

# Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 13th November, 1979

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

## BILLS (18): ASSENT

Messages from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills—

1. Reserves Bill.
2. Credit Unions (Consequential Provisions) Bill.
3. Education Act Amendment Bill.
4. Motor Vehicle Dealers Act Amendment Bill.
5. Prisons Act Amendment Bill.
6. Bush Fires Act Amendment Bill.
7. West Australian Trustee Executor and Agency Company, Limited, Act Amendment Bill.
8. The Perpetual Executors, Trustees, and Agency Company (W.A.), Limited, Act Amendment Bill.
9. Credit Unions Bill.
10. Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Act Amendment Bill.
11. Medical Act Amendment Bill.
12. Local Government Act Amendment Bill (No. 3).
13. Family Court Act Amendment and Acts Repeal Bill.
14. Unauthorised Documents Act Amendment Bill.
15. Fisheries Act Amendment Bill.
16. Local Government Act Amendment Bill.
17. Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill.
18. Fire Brigades Act Amendment Bill.

## QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

## CONSUMER AFFAIRS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by the Hon. Tom McNeil, and read a first time.

## ROAD TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

### Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 7th November.

**THE HON. R. HETHERINGTON** (East Metropolitan) [4.46 p.m.]: It is inevitable that the Road Traffic Act will be amended as people get more experienced and as far as monetary penalties and money generally are concerned as there is inflation. The Leader of the House said during his second reading speech that—

amendments to give effect to suggestions which have been submitted by members of Parliament, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations, the National Safety Council, the National Association of Australian State Road Authorities, and by officers of the Road Traffic Authority and traffic patrol concerned with the enforcement of traffic laws and the licensing of drivers and vehicles.

I shall raise a few queries although I point out I am not really challenging the Bill. The Opposition supports it; but before I resume my seat I would like to ask one or two questions which I would like the Minister to answer.

It is sensible that when licences have expired for less than 12 months and they were validated for the remainder of the 12 months we can now validate them longer, because many people, like myself, are now getting licences for three years and this amendment is merely bringing the Act into conformity with modern practice.

Another good provision in the Bill stipulates that as far as special licences are concerned, certain minimum periods beginning with 21 days must elapse before a person can apply for a special licence if he has been convicted of a drink-driving offence. In the past, they have, in one sense, suffered no penalty at all and perhaps this will remind them that this is a serious offence and something they must consider.

It is inevitable—and I have watched this since I have been in Western Australia over the past 12 or 13 years—that the amount of damage which must be done in an accident before it must be reported has gradually been increased. It was increased to \$100 before there was a requirement that people report the accident; now the amount has been increased to \$300. One of my colleagues in another place said that in one way this was a mistake because he would like accidents reported, even if not compulsorily, and even when a lesser amount of damage was involved, so that the police could get a pattern of accidents.

I think it has been argued in the second reading speech and in another place that, these days, \$300 is a pretty nominal amount of damage. One does not have to do very much to a car these days to be up for \$300 in damages. Perhaps they are not real accidents at all. My own accidents tend to be this kind; I tend to clip stationary objects. I have not done it for a long time, although it was a habit at one time. It did not ever do anyone except myself any great harm, and it did not cost a great deal of money and was not repayable from insurance. I think the amount of \$300 is sensible although I note that the Minister in another place suggested that some people thought the sum should be \$500. There is wisdom in keeping the amount down to \$300 at present until we see if this needs to be done to allow the police to obtain an adequate pattern of accidents from the reports.

The only real reservation I have is about the proposal that in court the person who is responsible for a breathalyser test may submit a written certificate and this is to be accepted as *prima facie* evidence. I realise that it is possible for a lawyer defending a person in court to call the person who has taken the test in order to give evidence, but this kind of test is different from the other tests listed in the Act in that there are about 50 steps to be taken and if they are done in the wrong order then the test is invalidated. If this is brought out in court the charge will not be proceeded with by the magistrate if it can be seen that there is some deficiency there. A person not represented by a lawyer and not knowing his rights fully will not therefore be in a position to cross-examine the person who had taken the test.

Although the Opposition is not opposing this clause it is looking at it a little suspiciously and will be interested to ascertain how it works out in practice.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: What is the number of the clause?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: It is clause 12 on page 5.

The main thing, for the information of the Minister, is that the breathalyser procedure is a complicated one and if the person was required to give evidence in court then the defendant may in fact cross-examine him on the spot. If there is only a certificate he may not and thus may let it go by default. The Opposition is not opposing the clause as such; it is just raising that query and hopes that the Government will look at it because it is one the Opposition will be watching to see how it operates in practice. The Opposition mostly welcomes what is in the Bill and supports it in general principle.

**THE HON. N. E. BAXTER** (Central) [4.56 p.m.]: For certain reasons I feel constrained to say a few words on the Bill. I would like to refer to the proposition by the RTA for the examination of vehicles by private garages. The idea came about many years ago when Jim Craig was the Minister for Traffic and has in fact taken a long time in its progress.

Some concern has been expressed by certain local authorities that it may even be used to take licensing away. I have done the best I can to assure them that it was not the intention of the amendment to the legislation. They would still have the licensing rights even though these garages served as examination centres.

Mr Hetherington spoke about the reporting of accidents when the agreed damage exceeds \$100 and must be reported. I took this up with the Minister on the 13th October, 1977. My wife had a small accident and had to report it. At first it was thought that the damage was minor, but the damage to the other vehicle appeared to be greater than \$100. While the accident was being reported the traffic officer said that it was time something was done about this because the amount of paperwork involved in the reporting of a minor accident of \$100 was considerable. So that was the reason for my letter to the Minister. Shortly afterwards, while returning from the country a kangaroo ran in front of my car, and there was no way I could avoid it. Quite an amount of damage was done to my car, and I had to report the accident because the damage was over \$100.

I approached the Minister by way of a letter on the 13th October, 1977. It read as follows—

Re the traffic regulation whereby a driver of a vehicle who has an accident does not need to report the accident unless there is reasonable cause for believing that the aggregate damage does not exceed \$100 and the owner of the damaged property is present or represented.

As it is some years since this figure of \$100 was set I believe it is high time, with the escalation of costs, that this was doubled to \$200.

It would save a lot of needless reports and time of departmental officers in hearing and recording the reports.

The amount of \$100 was set on the 19th May, 1969; a fair time back. I received a reply from the Minister on the 31st October, 1977. It reads as follows—

Thank you for your letter of 13th October, 1977 suggesting that the aggregate damage level of \$100 before an accident is required to be reported should be increased to \$200.

Late last year the Road Traffic Authority reviewed the legislative requirements for the reporting of accidents and concluded that no changes should be made.

During the review particular attention was given to the \$100 reporting level. Statistically speaking, traffic accidents are rare events.

That is rather amusing to me. To continue—

Consequently it is essential that details of as many accidents as possible should be available for any given location. The Main Roads Department makes considerable use of the information to determine priorities for the installation of traffic control devices, while the Road Traffic Authority uses the data to deploy patrolmen to locations with an accident history.

In your letter you commented on the time required for departmental officers to process the reports of accidents. May I take this opportunity to advise you that on 8th August a new road traffic accident records system developed by the Road Traffic Authority and the Main Roads Department was introduced throughout Western Australia.

A feature of the new system is the new accident reporting form which has considerably reduced the amount of time traffic patrolmen and Police spend in clerical work processing accident forms.

In view of the substantial reduction in essential data an increase to \$200 in accident value would bring about, it is not believed the amendment is desirable.

The Minister did not say anything about the time spent by the person concerned filling in accident forms. It takes about half an hour and then one can go on his merry way from the police station.

I was subsequently advised by the Minister, verbally in the corridor of the House one day—that was 12 months later—that a proposition had come up from a departmental officer to increase this amount, and they were considering \$300.

I received the following letter, dated the 30th October, 1978, from the Minister—

I am writing in further reply to your letter of October 13 1977 in which you suggested that the aggregate damage costs incurred in a traffic accident necessitating the reporting

of the accident should be raised from \$100 to \$200.

At the time of my former reply on October 31 1977, inquiries had indicated that the raising of the level would have had an adverse effect on the collection of accident statistics.

A recent review of the situation now suggests that the raising of the level would present few problems and it is proposed to introduce legislation for this purpose during the next session.

The Minister was good enough to tell me that when the report with this recommendation came up in 1978 he ripped a few strips off the officers concerned. Good luck to him. He has done the job and the Bill now increases the amount to \$300.

I wish to refer also to the transfer of licence on the sale of a vehicle, where the onus is on the vendor of a secondhand vehicle to ensure the number plates are returned to the Road Traffic Authority. This is a problem. When one sells a car it is taken over by the buyer with the number plates affixed until such time as the buyer relicenses the vehicle. If that person lives in a different district where he has to change the number plates and he forgets to forward the old number plates to the licensing authority, the original owner of the vehicle is liable for failure to return them.

This happened to my wife in connection with a car belonging to her which she sold in 1974 when she went to America and it was no longer needed because I had a Government car at the time. The car was sold to a friend who bought it for her son. He took the number plates off it and did not return them, and my wife received a summons from the shire concerned. The particular shire clerk used to do everything by the book. The matter went to court and the magistrate awarded costs of \$2 against my wife, but no fine. I have since spoken to other shire clerks who have told me they never take summary action in that manner; they advise the person concerned to give him or her a chance to do something about it.

I have a few queries about the breathalyser tests and the 40-kilometre limit, but I will leave them to my colleagues. I support the Bill.

**THE HON. W. M. PIESSE** (Lower Central) [5.03 p.m.]: I support the Bill, but I would like to mention a few matters about which some anxiety has been expressed by a shire council in my area. I hope one of the matters in particular will bring to the attention of the Minister an anomaly which arises when legislating for the whole State and

perhaps distances in country areas are not taken into consideration.

The first matter is the removal of the 40-kilometre limit to which suspected people can be taken for a breathalyser test. A person may be taken to a place up to 40 kilometres distant—and under this Bill even further if need be—and after the test may be left to find his or her own way home.

The case in point which was brought to my notice concerned a person who was accosted by the RTA because, I believe, it was fairly obvious he was not driving satisfactorily. The RTA took an Alcometer test, whereby the suspected person blows into a bag which indicates whether or not he is over the .08 limit. Prior to doing the test the RTA officer asks the person how long it is since he had his last drink of alcohol, and should it have been within the previous half hour it is reasonable to find a certain residue of alcohol is retained in the mouth, so that when the person blows into the Alcometer it registers .08 or more. However, if the person has only recently had a drink, when he is tested on a breathalyser, which is a much more scientific machine, it may be found that although the residue in his mouth gave a reading of .08 or more, in actual fact he had not absorbed more than the allowable amount of alcohol into his system, in which case he could not be charged.

Having been taken from his vehicle to a place up to 40 kilometres distant for the breathalyser test, if he is not charged and is allowed to go, how does he get back to his vehicle? In the metropolitan area he could ring for a taxi or use a train or a bus, but in the country he cannot do that. On inquiring about this I have been told that the police or the RTA will usually take him back to his vehicle, but they do not always do that, perhaps because of their circumstances at the time.

I have also asked what happens to the person's motorcar at the place where he was picked up, and I have been told the RTA officer will give him the option of having another RTA officer drive his vehicle to the police station where the breathalyser test is to be carried out. However, if the RTA officer who apprehends the person is by himself at the time, he cannot drive two cars and he cannot allow the suspected person to drive his car. He may call up another officer on his radio, but that would involve two officers and it can present difficulties at one or two o'clock in the morning. If the person has undergone the initial test of blowing into the bag, and the subsequent test on the breathalyser is proved to be over .08, he is then charged and must arrange bail. That is a different matter because he has broken the law

and has been charged in the proper way. If he cannot raise bail he must spend the night in the local police station.

I am hopeful the Minister will look into the situation of the man who is found to be not guilty, with a view to providing some means by which he can be returned to his vehicle in country areas, bearing in mind that his vehicle may be a long way from his home and from the police station. If this is taken into consideration I feel sure the people who petitioned me will be pleased.

Another matter about which people were very concerned was the four-hour time limit for breath tests. It was thought the suspected person could be taken any distance as long as it took less than four hours to get there. Those people were looking at the legislation back to front; I do not think any RTA officer would transport a suspected person to a place which took four hours to reach and then leave that person to find his own way back.

I do not think the introduction of the three-month waiting period for an extraordinary licence to drive a motor vehicle has been fully understood. For a first offence the licence is removed for only three months, anyhow. It would have to be a second or third offence for a licence to be removed for six months or longer.

I quite agree with Mr Hetherington that this provision enabling people to make application for a special licence has been abused abominably, and I believe this abuse has brought about the need for the measure contained in the Bill to close the gap. For a first offence the period is only three months.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: It is six months for drunken driving.

The Hon. W. M. PIESSE: Drunken driving is a serious offence.

The requirement for an officer who has conducted a breathalyser test to attend the court is unreal at this time. A signed, sworn statement that the apparatus was in order and that the test was carried out correctly should be sufficient, unless there is any doubt about the matter.

Having raised those items which caused some unhappiness, I support the Bill.

**THE HON. V. J. FERRY** (South-West) [5.11 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to mention one aspect of the behaviour of people who use the roads. The Road Traffic Authority carries out a multiplicity of duties, one of the most important and effective of which is its public relations exercise. The public relations section of the authority has been in existence for a few years.

I have had the pleasure of visiting the mobile road safety display unit from time to time, and I want to compliment the staff of the RTA who man it. They are extremely courteous and they relate very well indeed to people of all ages. I am quite convinced that through their efforts people at all levels in the community have a much better understanding of the RTA.

Officers of the RTA and the Police Force have a very difficult role to play in the community. We understand the reasons for that, but I must say we in Western Australia are fortunate that our law enforcement officers have a wonderful record which compares very favourably with that of other States of Australia and perhaps of other countries in the world. The record has not been achieved by accident. I believe it is the deliberate policy, particularly of the RTA, to ensure excellent public relations.

Admittedly, on occasions a situation may be mishandled, and my comment on that is that it is understandable because the officers are human beings dealing with other human beings, and perhaps at times misjudgments and errors are made. But in the main, those officers do an exceptionally fine job on behalf of the people.

The public relations mobile road safety display unit travels the length and breadth of Western Australia. It serves the metropolitan area by visiting shopping centres and schools and it also travels throughout country areas. I am informed it has visited a number of centres this year.

Members may be surprised, and I hope they will be pleased, to find that the unit has visited such far-flung places as Pannawonica, Port Hedland, Derby, Kununurra, Wyndham, Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, Broome, Dampier, Exmouth, Carnarvon, Carnamah, Dalwallinu, Northam, Merredin, Brunswick, Busselton, and Albany; and it will visit the Bridgetown and Wanneroo shows in the near future. I have no doubt the unit will be displayed also at other centres. That is the information I have been able to glean in respect of its main work this year.

The unit is fortunate to have the most active support of Lions Clubs in a number of areas, and particularly in relation to sight. As we are aware, the Lions Clubs direct their main thrust at the preservation of sight in humans. I am grateful for the work those clubs do in this area in association with RTA officers.

Not only is the RTA public relations unit involved in that sort of exercise, but also it is involved in testing headlights and speedometers as a free service.

One of the most effective mediums to get facts across to the public and clarify queries is that of radio talk-back programmes. I have heard, as I am sure have many other members, radio talk-back programmes on which RTA officers are invited to make observations and suggestions and to answer queries put forward by listeners. This works extremely well, and I am sure it does a power of good.

In addition to all that, the Road Traffic Authority provides films which are used for the further education of people in respect of road safety and traffic matters. Ongoing work in schools is extremely important. Traffic authorities over the years have endeavoured to reach schools, educate the young, and gain the confidence of children. RTA officers are continuing that programme vigorously. Here again, I am sure the programme pays off in the community.

It is a sad fact of life that we will always have road mishaps—I hesitate to call them accidents because in my view they should not happen. About 95 per cent of our road accidents are misadventures and not accidents because they are caused by someone. If we can break down that figure the community will be much better for it. When one looks at the statistics of the vehicles on the road and compares them with accident statistics, one finds the ratio of one to the other is decreasing. The number of road accidents may be increasing in some areas, but the ratio of accidents per vehicle on the road is decreasing. This indicates a number of things, not the least of which is the fact that vehicles are more reliable and road conditions are better. However, above all, it is the human factor which is the most dangerous factor in road safety.

The statistics show that the public should be far more aware than they are of the dangers of road travel, and they should drive accordingly. That applies particularly in Western Australia.

The provisions of the Bill meet with my general approval, and I support the measure.

**THE HON. R. J. L. WILLIAMS** (Metropolitan) [5.20 p.m.]: It was not my intention to speak in this debate, but I feel constrained to make some remarks in view of the comments made by other members. I agree with the provisions of the Bill; but I feel in relation to driving after the ingestion of alcohol we still have not gone far enough. Perhaps the Victorian legislation—and the Victorian method of enforcing its legislation, which is more important—is better than ours.

**The Hon. D. W. Cooley:** Never.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: It is a matter of opinion; I am entitled to mine, and Mr Cooley is entitled to his. I am aware he would not like the Victorian legislation, and that he will talk about the liberty of the subject when I explain what happens. However, I will refer also to the innocence of the subject.

As everyone knows, the Royal Australian College of Surgeons, Victorian Branch, recommended and had accepted that the blood alcohol level should be set at 0.05 in Victoria. In Western Australia it is set at 0.08, which is quite lenient. The Victorian authorities insist that a blood sample be taken from every person involved in a traffic accident. Many people would find that repressive and say they do not want to give blood or have their blood taken. However, it is extraordinary how the innocent may be vindicated by that action.

I will quote one example. In Victoria on a dark night a pedestrian stepped off the kerb and was struck by a car travelling at 15 miles per hour, with four occupants. The pedestrian was killed. The five persons involved in the accident had their blood sampled compulsorily. The result was astonishing; the blood of the four persons in the car registered no alcohol content, whereas the blood alcohol level of the pedestrian was 0.357. Therefore, the innocence of the occupants of the vehicle was established, *prima facie*.

Without that knowledge, it could have been said the vehicle was responsible for the death of the pedestrian.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: That is not an argument. Surely the car could have been responsible for his death.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: Therefore the occupants of the vehicle were exonerated. Other evidence was given that the pedestrian had stepped off the kerb without knowing where he was.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: You are saying that if the car ran onto the footpath and killed the pedestrian it would be all right?

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: Had that happened the driver would have been charged with driving on a footpath; but the fact of the matter is that the accident occurred on the road.

The other matter to which I wish to refer is that people have different metabolisms, which affect the rate at which alcohol is absorbed into the bloodstream. The most dangerous time on our roads is not at night after the hotels close, but in the morning between five o'clock and seven o'clock when the blood alcohol of persons who have been drinking the night before could be

higher than when they left the hotel. That might come as a shock to most people, but that is something magistrates are taking into consideration today. Today magistrates take into consideration the time at which the blood alcohol test was taken, and what was the reading.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott and I well recall that before the Law Reform Commission introduced the abolition of the term "drunk" many people appeared before magistrates without even knowing where they were; they were still under the influence of alcohol. In the past some people were not fit to plead because they were still under the influence of alcohol. Even as recently as yesterday a case was put out of the Supreme Court of Western Australia because one of the defendants obviously was under the influence of alcohol.

I would have liked the Government to go a step further and consider cleaning up the records of people who have offended only once in this area. Often they are young people. I have in mind four cases which came to my attention concerning very young men who had held a driving licence perhaps for no longer than six or seven months. Such a young man might go to his footy club on a Saturday night and drink more than he might realise is good for him, and be picked up while driving home. In the cases drawn to my attention, the young men had blood alcohol readings of 0.5, 0.23, 0.24, and 0.19.

This has had a most salutary effect on them. It is most traumatic for a young person to have his breath analysed firstly with an Alcometer by the arresting officer, and then by proper breathalyser equipment at RTA headquarters in Wellington Street; and then to be taken to the East Perth lockup and have to wait to be bailed out. I know in two cases this had an extremely salutary effect on the young men.

However, we keep applying the rod to those people. When they apply for motor vehicle insurance they must state that at one time they have been convicted. Consequently, we persist in punishing them long after the law has finished punishing them, in terms of higher premiums for motor vehicle insurance policies.

Perhaps the Government should look at expunging the records of those people after three, four, or five years, particularly in the case of first offenders. They should no longer be required to admit to a conviction. It is a terrible thing for a 23-year old who has developed some responsibility—although some of them may be even more irresponsible—to have to admit to, and

to have hanging over his head, an offence he committed at 17 or 18 years of age.

I wish to offer a piece of advice, prompted by what the Hon. Win Piesse said in respect of blood alcohol levels. If the officer asks what time the person last had a drink, and he is told it was five minutes ago, then the officer must wait for half an hour before he may test the person because the alcohol adhering to the person's mouth has a residual effect of 0.01 per cent. To the best of my knowledge that applies only when the person has plastic dentures. My advice is this: "If you are asked to blow and you feel you have had one too many, take out your teeth!"

**THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON** (South-West—Leader of the House) [5.29 p.m.]: I thank members for their contributions to the Bill, especially Mr Hetherington, who stroked it gently and asked one or two questions. He asked in particular that we watch the operation of clause 12. I think it is fair to say that everything contained in a Bill such as this is scrutinised constantly. As Mr Hetherington mentioned, many such amendments are the result of approaches made to local members of Parliament. There is no doubt people will watch this provision very carefully indeed.

Mr Baxter made some comments, and we all know he has had long experience of the legislation. I can well recall the occasion when Jim Craig started the campaign to put the traffic control from the local authorities and under the RTA.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: I opposed him every inch of the way.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: It is interesting the way the RTA has come about as a compromise solution, I guess.

By interjection, Mr Gayfer says that he opposed Mr Craig all the way. I sometimes felt very sorry for Mr Craig because his most severe opposition came from members of his own party.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Taking away licensing from the local authorities; that was the start.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Mr Craig was quite an enthusiast for taking it away, as Mr Gayfer puts it. It was not being taken away.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: That is a matter of opinion.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Some local authorities still have the control. However, it is interesting to hear the name of Mr Craig again. He was a good Minister for Police and Traffic.

I suggest Mr Baxter ought to be careful about talking about his killing of kangaroos without a

licence. Such a procedure is illegal and he should be a bit careful about owning up to things like that.

The point was well made about the need to increase the referable amount from \$100 to \$300. Very few accidents involving damage of only \$100 occur these days.

Some members referred to accidents. I always found that the worst ones occurred when the telephone post moved, not when the motor vehicle moved; but that does not happen very often!

I gained the impression that even the Hon. Win Piesse had a slight amount of sympathy for the person who occasionally has a drink and then drives. I do not think she meant to convey this. I am guilty of having a drink occasionally, but it is alarming that we do regard with some sympathy a person who has a drink and then drives. It is felt that some consideration ought to be given to him.

The Hon. W. M. Piesse: If such a person is innocent. Some people have been removed from their cars and taken away. I have been told on pretty good authority that, despite what Mr Williams said, there are a few cases in regard to which the first blow into the bag shows a reading of .08, but when a breathalyser test is taken, the persons are proved to be completely innocent; in other words, the level is well below the dangerous mark.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: There is no doubt about it! Say what we like about sexual equality, but women get away with anything. They really do. Mr President, your actions prove your sheer gallantry, and we appreciate and accept it.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: He never lets me get away with it.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: What Win Piesse said is probably true, but surely the moral is that people should think before they drink. If everyone knew what would occur, it would probably be quite salutary.

All those who have been around long enough know that in the past—it does not happen so much now—a magistrate would say that a fellow was exceeding the speed limit and had done this, that, or the other thing, but that, of course, there was some excuse because he had had too much to drink and therefore his behaviour was understandable.

The Hon. W. M. Piesse: I do not go along with that.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: The idea seemed to be that he was exonerated because he

had been drinking. As a matter of fact that should compound the crime and nowadays it does tend to do so.

If all people suspected of having had a few drinks before driving had an idea that they would be taken 12 to 30 miles away and had to walk back, fewer of us would drink before we drove motor vehicles.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: You have no chance of getting back or getting anywhere in the country. You have in the city.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: The driver should then wait until he reached home before he had a drink. With a hospitable person like Mr Gayfer, I could think of no better place to go but his home. I have enjoyed one or two drinks there in my time.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Yes, but you always have a chauffeur at your disposal.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I thank Mr Ferry for his contribution. He is always sensible in his utterances.

Mr Williams gave us the benefit of his encyclopaedic knowledge on alcoholism and the like. The subject is a great worry to all of us because of the contribution it makes to the number of deaths on the roads. It is a pity that such a pleasant social function should be the cause of so much heartache, worry, and, far too often, tragedy.

I thank members for their contributions. As I have said before, and members of the Opposition have reiterated, the Bill is a result of all sorts of approaches to the Minister and the RTA by a whole host of people. We believe the amendments will improve the legislation and that as a result of the improvements and of publicity concerning the real dangers associated with drink driving and speeding, an improvement will be made in the road toll. I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee*

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (the Hon. R. J. L. Williams) in the Chair; the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Leader of the House) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 13 put and passed.

Clause 14: Section 97 amended—

The Hon. H. W. GAYFER: I could not resist speaking on this clause, and I think the Minister has realised exactly why. I wish to detail the past

historical events which have led to the clause being included.

For a long time I have contended that every excuse is made by the licensing authorities in order to make it more and more difficult for people to licence their vehicles—in country areas in particular. This is done so that eventually all licensing may be brought under the umbrella of a central licensing authority.

One of the aspects which really annoys me concerns the number plates or registration plates dealt with in section 97. If members cast their minds back over the years they will recall that for years and years we had white enamel numbers on a black enamel background, and there was nothing wrong with that. Then some time ago we had the big debate in the Chamber and we were told that the number plates should be fluorescent and that the best combination was black letters on a white background. I can recall that the member for Claremont (Mr Crommelin) spoke at great length on the subject in the Assembly; that is how long ago the subject was under discussion. We were told that research all over the world proved that the best combination was black letters on a white background. This meant that despite tradition and despite the fact that the original number plates could be manufactured at Fremantle Gaol, a change was to be made to fluorescent number plates because this would be the panacea to all the problems.

Of course no-one seemed to care that our number plates then were very similar to those of South Australia.

Then a little later the Government again changed its mind and introduced personalised number plates with a "P" on them. They comprised black letters and numbers on a blue background, and also had the letter "P" on them.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Could you see any reason for the "P" when they were so obviously personalised plates?

The Hon. H. W. GAYFER: No I could not, because probationary drivers also have a "P" on the vehicles they drive.

Last year or perhaps the year before someone had the brilliant idea of bringing in black and yellow number plates. Originally we were told that our number plates looked too much like those of Victoria and so we put black numbers on a white background and then they looked like South Australia's number plates. Now we have black and yellow which are, in fact, the same colours as are on the number plates in New South Wales. In addition we have a personalised number plate. This was all done because it was said we must

have uniformity right throughout the State so that policemen could recognise number plates quickly and be able to identify the State in which the vehicle was registered.

By this time I had really had it. I had never heard so much baloney concerning the reasons for a change in our number plates. Actually it seems to be an annual event. Goodness knows what next year's colours will be!

I firmly believe that if a person wants a number plate to match the colour of his car, he should be able to have it. It should not make any difference because we have had so many different coloured number plates that the situation has become idiotic. We should not have to conform to any one particular colour at someone's whim.

After the last change I was quite annoyed, so when I was in Malaysia I decided to get my own number plates made. Why should I not, because everyone else has different number plates? Consequently I came back with three different sets, the same colour we had in 1925; that is, white numbers and lettering on a black background. I had a number plate marked "CR 500", the "CR" standing for Corrigin.

I drove around for some time with these personalised number plates. I saw nothing wrong with them. I had paid \$30 for them, the same amount which is paid for the personalised blue number plates. It was not a fraudulent number and there was nothing wrong with it at all. I was pulled up a dozen times and was asked where I had obtained the number plates. I asked the officer who apprehended me on each occasion whether he could show in the Act any provision which prevented my using the number plates. The situation became interesting.

We know what is in the Bill before us, and I suppose I should be opposing this provision. In the end I received a nice strong letter from Mr Reg Court indicating that I was not allowed to use any forged or fraudulently altered number plates.

I could find no reference to that in the Act and neither could my solicitor. I also received the advice of a very good friend of mine who is a solicitor. He is very knowledgeable on the subject of motorcars. His name is Mr Tom Hartrey. We felt that it looked as though this would be an interesting exercise.

However, I was too busy to follow the matter through the court so I removed the plates and replaced them with plates which had black numbers on a white background. Now I am told one may have only the number plates which are issued for the particular motorcar.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: Your argument is two-coloured.

The Hon. H. W. GAYFER: It certainly is. It illustrates the stupidity of all the talk which goes on about number plates. People stand up in the Chamber and talk about having the correct colours for number plates, but the colours are changed and next year different colours will be used.

The number plate I have on my car at the present time was not actually issued for the car I own now. However, the letters and digits are correct—CR 500. The number plate has black numbers on a white background, but according to the authorities the car should have a number plate with black numbers on a yellow background. When I sell the motorcar I will jack up the number plates, drive the car out, and put another car in between the number plates. That is a perfectly legal procedure and means I do not have to buy new number plates. Consequently the same number plates remain with the new car.

I have been told also I am not permitted to have a number other than the one issued with the car. This matter concerns country people particularly. The number on my plates is "CR 500" and I have had that number since I was 17 years of age. What is wrong with that? Every time one gets a new telephone directory, one does not get a new number; therefore, why should the licence numbers for cars be changed? Traditionally most country people have retained the same numbers.

In the town of Beverley the telephone numbers used to appear on the licence plates of cars.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: And post office box numbers.

The Hon. H. W. GAYFER: I have seen post office box numbers on the licence plates of cars also. I have removed the offending number plate from my car and I now have a legal number plate. However, how long will it be before people wake up to the fact that there should be a certain amount of rationale in the laws and that members should not stand up in the Chamber and speak piously about a correct colour for number plates?

Let us have a number plate in a colour which suits the car. For example, if one buys a black car one would not want to put a yellow number plate on it. Why cannot we have a number plate which suits the colour of the motorcar?

Legislation is now being introduced to prevent people from driving cars with number plates which are not of the right colour. According to the people concerned, the number plates are quite legitimate, except that they were not made here.

It is a lot of codswallop to bring in legislation to deal with these matters.

I should like to refer now to the registration label and the fact that such a big piece of paper has to be stuck onto the windscreen of the car. If a rock goes through the windscreen—as happens frequently in country areas—and the car is not licensed in the country, not only does one have the trouble of replacing the windscreen, but one must also travel to the offices of the authority with which the car is licensed in order to obtain another sticker.

People say to put the registration sticker on the side window. However, last week my daughter was picked up by a traffic officer, because the registration sticker was on the left hand window of her car. He told her she was not allowed to have it on that window, because it could be wound down all the way.

The Hon. W. M. Piesse: I have mine on the side window of the car.

The Hon. H. W. GAYFER: The Hon. Win Piesse will have to take the registration sticker off the side window of her car and put it on the front window. The whole situation is stupid.

The Hon. T. Knight: To get a new sticker, you will have to have a reason.

The Hon. H. W. GAYFER: One will have to travel to the city and go through the process of obtaining a new sticker. The matter was settled easily previously when one was allowed to put the sticker on the quarter windows, but no car has them now.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: We also used to have the round things which you put outside the window. Do you remember them?

The Hon. H. W. GAYFER: However, now we do not have quarter windows in cars and, because the side window winds down, one is not allowed to put one's registration sticker on it.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: The side window winds down fully, does it?

The Hon. H. W. GAYFER: The Leader of the House presses a button to wind down the window in his car; but in most cars one winds down the window. The Leader of the House might not even press the button—his chauffeur might do that.

Most of the other States of Australia have very small registration stickers and one does not have to break one's fingernails scraping them off every year. As a matter of fact, they do not have stickers at all in West Germany. Stickers are not used either in all the States of America. However, nothing has been done about the matter here and

we still have to go scrape, scrape, scrape to get them off.

In West Germany a little red medallion fits onto one's number plate. There is an extra hole in the plate and one places the medallion over it and inserts a little screw. I suggested that here, but I was told it was no good because people could remove it. However, people can remove the piece of paper.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: It is more difficult.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You have to go scrape, scrape, scrape.

The Hon. H. W. GAYFER: The people in West Germany and America are not dumb; but I am wondering whether we are. We should brighten up our ideas and have less red tape. Even the prefixes on the licence plates are being altered. Previously we were told it was necessary to have alphabetical letters and six numbers for the computer to work. It is becoming a joke.

Let us choose our own number plates. We should examine the matter so that proper registration labels for our cars may be obtained. Such methods are used in other countries. Therefore, we should be able to come up with a sensible solution here.

The Hon. NEIL McNEILL: I support totally the remarks made by Mr Gayfer. I refer members to the wording of proposed paragraph (f) (iii) which says, "any number plate or registration label other than one issued for that vehicle;". Apart from echoing the objections raised by Mr Gayfer, I should like to ask some questions. Over the years I have driven a number of vehicles and I have used the same licence numbers. Mr Gayfer has mentioned his number. Therefore, I shall mention mine. It is "WR 8", and is probably one of the best-known numbers in my province. It has become a personalised plate and such a number identifies the owner of the vehicle. Other people in country areas, such as ministers of religion, have adapted individual licence plate numbers for identification purposes. I see nothing wrong with that. One might ask, "How have you been able to keep the same number for different vehicles for such a long time?"

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: I do not think you should go into that.

The Hon. NEIL McNEILL: I am saying that the question may well be asked. The situation needs to be clarified in relation to a vehicle which is no longer licensed, because the wording of the Bill refers to "any number plate other than one issued for that vehicle". I am not talking about the registration label at the moment. What happens if a vehicle is no longer licensed? Will

the registration plate apply to that vehicle? Notwithstanding the remarks made by Mr Gayfer, it has been possible in the past for continuous use to be made of a number by one person.

For many years I have taken part in the controversy in regard to number plates and I believe I have a right to retain the number I have always used, which is "WR 8". As a result of this provision, when I dispose of my present vehicle, I can no longer use that number unless I buy a personalised licence plate. Mr Gayfer referred to those newly coloured plates and the fact that a charge is made for the privilege of having a personalised plate. I should like to know whether the number "WR 8" would be available for use on all other cars I may have in my possession at some time or whether that number would be able to be used only in relation to the car for which I purchased a personalised plate.

The situation is becoming ridiculous. In the days of the Hon. Jim Craig the argument was raised as to the real need for this sort of control over registration. In those days it was decided that the registration prefix for the country should be done away with.

At that time the police showed us the reason for the new registration procedure and the fact that, by the use of computers, it was possible to keep tabs on vehicles. This was particularly useful in the case of stolen cars, because it was possible to produce the entire history of the vehicle as it had always had the same registration number.

However, it was certainly not proved to me then that the same aim could not be achieved regardless of the number used. The same situation could apply whether the number "WR 8" applied to the Holden I own at the present time, to my previous Holden, or to any other car I might have owned.

It is possible still because surely that is one of the benefits of having a computerised system. I am very much in sympathy with the sentiments of Mr Gayfer, but really I do have my doubts about the value of that particular provision.

Secondly, I would like an explanation from the Minister on the two queries I have raised.

*Sitting suspended from 6.01 to 7.30 p.m.*

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: One can understand the anguish of Mr Gayfer. I really thought the number plates he has used for so long were quite legal. One only had to see them to realise that they were special plates. I suppose he has grown attached to them.

The reason I have been given for this provision is that the ordinary desire of people to have similar number plates especially constructed for their cars will be denied them because of the imitation plates which are made and distributed by people such as the self-proclaimed prince of the Hutt River Province. Without any approval he produced plates which commenced with the letters HRP—I assume this stands for Hutt River Province—with three numerals added, and then the word "Principality" in small letters at the bottom. Such replica plates have caused some confusion.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: That is illegal lettering—it is slightly different.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I am fully appreciative of the point raised by Mr Gayfer. It is my understanding that the provision is intended to mean that when a number plate is issued, the number is written down. It is my understanding also, that in the case of a number plate such as the one referred to by Mr Neil McNeill—"WR 8"—one can request that the same number be allotted to another car. Such a procedure is perfectly valid.

Over the tea suspension I attempted to make a telephone call to the numbers I was given, but unfortunately no-one was answering. I believe members are entitled to an answer, and therefore, Mr Deputy Chairman (the Hon. R. J. L. Williams), I will move to report progress.

#### *Progress*

Progress reported and leave given to sit again, on motion by the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Leader of the House).

#### **BILLS (4): RETURNED**

1. Legal Practitioners Act Amendment Bill.
2. Acts Amendment (Master, Supreme Court) Bill.
3. Solicitor-General Act Amendment Bill.
4. Criminal Code Amendment Bill.

Bills returned from the Assembly without amendment.

#### **PUBLIC NOTARIES BILL**

##### *Returned*

Bill returned from the Assembly with an amendment.

##### *Assembly's Amendment: In Committee*

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (the Hon. R. J. L. Williams) in the Chair; the Hon. I. G. Medcalf (Attorney General) in charge of the Bill.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The amendment made by the Assembly is as follows—

Clause 5, page 3, line 9—Delete the figure “7” and substitute the figure “10”.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: This is purely a typographical amendment in the sense that the figure “7” appears in clause 5, when it should have been the figure “10”. Attention was drawn to this matter by the Parliamentary Counsel and it was necessary to make this amendment because the error was typographical in the sense that it did not have any substance to it, but it could not be changed by order of the Clerks. Therefore, I move—

That the amendment made by the Assembly be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Assembly's amendment agreed to.

#### *Report*

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

### **APPROPRIATION BILL (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND)**

#### *Consideration of Tabled Paper*

Debate resumed from the 7th November.

**THE HON. V. J. FERRY** (South-West) [7.40 p.m.]: Mr President, I take this opportunity to support the motion before the House to take note of tabled paper No. 337, the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, and related papers. This motion gives me an opportunity to talk on a number of matters related to the Estimates.

The first item I wish to mention is one which gives me a great deal of pleasure. I would like to congratulate the people of Bunbury on obtaining the status of “city” for their town. It is a milestone in the history of Western Australia for a country centre, obviously outside the Perth metropolitan area, to be created a city. It is a tremendous milestone also for the people of the south-west generally, but especially for the people of Bunbury.

The City of Bunbury is a focal point of the south-west region which caters for about 85 000 people at this time. It is expected confidently that by the turn of the century the population will be approaching 250 000 in this same region. It is therefore of tremendous importance to the region generally that Bunbury should be classified as a city in 1979.

The celebrations recently enjoyed in Bunbury included many activities, and in fact, celebrations will continue for the next several months. One of the main attractions of recent celebrations was the use of a gigantic tent owned by TVW Channel 7. This tent was hired for the occasion at a cost of \$33 000. Additional costs associated with the use of the tent amounted to about \$18 300 for a three-week period, making a total cost of \$51 300.

The tent measures 106 metres by 65 metres, and it covers an area of 6 300 square metres. It is certainly a very big tent, and when it was erected in Hands Oval—a well-known football oval at Bunbury—it covered approximately one-third of the entire area.

The tent was the scene for a number of functions, one of the most enjoyable and historic of which occurred during the recent long weekend when a cabaret was conducted on Saturday, the 6th October. Some 5 000 people enjoyed the cover of that tent for a very comfortable social event. Certainly there was plenty of room for those 5 000 people. The cabaret was marvellously organised, thoroughly enjoyable, and the atmosphere was quite remarkable. It seemed to me that the tent became a catalyst; it captured the imagination and everyone obviously appreciated that Bunbury was on the threshold of great things. The night was a memorable one indeed.

On the Monday of that weekend, the Governor of Western Australia (Sir Wallace Kyle) was gracious enough to visit the town—as it then was—and he then proclaimed Bunbury a city at 3.00 p.m. This public function was again held in the tent and some believed that as many as 6 000 people were present. Certainly it was a tremendous gathering.

So the scene is set for further developments in the area. It is quite remarkable that a milestone such as the creation of a city can be the catalyst for further development. When one casts one's eye around the City of Bunbury one can see the multiplicity and diversity of industry there, including the service industries, medical facilities, and so on. It makes one reflect on its progress from the time of the first settlers. Certainly there is no doubt whatever that the City of Bunbury has a very sound base on which to proceed to a much greater future.

It has come to my notice that, subsequent to the proclamation on the 8th October, several new firms have made arrangements to establish premises in the city. I understand that a few of them were waiting for this moment, and the proclamation was the trigger which fired their

inspiration to make the step and establish their businesses in the new city. That is the way of things; confidence breeds further confidence. I am sure the south-west will gain in strength and confidence because of the status of the new city.

I congratulate the Bunbury City Council for its drive and foresight in conducting the celebrations as it did. The Bunbury Town Council, as it was prior to the 8th October, agreed to a special budget of \$150 000, which included a grant of \$50 000 from the State Government to assist with the expenses. I express my thanks to the Government for this generous gesture.

When one talks of celebrations, perhaps one could be excused for thinking in terms of "beer and skittles"; but such was not the case. The celebrations were held in an effort to promote the new city and to ensure the occasion was appropriately marked. Through advertising and other efforts, I believe due justice was done to the people of Bunbury on this historic and auspicious occasion.

I am sorry to say that such a wonderful occasion was slightly marred by acts of vandalism. The city was decked out rather wonderfully with many flags mounted on flagpoles on the various roads leading into the city. They were quite an impressive sight, with their banners of red, white, and blue, superimposed on which was the crest of the City of Bunbury.

A great deal of voluntary work went into the erection of these flagpoles. First of all, the flagpoles, which were of iron construction, had to be erected and painted; the volunteers did this work with a great deal of pride. The flags were then raised. Unfortunately, as is the case with human nature, certain people decided to souvenir a number of these flags. I suppose that was not unusual; however, in doing so they wrecked some of the flagpoles. Some were bent to ground level, twisted and mangled; some even created traffic hazards. This was an act of vandalism. I am pleased to relate that some vandals were apprehended.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Will honourable members discontinue their audible conversation while the member is addressing the Chair?

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I pay particular credit to one public-minded citizen who observed some vandals at work wrecking flagpoles and apparently souveniring flags. He promptly reported the act to the local police, who managed to apprehend the culprits.

Vandalism is a very serious and costly item in any community; it is wasteful and senseless and

unfortunately, because of human nature, seems to be a continuing problem. It is sometimes said we need more police officers, patrols, and the like. However, the only way to tackle the problem of vandalism and to achieve any degree of success is for each citizen to make it his or her business to protect the community in which he or she lives.

If any citizen sees any untoward action which is leading to vandalism, it behoves him to report the matter to the appropriate authorities and let them take action. I have the deepest sympathy for the police in their task of trying to maintain law and order. However, vandalism is an increasing crime in our community, and the people themselves must act as watchdogs to protect what is theirs. It is the community's assets which are being damaged and despoiled in this way. We do not want our buildings despoiled, our gardens wrecked, or our beautiful countryside vandalised in any way. It is up to us to take a personal interest in these matters.

If the community does not accept its responsibility to curb vandalism, these people will continue to get away without being apprehended.

I was reading some figures the other day which gave a cross-section of the type of people apprehended for various forms of vandalism. I will not have it said that vandalism is caused by only one section of the community; namely, our young people. That is not true. The figures reveal that people of any age commit this crime. Certainly, people in their late 20s figure prominently in the despoiling of the assets of the community. So, let us not for one moment think that only young people indulge in vandalism; it is a crime which is shared right across the board in our community.

I turn now to the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year ending the 30th June, 1980. The State Government makes payments in the form of grants to a number of organisations classed as charitable and public bodies. I have already referred to one such grant; namely, the \$50 000 paid to the City of Bunbury. This amount does not appear in the Estimates because the decision to make the grant was made after the Estimates were printed.

The Government assists a number of charitable and public bodies to encourage them to help themselves. I suggest to members that the grants made by the Government to these various bodies is based on the premise that the bodies receiving the money deserve such help because they have shown they are capable of assisting themselves. Any money which comes from Government

funding in fact is an addition to what these bodies are already doing.

It is said by some that Governments should spend much more money to help these organisations; I do not hold that view. I believe our community is strengthened and enriched by the many voluntary organisations which do such a wonderful job in a whole range of areas to help the needy people of our community. The work is carried out with wonderful spirit by volunteers. I do not believe such organisations should depend too heavily upon Government funding because that would tend to dampen down the spirit of the volunteer, and the genuine assistance which is given so spontaneously by many men and women in our community.

I wish to make particular reference to item No. 4 under the heading, "Grants to charitable and other public bodies", which deals with the Anzac Day Trust Fund. I remind the House that this fund was established specifically to assist those bodies which had an affiliation with ex-service organisations. The report of the trust dated the 31st December, 1978, reveals that some 27 organisations were assisted by the Anzac Day Trust Fund. It is worth recording that the Act provides for payments to the fund as follows—

Total net proceeds derived from race meetings held in the metropolitan area on Anzac Day. 60% of the net proceeds derived from country race meetings and of defined sporting activities held anywhere in the State on Anzac Day.

An amount (under the Liquor Act, 1970, Section 167) commensurate with the aggregate of the fees that would, but for the enactment of the Liquor Act, have been payable to the Anzac Day fund for occasional licences granted under various sub-sections of Sections 205 of the Licensing Act, 1911. (The previous enactment relating to the sale, supply and consumption of liquor.)

Particular reference is made, and thanks given to the Western Australian Turf Club and the Western Australian Trotting Association for their very consistent and meaningful contributions to the fund. Of course, other sporting functions such as football matches and the like, are held on Anzac Day. However, in the main it is the WA Turf Club and the WA Trotting Association which, through their activities, have been the main contributors to the fund. I believe it is a very worthy cause.

One of the organisations which receives money from the trust fund is the Torchbearers For

Legacy organisation. To emphasise the work done by some of these associations, I point out that in Western Australia, some 5 000 widows and over 600 children of deceased servicemen benefit from the umbrella of Legacy. I understand that Australia-wide some 93 000 widows benefit from the Legacy movement.

I am often asked why it is necessary in this day and age to continue the work of Torchbearers For Legacy and to raise more and more money each year. These people point out that World War II concluded in 1945, so surely there should be no need for this work to continue.

I regret to say that the legacy of war has caused an ongoing commitment to the extent that it will not be until the mid-1990s that this organisation will peak in its demand for help for widows and children of deceased servicemen.

It may surprise members to learn that since the end of World War II in 1945, more than 69 000 Australians have served overseas in theatres of war such as Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Borneo. There is an ongoing commitment.

The organisation is very grateful for the assistance it receives from the Government through the Anzac Day Trust Fund in the same way that other recipient organisations are grateful. By way of comparison, the Torchbearers For Legacy is committed to raising \$180 000 this year to meet the needs of Legacy. This means that it is committed to raising roughly \$500 each and every day of the year. That is a fairly tall order. Any business that could make a profit of \$500 a day would be a very good one. That is the commitment that Torchbearers For Legacy is required to meet this year.

The State Emergency Service is a very worthwhile organisation. It is one that is growing in importance in our community, for a variety of reasons. We do have national disasters from time to time. We have cyclones; occasionally we have earthquakes; and unfortunately we have bushfires. Perhaps if it rains properly again we will have some floods.

I refer to *Hansard* of 1973. On the 8th August, 1973, I asked a question in this House about the availability of aid for the people who may be victims of civil emergencies. I referred to storm damage to buildings and properties. I received an answer from the Minister of the day (the Hon. J. Dolan) in certain terms. My question was as follows—

- (1) Would he please advise what avenues of assistance are immediately available to citizens unfortunately the victims of civil emergencies such as storm damage to buildings and properties, as occurred in a number of localities in recent days?
- (2) As violent storms invariably dislodge some roofing materials, from what source may tarpaulins or other suitable weatherproofing material be obtained at short notice?

The Hon. J. Dolan replied—

- (1) There are a number of roofing contractors who are available at short notice, and who carry out emergency repairs at any time. The names, addresses, and emergency telephone numbers of these contractors are recorded at Civil Defence headquarters. Arrangements may be made by the Duty Officer.

I will not quote the rest of the answer because it does not really matter at this point. I am not having a shot at the Hon. J. Dolan because, on behalf of the Government, he answered the question honestly and fairly, as was his usual custom. The point I make is that the names of contractors were recorded at the then Civil Defence and Emergency Services headquarters, and one had to contact those headquarters to obtain them.

On the 14th August, 1973 I followed that question with the following further question—

Adverting to the reply to my question 7 on the 8th August, 1973, when it was stated that the names, addresses and emergency telephone numbers of contractors and firms capable of assisting are recorded at Civil Defence Headquarters—

- (1) Has an official approach been made to the Postmaster General's Department to include and print on the inside front cover of all telephone directories the title "Civil Defence" in the section designated "Emergency calls" (along with Police, Fire and Ambulance), and/or in the section designated "Emergency Numbers"?
- (2) If not, will the Government take the appropriate steps to correct the obvious omission in the interests of the public in times of civil emergencies?

The Hon. J. Dolan replied—

- (1) and (2) The subject has been discussed with representatives of the Postmaster General's Department. These emergency numbers, however, are—by regulation—restricted to Police, Fire and Ambulance Services, which operate on a 24-hour basis. Generally, experience indicates that the present system of listing numbers of key personnel under the State Government section as "Civil Defence and Emergency Service" is satisfactory.

That was in 1973. It seemed to me that if it was proper that police, fire, and ambulance numbers should be listed in the front of the telephone directory, the Civil Defence and Emergency Service should be listed also; but in 1973 that was not the thinking at all.

However, I am pleased to note that on page 23 the Perth telephone directory for 1979 has a full page headed "National Disasters". It has taken a while. It has taken six years.

Amongst other things, on page 23 of the telephone directory it has "STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE HEADQUARTERS LEAKE STREET BELMONT 277 5333". There are other telephone numbers, and there is a heading "BASIC RULES FOR COMMUNITY SURVIVAL". It has a list of disasters such as "CYCLONES AND STORMS", "FLOODS AND STORM SURGES", "BUSHFIRES", and the like. I am mighty pleased about that. It has taken six years to bring that about. I wish to congratulate the State Emergency Service and Telecom, as they now are, for including that information in the telephone directory. That is very good.

The funny part about it is that inside the front cover, where it has the heading "Personal Emergency Numbers", it has any number of things including chemist, dentist, doctor, electricity, hospital, police, Telateen, veterinary surgeon, and things like that; but there is nothing about the State Emergency Service on that page. The authorities still have a bit to do; but it is a great improvement. I wish to congratulate them, although it has taken six years.

The old question of daylight saving has been raised again.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: It is due for another go, surely.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: It seems to be an enlightening subject. Daylight saving has been the subject of many hours of debate in this Chamber in recent years. In fact, there was a referendum

on the 8th March, 1975, on that subject after the trial period of daylight saving in Western Australia. Daylight saving was rejected clearly by the whole of Western Australia, by a majority of just under 40 000 people. That number of 40 000 represents a margin of a little over 7 per cent on the "No" vote as against the "Yes" vote.

There was a recent editorial in *The Sunday Times* in which the following appeared—

Western Australia fell out of step with much of the rest of Australia with the introduction of daylight saving in several other states this week.

I say that the rest of Australia fell out of step with Western Australia. That is the way I look at it. Further down the article continues—

A referendum—surely the most democratic way to decide any public issue—decided WA would not alter its clocks for summer.

But that was in 1974.

In the editorial, it is said that the referendum was held in 1974. I have just said that the referendum was held in March, 1975. Certainly the Act to allow the trial of daylight saving was passed through this Parliament in 1974, and the trial period commenced in the latter part of 1974. However, it was not until 1975 that the referendum was held. In saying that it was held in 1974, it makes it seem it was a lot longer ago. Actually, only four years and eight months have passed since the referendum was held.

I am charitable enough to suggest that the writer of *The Sunday Times* editorial made a slip of the typewriter when that reference was made. However, it makes the time appear to be longer by one year. The writer wants another referendum. I suggest that after four years and eight months this is not the time at all. The editorial continued—

Perhaps it is time to have another look at the position in the light of experience. A state election is due to be held early next year—six years after the referendum.

The time is four years and eight months only, so there the writer is misleading the public inadvertently. I am charitable enough to suggest that. The writer continued—

This would be an ideal time to have another public poll to decide if the inconvenience (which might not have been fully realised in 1974) is such that there has been a change of mind.

I do not think we need another referendum. The subject was debated clearly; daylight saving was tried; and the people voted at the end of the trial

period and rejected it clearly. It would serve no useful purpose to hold another referendum for at least another 10 to 15 years.

The editorial in *The Sunday Times* suggests it is time to have another referendum. Let us consider that proposition a little further. If Western Australia was to conduct another referendum about daylight saving and it was rejected by a small margin, the people who are suggesting now that we have a referendum would be clamouring for another referendum later. If a referendum were held and a majority was in favour of daylight saving, there would be a call for another referendum a few years after that. So it would go on.

The subject has been canvassed well and truly. There is no need to indulge in flights of fancy and to talk about changing the clocks in Western Australia.

It has been suggested in an article in *The Sunday Times* that a number of business concerns are at a disadvantage because of the time gap between Western Australia and the rest of Australia. It is common knowledge that it is the practice of those firms and individuals who have a need to conduct their businesses in Western Australia in synchronisation with anywhere else in Australia, or anywhere else in the world, to adjust their times to suit their convenience. Whether we have Western Standard Time or daylight saving time, those people who run their businesses efficiently adjust their times to meet their needs. If they need to rise a little earlier, that is what they do. That is what they should do.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Banks cannot do it. Banks and post offices need legislation.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I know there are difficulties; but most businesses are able to adapt.

A point which people fail to understand is that our Western Standard Time does, in fact, have something like 20 minutes of daylight saving built into it in Perth, because the meridian runs somewhere east of Southern Cross.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: It is taken out of it in Kununurra.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I acknowledge that. I believe the Kimberley area—and this has been mentioned before—would be better placed if it were to adopt Central Australian Time because of the long distance to the east—

The Hon. W. R. Withers: We agree; but nobody else is interested.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: That indicates the complexity of the problem. I just make the point that we do not need daylight saving in Western

Australia. It is certainly an advantage in some of the places on the eastern seaboard, for reasons I can understand.

The big thing about daylight saving—and the reason the people of Western Australia rejected it, in the same way it was rejected in Queensland and the Northern Territory—is that it is not a question of saving daylight, but a question of heat. The hottest parts of the day are subject to very high temperatures. In Queensland, the Northern Territory, and Western Australia, it is of no advantage. It is a fact that during the summer months the heat is so severe that people cannot enjoy the hour saved, because it falls during the hottest part of the day. Therefore, that hour is of no advantage to the people in some places.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: We had to start work at four o'clock yesterday.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I think Mr Withers is much better for that. He is looking well.

I want to register my protest against another referendum on daylight saving. I could see no good purpose being served by it. I believe the subject should be allowed to rest as decided by the people in the referendum in 1975.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: We are generally out of step with the rest of Australia.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I suggested at a recent seminar that we should have a separate State in the Kimberley area with the Northern Territory. It did not hit *The West Australian*, but it hit the front page up there.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: There are one or two items on which I wish to touch. During the year of our 150th birthday, this Parliament had an open day. I understand that was the first one.

It was highly commendable and well supported by a great number of the public. It was a very successful venture and was done in the spirit of the 150th year celebrations as a gesture of goodwill. The House of the people was made available to them to visit, to look at, and perhaps learn something about it on that day. However, I am a little disappointed that at least one report in *The West Australian* of the 1st October, 1979, gave it such a small Press. This gesture of the Parliament was reported in such a way that the headline stated "Protests at Parliament open day". Of approximately 44 lines, 20 were devoted to the protestors who were members of the Unemployed Workers Union. Apparently, it was a very insignificant group which assembled in the grounds of the House and one or two members came inside the building. However, there were very few protestors and in my view they were

completely out of place on an open day which was a gesture of goodwill. It was not a question of protesting against the Government or anything similar. It was in very poor taste for *The West Australian* on this occasion to give almost half its space to a small group of protestors rather than write up a story about the Parliament of the people.

The Police Force of this State deserves our highest praise and gratitude. However, there are a number in the community who for one reason or another, all too frequently denigrate the police. As I mentioned previously in a speech this evening, there are occasions perhaps when law enforcement officers misjudge the situation—maybe they under-react or over-react—but this is understandable. The Police Force has to operate in all sorts of conditions and situations and on many occasions the officers have to make a snap decision and do as they see fit at that time. The Police Force has a very heavy responsibility to protect the community from those who would seek to be antisocial.

Unfortunately we have recently heard of two occasions when law enforcement officers suffered bodily harm. One officer was killed and another two were wounded by firearms. I suggest that the only people who really have a grudge against the police are those who deliberately set out to offend against society. Any decent-minded citizen in the community recognises the force as being there to protect the community from those who wish to throw their weight around.

I hope the people of Western Australia respond in a responsible way, as I believe they always have, and not be sidetracked into believing that the police officers in this State are heavy-handed and unfair at all times, because that is not the case. Only those who deliberately flout the law scream about police persecution and use similar phrases. It is despicable that this occurs because these men and women of the force are doing a job for us which is dangerous on many occasions and one which must be done in all sorts of conditions, day and night. They deserve our full support and it saddens me when members of the community see fit to denigrate the police officers for the execution of their duties.

If there are occasions when actions of the police need to be investigated or an injustice has been done then there are processes whereby the situation can be rectified. That is the way it should be and I hope that the people of Western Australia continue to support the police officers in the execution of their duties so we may continue to protect our community.

I wish to refer to some remarks made by Bob Hawke recently. He gave his views on how he would like Australia to be governed. I remember his saying on air that there were 14 Parliaments in Australia. In fact, there may be 14 Houses of Parliament, but there are not 14 Parliaments. He may have unintentionally misled the people with that statement because we all know that in Western Australia we have two Houses of Parliament, but there is only one Parliament. I do not think statements such as that do the community any good or Mr Hawke any credit.

As a member who represents a country area, I am absolutely horrified that Mr Hawke, a man in his position who is a very highly regarded leader in the community,—

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: He received a great write-up in Pickering's calendar this year I believe.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY:—would further the cause of the policies of the Whitlam Government when it was in office. There is nothing new about what he said, but it is very revealing that this gentleman, who aspires to represent people in Parliament and I assume aspires to be a Minister and even a Prime Minister of this country, would champion the cause of abolishing State Governments.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: It would split our nation into two or three different nations.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: It certainly would be split into many pieces. I am very apprehensive that the Australian Labor Party is still stuck on this type of regional Government. It wishes to have a regional Government in Australia and abolish State Governments.

As a country member I find this absolutely horrifying. The people clearly indicated in the last two Federal elections that they will not have a bar of the socialist centralism and if the ALP—and it really is an ALP policy—is still pursuing this course, then the State ALP will be duty bound to follow through that policy. Despite what the leaders of the ALP in this State might say and ALP members in this Parliament might say, when the crunch comes they will have to conform with Federal policy and do away with State Governments.

It is all very well for them to protest and say it will take time; they still encourage this policy and it is their long-term objective and they would go along with Hawke and the likes of him. It does our country no good at all, particularly country electorates. The country citizens whom I have the pleasure to represent reject that strongly. So, electorally, I feel a little sorry for the ALP that

Hawke has said this when the State ALP is on the eve of the next election.

I support the motion.

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [8.25 p.m.]: I was very interested to read a series of articles, written by a journalist by the name of Frazer Guild and of which due notice was generally given on TV, referring to the hospital development programme in Western Australia. I believe Mr Frazer Guild has been in Western Australia for approximately 12 months and came from Melbourne. Very little more seems to be known of his history as a journalist. Later on I will deal with some of the comments he has made which refer to waste and the blunders in our hospital development programme.

I believe I should go back to when I became Minister for Health in 1974. As a result of that I was the Minister responsible for this very progressive hospital development programme which we have in Western Australia today. I am very proud of what was done by me and my officers and others associated with the programme. I will not hold my head in shame as Mr Frazer Guild indicated I should.

When I took over as Minister I found after some time that the larger teaching hospital boards had ambitious plans for a large number of beds in those hospitals with up to 1 400 beds in Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and a similar number in Royal Perth Hospital. A lower number was proposed for the other teaching hospitals. At the time I took over Dr Davidson, who was then the Commissioner of Public Health, was near to retiring—it was within a few weeks—and I recommended that Dr Ken Carruthers be appointed as Director General of Medical Services. I recommended that Dr Jim McNulty should be appointed the new Commissioner of Public Health and that an equal position be created for Dr Ken Carruthers as Director General of Medical Services. These recommendations were accepted by Cabinet.

After Dr Carruthers' appointment I discussed these very ambitious hospital plans with him. My first words when discussing these were that I was not very happy about them. I did not believe they should even receive 1 000 beds and said that a lower figure would be more appropriate; and he agreed wholeheartedly. In accordance with that I gave consideration to the situation and at that time nearly all the top officers in the department were members of one or the other of the teaching hospital boards. I thought that it was a very awkward situation. I discussed this with Dr Carruthers and one other officer and my

inclination at the time was to move to withdraw all the departmental officers from these hospital boards because they were in a position where they would go to these meetings and discuss hospital board plans as well as many domestic matters. These matters did not worry the department two hoots because they were in the province of the hospital board, but it took up quite a deal of their time on issues when they could have spent their time much more profitably in the departments.

Dr Carruthers was comparatively new in the department. He came from the Perth Chest Clinic. I said, "I am prepared at this stage to appoint you to the hospital board and leave you there until such time as you get experience in the hospital field." In the position created for him he needed some experience in the hospital field, which he did not have.

I made the firm resolution at the time that within 12 months all the departmental officers would be withdrawn from the hospital boards so that they could devote their time to departmental matters, particularly as we then had coming up the hospitals 50-50 cost-sharing agreement which I could envisage would occupy the time of several officers. I preferred that they attend to that matter rather than spend their time at hospital board meetings, mainly discussing minor matters as far as the hospitals were concerned. At the end of 12 months they were all withdrawn from the hospital boards so that, as highly paid officers, they could spend their time on the job for which they were appointed.

During that early period a report of a subcommittee of the Teaching Hospitals Advisory Committee was presented to me. It dealt with projections of population increases and the number of beds required, not only in teaching hospitals, but also in the peripheral hospitals and private hospitals. It was a rather comprehensive document which contained a great deal of material covering the total position and making certain recommendations as to what we might require in the future. The report was left for some time as it was intended to review what had been done.

To return to the journalist Guild, it appears to me he was trying to give his editor a story which would help his position. It was only natural. He was a journalist trying to make his alley, one might say. Let us have a look at the first thrilling instalment in the series. On the 30th October the *Daily News* printed the following article under the headline, "Blunders cost WA millions"—

Planning blunders costing millions of dollars have been discovered in Perth's hospital building schemes.

Drastic modifications are now being made in an attempt to save millions more dollars of public funds which would have gone down the drain.

Before I continue with that article, I want to read a comment which appeared on page one of the same issue of the *Daily News* and which perhaps was written by the editor. It is not under the name of Frazer Guild. It says—

Public funds have provided a bottomless moneybag for gross extravagances, empire building and planning blunders in WA's hospitals.

For the past decade, successive governments have handed blank cheques to our hospital planners.

Imagine any Government handing a blank cheque to hospital planners! To continue—

With no controls, incentives or direction from government, the hospital-building game has become a free-for-all, with the heads of hospital departments getting virtually all the expensive space and equipment they asked for.

If the Medical Department and the Public Works Department exercised any control over the spending or commitment of public money, it is hard to find where.

Governments and health ministers, either unaware or aware but unconcerned, have allowed this scandal to go unchecked.

The government now probably will argue "What price health?"

But what argument is that when blind extravagance and lack of care provide not more luxurious facilities for the sick but a dramatic curtailment of hospital plans because we can no longer afford them?

I will later demonstrate to members how fallacious these statements are. To continue—

In fairness, it should be said that the present Minister for Health, Ray Young, inherited this mess. He has set up his own watchdog committee and has supported the proposed national inquiry into hospital costs.

But we are entitled to ask whether anything would have happened had not Commonwealth funds suddenly dried up.

I will later make some comments on that statement. To continue—

Now that the government is aware, it must set up a totally-independent body in this State to monitor and report publicly on all public health spending or the disease of the seventies will become the disease of the eighties.

To return to Mr Frazer Guild, his article continues—

Incredible examples of extravagance and over-planning are being found at the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre, where the eight-storey podium and ward block is being built.

I do not know why it is always referred to as the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre. The Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre is on an area of land controlled by the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre Trust. The Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, the State pathology department, the University of Western Australia pathology department, a chest clinic, and many other buildings are also on the same area of land and are part and parcel of the whole complex; but the actual podium and ward block which are being built there today are part and parcel of Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. Frazer Guild's article continues—

The result is that expensive areas of the new building, including operating theatres, will not be commissioned when completed late next year.

I would like to make some comments on that. The expensive areas of the new building were not built for today; they were built for many years to come. A hospital of the size of Sir Charles Gairdner is not built for tomorrow, because if it is built for tomorrow there is no way in which it can be successfully extended. We discovered this with Royal Perth Hospital, which was built in 1951. That hospital will be very difficult and expensive to expand because the podium block was built and used in conjunction with "A" and "B" blocks which were built in 1857. What has happened over the years at Royal Perth Hospital has created a situation where medicos doing very highly specialised work are in what one might call dog-box accommodation. I have even taken members of Parliament down there to show them the situation. One particular member was very critical of Royal Perth Hospital. A teaching hospital or a hospital which is likely to become a major hospital is not built for the day; it is built for a long time to come.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: What is a podium block?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I do not know why the word "podium" is used. It is the term used for a high-rise building. Nobody has ever explained it

to me. I do not know whether the Leader of the House can enlighten us.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It is just the main block.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The reporter Frazer Guild's article continues—

Some members of the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital Board expressed alarm at the way the complex was developing and the running costs which would be involved.

I will later deal with the allegations made by this reporter.

I now come to the facts of the whole situation. As Minister representing the Government, after discussing the matter with my officers and being advised by them, I told the teaching hospitals on the 1st August, 1975, that the proposed bed numbers had to be cut and the building plans had to be revised. Does that sound as though there was a lack of responsibility or consideration of the plans? Does it sound as though there were no controls by or directions from the Government and the hospital game had become a free-for-all? Of course it does not. This direction alone meant at the time a saving of between \$35 million and \$40 million in the then current plans of Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, Royal Perth Hospital, King Edward Memorial Hospital, and Fremantle Hospital.

Subsequently the plans were reviewed and a cutback was made. The plans presented by the hospital boards were revised because there had been a severe cutback. Discussions took place with the Hospital Planning Review Committee, which I had appointed, comprising departmental officers who were responsible for providing a plan to the Federal Government because of certain promises of funds. It was agreed, when proposed to me, that the United Kingdom firm Llewellyn, Davies, and Kinhill, who were recognised hospital consultants, be employed to vet the revised plans and advise on spacial and other requirements.

I come back to the accusation that there was no control and nothing was done. To a casual reader of the *Daily News*, that article would appear to give credit to Llewellyn, Davies, and Kinhill for the discovery that blunders had been made. However, the work of Llewellyn, Davies, and Kinmill was done before any plans were finalised. We made sure at the time that no concrete whatsoever was laid prior to the revision of the plans by Llewellyn, Davies, and Kinhill. No contracts were let and no tenders had been called. This journalist did not attempt to check his facts. He just tried to make a story.

The report from Llewellyn, Davies, and Kinhill, which was received in November, 1975, confirmed my decision of the 1st August in relation to the cutback on the plans. The report said the cutback was correct and recommended other amendments to the teaching hospital plans. On the 5th March, 1976, the review by a special committee of the building programmes, supporting the recommendations of Llewellyn, Davies, and Kingmill, was again submitted to me as Minister. That committee comprised the Commissioner of Public Health, Dr McNulty, the Director General of Medical Services at the time, the Director of Administration (Mr Horace Smith), and the Principal Architect.

In the article which appeared in the *Daily News* of the 30th October, specific statements were made. It said—

But we are entitled to ask whether anything would have happened had not Commonwealth funds suddenly dried up.

The article takes a great deal of liberty with the financial statements, because the State has always borne the lion's share of funds for hospitals.

At that time the Commonwealth encouraged the States to commence development programmes; and at the same time it called for a five-year plan, and then a 15-year plan, of hospital development within the States to be submitted to it. A committee comprising Commonwealth and State officers vetted the plans submitted to the Commonwealth before funds were finalised. The fact that, finally, some funds ceased to be available has nothing to do with the matter; because when we go back to the 1976-77 financial year we find the sum of \$34 343 757 was spent on hospital development, and the estimate for 1977-78 was \$28.959 million. From that was subtracted finance from private borrowings in 1976-77 of \$1.6 million; Commonwealth Government development programme funds of \$12 million; a contribution by the Lotteries Commission of \$3 100 184; and grants for cyclone damage at Port Hedland, etc., totalling \$15 600 875. All that money did not come from Commonwealth funds. An amount for similar purposes of \$9 170 000 million was estimated to be received in 1977-78.

Turning to the following financial years, we find the actual amount spent in 1978-79 was \$41 367 798, with no contribution from the Commonwealth. In 1979-80, proposed expenditure is \$47.822 million. All these moneys are coming from State funds and not from the Commonwealth. Therefore, the reporter concerned in the *Daily News* articles failed to

check his facts by looking at the Estimates to ascertain where funds came from.

In the first year we received some \$4 million from funds promised by the Commonwealth Government; in the second year we received \$12 million, and in the following year about \$6 million. That makes a total of about \$22 million provided to the State by the Commonwealth for its hospital programme. Of the original total amount of \$460 million promised to the States by the Commonwealth Government, the amount promised to Western Australia would have been about \$50 million. We did not get that money, but it has not affected the hospital programme because the money was provided by State sources. Therefore, the fact that Commonwealth funds dried up has not the slightest thing to do with the appointment of Mr Campbell, to whom Mr Guild referred as saving so much money for the State.

Mr Guild said that blunders cost Western Australia millions. He used that headline. I point out blunders have not cost Western Australia millions because the money has not been spent.

I am pleased to note that at the instigation of the Director General of Medical Services (Dr Roberts) Mr Campbell was persuaded to come to Western Australia to ensure funds were not spent unduly, particularly in relation to equipment to be installed in hospitals. Mr Campbell also looked at several other issues while he was here. Never has any suggestion been made—apart from that by Mr Guild—in respect of the possibility of abandoning plans. It has been merely a matter of bringing in a consultant, and the situation would have been the same if I were still the Minister. The Director General of Medical Services would still have brought in Mr Campbell to check on the facts, because we have a situation in which every medical practitioner wants this, that, or the other thing at every major teaching hospital. So the Government and the department were wise in obtaining a consultant to consider the matter and to ascertain whether or not the demands were reasonable. That is what Mr Campbell found in respect of certain recommendations he made.

I refer now to planning for the future. I believe members of the Opposition will agree it is wise to plan for the future, because only a month or so ago the Leader of the Opposition stated the Government did not plan for the future. However, I have presented a glaring example of planning for the future and I believe members opposite would wholeheartedly support this concept, particularly in view of the information available after exhaustive research.

I would ask the persons responsible for the *Daily News* whether they plan for an expansion in the circulation of the newspaper to cope with the projected increase in population, or do they intend to let the newspaper remain static and leave it to some other journal to fill in the gap? Do companies such as the AMP company and the Allendale Square consortium plan for the day in which a building is completed, or do they plan buildings for the years to come? Of course, they plan buildings for years to come. Private enterprise is not silly enough to erect a building today which will be outmoded tomorrow. In some large buildings office space is still not taken; and that applies not only in Western Australia, but in each of the major cities in Australia. Private enterprise companies do not build for today, but for tomorrow.

Such is the case with hospital planning. The fact is that population projection changes became evident in 1975. Even then the planning had been done to take us past the turn of the century and even further into the future. With the completion of the plan in a few years' time, there will be little need for great capital expenditure until well after the turn of the century. At the same time modern hospital facilities will be provided for our people.

The facilities will be available when they are needed, without it being necessary for people to wait for a hospital bed, which was the situation when I took over as Minister. In those days many people had to wait for hospital treatment because beds were not available.

The articles in the newspaper made sweeping generalisations. They referred to mythical, so-called experts and information from some unspecified sources and from members of hospitals boards. No names were quoted; it was a matter of innuendoes. It is surprising how many self-styled experts come to light in the matter of hospital planning and development. They seem to pop up from time to time in our newspapers and, without any research, data, or advice from world-recognised hospital consultants or from experienced people, tell us what we should and should not do. Even doctors seem to think they know all the answers. It is surprising how often this occurs.

I believe this series of articles was an attempt to discredit the Government rather than an attempt at responsible, investigative journalism, aimed at arousing public conscience.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I think someone in authority must have known that because they really had no effect; they just sank like a stone in a pool. It was a very bad series.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Yes; but it is not so much a matter of what we know as it is a matter of what the public knows. When members of the public see headlines such as, "Blunders cost WA millions", "Monument to bad planning", "Hospital built at double the price", and "Hospital growth out of control" they start to think the articles must have some credence. If nobody denies the articles publicly, the public will begin to think they are true. I am not prepared to let that happen.

It is cheaper to build today—and it has been during the past five years—than it will be to build in 10, 15, or 20 years' time. With the way costs are escalating, the cost of structures will more than treble if we leave them for 10, 15, or 20 years. Even now, hospital building costs have increased considerably over the original estimates as a result of cost escalation. The main podium and ward block at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital originally was estimated to cost \$47 million; that was the figure announced by the Premier back in 1975 as being available for that building. The north block of Royal Perth Hospital was estimated originally to cost some \$27 million. Probably the cost will be well above that; that is to be expected in these days of escalating costs.

Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital was designed to work in conjunction with the Government and private hospitals north of Sir Charles Gairdner. It was designed to cater for that sector of the metropolitan area. It was to take in a percentage of patients from country areas who needed treatment or operations in metropolitan teaching hospitals where the expertise was and where the specialists were.

There was a similar situation with Royal Perth Hospital. That was designed to serve what we referred to as the eastern sector, in conjunction with Bentley and other private and Government hospitals in the area. Fremantle Hospital was to cater for the southern sector, in conjunction with Rockingham Hospital, private hospitals, and Armadale-Kelmscott Hospital.

The plan was to provide each of those sectors of the metropolitan area with a teaching hospital in an area where the road system allowed for a fast traffic flow. One can imagine coming from the Wanneroo area, down Thomas Street to Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. Coming the other way, there are different ways of going to Royal Perth Hospital. That applies similarly to Fremantle, and it is not a very long trip to channel in to that major hospital from the southern sector.

I refer again to the article in the *Daily News* of the 30th October. The journalist referred to the following—

Scrapping X Block, a \$9 million wing which was to have included kitchens, physiotherapy and occupational therapy units, stores and workshops.

Instead, A Block will be renovated to include the kitchens and provide services and therapy areas and offices at an estimated net capital saving of \$6 million.

When I was the Minister, at no time did I state approval or disapproval of those things. Without approval, no funds could be spent. As a matter of fact, \$6 million was not spent there. An amount of \$6 million was not saved, because \$6 million was never spent, and there was no intention of spending it. Is that a blunder, when there was not intention to spend that money? Of course it is not.

We go on to the next item which was as follows—

The waste-disposal plans will be modified and another \$2.4 million saved.

He says the waste disposal plans will be modified, and another \$2.4 million will be saved. The hospital board had to satisfy the Commissioner of Public Health in regard to waste disposal. This is a matter between the board and the commissioner. It is pleasing to note that, after this time, they have compromised on the plan for waste disposal. That is a solution they did not come to when I was the Minister. Is this another blunder or not? The money would never have been spent because, all this time, they had been arranging a compromise with regard to waste disposal. There was no allocation to spend this money prior to Mr Campbell's being brought in. As a matter of fact, this was not one of the projects in which Mr Campbell was interested.

The next item was as follows—

The planned two-floor emergency centre will become a single, far more workable floor, saving about 65 staff—equal to \$1 million a year in running costs.

I wonder whose estimates these were. I am quoting facts, not guesses. The advice for this plan came from the medical profession. When a hospital is being built, the medical profession is consulted in relation to, say, the emergency centre. The medical profession believed there should be a certain type of emergency centre to deal with the emergency cases—accident cases, particularly—that would come into the centre. This is what was wanted at the time. The medical profession wanted the two-floor emergency centre.

After discussions, it was decided that they could do without the extra space. That is what came about. There was no expenditure of money there. It is not as though the money was spent and the work was done. If there had not been some flexibility, this could not come about. The medical profession changed its mind, or it agreed to accept less space, as I said before. The profession agreed it could manage in a smaller area.

One of the reasons for that was because prior to this a floor of beds had been removed. The fact that the centre was able to be fitted into one floor meant, surely, that the building plan was flexible. Is it a blunder to have flexibility in a building plan? Of course not.

The journalist went on to refer to what are minor matters in a complex like this. However, they involve a certain amount of money. He mentioned—

Theatre-type lights will not be installed in emergency rooms, saving \$40 000.

That refers to the type of lights required by the medical profession in the emergency areas. Members of the medical profession are the people who would have to work there. These decisions were based on technological advances and the demands of the profession. This was the sort of thing Mr Campbell was employed by the Government to consider. There was no money spent, because he was able to make changes. The podium ward block is going ahead, and it will be finished in the next 12 months or two years. Now we are looking at what will be placed within it. We say, "Do we need this or not?"

Mr Campbell was brought in for a specific purpose. He was to consult with the medical profession about the wisdom of doing things. Rather than being critical, the journalist should have congratulated the Government and the people responsible for their enterprise in doing this sort of thing.

The journalist continued—

A mobile X-ray will replace the proposed fixed X-ray in emergency, saving \$70,000.

Once again, this was a medical decision. What is more important is that the total outlay on X-ray equipment had been reduced already from the \$4 million demanded by the medical profession. It had been reduced by 50 per cent prior to Mr Campbell's coming to Western Australia. However, Mr Guild did not touch on that. He talks about things that Mr Campbell discussed with the medical profession, and areas in which reductions had been made. Money has not been wasted, because it has not been spent.

The article continues—

A revision of space needed for stores, and eliminating the need to move locker areas will save \$750,000.

I wonder where the journalist conjured up those figures. It would not be possible to take out a piece of the building, because it is there. Mr Campbell came to Western Australia when the main structure had been built. It was more or less in the finishing-off stages. He could not come in and remove a floor; so it is rather strange that the journalist conjures up this figure of \$750 000. It is a readjustment during the final stages of the building. That shows the advantage of employing consultants. Surely blind Billy would realise that the initial decision to reduce the number of beds would also require a reduction in storage space and space for lockers.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Is blind Billy cousin to blind Freddy?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Blind Billy, blind Freddy! I did not use "blind Freddy" because the chairman of the board of Sir Charles Gairdner is Mr Fred Johnson. I thought he may have felt I was referring to him, and I was not.

Is this the proper emphasis for a responsible reporter to place on these things? I say it is not. He mentioned several other matters. It is too silly for words for him to say that nobody had looked at the total plan. Of course the total plan was looked at. The total plan has been looked at while the structure has been proceeding. From time to time, the total plan has been reviewed by the architect's representatives who have kept in touch with the building. They had to have somebody on the job to see that the building was according to plan and according to the specifications. It is utterly irresponsible for a reporter to make a statement like that and for a paper to print it.

Now I turn to statements about Royal Perth Hospital and the north block. I refer to the headline in the *Daily News* on Wednesday, the 31st October which read, "MONUMENT TO BAD PLANNING". The article read—

The elaborate North Block at Royal Perth Hospital is going to cost \$60.5 million—more than twice the original estimate.

I do not know where the journalist obtained that figure. I would not like to make an estimate on it, because the original estimate was \$27 million. At present the progress is slow, because a certain amount of funds had to be devoted to completing the other hospitals. This work will be slowed up to some degree. It is unfortunate; but it is the only project that will be slowed up. The decision had to be made because of the situation in Royal Perth

Hospital. As I said before, there was a desire by the medical profession to obtain beds in Royal Perth Hospital for their patients. There was quite a waiting list there. There was no accommodation available at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, and there was little available at Fremantle Hospital because of the situation there.

Fremantle was a travesty of hospitalisation. People were placed on verandahs. Water pipes ran down the walls next to their beds. These were enclosed verandahs. Who would like to be in a hospital situation like that, on a long verandah separated by divisions where people walk along the side, and with four-inch pipes and smaller ones coming down beside the beds? That is not a nice atmosphere for a hospital.

The medical staff and the administrative staff of Royal Perth Hospital were dissatisfied with the situation. There had been an R and R programme going on for some years which had been instigated by Mr MacKinnon, I believe. That was designed to bring Royal Perth Hospital up to the standard of a modern hospital.

When I was in Royal Perth in 1974, the ward I was in was all right. The intensive care unit next door was all right; but when one walked out of the ward and went to the ablution blocks, one found them most depressing. One went into a small alcove about 6 feet by 4 feet in size, and it had a wash basin in it. There was one toilet in that. It looked as if one had walked into an old building. On the other side there was a similar alcove. There was one for the ladies and one for the gents, and there was one bathroom for a ward of 20-odd beds. There was a bath there, but there was no tap connected to it; and there was a shower recess.

If the nurse had to shower a patient, as was the case with me after I had an operation, the shower was very cramped. One went into the shower and the nurse stood with her legs almost against the bath. That is the sort of thing that existed in Royal Perth Hospital.

If one went to some of the areas where the super speciality equipment was being used, one found the people were working in very small, dog-box areas. Those areas still exist.

The specialists are working in these cramped conditions and naturally they are not happy about the situation. Something had to be done if we were to maintain the services we gave to our public. We have some very highly qualified specialists in this State; some of the best in the world. If we cannot show we are doing something to help them we will lose them. That is the reason

the north block of Royal Perth Hospital had to be built.

The old "A" and "B" blocks were built way back in 1857. They are big, open wards. I remember going there as a child to see an uncle with a broken leg. They were big, open buildings like halls with beds down either side. They do not have very good conditions, with just a small amount of room between each bed. The idea is to build the new north block and then phase out these "A" and "B" blocks and have modern accommodation for future patients. They will use the present radiology and other specialist areas for the extra wards. We are presently at the frame stage of the north block and there has been an allocation of \$679 000 to complete the frame. The work has slowed up, but it has certainly not been abandoned.

The next article by the journalist refers to the Wanneroo Hospital and is headed, "Hospital built at 'double the price'" and it reads—

The government turned down an offer from a private company to build the new Wanneroo hospital at a saving of \$4 million.

Instead of having the 80-bed hospital built for around \$2.5 million, it has gone ahead with its own \$6.5 million plan.

The hospital being built west of Lake Joondalup, near the new Wanneroo shire offices, is expected to be opened in July next year.

The offer to build the hospital for the government was rejected 18 months ago by Mr Ray O'Connor, who was then Minister for Works.

Further on it states—

The 80-bed Glengarry hospital was built and equipped two years ago for \$2.2 million, which included the architects' fees and other costs.

It has virtually the same general hospital facilities as Wanneroo, including midwifery beds.

Wanneroo will also have emergency and out-patient facilities.

Members should consider the two hospitals. I saw Glengarry Hospital being built right from the start; from the sand up. I used to pass it every day and saw it being built brick by brick.

It is an 80-bed hospital with very few special services and no room for expansion unless it takes over the car park, which is not very large. It is a different proposition altogether from Wanneroo Hospital. Wanneroo is an expanding area north of

the city. It is an area which will have to cater for current and future growth.

There was a demand for a hospital to be built before Glengarry Hospital came into being. Promises were made by the Premier and myself to have a hospital built in this area. The nearest hospital as the crow flies was Osborne Park. It was about five miles away. Development in the area has slowed to some extent, but this is only temporary; the population will increase very soon.

Glengarry Hospital has 80 beds, period; it is a private hospital. Wanneroo Hospital has 85 beds with provision and services for 200 beds to allow for future expansion. If we had not made provision in the early stages for services for 200 beds to be included in the hospital, the chances of expanding it at a reasonable cost later on would be absolutely nil. Again we planned for the future. When there is need for more beds, the major part of the expenditure will have been made in these times rather than with the high costs of future times. We will be able to include those extra wards and beds far more quickly compared with the time it would take to build the new services.

When anyone builds a hospital of this type the services work out to be about two-thirds of the cost. It is not the wards and beds that are the main cost. One has only to consider the various hospitals—even the Perth Dental Hospital—to see the services provided. Mr President, you have been in some of these hospitals and seen what is involved. Members should consider hospitals such as Royal Perth and Sir Charles Gairdner.

For a journalist to write stories such as these without checking the facts it is quite ridiculous. Perhaps this reporter should stand back and look at himself and say, "When I write another article I will check my facts pretty thoroughly first."

I refer now to the final Press cutting of the 5th November which reads—

#### Hospital Growth Out Of Control

Overspending on Perth's major hospitals has spread like a cancer out of control.

I can assure Mr Guild and the *Daily News* that spending on major hospitals has been completely under control since the programme was started. To continue—

And it has left WA out on a limb with a gigantic hospital development programme crippled, perhaps for years.

There is no crippling of programmes; the programmes are going on. The only programme slowing up is that of the north block of Royal Perth. This will go on as soon as major

development of other hospitals is completed. Very shortly allocations will be made for the Royal Perth Hospital north block to proceed from the frame stage. To continue—

There is no doubt that the headlong dash for more and more "acute" hospital beds in the early 1970s was a catalyst for the creation of the money-eating hospital monsters which have been created.

Planners were thinking in terms of 6.5 hospital beds per thousand population—a ratio which was trimmed to aim at five per thousand on the suggestion of the Australian Hospitals and Health Commission in 1974.

In most countries of the world it has been recognised that five beds to 1 000 of population is the requisite number to provide a reasonably efficient hospital service. A hospital built in Johannesburg with four per thousand would have been built on this basis.

He continued—

But why was Mr Campbell able to find such incredible overexpenditure in such a short time?

Mr Campbell did not find overexpenditure at all. To continue—

The major teaching hospitals were allowed virtual autonomy with its inherent tendency towards expensive duplication of specialities.

That is a complete and utter falsehood. During my term as Minister for Health, not only did I appoint a planning committee, but also I appointed a special committee comprising departmental officers and members of teaching hospitals whose duty it was to keep an eye on what was happening; to keep a finger on the pulse of any expensive duplication of specialist equipment. There had been a tendency for major teaching hospitals to duplicate the purchase of special equipment. We could not allow this to go on, because some of the items were very expensive and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. It would be stupid for a major hospital to have a very expensive brain scanner which was not operating to full capacity. The unit at Sir Charles Gairdner which was installed during my time as Minister is operating full time. The nuclear medical equipment could have been duplicated and perhaps not worked to full capacity, and this was what the committee was set up to check.

To continue—

It is significant that the Medical Department says it spotted examples of over-planning and over-use of space and pointed these out to the hospital board even though

these plans had necessarily been examined only in broad detail.

I have dealt with that. To continue—

Royal Perth was allowed to expand against the recommendation of the government commissioned report into metropolitan hospital needs and despite the reported promise from the Premier, Sir Charles Court, to Liberal back-bencher Dr Tom Dadour, that it would not be allowed to happen.

I know of no promises. The Premier denies he made any promises to Dr Dadour that Royal Perth Hospital would not be expanded. One wonders why over the years Dr Dadour has taken a set against the hospital. I know the reason; it is a personal thing on his part. As Minister for Health, I took Dr Dadour around the hospital in company with the administrator and board members. We had a cup of tea afterwards in the board room and he agreed that something should be done. We showed him what existed in the hospital. He agreed there and then that something had to be done. However, he still continued to criticise Royal Perth Hospital. I notice he has not criticised Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital.

These are the sorts of stories this reporter picks up without checking his facts. The reporter referred to a report commissioned in the 1970s which pointed out areas of overplanning. That is what the committee was put there for. He referred to Dr Scrimgeour. This person often contacted me, Mr MacKinnon, and Mr Davies, when we were Ministers for Health. I shall quote as follows—

Says Dr Scrimgeour: "Tax payers' money should not be used to bail out mistakes of the State government. If government planners had to pay for their white elephants there would not be any."

The article states—

Businessman Dick Kernot, chairman and managing director of a company which manages two private hospitals, has proved that economical building and staffing can reduce costs enormously and produce profits.

"The government planners have no incentive to meet targets nor any gauge by which to measure what they must achieve. We have to find a way to put the incentive back into planning," he says.

Mr Kernot is the managing director of Attadale and Glengarry Hospitals. Earlier in my stewardship of the State's health portfolio I was asked to go to Attadale Hospital and look at it. It was having financial problems.

I was asked to help, and the method of helping them was by means of the hospitals agreement under which expenses of public hospitals were shared on a 50:50 basis. Private hospitals received \$16 for each occupied bed per day. That helped them over their difficulty, and they have not looked back since.

Once they got on to their feet, they decided to build the Glengarry Hospital, and again they asked the Government to provide a guarantee against a loan of \$1.5 million, which the Government did. However, those same people are prepared to indulge in criticism of what the Government has done after receiving that assistance. I do not appreciate that criticism, and I do not think the Government appreciates it.

I will now refer to another gentleman, Mr Roger Pratt. The article to which I have been referring reads—

This incentive is the basis of the thinking of Perth accountant Mr Roger Pratt who last year urged a commission of inquiry into his proposals to change the government hospital system.

Except for the highly-expensive specialist services, Mr Pratt would like to see each hospital department be given a budget and told to balance its books by charging patients for treatment.

Says Mr Pratt: "At present the system is topsy-turvy, where people use the most expensive facilities and services which the large hospitals provide free and yet pay a fee to see their GP. It doesn't make economic sense."

I think I can remember seeing an article with regard to hospital expenditure written by Mr Pratt, which appeared in one of our newspapers some time ago.

He suggested a commission of inquiry proposed a change to the hospital system, and there was reference to each hospital having a budget. Each hospital now submits a budget to the department which has to be considered when the State Budget is being drawn up. The budget is examined in consultation with the Minister, and if it is considered that a certain hospital has submitted an excessive budget it is returned for further revision.

The department has to meet hospital costs within the funds allocated by the Government under the Hospital Fund each year. It has to bear the costs of all public hospitals, and budgets are worked to all the time.

It is difficult for a hospital to draw up a budget because it does not know the future demands of the various wages and salary-earning organisations during the coming 12 months. That figure has to be estimated. Hospitals do overestimate, to some degree, but they do have to include a figure to allow for escalation in wages and salaries. I do not know whether Mr Pratt knows it, but one of the major problems arises from increases in salaries and wages. When I was the responsible Minister I examined the costs of the major hospitals, and those increases in salaries and wages reflected back on to every other cost.

The public hospital situation is different from that of a private hospital where the number of staff can be restricted, and where the demands of the unions and other associations are not harsh with regard to staff numbers. A private hospital is able to cut back. Private hospitals do not have to provide specialist services—except the larger ones such as the St. John of God Hospital at Subiaco. Even that hospital finds it difficult to operate within a strict budget, and the buildings are being reconstructed in an effort to modernise and attract patients. Again, the Government came into the picture on that occasion by guaranteeing a sum of \$22 million on the venture.

I ask members to consider whether the Minister has blundered. I ask them to consider whether the Medical Department has blundered, or whether the Public Works Department has blundered. Of course, they have not. They have gone in with their eyes open, knowing exactly what they had to plan for.

A single action I took was to remove responsible officers from the boards which gave a chance for a responsible review of the original report which would have committed metropolitan hospitals to 3 000 too many beds. We had known of that situation for some time, and it led to the review. I will refer now to an article which appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald* of Friday, the 2nd November, 1979. The article states—

The 1,900 closures believed to have been decided on include 870 in the inner-Sydney area announced by the Minister for Health, Mr Stewart, in August.

These inner-city beds, mainly in major teaching hospitals, are all occupied at present.

Closing them is designed to save \$11.3 million this financial year, and \$22.6 million in a full year, by making about 1,350 jobs redundant.

Closing of the other 1,000 or more beds is designed to save \$5.5 million this financial year and \$11 million in a full year.

Most of these beds are not now occupied and consequently fewer jobs will be made redundant.

The article states further—

Canterbury Hospital: reduction of 25 obstetric beds, including 10 occupied beds.

Oberon Hospital: Beds reduced from 33 to 20, of which 11 will be for acute cases and nine for long-stay, nursinghome cases.

Bathurst, St Vincent's Hospital: Acute care beds reduced from about 58 to 28.

It states further—

The 27 000 available public hospital beds and 5 588 available private hospital beds represent a 20 per cent excess in bed capacity, according to the study.

The situation in New South Wales is that the number of beds is being reduced by more or less transferring them to outer hospitals. Sydney is different from Perth because of the heavy traffic congestion. For that reason, there is a tendency to decentralise their teaching hospitals. The article continues—

The greatest excess capacity is in the private sector, with an excess of 1 881 unoccupied beds in a total of 5 588 available beds.

That is a situation where the private sector has gone ahead and created an excess number of beds. The article which I have quoted indicates that the proposal was designed to save some money because it was believed the hospitals would not get enough from the 50:50 cost-sharing agreement plan. The State Government decided on the bed cuts because the cost-sharing budget approved by the Commonwealth fell \$28 million short of State requirements. Of course, the New South Wales Government receives a huge sum out of the 50:50 sharing arrangement. The year before last that State received \$346 million as its share. When one compares a sum of \$28 million, from other allocations, that is not a large sum, especially when compared with \$346 million received by New South Wales.

I want to remind members that as knowledge increases with new data and new plans, honest men make honest mistakes in the light of the information available to them. However, the word "blunders" implies incompetence and dishonesty.

I do not believe—and I am adamant in this belief—that the departmental officers were incompetent or dishonest when I was the responsible Minister and I do not believe they are incompetent or dishonest today. I found them to be hard-working, honest, and devoted people. I am sure that the Leader of the House will bear me out in that statement.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I do, 100 per cent.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I fully supported the officers of the department, and I had faith in their advice and competence when I was working with them as part of a team. I did not consider myself to be the boss with officers below me; I worked with them as a team in an attempt to achieve an efficient medical and hospital system in Western Australia. We tried to achieve what the people and the Government of this State required:

It is easy to criticise, as Mr Guild has done. It is difficult for some people to be constructive, and I hope that message gets through to Mr Guild.

I think those comments wind up the subject of my speech on the Estimates. I do not expect that much of what I have said will appear in the Press, but I wanted my remarks reported in *Hansard* because at some time in the future the situation will arise where people, instead of criticising the present development plans, will say that back in the 1970s there were people with enough foresight to do some forward planning and provide the State with an up-to-date medical and hospital system to last many years. If the planning had to be done in the future it is possible it would never come about.

This debate has given me an opportunity, which I appreciate, to express those views. The present form of debate has been a new innovation introduced in recent years, and it provides members with an opportunity to deal with urgent matters instead of having to wait until some future time when the Supply Bill or the Loan Estimates appear before us. In the past members have not been able to express themselves with regard to some particular subject at the appropriate time and usually they have had to wait some weeks for that opportunity when, quite often, the urgency of the whole matter had disappeared, and it was too late to get the message across. I support the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. Tom McNeil.

*House adjourned at 9.44 p.m.*

# QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

## RAILWAYS

### *Parcels and Mail Revenue*

337. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister for Lands representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that revenue for parcels and mail traffic received from Westrail is in serious decline?
- (2) Has Westrail closed receipt and delivery depots at some points in the metropolitan area, and placed severe restrictions on the main Perth depot, during the last three years?
- (3) If so, is this not a systematic attempt to abandon this traffic to private enterprise by providing the public with an inadequate service which has resulted in declining revenue?
- (4) If not, will the Minister advise what the Government intends to do so that the traffic which has been lost is returned to Westrail?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes. Revenue from parcels traffic has declined for a number of reasons—for example, consolidation into unit loads—but there has been no reduction from mails.
- (2) The Fremantle parcels depot has been transferred to Robb Jetty.  
The activities at Perth parcels depot have been modified to provide for a limited acceptance of parcels, by number and weight, per client and for the discontinuance of parcels delivery. However, parcels handling facilities at Subiaco and Kewdale have been upgraded.
- (3) No. Westrail has rationalised its parcels handling facilities to control costs and keep its rates at the lowest possible level.

- (4) Westrail will continue to market its services with the objective of providing the maximum efficient service to the public.

## RAILWAYS

### *Ore, Minerals, and Salt*

338. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister for Lands representing the Minister for Transport:

- What has been the total tonnages for each type of ore and mineral, including salt, carried by Westrail for each of the years 1976-77, 1977-78, 1978-79?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

	MILLIONS OF TONNES		
	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79
Alumina	2.10	2.26	2.30
Bauxite	4.46	4.42	5.42
Gypsum	0.08	0.07	0.07
Iron ore	1.88	1.23	1.23
Ilmenite	0.18	0.23	0.28
Mineral sands	0.71	0.80	0.76
Nickel	0.53	0.54	0.42
Talc	0.07	0.09	0.08
Salt	0.20	0.24	0.10
Coal and coke	1.18	1.29	1.40
Miscellaneous	0.04	0.03	0.03
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>11.43</b>	<b>11.20</b>	<b>12.09</b>

## TRAFFIC LIGHTS

### *Barnes Road-Huntriss Street-Sackville Terrace Intersection*

339. The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Minister for Lands representing the Minister for Transport:

- Further to my question 328 of the 7th November, 1979, will the Minister advise the number of accidents recorded at the intersection over the past year?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

Six.