

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 9th August, 1978

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

NATIONAL COUNTRY PARTY

*Allegation by Member for Moore:
Personal Explanation*

MR CRANE (Moore) [4.32 p.m.]: I seek leave of the House to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Leave is granted.

Mr CRANE: My personal explanation is as follows—

I, ALBERT VICTOR CRANE, of Somerset Park, Bindi Bindi, do hereby solemnly and sincerely declare:—

On Monday, July 31st, 1978 at approximately 7.45 a.m. I received a telephone call from Mr Everett Birch from the Geraldton area advising me that there was going to be a move to remove Mr Dick Old from the leadership of the National Country Party. Mr Birch asked me to support Dick Old as Parliamentary Leader of the Party at the Party Meeting to be held on Tuesday, 1st August, 1978.

Unbeknown to me, this move had been inferred in an article in Monday's "West Australian" and it was suggested that my vote would be the crucial vote in the issue.

I was most surprised at the suggestion that there was even going to be a move to change the leadership.

This was in view of the fact that—at the conclusion of the N.C.P. State Conference—both Mr Fletcher, as General President, and Mr Jones, representing Mr Old as Leader of the Parliamentary Party (in the absence of Mr Old who was unavoidably away at another function), pledged their loyal support to work as a team for unity and progress of the party.

Now it seemed in view of the press report, that the old wounds were about to be reopened.

After Mr Birch rang me I called Mr Old at home and spoke to Mr Old's wife. Mrs Old said she was upset with the news on the radio and in the newspaper and told me Dick had had a most trying night. She felt he would like to hear from me and gave me his telephone number.

I rang him at his office and had a short conversation with him. I told Mr Old I was angry at the change in plans as I thought we all were going to make a genuine attempt to work together. I was concerned for his position and for the stability of the coalition Government under a continuing threat of breakdown.

For this reason I said I would not support any move to unseat him or Mr Jones. I made it clear I felt I had been treated very unfairly and put in the hot seat.

Shortly after, the phone rang again and, as I was upstairs, my wife answered and told me Mr Fletcher was on the phone and wished to speak with me. Mr Fletcher asked me if I could meet him in town at Country Party Headquarters as soon as possible. I said I had to attend a Rural Traders' Co-operative Board meeting at 9.30 a.m. but would leave the meeting early and meet him at 11 Havelock Street, West Perth, at 11 a.m.

My wife was present in the room during all my telephone conversations.

I left my home at Tranby, Maylands, at approximately 9 a.m. for the board meeting in Lombard House arriving at approximately 9.20 a.m. Mr N. Symington, MC, Chairman of Directors, and Mr P. Lefroy were present when I arrived. I was met by both and told of the radio and newspaper report that suggested I held the casting vote in the Parliamentary National Country Party Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 1st August, 1978 at 10 a.m. They emphasised the importance of good, sound coalition government and expressed their confidence in me to make a sound and sensible judgment in such a serious situation.

I told them the situation was again becoming serious as I had hoped that—as expressed at the closing of our Conference on Sunday evening—all parties were prepared to genuinely try to work together for the good of the party, its supporters and the people of Western Australia.

Mr Davies: You did not approve this, did you?

Mr CRANE: To continue—

I advised them that Mr Fletcher, General President, had rang me earlier requesting an urgent meeting with him and that I would have to leave the Board Meeting early to keep the 11 a.m. appointment.

A few minutes after my arrival at the Rural Traders' Co-operative, the phone rang and it

was my secretary, ringing me from Parliament House.

Mr Davies: He just came out of your office. You must have approved it.

Mr CRANE: To continue—

She advised that John Arthur of the "Daily News" wished to speak to me urgently. I asked what he wanted and she said the morning newspaper indicated I would have the deciding vote at the Party Meeting on Tuesday if there was a move for a leadership change. I told her I was busy and did not really want to make any comment at this stage.

Mr Davies: But, "if I was pressed, I would."

Mr CRANE: To continue—

She suggested in view of this I should not make a comment to the paper and said she would be able to explain that I could not be contacted. I advised my secretary I was meeting Mr Fletcher at his request at National Country Party headquarters at 11 a.m. and would then be returning to Parliament House.

The other board members, Mr R. Rigg, Mr J. Phelan, and the company secretary, Mr M. Valli, had by this time arrived. We held our meeting and I was delayed because of important business and did not leave Lombard House until approximately 11.20 a.m.

I drove to Havelock Street arriving about 11.30 a.m. entered the building, proceeded up the passage, and knocked on the door of the administrator's office.

Mr Davies: And had boloney sandwiches for lunch.

Mr CRANE: To continue—

I was told to come in but on entering I realised a meeting was in progress between the General President, Mr Fletcher, the newly appointed Senior Vice President, Mr H. J. Cowan, MLA, Junior Vice Presidents, Mr R. Uphill and Mrs E. Adams, Mr Keith Walker, Treasurer and Mr P. Mayo, Administrator. Mr Fletcher advised he would be with me in a moment and I proceeded to the front board room and waited.

Mr Jamieson: Was not Mickey Mouse available?

Mr CRANE: To continue—

Shortly after, Mr Fletcher came into the room and started our discussion. Mr Fletcher reiterated he could not work with Dick Old

as leader and that it was imperative if the Party was to proceed according to the wishes of Conference which had returned him as President, Mr Old would need to be replaced.

Mr Jamieson: You would think the atom bomb was about to explode.

Mr CRANE: To continue—

Mr Fletcher said that Mr Cowan had shown courage and initiative and was, in his opinion, the man for the job. I disagreed because I felt firstly that Mr Old and Mr Jones had conducted themselves in the coalition government in an exemplary manner, which was acceptable to the vast majority of the people of Western Australia.

Mr Fletcher said there was no need to change the position of Mr Jones who seemed to be accepted as a moderate and he, Mr Fletcher, was prepared to go along with Mr Jones as long as Hendy Cowan was in a position of leadership.

Mr Davies: Right wing!

Mr B. T. Burke: Now we know about the bodyguards.

Mr CRANE: To continue—

Mr Fletcher then pointed out the position of my own Seat in Parliament with regard to the delicate balance of the Moore electorate.

Mr B. T. Burke: Here comes the vilification.

Mr CRANE: To continue—

He said that more than \$40 000 was spent during the last election campaign to retain my Seat as a result of the redistribution.

Mr Fletcher said that for the next election we would need \$50 000 for a similar campaign to ensure retaining the seat.

I disagreed with him and said I had worked very hard in my electorate and felt I had strong personal support regardless of Parties. Mr Fletcher insisted I would also need Labor Party Preferences. In reply, I told Mr Fletcher that it was necessary for me to be in a strong enough position to win the seat outright, as Preferences were something over which we have absolutely no control.

Mr Fletcher then advised me that if I would vote in support of Hendy Cowan—and so remove Mr Old from the leadership of the Party—sufficient funds would be available immediately to start my election campaign. He reiterated to me that we would need \$50 000.

He said a field officer would be employed immediately. He indicated that he was aware

I was in favour of retaining the services of the Party's former field officer, Mr John Coe. I said I did not believe Mr Coe would be available for this position, however, it was felt someone suitable could be found.

The important points in Mr Fletcher's view were that if I supported Hendy Cowan, the money would be made available, a field organiser would be employed and Labor Party Preferences would be assured.

Mr Fletcher told me that if I did not, there was no guarantee—and in fact it was most unlikely—we could get the money necessary for the campaign and I would lose my Seat. I disagreed with this point of view.

Mr Fletcher said he could almost guarantee those things he had offered and would confirm them. I told Mr Fletcher I would consider the points he had raised. But I told him there was one thing I wished to make quite clear. I told him that I was disgusted at State Conference to note that immediately after Mr Fletcher's re-appointment as General President, Mr Stephens spent much of Sunday afternoon in close consultation with David Oxer.

I told him I believed David Oxer's influence was still being exerted in the Party, and I made my position clear. I had in fact on the telephone to Mr Fletcher that morning said that if Mr Oxer had anything to do with the Party it would mean the virtual destruction of it.

I would add to those words what I have said previously: I believe Mr Oxer could not organise a fight between two blue heeler dogs. To continue—

Mr Fletcher said that he was "getting the message" and I could be assured that Mr Oxer would be having nothing further to do with the National Country Party. I then prepared to leave as I had a busy day before me.

Mr Fletcher once more asked me to consider very carefully my position. He said that the money for my election would be assured if I supported Mr Cowan. If not, he said that I would not be returned to Parliament.

I left the building and proceeded to Parliament House.

On returning to Parliament House, John Arthur of the "Daily News" rang me and wanted to know how I would vote. I said I would not give an indication who I would vote for, but that I would vote for stable Government in Western Australia.

Shortly after, David Warren of the "West Australian" rang me and I also told him that I would support sound Government in Western Australia, but would not indicate persons I would support.

I had been under considerable pressure for days and was beginning to realise the shock of the suggestion put to me by Mr Fletcher. David Warren is a reporter I trust and I told him in confidence I was absolutely fed up with the whole rotten business. I said it was getting very low and that I had been offered money to vote in a certain way.

I said that this statement was not for publication and I sincerely respect David Warren for keeping my confidence.

Later that afternoon, I received a message from the front door of Parliament House, advising me that Mr R. Sherlock of Moora wished to see me.

In my office I told Mr Sherlock of the offer which had been made to me. Mr Sherlock has always been a loyal and trustworthy supporter of mine. He was my campaign organiser in Moore during the last election and a man in whom I have always known I could confide.

Early Tuesday morning I received a telephone call from Mr Fletcher who confirmed to me that the funds he had promised on Monday of \$50 000 for election purposes were available and could be "put on stream" immediately. He told me I could start my election campaign forthwith, provided I took the actions suggested by Mr Fletcher at our meeting on Monday morning.

I immediately told my wife, who was standing by during the conversation. I told her I was disappointed and said I felt it was a horrible thing to do to Mr Old and I had no intention of carrying it out.

I arrived at Parliament House at 9.10 a.m. on August 1, 1978. My secretary who had gone to the Library was away when her phone rang. I answered the phone and it was John Arthur of the "Daily News".

He asked me what action I was going to take and I said I would not tell him what action I was taking.

However, I did tell him that I was disgusted as I had even been offered money and Labor Party Preferences by the factions supporting Jim Fletcher if I would give them my vote. I declined to name any person.

I told him I was equally disgusted at such a breakdown of moral values.

Approximately 9.30 a.m. I left Parliament House to go to Mr Jones' office at the Education Department, where I had arranged to meet both Mr Old and Mr Jones at 9.30 a.m.

I intended to ask Mr Old and Mr Jones if they had considered switching positions if the pressure was becoming too great for Mr Old under the circumstances, however, this matter was not raised. I was quite upset and told them how disgusted I was and advised them of the offer I had been made by Mr Fletcher.

On returning from the meeting with Mr Jones and Mr Old I felt that because of the seriousness of the situation I may need to make a Statement.

I called into the office of Mr Bruce Okely, Clerk of the Assembly, and had a confidential conversation with Mr Okely on the matter of my making a Statement in the House under Parliamentary Privilege.

I felt it was possible that this may be necessary because I could not prove the conversations I had had on Monday and Tuesday with Mr Fletcher.

I was aware of the threat having been placed on Mr Ron Elphick, at the time of his resignation as Executive Director of the National Country Party, earlier this year, and knew I could be immediately placed under a similar threat.

Mr Okely and I discussed the matter till after 10 a.m., the starting time for the Parliamentary Party Meeting, and I arrived at this Meeting a little late.

After the Party Meeting had closed, there was strong feeling in the Party room. I then advised all Members present of the offer which had been made to me and of my utter disgust with what had happened to our Party.

I did not name the person who had made these offers.

On return to my office, I received another telephone call from John Arthur of the "Daily News". He asked me to name the person who had offered me the money. I again refused.

He said that he could make a guess. I said he could guess all he liked. I said that if he asked if it was Queen Elizabeth I would say, No, it was not Queen Elizabeth.

And, if he asked if it was Jim Fletcher or any other person, I would say no to any name.

I would like this clearly understood, that I have been quoted in the newspapers out of context. To continue—

John Arthur concluded the conversation by saying he would send an envelope in a fortnight's time with a name in it.

Later, per medium of the telephone, a copy of the text of the article which appeared in the first edition of the "Daily News" under Arthur's name, was read to me. The report which subsequently appeared in the first edition of the "Daily News" was basically correct in what I said.

However, I was surprised to read in a later edition of the same newspaper under that reporter's name an additional paragraph, and I quote:

"Mr Crane said the approaches had not been made by Mr Fletcher."

To summarise, the facts are:

1. I was offered a financial inducement amounting to \$50 000 towards campaign funds and a promise of Labor Party Preferences to retain my Seat of Moore in this House.

Mr Jamieson: Not from the Labor Party, you were not.

Mr CRANE: I am sure it was not from the Labor Party. To continue—

2. The condition imposed was that I vote to unseat Mr Dick Old as Leader of the Parliamentary National Country Party of Western Australia.
3. The offers of this financial inducement and Labor Party Preferences were made to me by Mr S. A. J. Fletcher, the General President of the National Country Party in Western Australia.

I have made this Statement in this House because I feel I owe the truth to my fellow Members in Parliament and in the steadfast belief that it is my duty as an elected representative of the people of Western Australia.

There is just one other note I must add: In my view the duty of a member of this House is to the House and to a stable Government for the people of our State.

It is quite improper for any person outside of

this place to try to pressure a member either in his actions in the House or in his actions within his parliamentary party and this is so no matter what office such person may hold outside of this place.

I have made this statement to the House as it is a matter of grave concern to the House and to my party but it is of no concern to anyone else.

I do not propose to make any other statements on this subject in future.

Mr Davies: Do you want to bet?

Mr CRANE: In evidence of my sincerity, I wish it known that this entire statement has been lodged in the form of a statutory declaration.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

ST. JOHN AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION

Finance: Grievance

MR T. H. JONES (Collie) [5.22 p.m.]: My grievance relates to the situation confronting the St. John Ambulance Association of Western Australia. I wish to make it clear I am not raising this as another political football; I raise the matter following a request I have received from the Collie Sub-Centre of the St. John Ambulance Association for me to investigate the serious position relating to the ambulance service in the town. I directed a question on notice to the Treasurer today seeking to ascertain whether the association was in financial difficulty in country centres throughout Western Australia and he replied, "No".

However, that answer is not in accordance with the facts because at Collie there is only one ambulance driver who is working a continuous shift, seven days a week. It is true that up till about nine months ago the association was able to call on relief drivers in addition to the full-time driver, but that situation has changed to the point where one driver works long hours, seven days a week.

The Collie sub-centre is extremely concerned about this problem. How long can its ambulance driver continue working these long hours and provide adequate service? The Coal Miners' Industrial Union expressed its concern in a letter to me. Members would know that the coalmining industry is the highest risk industry in Western Australia and they would also know hundreds of construction workers currently are employed on the extensions to the Muja generating station.

The union's concern is a very real one. What happens if an injured worker needs to be transported by ambulance from Collie to Perth and no ambulance is available in the district? The closest centre is at Bunbury, 37 miles away. If an urgent situation should develop in the coalmines or somewhere else and no ambulance is on hand, the results could be serious.

That is why I asked the question on today's notice paper. On behalf of the Collie sub-centre, I discussed this serious problem with the manager of the St. John Ambulance Association in Western Australia (Mr Kaye-Eddie); it was confirmed that a letter to the Collie sub-centre dated the 4th May, 1978, in effect, said there was insufficient finance available to extend the existing service.

I understand from information supplied to me that Collie is not the only country centre experiencing such difficulties; problems are also being encountered in the towns of Geraldton, Port Hedland and Kalgoorlie. In fact, the situation there has been described as serious. In addition, I understand centres in the metropolitan area also face this problem.

Mr Carr: I can confirm that the claim about Geraldton is certainly correct.

Mr T. H. JONES: As I say, I do not want the St. John Ambulance Association of Western Australia made a political football, because it provides a wonderful service.

However, I felt compelled to raise the matter here because of the extremely limited service available in Collie. Imagine what would happen if there were a severe fall-in in one of the underground coalmines in the Collie region. What would happen if the ambulance driver were in Perth? This problem is exercising the minds of the executive of the Collie sub-centre. How long can the ambulance driver, working a continuous shift, seven days a week continue to provide efficient service? Of course the service he gives will start to deteriorate. I have clearly demonstrated why the Collie sub-centre executive approached me with a request to raise this matter in Parliament and to take action on its behalf.

Mr Kaye-Eddie, the manager of the association in Western Australia, did not pull any punches. He said, "The situation is that we do not have the available finance to put any more drivers on the road. If you can do anything about it, we will be very pleased." Of course, the answer given to my question today was quite unsatisfactory and did not clearly demonstrate the situation which exists.

The first part of my question was as follows—

Is he aware that the St. John Ambulance of Western Australia is not in a financial position to make funds available to ensure that some country centres can operate on the highest efficient level?

The Treasurer replied as follows—

- (1) No. A report on the financial operations of country centres in 1977-78 contained in the association's budget submission for 1978-79 indicated that ambulance services in the southern region of the State were operating satisfactorily.

Unfortunately, this is not now the situation. Mr Kaye-Eddie pointed this out to me in the terms of a letter sent to the secretary of the Collie sub-centre.

All I am doing today is drawing to the attention of the Treasurer of Western Australia the urgency of the situation in Collie. We are concerned; I think any fair-minded person would be concerned that one man should be working seven days a week servicing the needs of a high risk industry like the coalmining industry.

Everyone would know that, under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act, the coalmining industry pays the highest workers' compensation premiums of any industry in Western Australia. In addition, some 400 workers are engaged on the Muja power house extensions. In fact, the subcontractors there are so concerned that they are considering bringing their own ambulance drivers and vehicles into operation. This is something that neither I nor the Collie sub-centre nor the association in Western Australia wants to see. I ask the Treasurer to have an immediate look at the situation facing the association, and not wait until the Budget to provide additional funds, because that will not meet the immediate problems facing the association.

I am mindful of the fact that in the 1976-77 Budget, the St. John Ambulance was allocated \$1.87 million, and that this figure increased by \$230 000 to \$2.1 million in 1977-78. However, the general secretary clearly indicated in his letter to the Collie sub-centre that additional services could not be provided because they simply did not have the funds. This fact can be borne out by talking to Mr Kaye-Eddie himself. When I spoke to him, he said, "Mr Jones, we are in a serious situation in Collie. In fact, the situation in other country areas, and indeed in some parts of the metropolitan area is such that we are unable to take any remedial action because we do not have the funds."

All I am asking the Treasurer is to have a look at this situation. He does not have to believe me if he does not want to; he can discuss the matter with Mr Kaye-Eddie. The Treasurer said that everything was all right for the 1977-78 year, but obviously that is not the situation at all. If funds had been available Mr Kaye-Eddie would have arranged immediately for another driver to be stationed at Collie, because it is wrong for an ambulance officer to have to work seven days a week. That is my view, although it might not be supported by members on the Government side.

I understand that some ambulance drivers in Western Australia are working 120 hours a week. That figure was given to me this morning and I have not been able to check it out. The situation is reaching alarming proportions and the Government must take positive action. It is obviously wrong that an ambulance driver should work continuously for seven days a week. It is wrong that this should have to happen so that the people of Western Australia can continue to receive this wonderful service from an organisation of which we are proud.

The answer to my question today does not reveal the situation as outlined to me by Mr Kaye-Eddie nor the situation contained in the letter to the sub-centre dated the 4th May this year. I trust that my appeal to the Treasurer will be successful and he will realise the plight of the metropolitan and country centres. I hope the Treasurer will discuss this matter with the representatives of the association in Western Australia.

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Treasurer) [5.32 p.m.]: I would have thought that, had the honourable member been truly and earnestly concerned about this matter, he would have discussed the subject with the Government to check the information available to the Government and to ensure he had all the facts right. He would then have been still free to bring the matter up as he has done.

I remind the House that the answers given to the honourable member in question 1043 were obtained from the Treasury officers who sought information from the association. I invite members to read the answers to question 1043.

The important point about this matter is that these centres have a high degree of autonomy of which they are very proud and jealous. The association itself has a high degree of autonomy of which it is very proud and jealous. The

association makes a submission to the Government from time to time, certainly not less than at annual intervals, as evidenced by the fact that the item appears in the miscellaneous section of the Budget each year.

The honourable member quoted figures in respect of 1976-77 when the vote was \$1.87 million and the actual expenditure was \$1 869 780. The member gave as the estimate for 1977-78 a figure of \$210 000 which I am sure was just a slip of the tongue, as the actual figure is \$2.1 million for the year just ended.

When the time comes the association makes its budget submission which is subject to very critical analysis by the Treasury officers. There is a very well established pattern that has been developed between the Treasury officers and the officers of the association when the association wants to take any new initiative, such as in connection with the air ambulance and things of that kind. If the association wants to take initiatives in respect of equipment, premises and so forth these are matters for submission and discussion with the Treasury.

I know from my own experience, based on submissions that finally come to me, that things are done thoroughly. In the main a very good and sound working arrangement has been developed between the association officers and the Treasury officers, who make a study of the submissions.

I suppose the association would say that it could always make do with more money but in the final analysis, in my understanding and from my experience over the years, the association and the Treasury eventually arrive at a formula which becomes the basis of a submission to me by way of a recommendation from the Treasury. It would be most unusual, in view of the thoroughness with which the job is done, for the Treasurer of the day to reject or vary that submission. He is more likely to vary it slightly upwards than downwards but I cannot recall any variation having been made because the submissions are most thorough.

The centres themselves have an autonomy of which they are very proud and jealous, as does the organisation itself.

Mr T. H. Jones: You have no answer to the problem.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I felt that had the member for Collie been genuinely concerned—

Mr T. H. Jones: Surely you are not getting down into the gutter again.

Sir CHARLES COURT: —he would have done more than he has done before submitting his

grievance today. Asking one question on the day he makes his grievance and using that as substantially the basis of his grievance is, of course, not a very good display of sincerity.

Mr T. H. Jones: I discussed the matter with Mr Kay-Eddie who is a responsible officer of the association in Western Australia. What else could I do?

Sir CHARLES COURT: The honourable member used Mr Kay-Eddie's name so often during his grievance we thought it was a record. The member referred to some other centres as being in a parlous position and being comparable with Collie—at least in his opinion I gather. He mentioned Port Hedland. I was at that town on Sunday and spent a considerable amount of time there and I found the members of the association were very proud of their centre; very proud of their efficiency, their equipment, and buildings.

Mr B. T. Burke: Did they not indicate they need further services?

Sir CHARLES COURT: They were proud of their training system and of the co-operation they have with the medical practitioners in that part of town. I am referring to South Hedland. They were proud of the people who participate, not only the permanent drivers and the voluntary drivers, but also the young folk who are participating and being trained in first aid, which is one of the key activities of the centres and of the association in this State.

Mr T. H. Jones: Answer the question about the Collie problem.

Sir CHARLES COURT: As I understood the honourable member at the start of his comments, he did not want to make this a political football.

Mr B. T. Burke: You are making it so.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The member's grievance was against the association and not the Government. I undertake to get a pull of his speech and submit it to the association and get a response from the president and office bearers of the association. I will find out whether it is consistent with the submission they have made. I will also look at the submission made in respect of the 1978-79 Budget because the question he asked today was answered with the full knowledge of what is in the current submission that will appear in the Budget when it is finally resolved for 1978-79 and introduced into Parliament next month.

I assure the honourable member his remarks will be given to the association for its comments because we want the association to retain its autonomy. We want to make sure the centres retain as much of their autonomy as possible. I

would not like to think the honourable member is submitting this problem as the thin edge of the wedge in attempting to have the Government move into the ambulance service, because we will not.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Subiaco.

POLICE

Vintage Wine Saloon: Grievance

DR DADOUR (Subiaco) [5.41 p.m.]: Unfortunately, my grievance should never have occurred. Had the Minister for Police and Traffic paid more attention to and shown a greater understanding of the matter, it could have been avoided. I believe it should have been avoided. I intend to show the police are not performing their duty as it should be performed. An inconsistency has arisen in my electorate in regard to the work carried out by the police. It is most unfortunate that the matter should have arisen in Parliament; I did not want it to come to this place. I practically begged the Minister for Police and Traffic to accompany me on a visit to the Commissioner of Police in order to discuss the matter. However, that visit was not forthcoming. It was interpreted as an endeavour on my part to blackmail the Commissioner of Police. That was not my intention.

An Australian winchouse is located in my electorate. It has caused no end of trouble. I have received complaints continually concerning its establishment. These complaints emanate from the people who live in the near vicinity of the wine saloon. This Vintage Wine Saloon is situated in Keightley Road, Shenton Park.

I was forced to write to the present Minister for Police and Traffic on the 14th February this year in regard to this matter. The letter reads as follows—

Dear Mr O'Neil,

re Vintage Wine Saloon,
Keightley Road, Subiaco

This place is festering on and on and in spite of efforts last year to have it quietened down it is becoming worse. There is now live entertainment on the premises every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, the doors are left open—extremely noisy and a drunken mob driving away from there between ten and ten-thirty on these nights.

Unfortunately the health of some of the neighbours has become affected and I am most disappointed at the efforts of the police.

You very kindly put an Inspector on this job last year and things improved but whatever improvement occurred at that time very quickly deteriorated.

I now request that I am to be able to liaise with one of your senior police officers in an effort to try to clear up this desperate problem. This is very urgent and I should appreciate your prompt reply.

The reply arrived on the 31st March, 1978. It reads as follows—

Dear Dr Dadour

You wrote on February 14 about The Vintage wine saloon in Subiaco. Please accept my apologies for the delay in replying; however, the matter has been subject to considerable investigation.

It is understood you have been visited by a senior officer of the Police Department and have discussed this subject.

That is not correct. He never came near me. To continue—

Reports from the Police Department indicate the area was kept under surveillance by the Liquor Squad, the Subiaco Police and the Road Traffic Patrol for over a month recently. Particular attention was paid at closing times and despite this constant attention no offences were detected.

In addition, it appears that similar complaints have been investigated in the past and it has not been possible to substantiate the validity of the complaints.

The licensee conducts the premises in an above average manner and has always co-operated fully with the police in any enquiries.

Considerable police man hours have been devoted to complaints in this area over the last few years and there has been only one isolated incident of disorderly conduct, some time ago.

Complaints regarding noise emanating from the premises are, as you would be aware, a matter for the local authority to investigate under the Noise Abatement Act.

In view of the result of enquiries into this matter both recently and in the past, it is considered that any special police attention to these premises is not warranted.

As a result, I thought that maybe I was mad, or may be the complainants were mad. In order to establish the true situation, I went to a house near

the wine saloon at approximately 9.30 every night for six nights. It was quite an eye opener.

In particular, on Friday, the 28th April, at 10.10 p.m., while I was standing behind a fence, two male patrons urinated in the street about three feet away from me. The occupants of a police car from the Liquor and Gaming Branch saw these men illuminated by the car headlights. They immediately brought the vehicle to a halt, got out of the car and questioned the two males.

The following Tuesday I spoke to the Acting Minister for Police and Traffic, the Minister for Works, because the Minister for Police and Traffic was away for three weeks. I asked the Acting Minister if he would determine whether the two people caught by the police would be summonsed to appear in court. The Acting Minister for Police and Traffic kindly informed me the next morning that the two men would not be prosecuted. That happened on Wednesday morning. A summons would not be issued, because there was no witness to the alleged offence. Evidently, the men had done up their trousers by the time the police grabbed them. I assured the Acting Minister that I was an eye witness to the actions. In order to obtain information, I put a question on the notice paper on Tuesday, the 9th May. The question I asked reads in part as follows—

Is it a fact that on Friday, 28th April, 1978, two plain clothes police caught two patrons of the Vintage Wine Saloon at 10.10 p.m. urinating on the verge outside No. 12 Keightley Road, Subiaco?

The answer to that part of the question was—

On Friday, 28th April, 1978, at approximately 10.10 p.m., two plain clothes officers from Liquor and Gaming Branch, Perth, interviewed two male persons who subsequently admitted having urinated near a street tree in Keightley Road, Subiaco, about 70 metres west of the Vintage Wine Saloon.

In fact the distance was approximately 30 metres; but I will settle for 70 metres. The second part of the question was—

Do the police intend to proceed with charges?

The answer to that was, "Yes". The third part of the question related to the types of charges laid and the answer to that part of the question was, "Disorderly conduct by urinating." Part (5) of the question reads as follows—

What initiated the police, both uniformed

and plain clothed, visiting the wine saloon on that evening?

The answer was, "Routine patrol". I then asked what time the police arrived and what time they left and that was answered.

The point I am making is: Had I not asked the question of the Acting Minister, the matter would never have come to fruition. I spoke to the Acting Minister for Police and Traffic and arranged a time with the Acting Minister to go to see Commissioner Leitch. Unfortunately, Commissioner Leitch was on holiday. By the time he returned, the Minister for Police and Traffic was also back in Perth. On a number of occasions I requested, in writing and orally, that the Minister accompany me on a visit to the Commissioner of Police in order that I could set out the situation and tell him that somewhere along the line a breakdown had occurred. I wanted the opportunity to inform the Commissioner of Police that I had observed certain occurrences and the fact that the noise from the wine saloon was detrimental to the neighbourhood. Not only is the noise a problem, but also a number of other complaints have been made. We will agree that the noise factor is dealt with under the Noise Abatement Act which comes under the local authority. The Act needs revamping. It is not strong enough and there are many areas where amendments can be made.

The complaints I have received include noise caused by patrons leaving the wine saloon, shouting, laughing, obscene and/or offensive language, revving of motorcars, and sounding of car horns. This occurs in that area night after night. The wine saloon is situated in a residential area. Every night more than 50 vehicles are parked in that small area. The cars are parked on the verges on the roadway. As a result, the driveways of the houses are obstructed. The cars are parked on corners and on the verges. The Road Traffic Authority inspectors come along, have a look and go. They must be blind. The uniformed police visit the area and they go into the saloon. They disappear for periods of 15 minutes, 10 minutes, 46 minutes, 26 minutes, 22 minutes, and 20 minutes, night after night. On two occasions uniformed policemen have been observed drinking in the wine saloon. The noise, the bad behaviour, and patrons urinating are occurring outside the wine saloon while the policemen are inside. It is no wonder they do not see or hear what is happening.

My complaint is that I do not believe the law is being enforced as it should be. The residents of the area must always come first. The patrons of the saloon and the saloon must come second. The

patrons must behave themselves; but they do not. Examples of complaints I have received are: offensive and abusive behaviour; males and females urinating in the street or on private property; drunken females crying and arguing in the street; persons lying on the verges; persons entering private property; persons dumping rubbish and loitering; and—this is one of the worst features—females discarding sanitary napkins in the street.

I have a very real complaint. I wonder why the Minister for Police and Traffic has not listened to me and taken the correct action.

MR O'NEIL (East Melville—Minister for Police and Traffic) [5.50 p.m.]: It is true that I have declined a request from the honourable member to accompany him and present him to the Commissioner of Police in order that he may say to the commissioner what he has said here this evening.

I am sure the honourable member does not need my company, and I am sure the Commissioner of Police would be only too happy to see any member from this Chamber who wished to discuss a problem with him.

However, since the honourable member has disclosed his all in the Chamber, I will take a copy of his speech and refer it to the commissioner. I still invite the honourable member to try to make an appointment with the commissioner who, I feel sure, will agree to the request.

TELEPHONE SERVICES

Multiple Dwellings: Grievance

MR WILSON (Dianella) [5.51 p.m.]: My grievance concerns problems being encountered by people moving into newly constructed home units and flats in having telephone services connected, and the need for changes to the uniform building by-laws to help overcome these problems.

I am not sure whether I should address this grievance to the present Minister for Local Government or to the future Minister for Local Government and I can only hope that the present Minister will pass the information on to the incoming Minister.

Early in March of this year I was contacted by a constituent who had recently taken up occupancy in a block of home units in the suburb of Noranda Hills. He had applied for a telephone service to be connected to his new home unit on the 15th December, 1977. He had completed all the formalities which he was aware were necessary.

There had been some delays due to new cables being laid, but on the 16th February an order was issued authorising the installation depot to carry out the job. However, on the 22nd February the depot advised the sales office that the units were not prewired, and the telephone connection could not be carried out until this was done.

A letter was sent to my constituent on the 24th February advising him of the problem, and that it was the responsibility of the owner or lessee to have the internal wiring of the building carried out since Telecom does not provide free wiring in multi-occupancy buildings.

Eventually, Telecom contacted representatives of the builders of the units on the 9th March, again requesting advice of their intention to wire the building. On the 14th March, advice was received from this company declining to do so.

At this stage my constituent agreed to pay a \$25 wiring fee to Telecom to wire the building. The connection was eventually made on the 31st March, over three months after the application had been made.

On the 6th April, of this year, I put the following question to the Minister for Local Government—

- (1) Is he aware of the possibly long delays being experienced by people moving into newly constructed home units and flats in having phone services connected or re-connected due to variations in requirements made on builders concerning pre-wiring for telephone installation?

The Minister replied—

- (1) No. At no time has this question been brought to the attention of my department.

A second question I asked was—

- (2) Will he investigate the possibility of introducing amendments to the uniform building by-laws to make pre-wiring for telephone services in home units and flats mandatory on builders?

The Minister replied—

- (2) Not unless it is demonstrated that such an amendment is necessary and desirable.

At this stage I think I could safely say the fact that at no time has this question been brought to the attention of the department does not necessarily mean that it has not constituted a problem for many people. It may simply mean, unfortunately, that many people are finding the bureaucracy is impervious to their queries and

complaints, and that they are not getting anywhere in the process.

Subsequently, I wrote to the Secretary of the Department of Local Government concerning the conflict between Telecom and some builders about the responsibility for prewiring new home units and flats. The response was dated the 19th May, 1978, and stated—

This Department is of the opinion that this is purely a matter for Telecom Australia to resolve between itself and the builders concerned.

Consequently this is not a matter for consideration by the Building Advisory Committee, or for the inclusion of any provisions relating to telephone communication in the Uniform Building By-laws.

I wish to quote from the most recent letter I received from the State manager of Telecom Australia, relating to this issue. The relevant part of the letter reads—

... multiple dwellings, such as blocks of flats and home units, including those of the row or terrace type on common land, now represent a significant proportion of residential accommodation in urban areas. Buildings such as these nearly always require a planned approach to the installation and subsequent maintenance of internal wiring for both economic and aesthetic reasons.

I fully subscribe to the comments made by the State manager in that letter, and it is for this very reason that action is necessary at the present time. Many elderly people are now moving into villa-home unit type accommodation in the metropolitan area. They should not lose, or even jeopardise, their right to effect connection or transfer of a telephone service just because it is convenient for the regulations to give the entire prerogative in such matters to, what my constituent possibly in a moment of outrage refers to as, a "monolithic monopolistic mammoth" such as Telecom.

In order to improve the situation there is a need for the uniform building by-laws to be amended so that the intending builder of a multiple-dwelling type building is required to state in his specifications whether or not he intends to prewire for telephone installation.

Secondly, it should be the responsibility of the builder to advise Telecom whether or not the building is to be prewired, prior to the commencement of construction.

A further safeguard would be to make it

compulsory for an agent advertising new multi-unit type accommodation to say whether or not such a building was prewired for telephone services. The obvious advantages of such a requirement are, firstly, that Telecom could plan rather than guess its cable requirements in any region; and secondly, unsuspecting purchasers of multiple-dwelling units would be saved the trauma and frustration experienced by my constituent.

It is entirely wrong, in my view, to allow Telecom and the Department of Local Government to accept the whim and fancy of a builder as to whether or not he will provide a service in a building. Surely it is the function of the uniform building by-laws to set minimum standards that are acceptable to the great majority of people.

I urge the Minister to take up my suggestions with his department. I believe that this grievance, which may to some members be seemingly small, is a symptom of something that threatens an ideal that is precious, and is under serious threat in our system and society. It is a breakdown in the quality of concern given to satisfy the legitimate wish of people to receive careful personal attention to their requests for service.

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Local Government) [6.00 p.m.]: In answer to the member for Dianella, I am always willing to have any suggestion for improvement considered, but what the honourable member has put forward is just a general plea. I would like him to make formal, detailed representation with any backup material he has in his possession so that we can give it more attention.

Requests are often made for all sorts of inclusions in buildings which certainly add to the cost. What we are looking for is a method of installation which will allow additions to be made at a later date without any undue cost. Otherwise, we could be installing services which people do not want, and the extra cost must be considered. I am not suggesting that what the honourable member has requested is an expensive item, but I ask him to make a formal request, with all the backup material, so that the matter can be considered.

SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL

Tractor Repairs Cost: Grievance

MR SHALDERS (Murray) [6.01 p.m.]: I wish to draw to the attention of the Minister for

Consumer Affairs a case which came before the Small Claims Tribunal recently and which was heard by the referee, Mr R. Kennedy. The dispute involved a person who lives in my electorate. He is a school teacher by occupation but runs a small hobby farm. He had repairs done to a tractor which he uses on the farm, and a dispute arose between him and the repairer of the tractor as to what the cost of the repairs should have been. He paid a portion of the account and then made a claim to the Small Claims Tribunal asking that the remaining balance be dismissed.

Unfortunately, despite the fact that he gave as the address for service of notices the address of the school at which his wife teaches, he was never notified of the date the case was to proceed before the Small Claims Tribunal, so he did not know when the case was to be heard. However, in his absence, the case went ahead before the referee, with the defendant and the defendant's witnesses in attendance. The referee, in summing up, said he found he had no jurisdiction to hear the case, but there are other aspects which disturb me. In giving his decision the referee said—

The claimant did not appear at the hearing. When one of the parties fails to appear or give evidence by Statutory Declaration it is not the practice of the Tribunal to give the non appearing party reasons for a decision that might be made at that hearing.

If that is the general policy of the Small Claims Tribunal, perhaps it should be looked at, because there may very well be good reasons, as there were in this case, why a party did not appear or give evidence by statutory declaration.

The referee concluded by saying—

I dismissed the claim on the grounds that the claim was in respect of a tractor which was and is still being used in connection with a farming business carried on by the claimant. Accordingly, this puts the claim outside the jurisdiction of the Tribunal which is not empowered to deal with claims relating to services provided in connection with the operation of a business.

Had the referee stopped there, perhaps no harm would have been done, although he came to that conclusion solely on the evidence of the defendant and the defendant's witnesses. But despite finding he did not have jurisdiction to hear the case, he made some other extremely unfortunate comments, and I quote—

I have no reason to think that Davies—

That is, the defendant. To continue—

—ever gave Evans—

That is, the plaintiff. To continue—

—anything in the nature of a quote for the cost of overhauling the diesel engine. Evans claimed that he had been given a quotation of \$1 700.00 but the replacement parts alone cost over \$2 000.00. If Evans had set any store by the alleged "quote" he would hardly have paid Davies \$2 700.00.

He went on to say—

I am of the view that Evans discovered that the cost of overhauling the engine was much greater than he had expected and resisted payment of the balance of Davies' account. I am generally of the view that Davies is entitled to have the whole account paid in full.

My point is that the referee, after saying he found he had no jurisdiction even to hear the case, then went on to say, "But I think the defendant is the party who is in the right and that he should be paid." I believe those comments may well prejudice the plaintiff if the case ever goes on to another court, so I ask the Minister to investigate the matter to find out whether it is general policy for a referee to make comments of that nature when he has found he is in no position to hear the case. It is a practice which I believe should not continue.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Consumer Affairs) [6.06 p.m.]: I am unaware of this particular case. If the honourable member will provide me with a copy of the correspondence he has and any further details, I will take up the matter with the Bureau of Consumer Affairs and advise him of the position. I cannot take the matter any further at this stage because I do not know the full details of the case, but I give the honourable member an undertaking that I will have the matter investigated.

The **SPEAKER**: Grievances noted.

RACING, TROTTING AND GREYHOUND RACING APPEAL TRIBUNAL BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Bateman, and read a first time.

PARKS AND RESERVES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Third Reading

MRS CRAIG (Wellington—Minister for Lands) [6.07 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

In moving the third reading of the Bill, I would like to say that I hope the reply given to today's question on notice by the member for Warren on the subject which caused the delay in the second reading of this Bill last night has proved to be satisfactory.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren) [6.08 p.m.]: I thank the Minister for her reply to the question, but it still does not clarify the point we raised about the number of members of these particular bodies who will exercise the powers provided in the Bill to authorised persons. I feel we should know this, and it is regrettable that the matter was not researched and the information provided.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

ABATTOIRS: GOVERNMENT POLICY

Appointment of Select Committee: Motion

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren) [6.09 p.m.]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House a Select Committee be appointed to enquire into, report upon and make recommendations regarding:

- (a) the issuing to Pope Exports Pty. Ltd. of a permit to construct an export abattoir in the North Dandalup area by the Government after the West Australian Meat Authority had refused such a permit on two occasions in 1977.
- (b) the effects of granting a further export licence on the abattoir industry in Western Australia, in view of the fact that some abattoirs have been operating below normal capacity because of lack of stock for slaughter, and a proposed new abattoir to be built at Esperance could find its operations partially jeopardised.
- (c) the future abattoir requirements of W.A. for the slaughter of cattle and sheep in the light of estimated numbers of stock which will be turned off in this State.

- (d) the need for the Government to safeguard the operations of Midland Junction and Robb Jetty Abattoirs in the interests of employees, producers and consumers and to safeguard the many millions of dollars investment which these abattoirs represent.
- (e) that in the event of Midland Junction Abattoirs being closed or curtailed by the Government, consideration be given to a body comprising representatives of producers, Meat Industry Employees Union, processors and the W.A. Lamb Marketing Board being allowed to continue the operation of these works under some form of leasehold arrangement.
- (f) the need for the Government to issue a comprehensive and clear statement indicating its policy in connection with abattoirs in Western Australia.

This motion is before the House because of the present policy and attitude of the State Government to an increasingly obvious problem in the abattoir industry. The motion is directed towards the gradual closure of service abattoirs at Midland Junction, because such a move will have disastrous repercussions for all meat producers and employees, and will nullify any hopes of meat marketing reform. That is the basis of the entire situation, and the reason that the motion is before us.

The Government's policy is fairly obvious, and this view is reinforced by the indicators we have seen in the Press. Firstly, a permit to build an export abattoir at North Dandalup was issued and this, together with the expected commencement of an abattoir at Esperance, will draw some of the stock which is available in this State, and of course, already we have surplus killing capacity in Western Australia.

With a decrease in the number of stock available to the Midland Junction Abattoir, there will be a further decrease in throughput and an increase in the operating loss of this abattoir. In reply to a question on notice this afternoon the Minister for Agriculture said that there would be a \$4.1 million anticipated or actual loss this year, and that three-quarters of that amount was due to the operation of the Midland Junction Abattoir.

We must consider also the operation of Bonestock Pty. Ltd., a company which is not yet fully effective. Bonestock Pty. Ltd. is situated in

the Robb Jetty area and it will draw its raw materials from all over the metropolitan area, including the Midland Junction Abattoir. The reply I received to my question about this company will bear closer scrutiny. However, the essential point is that any profitability in the abattoir industry is provided by the by-product and rendering section. If this activity is curtailed at Midland Junction Abattoir, there will be a further decrease in profitability and the existing situation will be aggravated.

Mr Shalders: Are you opposed to the establishment of an abattoir at North Dandalup?

Mr H. D. EVANS: The honourable member should listen and then make his own contribution. Perhaps he will be able to reply on the policy of this Government in regard to the overall abattoir situation. Obviously the honourable member does not have much of a grasp of the abattoir industry at the present time.

Mr Shalders: I asked a simple question.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Also, I draw attention to the strong possibility of a further licence being issued for the slaughtering of pigs. Although it is by no means definite at this stage, if such a licence is issued, it will be a further nail in the coffin of the Midland Junction Abattoir. While this is purely speculation at the moment, in the light of the actions of the present Government, it is a possibility that cannot be ruled out.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I have drawn the attention of the House to the attitude and indicators this Government has displayed in connection with its policy towards abattoirs. I have also pointed out that the establishment of further abattoirs is obviously a move initiated to phase out service abattoirs, and this behoves a very close look at what it implies.

The first part of the motion which I moved before the tea suspension requires a Select Committee to look into the issuing of a permit to construct an export abattoir at North Dandalup after the WA Meat Industry Authority had refused a permit on two occasions. This was given some publicity in *The West Australian* of the 8th July, 1978, in an article headed, "Abattoir permit is policy switch". It is a switch, because twice last year—in May and July—the initial applications for an export abattoir by Pope Exports Pty. Ltd. to establish an abattoir at Baldvis were rejected by the WA Meat Industry Authority.

The WA Meat Industry Authority is the statutory body set up by the Government to examine and advise upon the siting of abattoirs

and related matters such as licensing, and all the other things that pertain.

The problems in connection with the establishment of abattoirs are generally not fully realised. It is a most complex matter when one has regard for all the problems associated with abattoirs. The planning becomes very difficult from all standpoints. Firstly there must be a sufficient capacity of abattoirs throughout the State to handle all stock coming forward in the year; that is most important, otherwise the consequences are serious, particularly to farmers.

The drought years of 1968 and 1969 showed just how disastrous lack of capacity can be, and Colonel McArthur at the carcase judging competition at Midland Junction in 1971 made reference to this. A quick calculation would show that in those years the shortage of abattoir space cost producers alone about \$14 million as a result of depressed prices. A number of producers received bills for consignments of stock they sent forward.

In addition to that, the increased cost of the Midland Junction Abattoir has been ongoing, and we are still paying for it today.

The second problem in connection with the establishment of abattoirs rests with the existence of an excess capacity, because this also has implications. If there is an excess capacity of abattoir space, then those abattoirs that are not operating at capacity cannot operate economically. So they show a loss, and this is one of the causes of the position at Midland Junction.

Abattoirs today have to be built to comply with the DPI standards, and export abattoirs must meet the standards of the American DPI as well as our own DPI. This has resulted in tremendous costs to abattoirs. The stainless steel that is found in modern abattoirs is very extensive and very costly. This means there must be as large a throughput as is possible to recoup the tremendous capital outlay involved. That is axiomatic, and it is one of the factors the authority must consider.

Another factor of major importance is the strategic location of abattoirs in the interests of reducing transport costs. The proposed abattoir at Esperance exemplifies the need for this. The cost of moving stock to Perth for slaughter increases the disability of the producers in that area very greatly; so it is no wonder that the Esperance producers have been pressing for an abattoir for so long. The need for rail and road access and for easy access to a port are prime requirements when looking to establish an export abattoir.

These considerations are closely tied to the

State's herds and flocks, and as these are located in various areas and the turn-offs vary according to the area, a great deal of research and examination of statistics is required.

Finally, as a fourth point, there is the avoidance of environmental problems. Nobody likes an abattoir in the close proximity. Despite the income generation created by an abattoir, nobody is very fond of it—and we found this at Midland Junction where the cost of overcoming effluent problems has been enormous. In that case the cost has run into millions of dollars and it has drawn in the last few years some very acid comment.

I suspect that if the local authority or the local residents stand a chance of losing that abattoir, the odour of dollars might be something of a deodorant and would have a salutary effect on the attitude of those concerned. It is not so long ago that they were very vocal.

Mr Old: Weren't they ever!

Mr Skidmore: They had every justification.

Mr Old: Okay, but your member just said that dollars would overcome it.

Mr H. D. EVANS: If I could come back to the business at hand, the role of the WA Meat Industry Authority is one of research, evaluation, and closely monitoring all the trends within the stock and abattoir industries. It must treat applications for a licence for an abattoir in the light of the total information available to it.

The composition of the WA Meat Industry Authority is of importance, and I learnt this in the answer to a question I asked the Minister on the 1st August. The answer showed that the authority has six members, as follows—

Mr R. Trevaskis—representing the interests of private abattoirs;

Mr I. Flack—representing the interests of Government abattoirs;

Mr J. Ware—representing the interests of the wholesale and retail meat industry;

Mr J. Samson, Mr O. E. Butcher—representing the interests of producers of meat;

Mr K. C. Watson-Bates—representing the interests of persons directly employed in the processing of meat at abattoirs;

Mr J. Craig—as an officer of the Department of Agriculture nominated by the Director of Agriculture.

The present position is this: Pope Exports Pty. Ltd. was refused a permit on two occasions last year. The company appealed to the Minister. In September, 1977—not so very long ago—the

Minister upheld the decision of the authority and rejected the application of Pope Exports Pty. Ltd.

However, we now find that the State Government has given a permit to the company to build a \$2 million abattoir in the North Dandalup area. The position is virtually unchanged since last year; surely it cannot have changed in essence since that time. The Minister's attitude is as valid now as it was then. If he was right in upholding the position adopted by the Meat Industry Authority then, why has it been allowed to go through now? I would suggest that the capacity of the abattoir is unchanged; if the abattoir space was considered more than adequate last September and the numbers of stock have not increased, why the change of heart?

Mr Old: How many appeals were there?

Mr H. D. EVANS: I referred to the appeal against the authority in September last year. If there has been a subsequent appeal, it has not received the publicity which has enabled me to bring myself abreast of it. The Minister may enlighten us on that point.

Mr Old: He certainly will.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Coming back to the present decision, I asked the Minister a series of questions, again, on the 1st August this year, one of which was—

Did the WA Meat Industry Authority refuse to grant a permit to Pope Exports Pty. Ltd. to construct an abattoir at Baldvis on two occasions in 1977?

The Minister's reply was—

Yes.

My next question was—

- (3) (a) Did the WA Meat Industry Authority approve of the application of this firm to build an abattoir at North Dandalup; and
- (b) if not, on what grounds did the Government issue a permit?

The Minister's answer was as follows—

- (3) (a) Yes.
- (b) The Government is not involved in any decision taken by the authority except where an applicant lodges an appeal, to me as the relevant Minister, against the decision.

So, that is the decision made on the appeal.

Mr Old: I will answer that in time.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I would like the Minister to answer it now.

Mr Old: In time; I am not going to make your speech for you.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I will take the point now.

Mr Old: I have asked you how many appeals there were.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I am asking the Minister; why the secrecy?

Mr Old: What is in the answer to the question?

Mr H. D. EVANS: To resume, the point I make is that the Minister confirmed that the WA Meat Industry Authority approved of the application of this firm to build an abattoir at North Dandalup.

I wish to refer the House back to the composition of the authority. Last year, the Minister was not prepared to accept the firm's application, yet the composition of the authority has not changed materially this year; however, the application has now been approved, and the authority approved it. Why then did the authority reject the application twice last year? I will tell members why. Let us consider the composition of the authority.

Firstly, we have Mr O. E. Butcher, who represents the Farmers' Union, whose policy states that Government involvement in service abattoirs should not be decreased. Therefore, he would in no way support a further application of this kind which would jeopardise the service abattoirs. The same could be said for Mr K. C. Watson-Bates; the policy of his union is very similar to that of the Farmers' Union.

That brings us back to four members, one representing the interests of private abattoirs and the other representing a section of the producers who are well known for their attitude. In fact, this attitude came out very clearly in last year's referendum, when they expressed in the clearest possible terms how they feel towards service abattoirs and meat marketing.

So, there it is: Two for and two against, which leaves us with the two Government members on that authority. Therefore, they must have made the decision. I would be very surprised if in fact the Premier in Cabinet did not say to the Minister for Agriculture, "This is the policy; see it is implemented." I would not be surprised if the two Government members on that authority were told how to vote or were given the very strong hint that this was Government policy and that they should act accordingly and help the Government do away with service abattoirs. That is about the strength of it. In essence, the Meat Industry Authority has been used as the vehicle to push the policy of this Government—one that is not wanted by the producers or by anyone in this State, except by that section of the meat industry which stands to benefit.

If we follow the situation further we find this is not the only instance of the Government adopting a policy of doing away with the service abattoirs.

Mr McIver: Using back door methods to get rid of Midland and the Lamb Marketing Board.

Mr O'Neil: We will hear about the State losing control of its railways soon.

Mr H. D. EVANS: We will touch on a few little points like that as we go along. However, the essential point is that the actions of the Government jeopardised the future of the service abattoirs of this State.

Part (b) of my motion refers to the effects of granting a further export licence on the abattoir industry in Western Australia. Even though sheep are not directly involved in the granting of a licence to this abattoir—as I understand it, it will handle only beef—it can be shown it will still have an effect on the total, overall industry in this State. The Government knew this and with that in mind, I wonder why the Government had a change of heart and overrode the wishes of the Meat Industry Authority—and, for that matter, of the Minister.

I come back to the point that it was a Cabinet decision. The Government must have known that the removal of 200 head of stock a day from the number available to the service abattoirs would result in a further under-utilisation of the meatworks at Midland, and that this would result in an increase in the financial loss sustained by Midland. We were told earlier this evening that the loss for the last financial year was \$4.1 million of which three-quarters was sustained by the operations of the Meat Commission at Midland Junction Abattoir.

This is obviously what the Government had in mind; namely, to place Midland Junction Abattoir in an irretrievable position, where the losses were such that the Government could say, "We must dispose of the abattoirs; we must sell them off." This is reminiscent of the tactic used in relation to the Mullewa-Meekatharra line, where the Government allowed the maintenance of the line to deteriorate to such an extent that it could turn the argument against the line and say, "We must get rid of it and transfer to road transport because the cost of reparation and upgrading will be too great."

Instead of resolving the position at Midland to bring it back into a workable situation, the Government has decided to take the way out supported by some members of the Liberal Party—and they would be able and active members, too, make no mistake—and allow the losses sustained by the abattoir to mount.

I remind members of what happened to the State Building Supplies, where a similar situation prevailed. Because of the Government's decision, it lost the effective control of broad forest management programmes; major timber concessions were granted to companies involved in the industry. It is only recently that there has been any prospect of a change in that situation. Now possibly it will lose a position from which it could initiate moves in the livestock industry, in the meat marketing field, and in the general overall guidance and direction of the meat industry. It will lose all this in following the policy it has embarked upon.

The figures for cattle available for slaughter in this State show they levelled out to a point where cattle numbers turned off. In 1977-78 the figure was 720 000; the projection for 1978-79 is 670 000 and for 1979-80 the figure shown is 670 000. As I said, that figure is a projection and it is not terribly optimistic. The total cattle numbers for 1978 are 2.45 million; for 1979 2.4 million; and for 1980 2.4 million, which I think is rather conservative. The figures do not show any upward trend. They did not last August and they do not this August. So, the indicators are clear that a requirement of increased abattoir space is just not there and it cannot be justified.

Bearing that in mind, the Government must have known that the granting of an export licence would have a deleterious effect on the Midland Junction Abattoir. So, I would like now to examine what is implied when we start talking about the Midland Junction Abattoir.

In the first instance, this abattoir is a service abattoir and it has to be clearly understood what a service abattoir means; what purpose it serves in the industry and the difficulties which confront it but do not confront meatworks of other kinds. It is expected now that the Midland Junction Abattoir will face an estimated loss of just over \$3 million, according to the figures given earlier this evening.

The reasons for a loss of such magnitude are many and they are the result of a multiplicity of causes. The first would possibly be overcapitalisation. The total cost of the Midland Junction Abattoir must surely exceed \$30 million at this stage. The interest payments would be very heavy and would form a part of the structural costs the abattoir has to bear. I point out, too, that the basic reason for this overcapitalisation rests with those opposite and the decisions that were taken. I feel that should be recorded.

The position that the Midland Junction Abattoir is in now is attributable to a very

considerable degree to the actions and lack of actions of previous Liberal-Country Party coalition Governments. I would like to refer to a newspaper item by Mr Richard Outhwaite of Kojonup who had close access to what transpired. Prior to 1968 there had been a cry for new abattoirs in Western Australia which were ignored and the Government of the day got caught in 1968-69 with drought conditions which cost the Western Australian producer community millions and millions of dollars.

That is not the worst of it. The Government called in a pair of consultants, Mr Towns and Mr Austen of Victoria. Their report was not even heeded. That is the background of what transpired. I would like to quote from the letter appearing in the newspaper in reply to a former Minister for Agriculture, Mr Nalder, as follows—

I wonder that Mr Nalder has the nerve to refer to this situation, when he and his colleagues in the last Government were directly and solely responsible.

About four years ago, at a meeting in Pastoral House, attended by representatives of organisations concerned with the production, selling and slaughtering of livestock, a decision was reached that there was an urgent need to plan for increased killing facilities to prevent an over-supply situation developing in the future.

The strongest pressure was then applied to Mr Nalder then the Minister responsible to provide funds to build another abattoir.

It soon became apparent that Mr Nalder was not prepared to take any action and when an approach to Mr Court, in his capacity as Minister for Industrial Development, produced no results, the Premier, Sir David Brand, was approached by correspondence and deputation.

Again there was no result. Eventually a "committee of experts" was appointed to investigate and advise.

The result—a complete endorsement of what had been placed before the Ministers some two years before, including the advice that a new abattoir was required, not an extension of Midland.

That is perfectly correct because the advice of Towns and Austen was that there had to be a new abattoir by the following flush season.

The other significant recommendation was that Midland Junction Abattoir should not be increased, but what happened? The Liberal-

Country Party coalition Government enlarged the Midland abattoir in the face of that situation. It is of no use referring to hindsight; it was foresight at the time.

I cannot understand why the opportunity was not taken then, although possibly it had something to do with the basic Liberal Party philosophy and its overriding of the Country Party which has been part and parcel of this situation in Western Australia. It was probably the so-called free enterprise philosophy that led that Government to procrastinate and so cause this disaster. When it started to enlarge Midland it brought about so many unnecessary problems.

One of those problems was overcapitalisation and the increase in costs to that abattoir which has made it very difficult for it to become an economic unit. It is to the eternal shame of members opposite that this should be, as they are supposed to be looking after the interests of the people involved. Again, the reasons are, overcapitalisation, and the disastrous blunders of the Liberal-Country Party coalitions.

The second point is the under-use of the killing capacity and it should be borne in mind that it is more difficult to take full advantage of Midland's capacity because of its tremendous size. Every abattoir has a level at which it can operate economically, and at Midland something like a 70 per cent capacity is needed to break even. Consider the number of stock required and the tremendous organisation necessary to provide the maximum capacity possible week after week.

At the present time we see that the mutton chains are not working and that skilled slaughtermen are working on the pig and beef floors in unskilled jobs, at wages far less than they would normally receive.

It was pointed out in this same item the beef floor at the Robb Jetty Abattoir was closed in April this year because of a lack of stock. Only one of the two mutton chains is operating. In the face of that, why is the Government still going ahead and giving a permit for another export abattoir? The activating motive behind this is obvious.

I turn to the situation of Midland as a service abattoir, what this implies, and what the producers in this State will lose if the policy of those opposite is implemented. As a service abattoir, Midland has to provide a larger work force than is normally necessary to cater for the operations of a number of individual processors. Being a service abattoir, this is part and parcel of its requirements. One should consider the services entailed. The records of a multiplicity of

operators must be kept separately and draughts of animals belonging to various processors must be separated and treated in an individual manner. Even in the case of rejected animals, additional work is created by the identification of the animal before its disposal. Records must be kept of rejected animals and documentation must be presented to the owners. However, this is not necessary in a private abattoir. Everything goes through in the one stream.

In a service abattoir, staff must be employed for the additional work entailed. Hence, the expenses are higher. Slaughtermen have to be trained. One does not take a man off the street, give him a knife and say, "There you are; go to it." Even if he is a farmer and used to farm killing, when he gets onto a mutton chain it is a different proposition. It requires a certain degree of skill. It takes a novice slaughterman six months to become sufficiently proficient to enable him to be let loose on the lamb chain.

Once again in reply to a question recently asked by me, I was told the cost to the works of training a slaughterman is approximately \$3 500 per head. In 1977, 25 slaughtermen were trained, and in 1976, 60 slaughtermen were trained. The cost involved in the training of those slaughtermen is considerable and cannot be disregarded.

Many slaughtermen leave the industry when the throughput is reduced. They go to other jobs, or they refuse to accept a lesser paid job which might be required of them. As at the 31st July the number of slaughtermen had fallen from approximately 162 to a figure of 96. Most of those slaughtermen have gone out of the industry and it will be very difficult to encourage them to come back into it. The cost of the loss of these slaughtermen is borne by the service abattoirs.

Limited training is provided in ordinary private abattoirs. The reason for this is the chains must be slowed down until the novices have reached a stage of proficiency where they can operate at full speed. The slowing down of the chains involves a certain amount of extra costs. These abattoirs provide a service to the industry. When access to a training facility of this nature is not available, another alternative must be provided. However, nobody has come up with a suggestion as to what it might be.

As a fifth point, the uncertainty of the throughput creates management problems. From day to day the management of the abattoir does not know what the kill will be. Every producer expects to be able to send stock into the Midland saleyards and they will be purchased and processed. This is, of course, of great importance

to the producer; but it has the effect that the management of the abattoir does not know today what tomorrow's kill will be until the saleyard is cleared. This brings about managerial problems. These problems are reflected in costs.

However, the service provided to the farmers compensates for the loss and inconvenience. For that reason it is desirable to retain service abattoirs.

I have made reference to the environmental problems which are reflected in the costs of operation of the abattoirs. Approximately \$2.5 million was spent last time the effluent disposal plant was upgraded. I believe the problems have finally been overcome. However, the costs of effluent disposal at the Midland abattoir are disproportionately high. The decision made by the previous coalition Government to increase the size of Midland abattoir has resulted in the disproportionately high cost of effluent disposal. The costs involved would not be reflected in direct increases; but as a result of the environmental problems created by the increase in size of the Midland abattoir, the costs would probably quadruple. It would, of course, be reflected in the cost of operation of the Midland Junction Abattoir.

The effect of the closure of a service abattoir such as the Midland abattoir cannot be taken lightly. It affects a very large percentage of the community. It would firstly affect the producers, because it is essential that meat producers in Western Australia are able to have their animals slaughtered.

I have made reference to the drought years of 1968 and 1969 when primary producers lost millions of dollars because of inadequate slaughtering facilities. You would know, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Crane), that this was the case. Farmers in your area, Sir, would have received a bill for sheep which were sent into the saleyards. It is estimated that the producers sustained a loss of approximately \$14 million in the two years of drought that I have mentioned. That was the fault of members opposite who would not listen.

Mr McIver: They still will not listen.

Mr H. D. EVANS: While the auction system exists, the necessity for service abattoirs is painfully apparent. The producers send stock to the Midland abattoir and that abattoir dictates the markets throughout the State. There is no doubt about that. The prices are virtually set by the Midland abattoir. Obviously the producers must be close to slaughtering facilities. A farmer cannot send stock from a country area to the

Midland abattoir and then have it shipped off again to a country abattoir for despatch and processing. This is what has happened at Esperance where an abattoir is being built in order to obviate this difficulty, which would affect thousands of producers if the service was not provided at Midland Junction Abattoir.

It has been reported to me that a story is being peddled by our friends opposite in some country areas that stock would be slaughtered in the area in which it was produced. What these people in effect are saying is, "If Midland abattoir closes it will not be so bad. Stock will be slaughtered in the area in which it is produced and you will not have to meet the cost of transportation." That is so much malarkey. If Midland Junction Abattoir were closed at the present time with the auction system in existence chaos would result. That comment would probably be valid if a weight and grade system of meat marketing was operating; but this is not the case. We are faced with the reality of livestock sales at Midland Junction Abattoir as an ongoing process. Stock will continue to come to Midland Junction Abattoir and if it cannot be slaughtered, somebody will have to decide what to do with it. This is why the saleyards are required by the meat producers' industry and that will be the implication of the closure of service abattoirs.

You, Mr Acting Speaker, would be very familiar with the situation. If a weight and grade system was in operation, the situation would be different. However, we do not have a weight and grade system and under the present Government it is not likely it will be introduced. The Government will not introduce meat marketing reform.

Mr Bertram: What about the Country Party?

Mr Skidmore: No way in the world.

Mr H. D. EVANS: There have been a few rumblings from the National Country Party; but that is all.

I will proceed to the point which the member for Avon reminded me of, and that is the effect on the proposed meat marketing commission. It is with something of a shudder that I turn to the question of the proposed meat marketing reform. It is probably fortuitous that the amendment to the Abattoirs Act which will eventuate in the reform of meat marketing, is to be heralded in this House shortly. We actually have the Bill before us, and what will it do? It will place an additional two producer members on the commission. That is the extent of it. However, as a result of the action by the Government in granting an export licence for another meatworks,

it will be impossible for the Meat Commission to operate as a meat marketing reform unit. No way will it be able to operate.

A newspaper article published on the 1st August, 1978, carries the heading, "Commission will be favoured by Mr Old". The article is an editorial from the *Farmers' Weekly*. Bravo! A great move forward. In part, the article reads—

And a concession that will be extended the Farmers' Union with the appointment of another producer member to the Commission's board.

The Meat Commission is to have two more producer members. Another heading reads, "Proposals for meat welcomed". That was my own remark, but I did not know the fine print at that stage.

In *The West Australian* of the 14th June, 1976, there was reference to meat marketing reform, and we now have the machinery before this House whereby that reform will be effected. That reform will be to increase by two the number of producer members. If the service abattoirs are taken away to whom can the Meat Commission turn to get its stock slaughtered? Will it go to the private abattoirs, to the same fellows who are in the trade; the same fellows who are battling for the markets and trying to obtain the same tenders as the Meat Commission? If the Meat Commission does get a tender are the private abattoirs to treat it with the same patience and impartiality as a service abattoir? Not on your life!

To do away with a service abattoir is to emasculate the Meat Commission before it is in an operative position. Only this afternoon I asked a question as follows—

(1) What quantities of—

(a) beef;

(b) sheep meats,

did the Western Australian Meat Commission trade in its own right in the—

(i) 1977-78 financial year;

(ii) 1976-77 financial year?

(2) What was the value of—

(a) beef;

(b) sheep meats,

traded by the Western Australian Meat Commission in the—

(i) 1977-78 financial year;

(ii) 1976-77 financial year?

(3) What amount did the Western Australian Meat Commission lose or gain in its trading operations in the—

(i) 1977-78 financial year;

(ii) 1976-77 financial year?

The answer to my questions was that the detailed information which I sought was not available, and that it would be supplied as soon as possible. I thank the Minister for that gesture of making it available. However, I come back to the point that to set up a meat marketing commission, and to enlarge the Meat Commission by two members and then turn around and deliberately emasculate the same commission is so much of a sham. That is what is intended. The Meat Commission will not have a chance to operate in the situation I have outlined.

Those producers who may think that they are to have meat marketing reform would do well to have a second look at what is implied. There is no way the commission will be able to operate without there being a service abattoir to fulfil the processing role which will be so vital. I have explained the reasons. In the world of privately-owned abattoirs, it would be similar to putting a lamb in amongst a pack of wolves.

The effect on the Lamb Marketing Board, if it does not have access to a service abattoir, will be profound. It is no secret that members opposite have done their very best to undermine the Lamb Marketing Board and restrict its trading powers. That has been made very clear on many occasions. When the Lamb Marketing Board was established it was attacked most vigorously by those who were to lose by its operations. They fought with might and main as you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Crane) would well know.

When there was a change of Government the Premier fulfilled his pre-election promise and set up an inquiry into the Lamb Marketing Board. It was more than an inquiry; it was an inquisition. The Lamb Marketing Board survived because of its sheer capacity and because of the job it had done. It has more than vindicated its role, and again this year it won two awards for outstanding performance in the export trade. The Lamb Marketing Board would never have been set up had it not been for the Labor Government, and it would not have survived its first few months had it not had the protection of the Labor Government.

Mr Skidmore: It is about to be executed by the Liberal Government.

Mr H. D. EVANS: An article appeared in *The West Australian* on the 15th June, 1978. I quote part of the article as follows—

There had even been moves at the time to have the board abolished.

Moves were made in Cabinet to have the Lamb

Marketing Board abolished. It was stated by the only Minister who had the fortitude to stand up and defend the board; he was certainly outnumbered, but he had the courage to say—

If the matter had been pushed in the Cabinet the board would have been abolished . . .

Only my action stopped it.

It would be revealing to know the reasons for the change of mind.

The reference was to the meat marketing commission. As has been stated, the attitude towards the Lamb Marketing Board has been sustained hostility. The attitude of members opposite is still hostile, and they are supported in the most practical manner possible by those who will gain most from the dismembering of the board. The Lamb Marketing Board will be in the same position as the Meat Commission without service abattoirs. I suspect that one of the underlying motives in denying service abattoirs is to do away with the Lamb Marketing Board. There are more ways of killing a cat than by choking it with cream, as members opposite would know. This is a well put together approach and one which deserves recognition as being Machiavellian.

If the Lamb Marketing Board had to turn to private operators, those who want to get rid of it and who ask for these requirements to be fulfilled would be in a most advantageous position. The board could not survive in that atmosphere, and its record would gradually fall into disrepute. It would ultimately be abandoned. That is what I forecast, and that is what is intended by those opposite.

If the Lamb Marketing Board becomes dependent on private operators for its kill it could have its operations strangled. There is no doubt about that. I point out, too, that without the service abattoirs the capacity which will be required for lamb kill is a source of some concern.

The prognosis for lamb in 1977-78 is 1.4 million. It is estimated that in the next season, 1978-79, 1.8 million lambs will be required for slaughter and export. That is a rather significant increase, and prognostications for future trade go to 3.5 million lambs.

It must be remembered that during the spring flush period something like 70 per cent of the lambs in Western Australia are killed. If the Lamb Marketing Board is to rely on Robb Jetty and the outlying export abattoirs—such as Albany, Linley Valley, Anchorage, and Geraldton—which have a maximum kill of something like 300 000, lamb producers had

better start examining the facts, looking at the position they are going into, and looking at the Government which is proposing it.

The effect on Midland cannot be disregarded, and a request may well be made that somebody ascertain the extent to which Midland and its surrounds are dependent upon the operations of the Midland Junction Abattoir. The establishment at Midland is not just the abattoir and the saleyards. Take away the abattoir, and the saleyards would cease to have any value; they also would be required to go. That would create a physical problem, apart from a restructuring of the meat marketing system which we do or do not have. There are also the service and backup industries surrounding the abattoir and saleyards at Midland; the transport industry and the mechanical and engineering industries that go with it, and a number of firms providing farming requirements, which are in close proximity to Midland, and for good reason. Midland has become the trading heart as well as the livestock heart of Western Australia. The sale of fuel, and what it implies through the ancillaries to service stations, is also of great importance to the area. All the tertiary and ancillary services will necessarily be affected. Other industries on the periphery, such as tallowing and rendering down operations, also have a very important stake in the area.

All in all, we are not looking at only 1 000 jobs in the abattoir itself. I suggest we are looking at many thousands of jobs when we consider the dependence of the area upon the service abattoir. I suggest there would be a marked effect on the processors who lease space and who also provide a service to the wholesale and retail outlets. If that service facility were done away with, the processors would hardly expect much consideration from the private abattoirs. Although they may not be the most important consideration, they are part and parcel of the operation of the industry at the present time, and without them there would be violent disruptions and considerable fluctuation in retail prices and the prices of stock. These are some aspects of the overall, interrelated problem.

It should never be forgotten that service works are essential in handling the flush season. They are part and parcel of the seasonal operation of farming. Producers know this very well and they are acutely attuned to it, as I have already indicated.

One of the propositions for streamlining and re-examining the Midland Junction Abattoir operation is contained in paragraph (e) of my motion, which suggests—

- (e) that in the event of Midland Junction Abattoirs being closed or curtailed by the Government, consideration be given to a body comprising representatives of producers, Meat Industry Employees Union, processors and the W.A. Lamb Marketing Board being allowed to continue the operation of these works under some form of leasehold arrangement.

It might be as well to include the Meat Commission if it ever reaches the stage of being allowed to trade.

I make the point, for the benefit of the member for Vasse, who has been concerned in the past that the member for Maylands and I had agreed that the leasehold of service abattoirs should be examined, that this came up in the Honorary Royal Commission and it is one of the recommendations which necessitated prolonged debate. The member for Vasse will now see the reason that the member for Maylands and I were interested in the leasehold aspect: it could incorporate into the operations of the service works those who are vitally concerned with them. If processors had a direct and real interest in a service abattoir they would be more prone to show loyalty and ensure the throughput is maintained.

It is the practice at the present time to adopt the most convenient method of disposal of stock, but if producers had a real and direct interest in the service abattoir there is a chance that, from a sense of moral obligation and responsibility, they would continue to support it at increased levels, which would necessarily improve the economics of the operation.

Similarly, if the Meat Industry Employees' Union were involved in and more closely attuned to the problems of management—and nobody denies there are many—as is the case in other countries, and if the work force participated and had more direct responsibility in management, we would be on the road to improved industrial relations and perhaps improved interest on the part of those employees who are involved in an unpleasant, repetitive, and humdrum type of job. Not everybody is prepared to accept that kind of job. Every avenue to improve the situation should be taken.

The Lamb Marketing Board must necessarily be involved. It is imperative that it have access to killing space, because without killing space it will wither and die. That, as I have suggested, is one of the reasons those opposite are seeking to do away with the service abattoirs. Rich would be the rewards from their friends in the export trade,

there is no doubt about that. It could well be that the processors who are already operating will be given some role on the management side. They would have the expertise and the contacts and would be in a position to maintain the throughput, provide the markets, and handle the dealing side of the stock industry, as is the case in Victoria.

The leasehold arrangement in Victoria seems to be operating well. I have the comparative charges of Midland and other major meatworks in Australia. They bear looking at. I think it is necessary to see what the comparison reveals. But those four bodies—the producers, the employees in the meat industry, the processors, and the Lamb Marketing Board—comprise the people who have a vital interest in a service abattoir, and they would be the people best able to run it. They have the expertise and the grass roots operative skills. It is not beyond the wit of the Meat Commission or the Government to work out some leasehold arrangement to the satisfaction of all concerned. At least this suggestion should be tried. Maybe it will result in some form of loan being guaranteed by the Government, but we must remember there was a loss of \$3.25 million this year and next year's loss will be greater. The throughput is expected to be about the same, but I have heard rumours that the killing charges at the Midland Junction Abattoir are to be increased, so there would be no great disadvantage in giving an idea such as this a go. At least it is one point that could be looked at by a Select Committee.

I have alluded to the charges at the Midland Junction Abattoir, and it is only fair to compare those charges with those incurred in similar sorts of operations in the Eastern States. First of all I will refer to the charges of the Metropolitan Meat Industry Board of New South Wales at the State abattoir at Homebush. The slaughtering fee is \$31 for cattle in New South Wales, whereas at Midland Junction Abattoir it is \$24.83, plus 6.81c per kilogram over 125 kilograms. So our slaughtering fees for cattle are higher than those charged in New South Wales; although the slaughtering fees for pigs are slightly higher than ours, the cost of killing sheep and lambs is very reasonable. In New South Wales the slaughtering fee for sheep and lambs is \$4.25, while at Midland Junction Abattoir it is \$4.0685 for sheep and \$3.9685 for lambs. So for that operation our price compares favourably with that of New South Wales.

When we come to compare our charges with those of the South Australian Meat Corporation at Gepps Cross and Protean Pty. Ltd. in Victoria, we find the situation not quite so favourable. The

figures I have were applicable at the 29th July of this year.

The charge for killing cattle at Gepps Cross is \$19.80 for everything over 91 kilograms, the charge in Western Australia being \$23.27 plus 6.81c per kilogram for all animals over 125 kilograms. The slaughtering charge for sheep and lambs at Gepps Cross is \$3.

Our figures again compare unfavourably with those of Protean Pty. Ltd. The slaughtering charge for cattle of 158 kilograms is \$19.62, while our charge is \$24.83 plus a surcharge for everything over 125 kilograms. Sheep and lambs are in excess of \$1 per head extra to kill at Midland Junction Abattoir.

That is the situation in regard to operating costs. I have explained the reason for the high operating costs at Midland Junction Abattoir, and I have suggested some methods which could reduce and streamline the operation. However, I have never suggested that we should do away with the service abattoir at Midland. To do that would be a most unfair exercise, and I believe it would be economically undesirable.

I now move to paragraph (b) of my motion which refers to the effect of the granting of a further export licence in Western Australia. I have illustrated already the repercussions of this on the various sections of the industry. It does not take a Rhodes scholar to see what will happen. By reducing the number of stock available, the operation at Esperance could be jeopardised. Esperance has long been agreed upon as the site for the next abattoir, and I remind members that it was John Tonkin who made land available for this project.

Mr Grewar: It came at the right time.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Nobody would disagree that there is a good case for an abattoir at Esperance. However, the number of stock necessary for the operation at Esperance must reduce the availability of stock in the entire State, and this will mean that the Esperance abattoir will need to extend its field of operation beyond the limits proposed at the present time. It could well be that it will move further afield and this will exacerbate the difficulties of the management of that abattoir because even without Esperance and the proposed abattoir at North Dandalup we have a surfeit of killing capacity in the State.

This is a serious situation, and a decision should not be made in a cavalier fashion. Decisions have been made surreptitiously and they will bring about the dismemberment of the service abattoirs for which the State pays, but which provide a very real service to the producers and to the economy

of Western Australia, especially around the Midland area.

I also take the opportunity to refer to the politics behind this, and make no mistake about it, the decision was a political one. It was not an industry decision; there is simply no way the granting of another abattoir licence could be defended on industrial grounds. The only grounds for the issuing of the licence are purely political—for the friends of Liberal Party members opposite. That is the truth of the matter, and members on the Government side know it.

If the National Country Party allows this situation to continue, it will be to its eternal shame—a greater shame than it has at the moment. I draw the attention of members to the friction that has occurred in the National Country Party. You, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Crane), have a reasonable working knowledge of that friction; how it occurred, and what has transpired.

The original confrontation in the Liberal Party-National Country Party coalition occurred in regard to meat marketing—it was not the dairy industry. The trouble arose over the need to expand the powers of the Lamb Marketing Board to trade in hogget and mutton. I endeavoured, by way of motion in this House, to bring that about, but my efforts were unsuccessful. However, the National Country Party, in coalition, was still vitally concerned to have the powers of the board extended, but its members were overridden by the Liberal Party members, and overridden several times. This was the area of confrontation. We know there was conflict in regard to the Dairy Industry Authority and its powers in regard to quotas and prices, but the original conflict arose in regard to meat marketing.

It was at that stage that the leaders of the Country Party took up a firm stance, and that is now part of history. It is also part of history that the leader and the deputy leader of that party were exhorted by the new leader and deputy leader to hold their position and to remain firm.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Crane): Order! Are you really staying close to the motion?

Mr H. D. EVANS: My very word!

The ACTING SPEAKER: I think you are straying a little.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Mr Acting Speaker, there are a few things here that should never be allowed to be forgotten. The political motivation of the present policy of the Government has to be exposed. At that time when the wise men from the east in the persons of Drake-Brockman and Anthony arrived, a reverse occurred in the leadership positions, and by any standards it

looked like a sort of double double cross. At least the position was gained by stealth and held by deceit; those are words I have heard used to express it.

However, that is not the worst example of deceptiveness. Such deceptiveness goes back 2 000 years to an occasion of a trade away which involved 30 pieces of silver. On this occasion the trade away involved a couple of portfolios, and it allowed the producers of Western Australia to be sold out. The policy that the Liberal Party is following is worse than shameful. As I said, one must go back about 2 000 years to find a comparable example.

The referendum of 1977 was a sham and a delusion. It was an exercise in cynicism. When the Bill to amend the Abattoirs Act is before the House we will have ample opportunity to debate this matter and to highlight what occurred during that referendum.

The referendum was loaded to such an extent that if people voted for questions one and three, question two would be accepted as a determination even if it received no votes at all. What did that determination result in? It resulted in the promise to expand the powers of the Meat Commission which is the vehicle of meat reform. What is the Government doing? It emasculated that commission before it got started. It is doing away with service abattoirs, and that will preclude and prevent the commission ever operating effectively. That is what the Country Party has done to the producers whom it purports to represent. Shame on them—the whole lot of them.

I think I have covered the points I wished to make.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Crane): Obviously; you have covered a few more than you should. I believe you have wandered from the motion. I have asked you to confine your remarks to the motion, and I believe you ought to do just that.

Mr H. D. EVANS: If that is so, Mr Acting Speaker, I appreciate your tolerance, and I think the full implication—

The ACTING SPEAKER: I am a very tolerant man.

Mr H. D. EVANS:—of the policy of which I have been speaking justified my so doing. Your tolerance in that regard is very much appreciated.

To recapitulate: The need for a Select Committee has never been greater than it is now. So many unnecessary and dubious motivations have emerged in respect of the present policy and

the actions of the Government. The question is not simply that of the issue of a licence for an export abattoir; it is what emanates from that. This is a direct way of putting service abattoirs in a position from which they cannot operate, and when the service abattoirs cannot operate the problems that will arise and the disadvantages that will accrue to producers are manifold. For that reason the whole matter should be looked at very closely. It is for those reasons I have moved the motion.

Mr McIVER: I second the motion.

MR OLD (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [8.45 p.m.]: One thing that could be said for the speech of the member for Warren is that it had length, even though it was very short on facts.

Mr Skidmore: You provided the facts in your questions.

Mr OLD: That is dead right; the only facts that came out during his speech were those provided from this side of the House.

Mr H. D. Evans: Tell us what your abattoir policy is.

Sir Charles Court: How about listening; you might hear.

Mr OLD: The member for Warren keeps referring to the great conspiracy to close Midland Junction Abattoir. I find this rather intriguing.

Mr H. D. Evans: You make an unequivocal announcement that you don't intend to do so.

Mr OLD: I also find the fact that he is attacking the WA Meat Industry Authority quite incredible. That authority is composed of a well balanced cross section of the community; its members are all men of repute and men of great character.

Mr H. D. Evans: I didn't attack them; I just told—

Mr OLD: There has been an attack on the integrity of the members of the WA Meat Industry Authority, because the member for Warren said that the authority was told by me to make a decision and that its decision had nothing to do with logic. That is what the honourable member has tried to lead members to believe. I put it to you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Crane), that is a very shameful and cowardly thing to do in this place in respect of men who are making an objective assessment of the situation.

It has been intimated that the final decision rests with the Minister, and I would like to put that misconception right. The WA Meat Industry Authority is an autonomous statutory body which is charged with assessing the situation of abattoirs

throughout the State, and charged with the responsibility of issuing or rejecting applications for licences.

On two occasions the authority has rejected an application for a licence from Pope & Co., and on two occasions an appeal has been lodged. Both appeals were dismissed. On the third occasion an application was made the Meat Industry Authority granted a licence under certain conditions.

Mr McIver: Under pressure.

Mr OLD: There is no way in the world that the Minister or anybody else can make the authority make a decision. Members opposite say by way of interjection that it was done by pressure. Once again they are going into the character assassination of men of integrity.

Mr Skidmore: You would know about that.

Mr OLD: It is about time members opposite quietened down and allowed these men to make their own decisions.

Mr H. D. Evans: The situation has not changed; the position is exactly as it was when they rejected the applications. Why did they change their minds?

Mr OLD: The decision to grant Pope's a licence was made by the WA Meat Industry Authority. It had nothing to do with the Minister or the Government. Under the Act the only time the Minister can be involved is if an appeal is lodged. Such an appeal was lodged twice, and on each occasion it was dismissed. Yet members opposite make out this is some kind of sinister plot. That is the only way they can attempt to justify something which has been done honestly by an authority which has assessed the situation; and it has the ability to assess the situation, which members opposite have not.

Mr H. D. Evans: Will you give an undertaking to retain service abattoirs?

Mr OLD: I will come to the member's questions as I go along; just let me have a go.

Mr H. D. Evans: If you give an undertaking now you will not have to go on.

Sir Charles Court: Why don't you keep quiet? We listened to you although it was a diatribe.

Mr OLD: An absolute diatribe.

The authority has assessed the guidelines for the issue of licences and the requirement of the Western Australian capacity to kill, and this Government is very much aware of the necessity to provide kill during the lamb and mutton seasons. For the member for Warren to come along and intimate we are about to abandon

Midland is pure conjecture, because on several occasions I have made Press statements to the effect that this Government gives an undertaking to provide kill for the lambs in Western Australia.

Mr H. D. Evans: What about the service abattoirs? You were fairly evasive in your statement.

Mr OLD: I said the Government will provide the kill, and if the Government provides, it must be a service abattoir; we are not in the business of running abattoirs.

A very interesting observation was made by the member for Warren that the abattoir at Midland does not stink as much as it used to. He did not know how much was spent on the abattoir, so I will tell him now. An amount of \$2.5 million was spent to rectify this problem, and it is costing us \$500 000 a year to keep that effluent disposal system going. I might add that this has been brought about because of the pressure of the environmental lobby and by pressure exerted in this House by the member who represents that area.

Mr Skidmore: And he would do it again and again.

Mr OLD: Immediately it looks as though there will be some restriction at Midland it does not smell any more! The stink has gone, because the member for Warren said so. I thought he knew all about it; the member for Swan said he was very much involved with this matter.

Mr Skidmore: Do not put words in my mouth; I will speak for myself.

Mr OLD: The member for Swan may get the opportunity. At the moment, 1.5 million lambs a year come forward for slaughter.

Mr Skidmore: You are as nasty as you ever were.

Mr OLD: I am glad I can get through to the member for Swan. By 1985, it is estimated that the lamb kill will double. This Government is well aware of the responsibility it has to provide service abattoir space for the kill and for the seasonal requirement. We are in a State where seasonality plays a big part in production. Even the member for Warren knows that; he knows we have seasonal peaks to a greater extent than most other countries.

Mr Skidmore: We know that; we are on common ground now.

Mr OLD: Is the member for Swan making a speech?

Mr Skidmore: I would not mind; I could do it better than you.

Mr OLD: It would be the first time, but I suppose there is a first time for everything. We are providing a service to producers, and this is what the game is all about. The member for Warren can go on and talk about the Meat Commission, the Meat Industry Authority and abattoirs, but the plain, cold, hard facts are that this Government realises the importance of the situation and undertakes to provide that service to the producers. What is happening tonight is, that through purely mischievous statements, doubt will be cast in the minds of some producers that the Government is going to make provision for them.

Mr H. D. Evans: There will not be any doubt if you make a statement.

Mr OLD: I am making a statement, if the member for Warren will just be patient and listen. The Meat Industry Authority has assessed the situation. It has decided in its wisdom that it can issue a licence to Pope Exports Pty. Ltd. on a decentralised basis.

Mr Carr: They are only 30 miles from Perth; that is not decentralised.

Mr OLD: At one stage, the member for Warren talked about the Baldvis site. The licence will be for 200 head of cattle a day, which is nowhere near the requirements of Pope Exports. It is a big exporter of beef and meat generally from Western Australia.

Through the activities of the union at our service abattoirs, the operations of the Meat Commission at Midland and Robb Jetty have a name for being unreliable. In addition, the slaughtermen there operate under a different award from that applying in private abattoirs, and there is no doubt that the killing charges are high. Through that reputation for unreliability and the high killing charges, a lot of the operators have left the Meat Commission and gone elsewhere, and that includes W.W. Pope and Co. So, the Meat Commission has lost a lot of its operators.

Mr Skidmore: Could you blame them, with the insecurity of their jobs and the Government's attitude?

Mr OLD: Yes, the lack of security due to the attitude of the union; this is exactly why the operators have gone. Members opposite should think back to the most recent strike at Robb Jetty which spread to the Midland Junction Abattoir; it concerned a matter of some maintenance men. It reached a stage where our own operators could not get into the abattoir to pick up their own carton meat to put on ships. How is that helping the industry? The member for Warren blatantly talked about leasing the abattoir to a consortium,

including the union. However, he has not thought it out.

The present livestock numbers throughout Western Australia have been very sadly depleted, in the main, due to the effects of the recent drought. That is well known even to the Opposition. We are in a situation at present where, certainly, we have an over-kill capacity in our abattoir space. However, that will not last.

Mr H. D. Evans: It will for some years, according to your projections.

Mr OLD: No, it will probably last for the next decade as far as cattle are concerned. In 1976-77, the available abattoir space was almost matched by the kill. If the price of beef continues to rise and we have decent seasons, it is reasonable to assume the beef herd will rise again and we will be back to matching the abattoir space we have available today.

One of the responsibilities with which the Meat Industry Authority is charged is ensuring there is abattoir space available for the kill; that is something the authority must do. However, it can work only on projections and "guesstimates" and the best "guesstimates"—even by the BAE—have been shown to be quite wrong on many occasions. Therefore, the authority must work within tolerance guidelines. Taking a 10 per cent or, better still, a 20 per cent tolerance margin, we could be short of killing space for cattle in the next decade. I mention cattle because that is what we are talking about in this debate. Therefore, I see no irresponsibility in the granting of this licence by the Meat Industry Authority.

Suggestions have been made to the effect that this decision may jeopardise the projected Esperance abattoir. Statements have been made repeatedly in this House that Esperance will get a licence for an abattoir. Let me reiterate tonight that when Esperance is ready to build an abattoir, it will receive a licence; so, members opposite can forget the problem there.

It is a fact that the ecological lobby has made the future of abattoirs in the metropolitan area quite doubtful. I am not talking only about service abattoirs now, because already we have had the study and report into the Owen anchorage. It is becoming increasingly evident that the disposal of effluent from the Robb Jetty area will continue to be a problem and this in turn will affect not only Robb Jetty but also Anchorage and Watsons. It is possible in the future that both service and private abattoirs will have to be located outside the metropolitan area.

Mr McIver: Six months ago, you would not allow us to build an abattoir at Northam.

Mr OLD: The member for Avon had better talk to the Meat Industry Authority, not to me. It is a fact that, due to the ecological lobby and the pressure put on the Government by certain people, including some members in this House, there will have to be a move out of the metropolitan area. This may not be for 10 or 20 years but we have to programme for that situation and that is what we are doing.

Mr Skidmore: There are abattoirs in Sydney and Melbourne which are in the metropolitan area and they are putting effluent into the sewerage without any problems.

Mr OLD: I did not think the member wanted abattoirs in Midland.

Mr Skidmore: I did not say that and I never have.

Mr OLD: The Meat Industry Authority and the Meat Commission conjointly were charged with looking at the situation and then providing an idea of what the next decade or two would hold. They were asked to come up with some sort of answer to the Government's problems as to what should be done. There have been some submissions put to the Government which currently are being considered.

Mr Skidmore: They have been under consideration for seven weeks.

Mr OLD: When the Government has made a determination an announcement will be made. The honourable member can yack all night and he will not bring the announcement closer.

Mr H. D. Evans: But what damage would you have caused before then?

Mr OLD: To whom?

Mr Skidmore: To everyone.

Mr OLD: The industry is in agreement with the decision made by the Meat Industry Authority.

Mr Skidmore: You have not bothered to let the workers know.

Mr OLD: There has been no appeal or objection raised to the issue of that permit.

Mr Skidmore: Have you consulted the workers?

Mr OLD: There is no doubt that the Meat Commission operation is running at a very substantial loss at this stage. This is accepted by the Government because it is under unusual circumstances; that is, drought. The Government has not at any time declined to prop up the Meat Commission and pick up the tab for its losses. If that is not assistance to the producers I do not know what is.

We have asked the commission and the authority to look at the long and medium term

situation and the long and medium term requirements for abattoir capacity. If one takes the trouble to look at some of the project figures of our exports to the Middle East one will realise we are going to need a colossal capacity in our abattoirs in the next 10 or 15 years. The time to plan is now and that is what the Meat Industry Authority and the Meat Commission are doing.

Whatever has been said about outside pressure, I can assure members no pressure was exerted. There may have been an endeavour to exert pressure, other than political, on the Meat Industry Authority, but its members are men of integrity who are involved in the industry themselves and they do not succumb to such pressure. It is a shameful thing that someone in this House should accuse those men of succumbing to pressure from the Government.

Mr Shalders: Will they really have confidence in the member for Warren in the unlikely event he should ever become minister for Agriculture again in the future?

Mr OLD: The productivity at our service abattoirs is abysmal. I was interested to learn that the South Australian meat industry employees have given an undertaking to the South Australian Government to increase productivity by 15 per cent.

Mr Skidmore: If you ran your abattoirs like SAMCOR you would be better off.

Mr OLD: We will be looking to unions to get some concessions and then perhaps we can get our abattoirs working at a reasonable capacity, but at this stage we are committed. We will make sure the capacity for the lamb and mutton kill is adequately catered for.

Mr H. D. Evans: Are you going to do away with the beef side of the abattoirs?

Mr OLD: No, we are trying to rationalise this aspect.

Mr H. D. Evans: Are you sure there will be provision for lamb and beef?

Mr OLD: There is plenty of capacity. We have floor space for lamb and beef. It may be that we will use one beef floor for other purposes for a while but we will be providing a service kill for beef. However, members opposite would not believe it tomorrow even if I tell them tonight.

I am conscious of the necessity to make sure that the Lamb Board is adequately catered for in so far as killing is concerned. I only wish that the meat workers had the same desire to service the Lamb Marketing Board, and enable it to keep its operation going efficiently.

Mr Skidmore: It was the conservationists fault a while ago; now it is the workers.

Mr OLD: It was only last month that a chartered aircraft left 15 tonnes short of its full load because of industrial trouble at Robb Jetty. That is really when they get at us unfairly; that is when the pressure goes on, which does not help the producers at all. So all the crocodile tears from members opposite have not done much to help the producers.

Mr Skidmore: If you worked out a different industrial arrangement with the workers you would not have the trouble you presently have with them and you know it. The South Australian firm has worker representatives on the administration section of the corporation.

Mr OLD: In summary, the decisions which will be taken and those which have already been taken result from a very careful analysis by a responsible group of people. These people have analysed the situation throughout the State and have made a decision on the basis of that analysis. They have issued a licence and, possibly, Pope's will build an abattoir. I do not know, but they have a licence to do so.

The Meat Industry Authority is very conscious of two things: One is the balance between export and non-export abattoirs. One must realise the advantage non-export abattoirs have over service abattoirs, and export abattoirs in general, as compared with service abattoirs in particular.

One of the few factual comments the member for Warren made was that the operation is terribly costly because of identification of animals right through the system. One is not dealing with a situation where one is putting 5 000 sheep through in a day. We are faced with a situation where we are putting 20 or 30 different lots of sheep through in a day. They all have to be handled separately, tagged separately, and stored in freezer units separately and this is expensive. Added to all this, we have the present labour situation. On that basis I totally reject the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Shalders.

ACTS AMENDMENT (CONJOINT ELECTIONS) BILL

Second Reading

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [9.10 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

In moving the second reading of this Bill I should like to indicate to the House that the conjoint elections which the Bill hopes to cement as a future norm of the Parliament of Western

Australia have in fact been in operation since the 20th February, 1965. Prior to that time one other conjoint election was held on the 7th April, 1956. One would hope that conjoint elections, when half of the members of the Legislative Council retire at the same time as an election is held for the Legislative Assembly, will continue.

Goodness knows the situation which would have faced political parties as far as costs are concerned had there not been a change of heart on the part of the Liberal Government in 1965 when it altered the situation. I hasten to say, members who have tried repeatedly to alter the Constitution Act, or change the electoral laws of this State, have not met with a great deal of success. However, hope springs eternal, and I am prepared to try to launch this venture in an endeavour to bring some sanity to the situation which prevails.

The Premier has often said when an amendment relating to the Constitution Act or electoral laws is attempted by a member, the opposing party looks immediately for niggers in the woodpile. Members opposite usually feel some danger is involved, something is wrong with the attempted amendment, or that it is something to worry about.

Of course, we on this side of the House have agreed with some of these amendments in the past. In 1965, a Bill was introduced in relation to those matters which were detrimental to the cause of the Labor Party. We knew we would lose electorates. However, a principle was involved and we were prepared to go along with the proposed amendment. It amazed the staff of the Legislative Assembly, who had seen many long debates on amendments to the Constitution Act, that only one brief speech was made by a member of the Opposition and the Bill passed through all stages very quickly.

One might have said we were a little frightened that the Liberal Party of the day might suddenly change its mind. We found out, through a leak in the grapevine, that a member of the Government of the day had misjudged the attitude of the Labor Party. That member said the Government had been told that even though there was a principle involved the Labor Party would finally object to the Bill. He did not agree. However, the Government was waiting in vain for the Labor Party to object on the grounds that it would lose a number of seats. This did not occur, of course, and the particular gentleman to whom I have referred was the wise man of the coalition Government. He is no longer with us, so it does not matter very much. But he was wise to be able to realise the attitude of the Labor Party and he

tried to tell his political colleagues at the time. However, it was all to no avail.

Many reforms in electoral procedure have been brought about as a result of action taken by a private member and the particular occasion to which I have just referred falls into that category. Out of the blue, the Hon. Dr Hislop introduced a motion in the Legislative Council to the effect that it was time the Legislative Council grew up and was elected by adult franchise. When this motion first appeared on the notice paper, everybody laughed heartily. However, Dr Hislop, being a father of democracy, was successful with his motion. He left the Government of the day in an invidious position if it did not move on the basis of an opinion of the Legislative Council as to the franchise associated with that Chamber.

As a result, we are at the stage where conjoint elections are the normal procedure, rather than the abnormal. Prior to that occasion, in 1956, the Hawke Government held a late election on the 7th April. This was done so that the Legislative Assembly election could be held in conjunction with the election of a third of the members of the Legislative Council. In its own way, that was a conjoint election.

Since that time elections have been held on the same day. Prior to that, every six years the political parties of this State were faced with virtually five general elections. One would wonder how the political parties would face up to such a situation in this day and age when we consider the costs of television and the other costs involved. Every two years we would have three elections for the province members and we would have two general elections for the Legislative Assembly in a period of six years. One's mind boggles at the thought of having five elections in a period of six years in this day and age. At least we have got away from that situation.

However, the Act does not require this situation to continue. The Electoral Act and the Constitution Act merely allow conjoint elections to occur when a Government so desires. The Bill before us at the present time seeks to ensure that position shall continue indefinitely. The only way this may be done is to synchronise the terms of office of the members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. As we know, members of the Legislative Council have a six-year term. They take office on the 22nd May for a period of six years from that date. If the legislation is not amended, the day will come when a Government will, for the sake of convenience, advise the Governor to dissolve the Legislative Assembly Chamber and conduct a general election or, alternatively, the situation will

get out of kilter for some other reason. Perhaps there will be a vote of no confidence or some other action may occur within the Parliament itself. Then, of course, we would get back to the stage where we would have four rather than five general elections every six years.

This is a sensible and reasonable amendment in this day and age. It is not removing any of the privileges held by members of the Legislative Council. Perhaps in the initial stages of operation some members may lose a month or two of service; but, in the long run, it will certainly tie down the situation to an orderly pattern which our electoral system will follow in the future.

For this reason, the measure has a great deal of merit and deserves the support of both Chambers. I reiterate that we always feel there may be a catch in a Bill introduced by a private member. Nevertheless, I have mentioned one occasion where the Legislative Council caused a change in its franchise. If we go back a little further we find the provisions of preferential and compulsory voting, and a number of other similar matters, were introduced by private members and not by the Government of the day. Therefore, it can be seen that these measures do not always fail. I have noted, in both State and Federal politics, this has occurred in vital situations. For example, the introduction of compulsory voting was brought about as a result of extremely low polls in a series of elections. A motion was introduced to bring about compulsory voting, and it was passed.

It is not impossible for a private member's suggested change in the electoral system to take place, but it is not generally acceded to. One has to put up with the fear held by members on the other side that something is hidden in the proposed legislation. There is a feeling that a trap may be involved or the person who introduced the measure hopes to gain some advantage from it.

I suggest this time there is no particular advantage. There is a slight disadvantage to some members in the Legislative Council if a Parliament fails to run its full course of three years. However, on looking at the statistics in the *Parliamentary Handbook* one will see that since about 1905 that has not occurred. There have been some terms shorter than three years, but only by choice in order to go into an election before Christmas rather than after Christmas. Members have run their terms of office without any insecurity in the Parliament. So, one can disregard that disadvantage to a great degree and realise that the chances of it occurring in the future could be no more than the chances were in the past.

Disregarding that, Legislative Councillors do not have very much to fear with these proposed amendments. It seems to me quite reasonable that if the Parliament does fall short of its term, for some reason or other, the senior half of the members of the Legislative Council should be obliged to meet the electors at that time. The only way to achieve that is to get away from the fixed date. Nobody seems to know really why the date has been fixed. It has been suggested it had something to do with the monarch's birthday, or the celebration of the coronation of the monarch; something in that regard. However, there is nothing really clear on the matter in the Parliamentary Library. There is no real indication of what brought about the particular date.

The Bill sets out to amend two Acts to achieve what I propose. Its intention is to amend the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, and the Electoral Act in the two sections which I have put before members. As a result of those amendments the Acts have to set down new criteria for replacing members, both in the short-term period and in the long-term period.

My proposed amendments will achieve that purpose so there will be no slip-up if a member happens to die or to retire short of his term of office. What should happen in that situation is clearly laid out. In other words, there would be a by-election for the rest of the term of the person who died or retired, similar to what occurs in connection with the Legislative Assembly. There would not be any great worry on that score.

One has to compare the other States and find out what they do with their particular Legislative Councils. Of course, in the case of Queensland we all know what they did with their Legislative Council. In New South Wales, the system has just been amended and it is in a state of flux at present. To quote what has occurred in the past would give an erroneous impression of what will happen in the future. Up till now members have been appointed for a 12-year period, with one-fourth of the members being elected every three years. The term of service of those members expired on the 22nd April in the appropriate year. Of course, those members were elected by Legislative Council members and Legislative Assembly members sitting together. That has been the system up till now, but it will revert to elections by adult franchise on a proportional representation basis as from the next election in New South Wales.

In Victoria, Legislative Councillors have a term of six years, one member from each province retiring every three years. The six-year period commences from and includes the day appointed

for taking the poll at each periodical election. If the poll is held before the members retire, the six-year term commences from and includes the day after the day when retirement is due. So, members in that State have a fixed six-year term but not a specific date. That virtually means they have a six-year term from the time they are elected.

A most peculiar system operates in South Australia, even though it is a proportional representation system. Imposed on top of that, the Legislative Councillors must serve at least six years. If a Government goes to the polls early, as the Dunstan Government did on the last occasion, the term of many of the members of the Legislative Council extends into the next term of Government. In other words, they get a free run for another term if the election is short of the six-year period. But, if they have served six years the Legislative Councillors are expected to meet the people at the same time as the Legislative Assembly members.

That is a rather complex situation, but when one realises how complicated the deal was, to get somewhere with the Liberal Movement, the Labor movement, and the Liberal Party—all hedging in the system—one can only wonder at their achieving anything at all. For the purpose of the six-year term, at least the date was set as from the 1st March in the year of election.

In South Australia elections are usually held during February, and that is not an unreasonable month during which to hold an election. I again point out that if there is a short term, the senior members do not have to go to the electors until the next election.

We all know the situation in Western Australia. In the Tasmanian Legislative Council there are 19 members, and they retire in rotation; three each year and four every sixth year. Elections are held annually on the fourth Saturday in May, and membership dates from the election day.

So it will be seen that there is no real rhyme or reason for terms in Legislative Councils, except for the period of six years, as against 12 years under the previous system in New South Wales. It appears to me that when framing the various Constitution Acts there was no particular theme, except that Legislative Councillors should run two terms of the Parliament. The normal term of a Parliament, in all States except Tasmania which chops and changes about, and which I think now has a four-year term, is on a three-year basis for the Legislative Assembly.

For those reasons it is thought advisable to

adopt a system which is very clear, and a system which will indicate exactly when Legislative Councillors are expected to meet their fate with the people of the State of Western Australia. There is another criticism also of the fact that they are elected in February or March, and after all the glamour of the election they do not take their places in the Parliament until the 22nd May next.

I know it can be said that the same occurs in the Senate, but that is a proportional system on the basis of equal State representation, and I am not looking at that aspect on this occasion. I suppose the setting of the date to be the 30th June in the year in which Senators retire is brought about by the normal end to the financial year in Australia. I know that the 30th June is usually during a winter recess, at any rate, so it is appropriate that that be the date.

Even that is unfair in the case of a double dissolution when the term of a senator dates back to the previous 1st July, irrespective of whether the election is in June of the next year. A member in that situation could lose a complete year and have a short term. Members who serve a short term have to go out at the appropriate time, having due regard for a short term or a long term which might apply as a result of the time of the election.

That, too, is somewhat complex, and it is not clear unless one studies the particular set of circumstances that occurs, such as that which occurred in 1975. Those who were elected after that double dissolution in December had their term of office dated back to the 1st July, 1975.

All this leads to the Bill now before us, which is an attempt to iron out our own affairs. We cannot sort out the problems of the other States. It would be nice if we could do that for them, but they have their problems and we have ours. Our problem, as I see it, is to prevent the situation arising again where we have separate Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly general elections. If this proposition is agreed to we will move away from that situation. It may cause a little heartburning among some members who will finish their term a few months ahead of time, but I do not think that will worry many people, and it probably will not have a great effect on the general attitude of members of the Legislative Council who will be mainly affected.

I think I have said enough to indicate that this is a worth-while measure. Being a private member's Bill, it is a change from the norm whereby Bills relating to electoral matters, electoral districts, or Constitution amendments

are proposed by a Government and passed by the force of numbers on its side. I consider this is a sensible amendment to both of these Acts of Parliament. I can assure those members of the Chamber who, when a person such as I proposes a Bill like this, usually go straight to the wood pile and start to look for the niggers that as far as I know there are no niggers and the Bill is quite straightforward. It means we will determine for all time that the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly elections will occur on the same day at approximately three-year intervals.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr O'Neil (Chief Secretary).

GOLDMINING INDUSTRY

Stabilisation: Motion

Debate resumed, from the 10th May, on the following motion by Mr Grill—

That in the opinion of the House urgent action should be taken by the Government to stabilise the mining industry on the Goldfields by:

1. Encouraging and seeking Federal Government support for a scheme to stabilise the price of gold.
2. Initiating a study, backed by the resources of the Mines Department and the Department of Industrial Development, into a feasibility of establishing a custom gold treatment plant in the Eastern Goldfields.
3. Providing a low interest long term loan to North Kalbarri Mines Ltd. to allow it to convert its nickel treatment plant back to gold treatment, thereby retaining its present workforce.
4. Appointing a special committee comprising representatives from the Chamber of Mines, Education Department, W.A. School of Mines and Unions, to inquire into and make recommendations on the needs of education and training of workers in the mining industry.

MR T. D. EVANS (Kalgoorlie) [9.33 p.m.]: It is with a great deal of pleasure that I rise to support this motion, although since it was introduced, due to the lapse of time and the change of circumstances—which are certainly significant—my remarks in supporting the motion as a whole must be qualified, especially in relation

to paragraphs 2 and 3 of the motion. I think that would be understood.

Although circumstances have changed, I believe the general thrust of the motion remains the same. In fact, the general thrust is even more urgent now than it was when the motion was introduced early in May. Members might recall on that occasion the mover of the motion spoke about the need for the rejuvenation and restoration of the goldmining industry in Western Australia, and particularly on the Golden Mile.

The mover of the motion spoke at a time when the price of gold on the international market was hovering a little above \$A.160 an ounce. He spoke at a time when the closure of two nickel mines in the geographic and economic environment of the eastern goldfields was threatened; in fact they were destined to be closed. I refer to the Anaconda Redross nickel mine and the more significant mining operation at Windarra—the place to which the famous Poseidon nickel boom gave birth in the 1970s.

Since that time what was destined to happen in the case of the two nickel mines has in fact happened; men have not been retrenched but have been deprived of their opportunity for a livelihood in those industries. In contrast, the price of gold has dramatically soared on the international market and is today over \$177 a fine ounce; that is as precise as I can be. Yet not one ounce of gold has been produced in Kalgoorlie apart from that produced by the operating mine at Mt. Charlotte. North Kalgurli and the other mines on the Fimiston leases have been dormant for some years.

I will now refer to the motion itself; and I believe it is right, proper, and fair to give credit where it is due and, if necessary and appropriate, to extend criticism where it is deserved. I will read the four paragraphs of the motion. It calls upon this House to request the Government to take urgent action to stabilise the mining industry on the goldfields by doing four things, the first of which is—

1. Encouraging and seeking Federal Government support for a scheme to stabilise the price of gold.

As far as I am aware, at the present time that request still remains unanswered. I give credit to the Minister for Mines for seeking Federal aid but it appears his request and pleas have fallen on deaf ears in the Federal Government. If I am wrong in extending to him credit for making those pleas, I would be happy to hear him say so. I am prepared to give him credit for having tried but at the same time I am very unhappy that the request

he made has not been answered by the Federal Government and it appears that if such a scheme is to be operated and maintained it will have to be done under the auspices of the national Government of Australia.

The motion then calls upon the Government to take action by—

2. Initiating a study, backed by the resources of the Mines Department and the Department of Industrial Development, into a feasibility of establishing a custom gold treatment plant in the Eastern Goldfields.

I feel I should link this with the third part of the motion which asks this House to request the Government to provide a low-interest long-term loan to North Kalgurli Mines Ltd. to allow it to convert its nickel treatment plant back to gold treatment, thereby retaining its present work force. I felt I should link the feasibility study with the custom mill and the conversion of the nickel treatment plant of North Kalgurli Mines Ltd.

I must acknowledge the fact that since the introduction of the motion the Government has made a financial offer to North Kalgurli Mines Ltd. I will not say it was the most generous offer that could have been made, but nevertheless it was made. Although it came at the death knock, it did come, and it was accepted by the company. I do not know whether the extent of the loan or the conditions attached to it were such that the company was not able to retain its full work force, as it was hoped, but some of the people who had been engaged previously in the treatment of nickel either directly or indirectly could not be employed usefully in the conversion of the nickel treatment plant.

It is a fact of life that the motion called upon the Government to make this loan so that the conversion could take place and that the entire work force could be retained. However, that was not to be. Of course the employees who were retained are grateful that North Kalgurli Mines Ltd. was able to provide some employment.

It is widely believed—and this is so amongst some of those who are engaged in prospecting and particularly those who hope to bring some big projects into operation—that the conversion of the treatment plant will go a long way, if not the entire way, to providing the custom mill that has been so eagerly sought for so long for the eastern goldfields. So it becomes apparent why I have linked parts 3 and 4 of the motion.

I now turn to the fourth part of the motion. Certainly I do not believe this is an insignificant part, but it will depend upon goldmining being

actively resumed. It calls upon the Government to appoint a special committee comprising representatives from the Chamber of Mines, the Education Department, the Western Australian School of Mines, and those unions associated with the mining industry, to inquire into and to make recommendations on the need to educate and to train workers in the mining industry. This will become necessary and important only if goldmining can be restored effectively on a viable and continuing basis. If this can be done, the fourth part of the motion becomes very important, and indeed, urgent.

The full thrust of this motion is to be found in the first part of it. Already I have expressed disappointment that the pleas made by the Minister for Mines to the Federal Government have gone unheeded, perhaps unheard, but most certainly unanswered. In this instance I am referring to the need to request the national Government to establish a minimum guaranteed price for the commodity which is sought so eagerly today on the international market at \$177 an ounce. If a representative of the Federal Government were to ask me what price I would suggest as the minimum guaranteed price I am not in a position to be able to pluck a figure out of the air. However, various people associated with the mining industry have suggested figures, and in recent times the highest figure I have heard is one below the existing price of \$177 an ounce.

Certainly I do not know whether the figures quoted are accurate or not, but the feeling of those associated with this industry is that a minimum guaranteed price of \$170 an ounce for a period of 10 years at least would result in the resumption of a viable goldmining industry. Therefore, it is most disappointing that the Federal Government did not heed the plea of the Minister, although it is not uncharacteristic of it. I can recall prior to the 1975 Federal election, the discredited former Treasurer—

Mr Bertram: Which one?

Mr T. D. EVANS: —who was discredited long before he was involved in some family loan affairs, made a promise to the eastern goldfields.

Mr Clarko: What about Dr Cairns? Was he discredited too?

Mr T. D. EVANS: Dr Cairns did not make any promises to the people of the goldfields, but Mr Lynch and Mr Anthony did. They both promised assistance to the goldmining industry, and within five weeks they completely repudiated their promises.

Mr Bertram: They were Mr Fraser's promises.

Mr T. D. EVANS: The former Treasurer was

discredited when he made those false promises in 1975. I believe the Minister for Mines did make a plea to the Federal Government for the establishment of a formal stable price for gold. I ask him to continue his efforts because in my opinion this is the only guaranteed formula for the restoration and the long continuance of goldmining as a viable industry in Western Australia.

I know the Minister has spoken in this debate, and that it is not possible for him to speak again. However, I am asking for some early action—we do not have to look to the Federal Government for action on this occasion. In fact, that would be a waste of time. We must look to the State Government for action. I believe the Minister is already in possession of a feasibility study which was prepared after a great deal of work was carried out in secrecy over a long period. I attempted to inquire about the prospect or the economic probability of reopening either in part or in whole, on a small scale or on a large scale, some operation by Kalgoorlie Mining Associates on the leases.

I believe early consideration should be given to the report. I do not know what the report contains, but if after a thorough and certainly time-consuming effort to establish whether the goldmining industry can in fact be profitably restored in the long term, the report states it is possible to restore the industry then I hope any action the group of companies calls upon the Government to perform will in fact be forthcoming.

I make this final plea: I mentioned that I gave credit to the Government for the assistance extended to North Kalgurli. Perhaps it was not sufficient, and I have mentioned that. However, that is not for me to say. I do know that the entire work force was not able to be retained. However, the Government has made some commitments. I believe in the case of North Kalgurli when the conversion has been completed and if the price of gold continues to soar or at least remains at the present level, the Government will have a moral obligation and also a financial incentive to see that the company gets back into full production without any undue delay.

If the study performed by Kalgoorlie Mining Associates calls for the Government to perform any action, I hope such action will be forthcoming with the same degree of expedition.

I have a great deal of pleasure in supporting the motion, qualified as it is by the passage of time.

MR T. H. JONES (Collie) [9.52 p.m.]: I join with the member for Kalgoorlie in supporting this

motion. Perhaps I should preface my remarks by pointing out that if anyone were to visit Kalgoorlie and hold discussions with the mining interests, unions and prospectors there he would have a deep appreciation of the reason the member for Yilgarn-Dundas saw fit to move this motion. I believe it is a most commendable motion. It was moved after much consideration and after a great deal of discussion had taken place with mining interests in Kalgoorlie.

I had the pleasure of visiting Kalgoorlie and inspecting the Mt. Charlotte operation—not for the first time—and we held discussions with numerous mining interests on the goldfields. If the goldfields are ever to get back into reasonable production again and some reasonable level of employment and stability in the Kalgoorlie region is to be created, this motion must be acted upon.

It is understandable that no-one would be prepared to inject the great amount of capital required to be injected into the industry unless he knew where the industry was going in the long term; and we are all aware of the fluctuating fortunes of the goldmining industry of this State. The rather unique situation on the goldfields is that some thousands of workers have been retrenched, and whilst this unemployment persists we see the price of gold rising daily.

As the member for Yilgarn-Dundas clearly indicated when moving the motion, he is urging the Government to encourage the Federal Government to support a scheme for the stabilisation of the price of gold. In my view unless this policy is introduced there is no way that the goldmining industry in Kalgoorlie will get off the ground again. I am sure no member of this House, even if he had the amount of money required, would invest his money in the goldmining industry if he was not assured of the long-term future of the industry. Therefore, it is understandable that the goldfields people are working towards this end.

So I do hope the Government will appreciate the motives behind the moving of this most commendable motion by the member for Yilgarn-Dundas. There is nothing wrong with the motion; it simply seeks to bring home clearly to the Federal Government the need for the introduction of a price stabilisation scheme. Price stabilisation schemes have been introduced in many other industries. We have seen boards created to bring stability to prices in other industries. I could instance the wheat industry and numerous other examples of industries which have been at the crossroads but have been stabilised by some legislative movement.

This motion is intended to provide stability to the price of gold so that we may see the goldfields return to their normal level of production. Of course, we are aware that the goldfields at present are going through an era that many other mining areas have experienced previously. It might be said that the people of the goldfields are down, but they are still living in hope and are waiting on the State Government, in conjunction with the Federal Government, to initiate a plan to bring stability to the price of gold, which would then permit capital to be made available. I understand capital will not be hard to obtain if there is a guaranteed price for gold.

The member for Kalgoorlie mentioned that the proposals in clauses 2 and 3 of the motion have already been carried out, and clause 4 depends upon the revival of the industry. I am sure members will appreciate that, so there is no need to proceed any further on that matter.

What the member for Yilgarn-Dundas is attempting to do is very clear, and he is doing it at the request not only of workers in Kalgoorlie but also in the interests of the companies involved. As I said a moment ago, this is the only way the goldmining industry can get back into business.

With those few words I indicate that the motion has my full support.

DR TROY (Fremantle) [9.57 p.m.]: I rise to support the motion, and I would like to make a few remarks in so doing.

The rapid and spectacular development of the nickel industry in Western Australia in the 1960s and early 1970s demonstrates yet again the chaotic and anarchistic nature of the market place as the motive force for economic development. We witnessed the discovery and development of the nickel deposits in this State in response to an equally rapid and spectacular development of the steel industry of the world and, in particular, of Japan.

The resources developed amounted to about 10 per cent of world capacity to produce nickel. Due to the chemical nature of the principal ore mined in the eastern goldfields, it ranks high in terms of refining efficiency from an energy point of view. Also, being a late developer enabled the company to take advantage of economies of scale and technology in the developments in the eastern goldfields. Despite these great advantages—advantages of efficiency in energy terms, and advantages in productivity terms—and despite also the fact that a big community relies for a major part of its income on this industry, the industry is declining at a faster rate than it opened up after a few short years of operation.

One of the main companies locally has accumulated a large stockpile. Such stockpiles amount to a body of capital which is not earning. No company can operate indefinitely on this basis. Sooner or later the interest charge on capital borrowed to continue the operation threatens the very operation.

In market terms there is now an excess of capacity to produce nickel over the demand. This in turn has led to a veritable trade war. The old price agreement between producers has gone. Through sheer size of output, the main producer—Canada—has been able separately to negotiate on price and on quantity sold. Local production has been sent to the wall.

Industry, and consequently communities which have been built with such high hopes have seen all those high hopes disappear. What is operating now is complete anarchy of the market place. It is dictating that the excess capacity is destroyed. This means mine closure, miners without jobs, and homes without income.

It is important to understand that one of the great accelerators of the slump has been the absence of a guaranteed international currency. The US dollar was such a currency up until 1971. However, the US, its enormous wealth notwithstanding, proved incapable in the long run of the task of overcoming the inherent anarchistic character of the market place and the problems derived from the market place.

Mr Clarko: Are you aware it is against the practice of this House to read one's speech?

Dr TROY: The dominant role of the US dollar was the main prop of the prolonged post-war boom. Today, that central role, in a period of uneven devaluation, has proved to be the accelerator of the slump it was hoped would be avoided.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Crane): Order! I would draw the member's attention to the fact that he seems to be spending a lot of time looking at his notes. I am not suggesting he is reading his speech, but it does seem that perhaps he is.

Dr TROY: Very well, Mr Acting Speaker. The rest of the world is now frantically seeking an alternative to the US dollar. The main factor behind the devaluing US dollar on the world money markets is the enormous trade deficit the US is suffering. At present, that trade deficit is running at the rate of \$33 billion per annum.

In essence, the US is trying to pay its bills with money that has no real basis in value. The US Government itself is not intervening to stop this decline. In fact, it is using the decline to destroy

the industry of both Japan and Europe, its main competitors.

Japan, for its part, has attempted to stop that decline by buying dollars on the Tokyo money market; in the recent period it has purchased \$US1 500 million in a matter of a few days, but despite that the decline continued. The European economic community some weeks ago attempted to look for an alternative currency, but it was unsuccessful. However, it did agree to the need to move away from the US dollar as a currency those people receive for their goods. The EEC, as Japan, is now trying to place a control over currencies trading on their monetary markets in an attempt to avoid the speculative consequences of the decline in the US dollar.

The same can apply to the oil producing countries of the world. They also recently proposed to move away from the US dollar as a currency in which they are paid.

Historically, gold has been an internationally acceptable currency, and with some justification. It has both an exchange value and a use value, unlike paper currency which has no value in its own right. In this present climate of internationally unstable paper currencies, gold will again reassert itself.

The member who moved this motion said there was nothing to stop the price of gold from going above \$US200 an ounce. In fact, this has already happened.

Mr Williams: So?

Dr TROY: The "so" of this statement is the following: Gold will reassert itself and, therefore, the development of the gold industry in this State is a wise economic move for this Government. The Government should take the initiative. It can create a lot of jobs if it puts money into the gold mining industry.

However, it is highly unlikely that this Government will act in this manner. As in other areas of the economy, the Government is leaving it to be run by private entrepreneurs. This *laissez-faire* attitude has led to today's inevitable consequences—the destruction of competing surplus capacities on a world scale, the destruction of jobs, an empty future for our youth, and a declining living standard; in short, anarchism at the market place reigns supreme, and, in the long run, destroys.

A Government which prays at the altar of the God Almighty dollar as its principal *modus operandi* of the economy can only go further and further into crisis as this dollar goes further and further into crisis. This Government has no

answer, and I commend the motion moved by the member for Yilgarn-Dundas.

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [10.05 p.m.]: I wish to comment very briefly on the motion, as the Minister has spoken already and set out the Government's position very well. Of course, there have been some changes since the motion was moved, because it was quite a while ago. I do not propose to refer to the comments of the member for Fremantle because, apart from his direct reference to the motion itself, his comments did not appear to have any relevance to the motion. It seemed to be an exercise in ideology rather than an exercise to try to help the honourable member with his motion.

We accept that the member for Yilgarn-Dundas moved his motion in good faith and because of his interest in and commitment to the area. However, I remind the House that no Government has assisted the goldfields more than the present Government. I also remind members that no district in the southern half of the State has had as much Government assistance as has this particular area.

Mr Davies: Are you going to detail these?

Sir CHARLES COURT: This Government has provided assistance to keep the industry in operation and to maintain employment and, I might add, without any encouragement from either the Whitlam Government or the Fraser Government. We put real money into the industry in a genuine effort to keep the goldfields working to the maximum extent practicable.

We have also made a very great contribution to the local authorities to assist them through the transition period when there was a cutback in employment. Here again, this area has received more assistance than any other part of the State. We do not begrudge it; in fact, we moved in quickly and no-one up there who is fair-minded would criticise the Government for the way it sought to help the companies, purely for the purpose of maintaining employment, and also to assist the local authorities in a very realistic way.

The first part of the honourable member's motion asks the Government to encourage and seek Federal Government support for a scheme to stabilise the price of gold. Offhand, that seems to be a fairly simple exercise and one which could bring some stability to the goldfields, and perhaps encourage investment. However, I think the honourable member knows enough about the experience of State Governments and the industry with Federal Governments of all political colours in recent years to expect in his heart that it would be otherwise than an exercise in futility to try to

get the Federal Government to agree to such a proposition.

It has already been explained by one honourable member tonight that it is very difficult to get anyone to agree on what should be the price at which we should seek to stabilise gold. I agree with him that when one asks people what the price should be, there is a lot of shifting of ground. Some people nominate a price which in fact is lower than the present price of gold, because they say they are seeking to get the best figure on which the industry can rely. Others want to achieve a figure at around about the present price of gold with an indexation factor built into it. Their chance of getting that from a Federal Government—no matter how starry-eyed they might be—would be absolutely nil.

The members who have commented tonight have referred to the fact that items 2 and 3 of the motion no longer are in issue and this brings me to item 4. I understand there is already very close co-operation existing along the lines suggested by the honourable member. I do not know whether in fact there is a formal committee of those people, but my understanding and information both from the area and from the Minister is that there is a high degree of co-operation. I think one will find in an area like this, where they have a recession, there is a tendency for them all to get together.

The Government made a decision about the School of Mines. It was a decision with which I was personally involved because I have very strong feelings on it and I think this decision and a number of other things have brought the community very much together and I believe it will go on to greater strength in the future.

I have always had confidence in the area. The nickel industry recession was a setback to it but it was a situation that confronted the whole world. There would be very few people who would not admit it is a recession which has gone beyond anything they contemplated in the past. We have had these recessions in the past—these "credit squeezes" and the like—and they have been of fairly short duration, but this one has been lingering. I have said often that it is a recession brought about by the fact that the people who are really manipulating the economy these days are so learned and have so much learning and information around them they are confused. That might sound a little Irish but when one is dealing with those people one finds they are programmed into the one kind of thinking.

Mr Davies: Who are they?

Sir CHARLES COURT: Whether you meet them in Germany, in this State, in the Eastern

States, or in America, and even statements from Russia, they all have the same basic thinking which would keep us in this recession.

Mr Bryce: You said the recession was good for us.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Do not distort things.

Mr Bryce: You said it in the Press.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I said that, often out of recessions, one gets some good and some strength.

Mr Davies: You are talking humbug tonight.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The last point on which I would like to comment is that of the Fimiston submission. This is an area in which the honourable member has taken an interest and which, if I recall correctly, was touched on by the member for Kalgoorlie tonight.

The Fimiston study has been received by the Government and is currently being examined by the Mines Department and the Department of Industrial Development. The very nature of the study is such that it will take a considerable time to complete the examination, but I want to assure the honourable member and the House that it is being proceeded with with all despatch. However, I do have information which indicates it will take considerable time to undertake the examination.

The owners have submitted the study and it is being examined by the Mines Department and the DID which are working together in the hope there can be further consultation with the companies. In the light of all this, the Government cannot support the motion. We do not think there is any necessity for the motion. We have demonstrated that the matters which were in the honourable member's mind have in fact been given proper and genuine attention as we did accept that he put forward the motion in a sincere desire to bring to the notice of the House some of the problems of his area.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [10.14 p.m.]: I do not want to prolong this debate but I feel I must say a few words to the first part of the motion. The Premier got to his feet and made sweeping statements about how much assistance this Government has given above that given by any other Government. I do not know in comparative figures or in kind whether this is the case; one would have to research the matter more thoroughly than the Premier has done to be able to define that, because over a number of years there has been much assistance given by many Governments to our goldfields—and so there should have been.

The goldfields after all is the area that put

Western Australia on the map initially. Without the goldfields we would be the poorer today. Because of them we exist the way we do today. There is no reason why we should not take every care to make sure that the area is kept in operation as much as possible. This is particularly so of Kalgoorlie where the most concern is felt, because the type of stable population that has been established there through goldmining has been in evidence in this region for many years.

I realise a State cannot afford to go broke in trying to prop up an area, but the market price of gold in recent times has indicated there are distinct possibilities of providing far more work in goldmining activities if some stable price can be attained. If the Commonwealth Government is prepared to stabilise the price of gold or guarantee its stability, that is the least it could do.

While gold is not one of the great trading currencies of the world, it is still handy to have. It is in demand, and recent rises have indicated that a lot of people have more trust in gold than they do in dollar notes. As a consequence there is every reason why this motion—even though some sections have to some degree been attended to—still should be persisted with and some encouragement should be given to the Federal Government to establish a stabilised scheme for gold in this country.

We do not want to have the Premier repeatedly on his feet referring to the great assistance that has been given to the industry and then referring to some mendicant support he has thrown into the area by assisting local governments to provide jobs. That is stop-gap assistance; it is not permanent. It is not the degree of permanency that people in this region desire and to which they are entitled. It is only by members putting forward motions like this to prompt the Government of the State to get action taken federally that anything can be done.

I readily agree that the Whitlam Government was not very receptive to such propositions. However, at the time of the Whitlam Government there were different circumstances; the nickel industry was reasonably buoyant and was taking up the leeway where jobs were being lost in the goldmining industry. Most men from the goldmining industry were able to find jobs with nickel producing companies. So at that time there was not such a great urgency.

In the future we must make sure to guarantee the industry. It should not stagnate or stagger as it has been doing for the last few years. The member for Yilgarn-Dundas has rightfully brought to the attention of this House the

necessity for some action to guarantee the existence of the people on the goldfields and those they support, and the protection of their interests and property by some assurance from the Federal Government.

It has given good service to the Australian Government. It has provided currency for many activities over a long period of time. It is only reasonable now that, if the availability of gold is still in evidence—as it evidently is—there should be a concentrated effort on the part of both the State and Federal Governments to provide the stability that will assure the industry of a reasonable future. I support the motion.

MR GRILL (Yilgarn-Dundas) [10.21 p.m.]: First of all, I should like to thank those members who have taken part in the debate. I note that, in general, they have supported the proposition put forward. Through the Premier and the Minister for Mines, the Government has kept this debate at a fairly low key. I can understand its reasons for doing that. I believe there has been an attempt on the part of the Government to play down the situation. I do not say it has tried to hide the situation. I merely say it has played down the situation and made light of it. In all sincerity, I do not think it is a situation which can be made light of.

There is a very real predicament in the goldfields and I have documented that predicament. In the mining industry alone, 2 000 jobs have been lost. That is a documented figure and it is conservative. That figure of 2 000-plus people represents something like half the mining work force in the goldfields. It includes people from Murchison-Eyre, people from Kalgoorlie, and people from my electorate of Yilgarn-Dundas. They are three major electorates.

Had 2 000 jobs been lost in the Pilbara, or in a major centre such as Newcastle, or in some other large centre, it would have made headlines throughout Australia. Even the fact that the whaling station in Albany closed down last week with a loss of 100 jobs made headlines. I do not begrudge any financial assistance which is given to the people of Albany. Country people receive too little assistance. However, the closure of the whaling station made headlines. The fact that the goldfields work force has been virtually decimated was swept under the carpet. That fact should be of concern to everyone in this House.

Time has past since I moved the motion on the 10th May, 1978 and certain events have occurred. The Minister has indicated he will take certain steps to alleviate the situation.

Since that time also the price of gold has risen

quite dramatically and the Government has in fact given a \$500 000 loan to North Kalgurli Mines Ltd. However, the situation has not changed substantially for the better and in fact the employment position is worse. The Nepean nickel mine is "in a precarious situation". Those words are not mine. They are the words of the Minister himself. Sixteen men have been put off recently and the future of the mine is in doubt. The Redross nickel mine has closed down and the proposed retrenchments have gone ahead. What is worse, the Government—and I lay the blame for this situation at the feet of the Government—has announced, despite numerous representations to the contrary, it is going ahead with a plan to increase State Battery charges by a further 100 per cent, making the increase in battery charges 600 per cent over the last four years. In a period when people are being put off at the mines and when men could at least be employed in small shows around the State and around the goldfields, that increase is criminal.

Mr H. D. Evans: The figure was 600 per cent?

Mr GRILL: The figure is 600 per cent in the last four years. I hope the Government will reconsider its decision to go ahead with the increase in battery charges. The men who have been put out of work in the mines in Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Norseman, and other places need somewhere to go. All they can do is mine the various small shows in the area. These are virtually low-grade prospects. All the easy minerals were worked out long ago. If battery charges are increased by 100 per cent many of the small shows, which rely on low-grade ore to go through the battery, will not be able to operate.

I can give the Minister examples of small mines employing small numbers of men, but, in the aggregate, employing large numbers of people. These small mines will go out of operation if battery charges are increased by a further 100 per cent.

The last factor with respect to the situation is that the Federal Government still has not come to the aid of this State in regard to its goldmining industry. I think it is particularly bad that the Federal Government has not even given any aid or advice, or made any comment on the situation.

It is important that as soon as possible some worthwhile action is taken in the goldfields. The reason we on this side of the House put forward the motion which is before you, Sir, is that we want to see a worth-while, substantial, and coherent plan put forward. It is only by planning and not by the *ad hoc* aid the Premier has mentioned—and I do say it is *ad hoc* and

most of it was given only at the last moment—that we will get anywhere in the goldfields. We shall do this only by concerted and coherent planning.

At times I doubt whether the Government has the capability of bringing forward such a plan. The Government seems to be tied to a philosophy where it eschews the thought of planning and co-operation and seems to be tied forever to an inflexible idea of unbounded capitalism. The companies in the goldfields and the Government have to co-operate in respect of a plan to stabilise the area. If they do not co-operate, we will be stitched up continually, just as we are stitched up continually in regard to the Japanese negotiations over iron ore.

It is ridiculous that the level of exploration and drilling in this State is not tied to the demand or the need to find new ore bodies, but is in fact tied, for some unknown reason, to the fluctuations in the share market. We need a long-term plan. It is important that we have such a plan and it is important also that both the Federal Government and the State Government are involved in such a plan. The aid granted to North Kalgurli Mines Ltd., for instance, is an instance of one where absolutely no planning was carried out.

The second part of my motion was that the Government should be involved in—

Initiating a study, backed by the resources of the Mines Department and the Department of Industrial Development, into a feasibility of establishing a custom gold treatment plant in the Eastern Goldfields.

Aid was given to North Kalgurli Mines Ltd., but a feasibility plan was not undertaken. No feasibility study was undertaken. If it was undertaken, it was a strange sort of study where the proposed customers of the mill were not even consulted. I have spoken to numerous prospectors in the goldfields and not one of them was consulted on the feasibility of the establishment of a custom mill. It is with some grave doubt that I say the proposed custom mill at North Kalgurli Mines Ltd. may not be feasible.

Mr Mensaros: Would you recommend that the Government should not have given them the assistance?

Mr GRILL: I believe the assistance should have been given; but I do not think it should have been tied to the notion that North Kalgurli Mines Ltd. must go ahead with a custom mill. I believe a feasibility study should have been undertaken into the sort and type of custom mill that would best suit the area. Only after such a study has been

carried out should a condition be imposed on the loan.

Mr Mensaros: But you well know that had it been done that way, it would have meant all the employees would have been dismissed and there would be no continuity. So there was an element of urgency in it to either give them the loan or, alternatively, let the employees go.

Mr GRILL: I realise that; but the Minister must realise also that that is symptomatic of the fact that the Government acts in an *ad hoc* manner and does not have a plan for the area. The Minister must realise that also.

I applaud the Government for granting the loan; but the Government did so at the last moment, because it was forced into it. It was a desperation move and no planning was behind it. That is the tragedy of the goldfields. The problem in respect of the custom mill is that it may not suit the area. Most prospectors probably will not use it. The mill will be linked now with the type of ore which will be treated by North Kalgurli Mines Ltd. from its own mine.

Most of the high-grade ore left in these areas is problem ore. That is all that has been left behind; it is hard to treat. Such ore could well form the basis of a custom mill. However, if a custom mill is to be linked with the ore from one particular mine there is very little likelihood that that mill will have enough flexibility to treat the ore which has been left behind from previous operations.

I have seen feasibility studies carried out independently by well known geologists and metallurgists, which indicate that the custom mill plan put forward by North Kalgurli Mines Ltd. may not be the type of mill the area needs.

In conclusion I wish to say the problems in the goldfields at the moment are enormous. They require long-term planning, and they require large amounts of money to overcome them; not piddling \$500 000 loans, but millions of dollars which, if wisely spent now, will probably save tens of millions of dollars later on.

I commend the motion to the House.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 19

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

(Teller)

Noes 29

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

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr B. T. Burke	Dr Dadour
Mr Tonkin	Mr Sibson
Mr Barnett	Mr Hassell

Question thus negatived.

Motion defeated.

House adjourned at 10.35 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ABORIGINES

Sacred Sites: Kimberley

1011. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Has he received confirmation of a report that Aboriginal sacred sites in certain parts of the Kimberley have been bulldozed?
- (2) What is the exact nature of the damage and by whom was it done?
- (3) If no confirmation has been received, when will it be known?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) Yes. I received a personal report from the Aboriginal community living at Noonkanbah Station that damage had occurred to three of their cultural sites.
- (2) An initial site was damaged by the intrusion of a bulldozer and Amax Exploration have made contact with the local community in an attempt to rectify the matter. The exact nature of the damage is not known.
- (3) I have been in contact with my colleague, the Hon. P. V. Jones, Minister for Education, Cultural Affairs and Recreation and have asked for his assistance in having the Western Australian Museum make the appropriate inquiries.

LAND

Cape Naturaliste

1017. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) Did he lodge an objection under section 42 of the Town Planning and Development Act to an appeal to a Town Planning Court against the rejection of a proposal by the English Wake Partnership to develop land at Cape Naturaliste?
- (2) If "Yes", what was the effect of this objection?
- (3) On how many occasions has a Minister used this section of this Act to lodge a similar objection?
- (4) When, and how, were the partnership's solicitors advised of his action?
- (5) What alternative avenue of appeal was open to the partnership?
- (6) What time limit lay on this alternative avenue of appeal and from when did it date?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The objection was that if the appeal were upheld, it would be contrary to town planning principles, both in respect of the land the subject of the appeal and in general, and would tend to prejudice the public interest. Consequent on the Governor making a declaration, the appeal was removed from the jurisdiction of the court.
- (3) Four, including this one.
- (4) The partnership was advised by a letter dated 15th April, 1976, addressed to D. L. Wake, R. L. English and N. Wende, care of the solicitors, Messrs. Stone James & Co., and notice of it was given in the *Government Gazette* of 15th April, 1976.
- (5) An appeal to the Minister.
- (6) A notice of election to appeal to the Minister was required to be served on the Minister within fourteen days of the Governor's declaration being served on the Appeal Court, which was 15th April, 1976. Advice to this effect was contained in the letter referred to in (4).

LAND

Cape Naturaliste

1018. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Did the Department of Public Works write to D. L. Wake or R. L. English indicating that the Environmental Protection Authority had requested the department to negotiate the acquisition of Sussex Locations 1340, 1341 (Cape Naturaliste)?
- (2) If "Yes" when did the department write and what were the terms of the letter?
- (3) Was the acquisition process subsequently deferred or delayed?
- (4) If "Yes" what caused the deferral or delay?

Mr Young (for Mr O'CONNOR) replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) 27th May, 1974. That an inspection and valuation of the land was being carried out and that a valuer would make contact to arrange a discussion.
- (3) Yes. Action to purchase was deferred for approximately 12 months.
- (4) Representations by the owners.

1019. *This question was postponed.*

1020. *This question was postponed.*

SECURITY INDUSTRY

Private Companies: Consultation

1021. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Were the employees of private security companies consulted prior to the framing of the present Security Agents Act?
- (2) If "Yes" what are the details of these consultations?
- (3) If "No" to (1), why not?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) to (3) Inquiries so far undertaken show no evidence of consultation with employees. It would not be normal for such discussions to ensue with individuals.

It is understood that the association representing security agents did not come into being until this year. The Act was passed in 1976.

SECURITY INDUSTRY

Private Companies: Police Investigations

1022. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Acting Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Have the police had reason to investigate whether private security companies are providing the full services for which they are paid by clients?
- (2) If "Yes" what were the reasons for and detailed findings of each such inquiry?
- (3) What instructions, advice or action resulted from any such investigations?

Mr Young (for Mr O'CONNOR) replied:

- (1) to (3) It is assumed that the member meant to use the words "Bureau of Consumer Affairs" where he used the word "police".

The matter raised is beyond the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Consumer Affairs unless the clients are private individuals and there are no complaints by such individuals about security companies on the bureau's files.

SECURITY INDUSTRY

Private Companies: Police Investigations

1023. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Have the police had reason to investigate whether private security companies are providing the full services for which they are paid by clients?
- (2) If "Yes" what were the reasons for and detailed findings of each such inquiry?
- (3) What instructions, advice or action resulted from any such investigations?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) to (3) No.

WATER SUPPLIES

Mandurah

1024. Mr SHALDERS, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) During which year was a reticulated water scheme inaugurated in Mandurah from the Ravenswood bores?
- (2) Which Government was in office at that time?
- (3) When was the South Dandalup Dam completed?
- (4) Which Government was in office at that time?
- (5) What is the anticipated cost of the work implemented by the present Government to provide water from the South Dandalup Dam to Mandurah and thus upgrade the quality of the water available there?

Mr Young (for Mr O'CONNOR) replied:

- (1) The official opening was held on 6th December, 1973.
- (2) Labor.
- (3) The official opening was held on 8th February, 1974.
- (4) Labor.
- (5) \$1 800 000.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Packaging and Labelling Laws

1025. Mr TONKIN, to the Acting Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Is it correct that at a meeting of consumer affairs Ministers representing the Commonwealth, the States and Territories, on 26th May this year, the questions of packaging and labelling laws and product standards, including those relating to safety, were raised?
- (2) Did the Ministers present unanimously agree that lack of uniformity in packaging and labelling laws placed a severe and unnecessary cost burden on both consumers and industry and that urgent action was necessary to improve the situation?
- (3) Did the Ministers present also agree that the question of a mandatory national standard on care labelling of garments should be given high priority?

- (4) What action has the Government taken on the matters discussed at that meeting?

Mr Young (for Mr O'CONNOR) replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No, but the Ministers discussed the matter at length, and comments were made on the cost burden generated by non-uniformity. The Federal Minister reported that an inter-departmental committee is examining suggestions contained in the report on packaging produced by the Trade Practices Commission. The Minister agreed to contact his State colleagues as soon as the committee has completed its work.
- (3) Yes. The Commonwealth is pursuing the care labelling regulations which will be based on standards designed by the Standards Association of Australia. I am advised that the technicalities of the matter are complex and the Federal Minister reported that he is advised that about 18 months will be needed to fully develop and apply the regulations generally.
- (4) Answered by (2) and (3).

WATER SUPPLIES

Dams: Murray River, Nanga Brook, and Ellen Brook

1026. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) When is it anticipated that the Metropolitan Water Board will construct a dam on the Murray River?
- (2) Alternatively, are there any proposals to dam the main streams of first class fresh water, such as Nanga Brook, to save the water from being "salt" polluted in the main Murray Valley?
- (3) Is the reverse osmosis process likely to be used to any great degree in supplying water for the Metropolitan Water Board in the foreseeable future?
- (4) Has consideration been given to damming Ellen Brook for the purpose of forced recharging of the Gngara mound?

Mr Young (for Mr O'CONNOR) replied:

- (1) This is not known, as there is no proposal to construct a dam on the Murray River at the present time.

- (2) The alternative means of development have not yet been fully evaluated. Damming of the fresher tributaries could be one option, but there are no firm proposals at this stage.
- (3) The reverse osmosis process is one alternative for desalination that the Metropolitan Water Board will consider.
- (4) Yes, this possibility will be considered. There are no firm plans at present.

ROADS

Funds: Federal and State

1027. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

I refer the Treasurer to the answers given to question 859 of 1978:

- (1) What were the sources of State revenue from which \$44 013 000 was expended on roads in 1977-78?
- (2) How much was contributed from each source?
- (3) What are the sources of State revenue from which an estimated \$53 975 000 will be expended on roads in 1978-79?
- (4) How much will be contributed from each source?
- (5) What are the balances carried forward from 1977-78 included in the amount of \$53 975 000 to which the Treasurer refers in answer to part (8) of question 859 of 1978?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) (a) The Road Act;
(b) Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act;
(c) Loan Borrowing (Main Roads Act).
- (2) (a) \$38 411 000;
(b) \$4 802 000;
(c) \$800 000.
- (3) (a) Road Traffic Act;
(b) Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act;
(c) Loan Borrowings (Main Roads Act).
- (4) (a) \$47 575 000;
(b) \$5 400 000
(c) \$1 million.
- (5) \$3 260 000.

ROADS

Sealing: Costs

1028. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What is the estimated cost to seal one kilometre of road with a prime bitumen seal for—
 - (a) highways in
 - (i) the Pilbara region;
 - (ii) the Kimberley region;
 - (iii) the south west;
 - (b) rural arterial roads in
 - (i) the Pilbara region;
 - (ii) the Kimberley region;
 - (iii) the south west;
 - (c) rural local roads in
 - (i) the Pilbara;
 - (ii) the Kimberley region;
 - (iii) the south west?

- (2) What is the estimated cost to seal one kilometre of road in the metropolitan area with bituminous concrete for

- (a) urban arterial roads;
- (b) urban local roads?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) The cost of constructing and sealing roads varies considerably, even in the same region, due to various factors including changing terrain and availability of road making materials. The following figures give an indication of the range of costs excluding very difficult sections:

(a) Highways in—

	\$	\$
(i) the Pilbara region	70 000-250 000	
(ii) the Kimberley region	80 000-260 000	
(iii) the south west	60 000-100 000	

(b) Rural arterial roads in—

(i) the Pilbara region	60 000-250 000
(ii) the Kimberley region	70 000-260 000
(iii) the south west	50 000-100 000

(c) Rural local roads in—

(i) the Pilbara region	35 000-70 000
(ii) the Kimberley region	40 000-80 000
(iii) the south west	25 000-50 000

- (2) (a) Urban arterial roads (excluding freeways), \$100 000-\$150 000 (single carriageway 7.4 m), \$200 000-\$400 000 (dual carriageway 7.4m);
- (b) Urban local roads \$50 000-\$70 000.

ROADS

Sealing: Sections to be Completed

1029. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What are the highways, or portions of highways, which are not sealed with bitumen in—
 - (a) the Pilbara;
 - (b) the Kimberley?
- (2) What is the location and length of the highways and portions of highway identified as not sealed with bitumen in (1)?
- (3) What rural arterial roads or portions of roads are not sealed with bitumen in—
 - (a) the Pilbara;
 - (b) the Kimberley?
- (4) What is the location and length of rural arterial roads or portions of roads which are not sealed with bitumen in—
 - (a) the Pilbara;
 - (b) the Kimberley?
- (5) What rural local roads or portion of roads are not sealed with bitumen in—
 - (a) the Pilbara;
 - (b) the Kimberley?
- (6) What is the location and length of rural local roads or portions of roads which are not sealed in—
 - (a) the Pilbara;
 - (b) the Kimberley?

Mr YOUNG replied:

The information sought by the Leader of the Opposition will take some little time to collate.

I will forward it to him as soon as it is possible.

WATER SUPPLIES

Thornlie Aquifer

1030. Mr HERZFELD, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Does the term "confined aquifer" indicate an underground water source that is hydrogeologically isolated?

- (2) With reference to the aquifer in Thornlie reported by the Government Chemical Laboratories in 1976 to have been contaminated with products associated with the manufacture of 2, 4-D, is it thought to be a confined aquifer?
- (3) Have tests been carried out for the occurrence of 2, 4-D and phenols in surrounding aquifers?
- (4) If so, for what period and with what results?
- (5) Do the results indicate or suggest any possibility of the contamination spreading?

Mr Young (for Mr O'CONNOR) replied:

- (1) Yes, except at intake and discharge areas.
- (2) No.
- (3) Not in surrounding aquifers, but from nearby wells and bores which tap the same aquifer.
- (4) Sampling and testing carried out between 1960 and 1977. Most recent results showed a level of 2, 4-D of less than 0.002 mg/l and phenols 0.3mg/l.
- (5) Yes.

WATER SUPPLIES

Desalination

1031. Mr HERZFELD, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

Would he give—

- (a) the estimated capital costs; and
- (b) the estimated annual recurrent cost of desalination of Perth's current water needs to deliver water of constant 500 mg/l total dissolved solids quality?

Mr Young (for Mr O'CONNOR) replied:

- (a) and (b) This information is not available, but it is relevant that Perth's water needs are already met by water containing 500 mg/l total dissolved solids or less in all years except in a rare and extreme drought year.

TRAFFIC

Hardy Road Railway Crossings

1032. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is he aware of the continual bank-up of traffic each morning and evening brought about by the fact that there are five sets of railway lines, which cross Hardy Road, Kewdale, and are extensively used by rolling stock especially during peak traffic hours?
- (2) Is it intended this financial year to build an overway similar to that in Welshpool Road, Wattle Grove, to alleviate this problem?
- (3) If "No" then what other method does he intend to use to relieve this ever growing traffic problem?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.
- (3) A scheme has been developed involving widening of the roadway. As a local road is involved an approach is being made to the Belmont and Kalamunda Shire Councils in respect to financial contributions.

ENERGY

Electricity Supplies: Recreation Facilities

1033. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) What is the quarterly fixed charge and cost per unit of electricity to local government recreational facilities in
 - (a) the metropolitan area;
 - (b) country areas?
- (2) What is the quarterly fixed charge and cost per unit of electricity to private recreational facilities in
 - (a) the metropolitan area;
 - (b) country areas?
- (3) What concessions are available, if any, to—
 - (a) local government recreational facilities in
 - (i) the metropolitan area;
 - (ii) country areas; and
 - (b) private recreational facilities in
 - (i) the metropolitan area; and
 - (ii) country areas?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) The electricity used for recreational facilities, whether by local government or private bodies, is charged by the State Energy Commission under the general section of the Industrial, Commercial and General Tariff.
 - (a) \$9 per quarter fixed charge together with all metered consumption at the rate of—
 - 6.60 cents per unit for the first 3 000 units per quarter;
 - 6.40 cents per unit for the next 12 000 units per quarter;
 - 5.19 cents per unit for the next 135 000 units per quarter;
 - 4.47 cents per unit for the next 1 350 000 units per quarter;
 - 4.04 cents per unit for all over 1 500 000 units per quarter.
 - (b) (i) Supplied from interconnected system as (a) above.
 - (ii) Supplied from other than interconnected system—
 - \$9 per quarter fixed charge together with all metered consumption at the rate of—
 - 6.60 cents per unit for the first 3 000 units per quarter;
 - 6.40 cents per unit for the next 12 000 units per quarter;
 - 5.19 cents per unit for the next 135 000 units per quarter;
 - 4.47 cents per unit for all over 150 000 units per quarter.
- (2) (a) See 1 (a);
- (b) See 1 (b).
- (3) (a) and (b) None.

TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD

Dividends

1034. Mr T. D. EVANS, to the Chief Secretary:

For the three months period inclusive of 5th August last and expiring on that date (and inclusive of TAB operated mid-week race meetings) would he please indicate:

- (a) in the case of New South Wales; and

(b) Victorian horse racing events,
on how many occasions the Western
Australian TAB dividend

- (i) straight out; and
- (ii) place,

exceeded the respective course dividends
and on the other hand were less than
such dividends?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

No records are kept which would enable
this information to be provided.

TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD

Telephone Betting

1035. Mr T. D. EVANS, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) In centres beyond the metropolitan area,
is it possible for patrons of the TAB to
operate a TAB phone account without
the necessity and the cost of making
long distance (STD or trunk calls) to
TAB phone betting facility centres in
Perth?
- (2) If not, why cannot this facility be
extended through the closest TAB
agency in a country centre for the
benefit of country TAB patrons?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes.

HEALTH

Herbicides 2, 4-D and 2, 4, 5-T: Use by Local Authorities

1036. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Local
Government:

In view of the continual publicity being
given to the use of 2, 4-D and 2, 4, 5-T
herbicide, will he advise:

- (a) what local authorities are using this
toxic herbicide in Western
Australia; and
- (b) for what purpose?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (a) and (b) This information is not held
within departments under my
jurisdiction.

TRAFFIC

Noise Levels on Metropolitan Roads

1037. Mr HODGE, to the Minister representing
the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Does the Main Roads Department
conduct regular checks of traffic noise
levels on roads and streets in the
metropolitan area?
- (2) If "Yes":
 - (a) which streets and roads in the
Melville area have been checked
during the past 12 months;
 - (b) on what dates were the checks
made;
 - (c) what were the results of the checks?

- (3) If "No" to (1) why not?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) and (2) No.
- (3) The collection of traffic noise data is
restricted to specific projects related to
the Main Roads Department's direct
responsibilities.

HEALTH

Noise Levels on Metropolitan Roads

1038. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Does the Public Health Department
conduct regular checks of traffic noise
levels on roads and streets in the
metropolitan area?
- (2) If "Yes"—
 - (a) which streets and roads in the
Melville area have been checked
during the past 12 months;
 - (b) on what dates were the checks
made;
 - (c) what were the results of the checks?

- (3) If "No" to (1) why not?

Mr RIDGE replied:

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

- (3) The Public Health Department officers have concentrated on other aspects of noise abatement, and primary responsibility for the control of traffic noise rests with the Main Roads Department and the Road Traffic Authority. However, I am aware of the prevailing nuisance caused by traffic noise in the metropolitan area and a special interdepartmental committee has been established to report directly to me on control measures.

TRAFFIC

Noise Levels on Metropolitan Roads

1039. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Does the Road Traffic Authority conduct regular checks of traffic noise levels on roads and streets in the metropolitan area?
- (2) If "Yes"—
 - (a) which streets and roads in the Melville area have been checked during the past 12 months;
 - (b) on what dates were the checks made;
 - (c) what were the results of the checks?
- (3) If "No" to (1), why not?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Whilst the Road Traffic Authority does not check traffic noise levels generally, suspect vehicles are checked.
- (2) (a) Leach Highway and Stock Road;
(b) 24th April, 14th and 16th June, 12th, 21st and 24th July;
(c) 56 vehicles were issued with work orders relating to inefficient exhaust systems.
- (3) Not applicable.

TRANSPORT COMMISSION ACT

Breaches and Enforcement of Section 48

1040. Mr HODGE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

In view of the Minister's admission in answer to question 918 of 1978, that the Government is not currently enforcing the law in respect of section 48 of the

Transport Commission Act, 1966-1976, will the Minister take immediate steps to:—

- (a) instruct the Transport Commission that the law must be upheld and enforced; and
- (b) remove those sections of the Act that the Government cannot or will not enforce?

Mr YOUNG replied:

No; the question of enforcement of driving hours as it affects commercial goods vehicles is dealt with in the Southern Western Australian Transport Study report and consideration will be given as to what action is to be taken when that report is finally considered by Government.

TRAFFIC

Motor Vehicles: Overladen

1041. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Do Road Traffic Authority weights and measures patrols operate on metropolitan roads 24 hours a day?
- (2) If "Yes" have the patrols apprehended any overladen vehicles using roads in the Melville district in the past 12 months?
- (3) (a) How many have been apprehended; and
(b) How many were apprehended between the hours of 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.
- (4) If "No" to (1), why not?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) (2) and (4) Whilst the Road Traffic Authority Heavy Haulage Squad does not regularly patrol metropolitan roads 24 hours a day, when occasion demands appropriate surveillance is undertaken. Night activity is limited by need, availability of staff, and dangers associated with operations at night.
- (3) (a) 134;
(b) 6.

HEALTH

Medical Practitioners

1042. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is he aware that some Geraldton doctors have adopted the practice of demanding payment from patients before seeing them?
- (2) Is he aware of this practice occurring anywhere else, and if so, will he please indicate how widespread it is?
- (3) Has his department checked the legality of the practice?
- (4) If so, will he please indicate its findings, and if not, will he have a check made?
- (5) What is the Government's attitude to this practice?
- (6) Has the Government taken any action to try to enforce or encourage a cessation of this practice?
- (7) If so, will he advise of the action, and if not, will he please indicate whether any action is intended?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) to (7) The provision of and payment for medical services rendered by a medical practitioner in private practice is a matter of contractual arrangement between the practitioner and his patients. The Government does not interfere in the relationship between a medical practitioner and his patient.

It is understood that the Medical Board of Western Australia and the Australian Medical Association are of the opinion that no patient should be refused consultation without the practitioner's knowledge and decision and that it is not good practice for a fee to be demanded before a medical service is rendered. There may of course be circumstances where a particular patient may be requested to pay an account at the time of service.

HOSPITALS

St. John Ambulance Association: Country Centres

1043. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Treasurer:

- (1) Is he aware that the St. John Ambulance of Western Australia is not

in a financial position to make funds available to ensure that some country centres can operate on the highest efficient level?

- (2) In view of the fact that the Collie centre has only one full time driver who is required to work seven days a week due to lack of finance being available to employ another driver, will he discuss the problem in conjunction with the St. John Ambulance of Western Australia and advise me of the decision arrived at?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) No. A report on the financial operations of country centres in 1977-78 contained in the association's budget submission for 1978-79 indicated that ambulance services in the southern region of the State were operating satisfactorily.
- (2) A check with the St. John Ambulance Association revealed that the Collie centre has paid a relief driver in addition to the full-time driver and can also call on volunteers, as required.

It should also be said that St. John Ambulance centres have a high degree of autonomy in the conduct of their operations and the control of their funds. Although the Government provides financial assistance to the St. John Ambulance Association it does not become involved in the operation of individual centres nor in the assessment of priorities, the latter being the prerogative of the association.

MINING

Coal: Payments by Mining Companies

1044. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Do the coalmining companies in Western Australia pay any moneys on coal produced to any Federal body?
- (2) If "Yes" will he please advise:
 - (a) When the scheme commenced;
 - (b) the payments involved; and
 - (c) the amounts already paid into the fund?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Yes, to the Commonwealth Department of Business and Consumer Affairs for—

- (i) The Coal Mining Industry Long Service Leave Trust Fund; and
 - (ii) The Coal Research Trust Fund.
- (2) (a) 1951 and 17th August, 1977, respectively;
- (b) 10c per tonne and 5c per tonne respectively;
- (c) the companies advise that the total contributions to the long service leave fund is not readily available but that \$109 141 has been paid to the research trust fund.

MINING

Collie: Coal

1045. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Mines:

When was the last consignment of Collie coal forwarded to the Federal laboratories for testing purposes?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

The companies advise no consignments have been made.

MINING

Coal: Visits by Mining Engineer

1046. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Mines:

How many visits have been made to Collie by the present State mining engineer and what were the dates involved?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

The total number of visits is not available, but there are 28 recorded visits on the following dates—

13th and 14th April, 1967;
 3rd and 4th August, 1967;
 5th October, 1967;
 6th March, 1968;
 8th and 9th October, 1968;
 18th, 19th and 20th February, 1969;
 4th and 5th November, 1969;
 11th March, 1970;
 4th May, 1970;
 10th and 11th November, 1970;
 21st May, 1971;
 23rd and 24th September, 1971;

20th and 21st April, 1972;
 6th and 7th November, 1972;
 11th July, 1973;
 12th November, 1973;
 18th and 19th April, 1975;
 21st and 22nd May, 1975;
 1st July, 1975;
 6th August, 1975;
 12th November, 1975;
 10th May, 1976;
 11th August, 1976;
 2nd November, 1976;
 12th November, 1976;
 18th January, 1977;
 24th June, 1977;
 16th November, 1977.

ENERGY

Nuclear Power Stations: Amortisation Period

1047. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

Is it a fact that a 20 year amortisation period is the principle accepted for nuclear power stations compared with 30 years for conventional stations?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

This is not so. The amortisation period for various types of power plants varies generally between 20 and 30 years depending on specific circumstances and no general rule can be determined.

ENERGY

Nuclear Power Stations: Waste Disposal and Safeguards

1048. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

Is it a fact that among the serious problems associated with nuclear power plants are—

- (a) the disposal of waste; and
- (b) the safeguards to be adopted regarding safety and health, when the station is taken out of commission?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

There are a number of matters which have to be considered in detail when considering a specific nuclear power

plant and the matters mentioned by the member are two which require attention. However, the prevailing opinion worldwide is that nuclear power stations are capable of being designed and able to satisfactorily overcome these and other problems and are in fact the most economic and satisfactory choice of power generation in many parts of the world at the present time.

LAND

Crown: Margaret River

1049. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Would she advise when the Lands Department commenced the programme to subdivide Crown land at Margaret River to meet light industry needs?
- (2) As there was a request for review of prices to be charged for these lots, when was this made and when is a decision expected?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) Road construction by the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River to serve lots 156 to 161, and lot 168 was authorised on the 6th February, 1978. Water services were paid for in March, 1978, and the blocks were open for leasing on the 10th May, 1978.
- (2) The shire council requested a review of prices in a letter received on the 5th May, 1978. A decision has been made and it will be conveyed to the local authority shortly.

ABATTOIRS

Cattle, Sheep, and Lambs: Slaughtering Capacity

1050. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What was the total killing capacity available for—
 - (a) cattle;
 - (b) sheep and lambs,
 in 1976 and 1977 in Western Australian abattoirs?
- (2) What is the total killing capacity which will be available for—
 - (a) cattle;

(b) sheep and lambs,
in Western Australian abattoirs in 1978, 1979, 1980 and 1981?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) and (2) The total capacity of the export and non-export abattoirs in the agricultural areas is estimated to be about 845 000 cattle per annum, and the actual turn off for slaughter in 1976-77 was very close to this capacity. The total capacity for sheep and lambs is estimated to be about 8.5 million per annum. Actual slaughterings in 1976-77 totalled 5.9 million out of an estimated 8.3 million total turn off for slaughter and live export. Such figures disguise the need for a slaughtering capacity which is capable of handling the marked seasonal turn off of stock in Western Australia. The total slaughtering capacity of Western Australian abattoirs is unlikely to change significantly in the next few years.

WA MEAT COMMISSION AND MIDLAND ABATTOIR

Financial Loss

1051. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What is the loss, or estimated loss, of the West Australian Meat Commission for the 1977-78 financial year?
- (2) What was the loss or estimated loss sustained by the Midland Junction abattoirs for the 1977-78 financial year?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) and (2) In the order of \$4.1 million of which three-quarters is contributed by the Midland operations.

ABATTOIRS

Export: Permits

1052. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) How many permits, including conditional permits, to build export abattoirs, have been issued in the past five years?

- (2) What specific conditions apply to the permit issued to Pope Exports Pty. Ltd. to build an abattoir at North Dandalup?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) Two. One of these approvals endorsed a decision taken by the Government prior to the Meat Industry Authority's legislation coming into effect.
- (2) The conditions relative to this approval are considered to be a matter of confidentiality between the authority and the company.

ABATTOIRS

Applications for Establishment

1053. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Have any applications for the building of further abattoirs in Western Australia been received by the Western Australian Meat Authority?
- (2) If "Yes" from whom or what company was said application(s) received, for what purpose(s) and in what area(s) to be built?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) Ten applications to construct and operate non-export abattoirs have been made to the authority.
- (2) The details sought by the member are considered to be a matter of confidentiality between the authority and the applicants.

PARKS AND RESERVES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Definition of "Authorised Person"

1054. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Lands:

How many boards are there in existence, the members of which would become "authorised persons" under the definition contained in the Bill for an Act to amend the Parks and Reserves Act 1895-1972, which is currently before the Legislative Assembly?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

The precise number is not available

without an exhaustive search of reserve records as reserves exist with old vestings in local committees and boards. However, all local authorities, 138 in number, come within the scope of the question pursuant to section 310 of the Local Government Act. In addition, there are the Kings Park Board, the Rottnest Island Board, the Parliamentary Reserve Board, and the Government Domain Reserve Board.

FRUIT

Fruit-fly Baiting Schemes

1055. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) How many fruit fly baiting schemes have been operating in each of the past five years?
- (2) How much money has been paid to fruit fly baiting committees in each of the past five years, and which committees received assistance and to what extent?
- (3) What was the cost, actual or estimated, to the Agriculture Department for fruit fly control in each of the past three years?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) to (3) The detailed information sought is not readily available. It is being obtained and will be supplied as soon as possible.

RAILWAYS

Manjimup-Northcliffe

1056. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What has been the annual tonnage of freight hauled over the following sections of railway in each of the past three years:
- (a) Manjimup-Pemberton;
- (b) Pemberton-Northcliffe?
- (2) What profit or loss has been shown on the operations of the following sections of railway line in each of the past three years:
- (a) Manjimup-Pemberton;
- (b) Pemberton-Northcliffe?

Mr YOUNG replied:

	1975 76 tonnes	1976 77 tonnes	1977 78 tonnes
(1) (a) Forwarded	83 284	*493 363	556 896
Received	5 040	5 122	2 856
Total	88 324	498 485	559 752

*Woodchip haulage commenced.

(b) Forwarded	13 402	13 040	13 439
Received	1 567	1 935	2 026
Total	14 967	14 975	15 465

- (2) Not available. Profit and loss figures are not compiled for individual sections of railway.

ABATTOIRS

Bonestock Pty. Ltd.

1057. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Has any decision to supply Bonestock Pty. Ltd. with material from Robb Jetty and Midland abattoirs yet been taken?
- (2) If so, what are the details of quantities to be made available?
- (3) Is Bonestock Pty. Ltd. in operation, and if so,
 - (a) what quantities of product is it turning out monthly;
 - (b) what are the sources of its raw material?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) This information is not known to my department. The member should direct his questions to the company.

MEAT

WA Meat Commission: Trade in Beef and Sheep Meats and Trading Results

1058. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What quantities of—
 - (a) beef;
 - (b) sheep meats,
 did the Western Australian Meat Commission trade in its own right in the—
 - (i) 1977-78 financial year;

(ii) 1976-77 financial year?

- (2) What was the value of—

- (a) beef;
 - (b) sheep meats,
- traded by the Western Australian Meat Commission in the—

(i) 1977-78 financial year;

(ii) 1976-77 financial year?

- (3) What amount did the Western Australian Meat Commission lose or gain in its trading operations in the—

(i) 1977-78 financial year;

(ii) 1976-77 financial year?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) to (3) The detailed information sought by the member is not readily available. It will be supplied as soon as possible.

EDUCATION

Teachers: Commencement of School Year, and Holidays

1059. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it a fact that in his letter to teachers of 14th July, 1978 in which he stated that teachers would be required to take up their appointments on the Thursday prior to the commencement of the school year, he stated that the change in policy had been decided as a result of overtures of principals and parents?
- (2) If "Yes":
 - (a) have many principals indicated a desire for or approval of the change; and
 - (b) precisely how many—
 - (i) parents;
 - (ii) parent organisations,
 made such overtures?

- (3) Did he state that teachers who did not comply with the proposed changed regulations regarding school commencement could jeopardise their holiday pay?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) Yes; particularly the High Schools Principals' Association in relation to the Royal Show holidays over several years;

- (b) A precise number is not known since overtures have appeared in the Press and at meetings, in addition to letters and personal contact in schools.
- (3) My letter indicates that individual teachers who refuse to comply with the regulations will jeopardise holiday pay, and temporary teachers may jeopardise continuity of employment, which is in accordance with existing regulations.

EDUCATION

Teachers: Commencement of School Year and Holidays

1060. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Did he liaise with the State School Teachers' Union of W.A. last year in the preparation of a survey which was conducted to ascertain the attitude of teachers to proposed changes to holidays and commencement of the year procedures?
- (2) What did the results of such survey reveal?
- (3) (a) Were these results adopted by the Education Department in the preparation of proposed regulations regarding holidays;
(b) if not, why not?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (3) It is assumed that the member is referring to a referendum conducted by the State School Teachers' Union on various questions, formulated by the union, relating to holiday changes. I have already advised the House of the matters raised by the member and the information appears on pages 1317 and 1318 of *Hansard* for 3rd May, 1978.

EDUCATION

Belmont High School

1061. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

In respect of question 905 of 1978 concerning maintenance work at Belmont High School:

- (1) What principal items of expenditure accounted for the \$130 000 mentioned in his reply?
- (2) What type of work was referred to as "...urgent and minor repairs and renovations"?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) (a) Repairs and renovations to various parts of the building amount to \$93 500.
(b) White ant eradication and replacement of damaged timber, etc., to the value of \$23 000.
(c) Miscellaneous minor items amounting to \$13 500.
- (2) Urgent and minor repair and renovations include the following:—
(a) replacing broken glass;
(b) replacing broken wall and roof sheeting;
(c) re-hanging doors;
(d) repairing damaged locks;
(e) white ant treatment and rectification;
(f) other minor works of an urgent nature, of which the cost did not exceed \$200.00.

EDUCATION

Belmont High School

1062. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

Further to my question 911 of 1978 concerning maintenance work at Belmont High School, will he provide a breakdown of how the proposed \$200 000 is to be spent?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

The cost indication of \$200 000 is for complete repairs and renovations to the school. This work has not yet been itemised in detail.

EDUCATION

Belmont High School

1063. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

What scientific tests, if any, have been conducted at the Belmont Senior High School to assess the level and effects of road traffic noise?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

No scientific tests for road traffic noise have been carried out by the Public Works Department.

1 under maintenance;

1 under maintenance and offer has been made.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Ship Repair or Construction Facility

1064. Mr TAYLOR, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

Is any company, not already established on Cockburn Sound, indicating an interest in establishing either a ship repair facility or a ship construction facility in Western Australia which could handle ships with tonnages in excess of 1 000 tonnes?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

Yes, generally in the size range up to 1 000 tonnes and possibly a little larger, depending on the needs of the offshore industries.

HOUSING

Coolbellup

1065. Mr TAYLOR, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many homes, duplex units and apartments in Coolbellup are currently unoccupied?
- (2) For what reasons are these units of accommodation not occupied?

Mr Young (for Mr O'CONNOR) replied:

- (1) and (2) Houses—

3 bedroom, 2—

under maintenance and have been reallocated.

Duplex—Nil.

Apartments—

3 bedroom, 36—

1 under offer;

27 offers have been made, but declined due to selectivity of applicants;

8 under maintenance.

2 bedroom, 7—

4 have been subject to decline due to selectivity of applicants;

1 currently under offer;

MINING

Nickel: Kambalda Fatalities

1066. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) How many workers have been killed in accidents at Western Mining's Kambalda nickel operations?
- (2) Where were the said fatalities in terms of shafts or working places?
- (3) What were the dates of the said fatalities?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) to (3) 17—

- (a) There have been four fatal accidents in shafts:

The Durkin Shaft (3):

31st May, 1970;

16th March, 1971;

11th June, 1972.

Silver Lake shaft (1): 28 December, 1966.

- (b) There have been 10 fatal accidents in other underground workings:

Silver Lake (6);

12th June, 1975;

25th September, 1975;

10th March, 1976;

30th April, 1976;

13th January, 1977;

15th March, 1978.

Durkin (3):

24th May, 1971;

16th February, 1973;

28th February, 1973.

Otter Juan (1): 4th June, 1975.

- (c) There have been 3 surface fatal accidents:

12th November, 1969;

15th May, 1970;

20th June, 1972.

WATER SUPPLIES

Total Dissolved Salts Content

1067. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

Adverting to page 17 para. 3.39 of the Metropolitan Water Board Development Plan 1978-1983, will he list the areas which have water supplies with a total dissolved salts content of 1 000 mg/litre or higher?

Mr Young (for Mr O'CONNOR) replied:

Balingup
Cue
Laverton
Leonora
Menzies
Mount Magnet
Mullewa
Northampton
Roebourne
Sandstone.

HEALTH

Asbestos Mining and Milling

1068. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Health:

When did the Health Department first become aware of the dangers of asbestos mining and milling and cancers of the lungs?

Mr RIDGE replied:

The meaning of the member's question is not clear.

Asbestos mining and milling was recognised as a health hazard in the early 1930's and its association with lung cancer shortly afterwards. The association between asbestos and mesothelioma was first recognised in South Africa in the late 1950's. The Public Health Department was aware of this work, and the first report of mesothelioma in a Western Australian asbestos worker was published by a departmental officer in 1962.

HEALTH

Herbicides 2, 4-D and 2, 4, 5-T: Deformities in Births

1069. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Health:

Will he table the reports of inquiries undertaken in Victoria and Queensland in recent months concerning the relationship between the use of 2, 4-D and 2, 4, 5-T and deformities in human births?

Mr RIDGE replied:

I do not have copies of the Reports but they will be obtained and tabled.

In the meantime, the N.H. & M.R.C. Report which refers to them is tabled herewith.

The report was tabled (see paper No. 291).

MINING

Asbestos: Dangers

1070. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Mines:

When did the Mines Department first become aware of the dangers of asbestos mining and milling and cancers of the lungs?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

It was known in the 1930's that asbestos was harmful to health and this would have been within the knowledge of the Mines Medical Officer.

HEALTH

Herbicide 2, 4-D: Manufacture at Thornlie

1071. Mr HARMAN, to the Treasurer:

Adverting to question 981 of 1978 concerning the Technical Supply Co. previously at Thornlie, will he advise:

- (a) the details of involvement by the Government of the day in the cessation of activities of this factory;
- (b) the details of financial assistance provided by the Government of the day?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (a) The Government acted on the recommendation of an interdepartmental committee to transfer the company to Kwinana.
- (b) £15 000 was advanced from Loan funds for the transfer of the factory. £7 500 of this amount was a loan and was subsequently refunded.

HEALTH

Herbicide 2, 4-D: Manufacture at Thornlie

1072. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) When did his department first become aware that "residues and intermediate products from manufacture of 2, 4-D" by the Technical Supply Co. at Thornlie were disposed down a disused well and contaminated underground aquifers?
- (2) What action did the department take at the time?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) 1960.
- (2) Tests of the bore and spring water supplies were conducted throughout the area and the works was required to cease manufacture pending the results. Subsequently the factory was closed and re-sited on another location.

HEALTH

Noise: Air-Conditioners

1073. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is he aware of the suffering being caused to people from the high level of noise of air conditioning units in adjacent premises?
- (2) Is it a fact that a special committee has been established to investigate the problem of noise nuisance with respect to air conditioners?
- (3) Is it proposed to review the regulations which at present restrict action against noisy air conditioning units on the basis of background noise?
- (4) If "Yes" to (3), when will the new regulations be introduced?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) to (3) Yes.
- (4) I cannot give the member the date, but the new regulations are in draft form and it is hoped to introduce them in the near future.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

FLUORIDATION OF WATER SUPPLIES

Wanneroo

1. Mr NANOVIH, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Has fluoride been introduced into the Wanneroo water supplies?
- (2) If so, on what date?

Mr Young (for Mr O'CONNOR) replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The 13th June, 1978.

NATIONAL COUNTRY PARTY

Allegation by Member for Moore

2. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

In view of the statement which has just been made by the member for Moore, and in view of the Premier's oft espoused desire to uphold law and order, would he tell us what action he proposes to instigate to take up the privileges provided under the Parliamentary Privileges Act, wherein clause 8 gives the House power to punish summarily any person who commits certain contempts, one of such contempts being listed as, "The offering of a bribe to, or attempting to bribe a member"?

The SPEAKER: This question relates to a matter of privilege. Privilege is a matter for the House and not for an individual Minister to determine. I would say it is within the competence of the House alone to determine a matter of privilege.

Mr Davies: Thank you, Mr Speaker; I was hoping you wouldn't rule that way.

SENATOR WITHERS

Dismissal from Ministry

3. Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

- (1) Is it the policy of the Premier's Government to support Mr Fraser's sacking of this State's senior senator (Senator Reggie Withers) from his Cabinet?

- (2) Has the Premier communicated his Government's position to the Prime Minister?
- (3) If "Yes" will he supply details thereof?
- (4) If "No" why has he failed, refused or neglected to do so on this vital question of concern to so many Western Australians, which has caused Senator Margaret Guilfoyle to resign from her portfolio?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) to (4) I assume from his comments and the tenor of his remarks that the member for Mt. Hawthorn wants me to make representations to the Prime Minister to cancel—if that sort of thing can be done—the dismissal of Senator Withers, and to reappoint him to the Ministry. If that is his intention, then I am very interested to hear it and I would like him to confirm it in due course. In answer to the main point of his question, as to whether I have made representations to the Prime Minister, I advise that I have had talks with the Prime Minister on this matter—not since the action taken by him in respect of Senator Withers, but in the period immediately before it. I regard those conversations as being essentially private conversations between myself as Premier and Mr Fraser as the Prime Minister.

ALP HEALTH COMMITTEE

Services of Departmental Officer

4. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Does the Minister recall that on the 20th July—some 18 days ago—I wrote to him and asked him whether he would provide the services of an officer of his department to confer with the health committee of the ALP Opposition?
- (2) Has he been able to make a decision on this request?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) and (2) I do recall receiving such a request from the member for Maylands, and I would like to assure him that he will be in receipt of an answer from me in the very near future.

HEALTH

NHMRC Recommendations

5. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Health:

What are the formal machinery steps which must be taken by the National Health and Medical Research Council to convey its recommendations to the States for implementation, and who are the officers who sit on the NHMRC?

Mr RIDGE replied:

I thank the member for Rockingham for notice of his question, the answer to which is as follows—

The Chairman of the National Health and Medical Research Council advises in writing the Commissioner of Public Health and Medical Services. With your permission, Mr Speaker, I table herewith a photocopy of the membership of the council and its committees.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 292).

SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

Symbol: Colours

6. Mr CARR, to the Premier:

With reference to the Swan-shaped symbol chosen for the 150-year celebration, will the Premier please indicate whether there was any particular reason for choosing the South Australian State colours rather than the Western Australian State colours?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

If the honourable member is trying to be smart, he does not get any marks at all, because when the logo design was made public as a result of the considerable amount of work that was done by experts on this question—this goes back a long way now—there was a formal public ceremony to unveil the logo and to announce its significance and the reasons it had its present colours.

If the honourable member cares to go back and look at that publicity he will find the explanation. However, I will gladly send him an official copy of the release made at that time.

Mr Davies: Tell us now.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I do not have the exact words in my mind, but the member for Geraldton will recall there was a significant reference to the colours of gold, red and black as they relate to this State. If I recall it correctly, black represents the swan, gold is our traditional colour and red is related to

the sunshine of this State. Members should not take me literally! However, I would think the member for Geraldton would say we pinched the colour red from Geraldton. I undertake to supply the honourable member with the official release.
