

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 16th August, 1978

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

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

ACTS AMENDMENT (CONSTITUTION) BILL

Third Reading

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

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 31

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

(Teller)

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

(Teller)

The SPEAKER: The result of the division is ayes 31 and noes 22. The ayes have it. I declare the Bill carried with the required constitutional majority.

Mr B. T. Burke: An unconstitutional measure with a constitutional majority.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

NATIONAL COUNTRY PARTY: ALLEGATIONS BY MEMBER FOR MOORE

Inquiry by Select Committee: Motion

MR STEPHENS (Stirling) [5.13 p.m.]: I move—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the allegations contained in the personal explanation made by the Member for Moore in the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday, 9th August.

Firstly, I would like to refer to the allegations contained in the personal explanation made by the member for Moore. His statement was fairly long, and so I will be quite specific about what I am referring to. The member for Moore summarised his allegations as follows—

1. I was offered a financial inducement amounting to \$50 000 towards campaign funds and a promise of Labor Party Preferences to retain my Seat of Moore in this House.
2. The condition imposed was that I vote to unseat Mr Dick Old as Leader of the Parliamentary National Country Party of Western Australia.
3. The offers of this financial inducement and Labor Party Preferences were made to me by Mr S. A. J. Fletcher, the General President of the National Country Party in Western Australia.

Secondly, I believe it would be appropriate that such a Select Committee should investigate and report on the honourable member's allegation of the misreporting of his remarks in the Press. The member for Moore said this in his statement—

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

I believe if misrepresentation has occurred in the newspapers on a matter as serious as this, that also should be investigated.

I would like to assure the House that I have no joy in bringing this motion to the Parliament. It has been described as something which was initially a domestic matter and, under certain circumstances, that may well be true. However, in saying that I have no joy in moving the motion, I want it understood that my association with the National Country Party goes back over many years. My association with the party started when I was eight years of age and I first commenced to help in election campaigns. Since then my association with the party has continued right up to the present time, with the exception of a few years in the service and two years in Adelaide. So

I have a long association with and a deep conviction for the policies and philosophies espoused by the National Country Party.

Had the allegations been kept within the four walls of the National Country Party room, and had the machinery within that organisation been prevailed upon to pursue the matter, then perhaps I could agree that it is a domestic matter. I believe it was bad enough for the National Country Party image that the general allegations were made; but the member for Moore saw the need to use parliamentary privilege to detail the allegations and to name the General President of the National Country Party (Mr S. A. J. Fletcher) as the man who offered the bribe. As far as I am concerned, that brought the matter into the public arena.

Parliamentary privilege was used to attack a man, and as far as I am concerned that may be fair enough if the man is guilty. But Mr Fletcher has strongly denied the allegations and has strongly denied any guilt. Therefore, and particularly as a member of this House is involved, I believe whether or not the allegations are correct should be established. As I understand the situation, if the allegations are true they do not constitute a criminal offence, but they certainly constitute a breach of the Parliamentary Privileges Act.

If members care to refer to the book "Acts, etc. Relating to Parliament", pages 96 and 97, they will find that section 8 of the Parliamentary Privileges Act carries the side heading, "Houses empowered to punish summarily for certain contempts". The section goes on to state, "... whether committed by a member of the House or by any other person—". Further on, on page 97, the following is found—

The offering of a bribe to, or attempting to bribe a member.

So it is quite clear that the alleged events, if substantiated, would constitute a breach of the Parliamentary Privileges Act. Quite clearly the Parliament is now involved and has a responsibility to make a judgment on the matter.

Initially I considered bringing before the House a motion for the appointment of a Royal Commission, but I ruled that out principally on the grounds of cost. I think it would be readily appreciated that a Royal Commission would involve substantial cost. There is also the fact that if a member of Parliament appears before a Royal Commission in connection with statements made in the House it is my understanding he can claim parliamentary privilege in reference to any questions directed to him relating to his

statements in the House. Although I know from reading the Press that the member for Moore stated he is quite prepared to co-operate, there is the point that if something happened he could claim parliamentary privilege.

Another point is that even if a Royal Commission were appointed, it would have to report to the Parliament, and any action would of necessity be taken by the Parliament. This, of course, introduces the suggestion that members' bias would not allow a fair hearing. I believe we should reject that argument of bias because as members we are frequently asked to make judgments on many matters.

I opted for a Select Committee on the grounds that it would not cause any great cost to the State. I know the Premier has issued a Press release in which he stated amongst other things that he was concerned about the costs in manpower, time, and public expense a Select Committee would entail on what would appear to him to be an abortive exercise.

Earlier this afternoon I asked a question of the Speaker inquiring the total cost and the breakdown of the cost with respect to the parliamentary Select Committee appointed to inquire into the allegations made by the member for Ascot in November, 1976. I was informed by the Speaker that no specific amount can be identified as being a direct cost incurred by that inquiry. He said that relatively minor sums would have been spent on items such as photocopying. He went on to say there was no expenditure on travelling or printing, and that the costs of staff time would be regarded as coming within the overall costs of running Parliament at that time. I am perfectly aware that each Select Committee is not necessarily the same as the one that preceded it; but I feel that answer clearly gives a general indication that the cost to the State would be minimal. As opposed to the situation in respect of a Royal Commission, a member of Parliament can be forced by a Select Committee to answer questions in relation to his statements in the House.

The argument advanced that a Select Committee would not be appropriate because the bias of members would prejudice a fair hearing can be dismissed on two points. The first point is that when the Government decided to appoint a Select Committee to investigate the allegations made by the member for Ascot in November, 1976, a great deal of debate occurred which is reported in *Hansard*, volume 214 of 1976, at page 3891. So members of Parliament were involved in that situation, and it was considered appropriate that members of Parliament should sit in

judgment on another member. In my opinion the same applies in this case.

The other point is that to suggest there would be bias is a reflection upon the integrity of members of this House; because it implies that bias would lead members to make a judgment other than on the facts presented. It is most important that as members of this House we should retain our integrity and act in a manner in respect of which no-one can cast aspersions and say we are making judgments not based on facts.

In conclusion, I think we would all agree that the Parliament, above all other bodies, should uphold the law. An allegation has been made in this House by a member that a man attempted to bribe him. It matters not that the man is of the same political persuasion as the member concerned. The important point is that this House is aware of an allegation of bribery. I have indicated that, if substantiated, the allegation clearly involves a breach of the Parliamentary Privileges Act. We in this House have a duty either to prove the allegation or to clear Mr Fletcher's name.

If the House does not take the course requested and support this motion for the appointment of a Select Committee, I can only draw the conclusion that the Government prefers to see a smear rather than to attempt to establish the truth and, at the same time, give a citizen an opportunity equal to that of his accuser.

MR McPHARLIN (Mt. Marshall) [5.24 p.m.]: I second the motion. I rise to speak in support of the motion with a great deal of emotion, having known both the member for Moore and Mr Fletcher for many, many years. The accusations and denials that have been made in the public forum are most disturbing to me. I know the member for Moore does not fear an inquiry because I have discussed the matter with him; I know also that Mr Fletcher would not be over-concerned about such an inquiry.

Perhaps some degree of similarity exists between the circumstances surrounding the appointment of the Select Committee to inquire into allegations made by the member for Ascot, and the circumstances surrounding the motion before the House. I know they are not on exactly the same level, and that on this occasion the motion refers to a particular political party. I would have preferred the party to have researched and inquired into this matter itself, instead of having it brought to the House.

However, now that the motion is before the House at least we can obtain a decision by members which may set a precedent for the

future regarding the attitude adopted by the House when a matter of this nature comes before it. That is one reason that I am seconding the motion; and also I want to hear some comments which may be made in debate which will reveal the attitude of members on the matter referred to in the motion.

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [5.28 p.m.]: I rise to oppose the motion for what I believe are some very good and obvious reasons. First of all, it is unfortunate that the motion was ever moved. However, it has been moved and, therefore, the House must deal with it. I must say with complete frankness that I do not regard the motion as being one that is proper for the House to consider. I do not regard this matter as being appropriate to be considered by the Parliament; I regard it as a matter which is essentially one for resolution within the ranks of the political party concerned.

I invite the attention of members to the fact that if we accept this motion and accept that it is a responsibility of this House and a matter properly to be dealt with by this Assembly, we could create a precedent which would have limitless possibilities. We would be laying open the way for members who in other circumstances might feel they should use a similar motion because, for instance, there is trouble within the Labor Party. It could be that someone within the Labor Party might want to move a similar motion in respect of something that has occurred in the Liberal Party; and so it goes on.

Mr Jamieson: Why did you not advise the member concerned when he went into your office before he made his statement in this House?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I do not know what the member is talking about.

Mr B. T. Burke: Are you saying you had no knowledge of the content of the personal explanation?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I am talking about the motion.

Mr B. T. Burke: Of course you are not.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr B. T. Burke: You connived with him.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Sir CHARLES COURT: I say quite categorically, and this would be substantiated by the member for Moore, that I did not know the content of his document. He made that very clear to the House.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Sir CHARLES COURT: I come back to the point that this is not an appropriate matter to be dealt with by this Parliament and I have stated one of the reasons. Another reason is that this House would be entitled to assume that certain members of the National Country Party are partisan in this issue. I would defy anyone to name a member of the NCP in this House who could not be said to be partisan in this issue. That is not a very good way in which to start as a member of a Select Committee setting out on an all-party basis.

Mr Bryce: Have you forgotten November, 1976?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I will get to that. To try to get to the basis of a matter which is essentially a dispute or a difference within a political party in these circumstances would be difficult. If members accept the proposition I put forward, that it would be reasonable to assume NCP members in this House would be partisan in the matter and therefore would disqualify themselves from membership of the committee, we could then ask who would be the members of the Select Committee. If my guess is any good, and I have not canvassed Government members, I cannot imagine any Liberal Party member wanting to serve on such a committee. This is essentially an internal matter of a political party.

This brings us back to the Labor Party. From what one reads in the paper the Labor Caucus has made a decision to support the motion. I would be surprised if the more experienced members on the other side would want to be a party to this Select Committee. I doubt they would want it on their hands and their heads that they used the machinery of this Parliament for an exercise to study the internal affairs of another political party.

One is entitled to assume also, both from public utterances and other actions, that the members of the Opposition are themselves partisan in this matter. It is a matter for their own consciences as to whether they believe they would be the proper people to sit in judgment on a matter of this kind.

Mr Skidmore: Do you understand the meaning of the word "conscience"?

Sir CHARLES COURT: There is another reason that a Select Committee is not the suitable machinery for a matter of this kind. I refer to the Select Committee convened by this House and which is well known to most members in which the member for Ascot was involved. If ever there was a demonstration of how abortive an exercise of this kind can be when dealing with members of Parliament within the Parliament, that Select

Committee must take the prize. If members want proof of that statement I suggest they read the document entitled "The Table" being *Journal of the Society of Clerks-at-the-table-in Commonwealth Parliaments* which is a 1977 publication volume XLV. The journal reports in considerable detail the events that led up to the Select Committee virtually being declared abortive.

Mr B. T. Burke: It should not have been set up.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I remind members that the member who was the central figure of that inquiry refused to answer questions unless he could get certain assurances from the Select Committee. The House at large believed the assurances were there and implied in the legislation and the Standing Orders. However, that was not enough and the member wanted certain undertakings.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Sir CHARLES COURT: The member wanted certain specific undertakings before he was prepared to answer questions, so he did not answer the questions at all. A situation such as that could very easily develop if the legal advisers of any of the parties to the inquiry being requested were of the same opinion as the legal advisers for the member for Ascot. The same situation could develop; the committee could be abortive.

That in itself would indicate that until we get different Standing Orders and different legislation we have a state of impasse within the Parliament itself. I imagine no member would be prepared to act until the point raised by the member for Ascot and on which he pivoted his argument is cleared up. So, whether it be the member for Moore, Mr Fletcher, or someone else, no doubt that would be a very important point because any person involved would consider if it was good enough for a member of Parliament to use that as protection, when he has already the protection of the Parliament behind him, it would be important for someone who is not a member of Parliament.

A lot of play has been made about this being a breach of parliamentary privilege. I sought advice on this and my understanding is that no breach of parliamentary privilege was involved. There seems to be a tendency to read the words on page 97 of the publication we have covering Acts, etc., relating to Parliament as of 1968, as referring to any matter regardless of the circumstance. If members study the origin of the Parliamentary Privileges Act they will find it relates to their

duties as members of Parliament within the Parliament. This is not a matter within the Parliament; it is a matter within the National Country Party.

Mr Jamieson: Why did he bring it into Parliament?

Sir CHARLES COURT: In case members want a second reference in connection with this matter, I refer them to extracts from the Criminal Code, particularly those on page 105. The total extracts start at page 101 and I believe it is important to read them all. These extracts refer very clearly to suggestions of bribes or inducements to a member in the course of his duties within the Parliament.

In this motion we are not talking about something within the Parliament; it is something quite removed from the Parliament; it is an internal matter of a particular party. I reject the request for a Select Committee on those grounds also. I believe there is no question to be decided relating to parliamentary privileges as would be the case if we were dealing with a member and there was an inducement or bribe that might have been offered to him as a member of Parliament in respect of his duties within the Parliament.

For instance, if the president of a yacht club said he wanted a certain chap to be commodore and he wanted someone else to be kept out, we would not be bothering Parliament. In that case it would be entirely a matter for the yacht club. It is only a question of degree and not a question of a different principle.

I want to refer to the cost factor. The member for Stirling has used an answer given by the Speaker as his proof that a Select Committee would not be costly. Quite frankly we cannot treat that particular case as any indication of what would be the cost factor in time and diversion of parliamentary effort of members and *Hansard* and a host of other people if we were to get involved in a matter of this complexity; where people in a party were obviously experiencing a serious division about a particular issue and were then going to use the machinery of the Select Committee to air their differences and try to bring proof that one group was right and the other wrong. It would be a protracted affair.

It is not a question only of dollars but in the diversion of members' time away from their normal and proper duties to something I believe is quite irrelevant to the duties of Parliament.

It seems passing strange that the ALP has fallen in love with this matter and from the interjections of members opposite it would appear they are partisan in this matter. Again, their

attitude makes it clear they would have to search their consciences before they accepted membership of this committee.

For the reasons I have given the Government opposes the motion. We consider it inappropriate to be before the Parliament and we consider it essentially a matter for the National Country Party. We do not consider there is any question of a breach of parliamentary privilege. All the research I have done substantiates this. We believe also it would be well nigh impossible to get members for a Select Committee from all parties within this Assembly who could rightly say they did not have some precommitment in the matter. I am referring to those members who would be willing to officiate.

There is another group I have mentioned who I believe would not be prepared to accept nomination, believing it improper to be involved in the internal affairs of another party. There could be circumstances where a matter within a party is a matter of public concern or public offence but that would be more properly dealt with under the terms of the law without prompting from the Parliament.

However, when considering a matter of this kind it would be quite improper for Parliament to involve itself and it should be left where it rightly belongs; that is, with the National Country Party. We have had one experience of an abortive committee where a member of Parliament was involved in an inquiry of this kind and until we sort those problems out I do not want to get involved in another similar case.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [5.43 p.m.]: The Opposition supports the motion. I think we have just had a demonstration of the Premier's partisanship and the fact that he quickly made up his mind that there would be no Select Committee as far as he was concerned. He announced his decision to the media and then set about looking for reasons to substantiate that decision. He has not been able to come up with any substantial reason.

If the Premier wanted a Select Committee he could find members; I am sure he could direct members on his side of the House. He would be able to argue just as convincingly the opposite way to that which he has tonight if he really wanted to.

I am certain the main thing to come out of his statement tonight is his partisanship in the affair. The Premier has asserted that he is concerned with governing in his own right and with getting rid of the National Country Party from the Government, and no-one could blame him for

that. He has been working towards this end for the past three or four years; working towards it successfully. So the Premier is partisan and he does not want a Select Committee as it might interrupt the plan or the programme he has for getting government in his own right.

Having that aim and objective, I do not blame him in the slightest, and no-one in the whole of the Parliament would do so. However, what concerns me is that he obviously does not understand the motion. The member for Moore used Parliament as a vehicle for making a statement, at which stage he brought Parliament directly into the conflict. The Premier knew about the statement which was being made. Immediately before it was made the member for Moore was in his office and shortly afterwards he was looking for me. The message came to me that he had been discussing his move with the Premier and wanted to tell me what was going on. By that time the bells were ringing and I was not available.

Sir Charles Court: That is the normal procedure—to consult about asking for leave to make a personal explanation.

Mr DAVIES: That is so, but it was indicated that he discussed the content of the motion with the Premier and the Premier did not deny it.

I took the matter up by way of interjection when the member for Moore was making his statement.

Several members interjected.

Mr B. T. Burke: You had no prior knowledge, you said.

Sir Charles Court: Not of what was in the statement. You stick to the facts.

Mr DAVIES: We in fact gave permission to the member for Moore to make a statement. We have been caught twice on matters like this. The permission was abused initially on another occasion by the Premier. Because of the way Government members have abused that privilege, I doubt whether they will ever get a chance again to make personal statements. However, that is by the way.

We listened with great interest to the statement the member for Moore was making and after he had read some three pages of his prepared statement, it was fairly obvious it was turning into a "Blue Hills" or "Days of Our Lives" type of serial. I became agitated and, in fact, a few members became derisive of the manner in which he was proceeding because all that he said, he could have said in a 10-line statement. However, he detailed what was going on and how it all came

about and he detailed it in the form of a statutory declaration.

I became so disgusted with the way the House was being treated that I interjected. Mr Crane was speaking and then I said—

You did not approve this, did you?

I was talking to the Premier and he stared me straight in the face and did not reply. A little further on I interjected again to say—

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

There was no denial.

Sir Charles Court: I did not have to. You are supposed to keep quiet.

Mr DAVIES: Unfortunately the Premier—

An Opposition member: The Premier is well known for keeping quiet.

Sir Charles Court: You are supposed to keep quiet while a personal explanation is being given.

Mr Bryce: He is well known for hiding his light.

Several members interjected.

Mr DAVIES: I think all of us should keep quiet at times. Apparently the Premier has been hit on a raw nerve and it is quite obvious he had been discussing what was going on. He did not deny it then. No denial is recorded in *Hansard*, and although he chooses to deny it tonight, it is obvious it is part of the total plan he connived at—

Sir Charles Court: Total rot.

Mr DAVIES: —because it was the end for which he aims, and I do not blame him for that. However, for him to say tonight that this was done without his knowledge and that it was done in the best interests of Parliament and in the interests of upholding tradition is pure hypocrisy because he knew what was going on and he connived at it. *Hansard* shows that and we all know what was observed on the day in question before and after the statement was made. It all indicates he was part of it so we can understand—

Sir Charles Court: Let us get this clear—

Mr DAVIES: —his attitude and his reluctance to let anyone in the House sit in judgment on what he connived at.

We believe that the first thing which should be done is that a Select Committee should be appointed to find out where the truth lies. As the matter has once been brought to Parliament it has become the property of Parliament and it is up to us to uphold the rights and privileges of this House, as the Premier himself on so many

occasions tells us we should do. He says that the rights and privileges of Parliament are paramount. He uses them. If the Premier has nothing to be afraid of he should support the inquiry we want.

Mr Grill: What was the member for Moore doing in his office just after he made the statement?

Mr DAVIES: I do not think the Premier has even read the motion because we are not asking for an inquiry into what happened at the NCP headquarters or at the home of the member for Moore, or the Minister for Agriculture. We are asking for a Select Committee to inquire into what happened in this House. That is all we want to know and if charges have been improperly laid then of course the House can use the powers it has to put things to rights.

Of course the matter has been prejudged. It has been prejudged by the Premier and, as I say, I believe it was prejudged even before he read the motion or realised what the motion contained because of all people he is the one we would expect to uphold the rights and privileges of Parliament.

Until I made a comment on the weekend to the effect that I personally supported a Select Committee, but would have to wait to see what my party did when it went to Caucus on Tuesday, I had not made any statement on this matter at all. I want to remind the House that I had no need to, despite the fact that I was approached from both sides on various occasions, including one occasion when I was in Derby. I was contacted by telephone and asked to make a statement one way to support one faction. However, I have consistently refused because it was not my business what the NCP was doing. It was entirely the business of the NCP and it still is its own business. It still would be if the matter had not been raised in this House, not only by way of statement, but by way of a sworn statement—a statutory declaration.

If the member for Moore was so sure of his facts and if what he says is true and he was not prepared to perjure himself and he was aware that he would be making a statutory declaration and none of the statements were wrong, he could have made the statement outside the House with the same protection as he had inside the House. He would have had nothing of which to be afraid. However, he chose to raise the matter in Parliament, and having used Parliament as a vehicle to make a statement and obtain publicity, he and the Premier want to dodge using

Parliament as a means by which to ascertain whether the statement was correct.

A reflection has been cast on all kinds of people and all members of Parliament as a result of what has happened. What are the public thinking about members of Parliament when they realise that this kind of thing goes on?

Sir Charles Court: This has nothing to do with his parliamentary duties.

Mr B. T. Burke: It does not say that.

Mr DAVIES: It does not matter what a member does, if he is a member of Parliament is he prepared to accept a bribe? Is it right that he should detail the matter in Parliament but we are told that members opposite do not care because it was not in connection with his parliamentary duties?

In the course of the statement, on more than one occasion, the member for Moore said that he was taking the action in the interests of good stable government. He mentioned good stable government time and time again in his statement. Of course, that is what we are interested in—good stable government. However, it is not really what the Premier is interested in. He is interested in using Parliament for his own ends and not for the ends which everyone would applaud him for trying to achieve. He does not want the matter discussed any more.

Is there a close liaison between the NCP, the member for Moore, the members of the NCP, and the Government? Of course there is. When we read *Hansard* we find that there are members of the NCP who form part of the coalition which makes up the Government, and they have been an embarrassment to the Government.

The question has often been raised: What effect do the NCP members have on the Cabinet? What attention is paid to the things for which they stand? I believe that because some of the matters they wanted to promote would not be touched by the Premier, the initial split occurred and there was some changeover in the Ministry as it affected the NCP element.

However, the member for Moore says he is interested in good stable government and as the NCP is part of the coalition, we would expect the policy of the NCP at some time or another to be accepted, adopted, applied, or investigated by the Government as a whole, because it is a coalition Government. It is not a one-party Government, as much as the Premier would like it to be. Therefore what effect is the NCP having on the Government as a whole?

Incidentally, Mr Speaker, do I have unlimited time?

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr DAVIES: Thank you. I just noticed the timer and I was not sure whether my time had expired or I had unlimited time.

We wondered what practical part the NCP was playing in the running of this State because it concerns us all. At election time we all go to the electors with a printed policy—the NCP, the ALP, and the conservative Liberal Party.

As the coalition Government has been in office for a number of years we thought it would not be unreasonable to find out what it has been doing, so we chose 10 major items from the NCP policy from various sections of its "Policy Objectives Booklet" for the 1977 State election, and we framed questions around the policies and directed them to Ministers of the Government in both this House and in another place.

The result showed that in respect of the 10 questions we asked, the Government did not intend to implement nine, and in respect of the tenth it had no need to implement it because it had always been in practice anyway.

In respect of five of the 10 questions the Government stated that it had not even considered the matters, which tends to indicate that the NCP members in Cabinet did not bring the matters to the attention of the Cabinet or the Government in general.

This is a matter of concern to us. We would expect that a significant arm of the Government would attempt to bring to the notice of Cabinet the policies it represented. Yet, of 10 questions asked, the Government would not take action in regard to nine and did not in regard to the tenth because it was already policy; and in respect of five of the 10 questions the Government had not even acted and Cabinet had not bothered about them. This is the kind of concern we should be expressing when we look for good stable government, and this is the good stable government in the interests of which the member for Moore alleges he acted.

It was because of the need for this good stable government that the member for Moore acted as he did. Having said this, and having shown that apparently there is some need for positive action to be taken for good stable government, then of course we would expect that the Parliament would take up the offer of a Select Committee to ascertain what that good stable government is.

Members might like to know some of the questions which we asked in case some of them

might be interested in taking them to Cabinet on a future occasion. With regard to pornography and violence, the NCP policy statement states—

The Party believes there should be adequate restriction on the screening of 'R' certificate films and advocates an investigation into the effect which the dissemination of pornography and violence, through all mediums, including radio and T.V., has on the community.

In question 116, the member for Melville asked the Chief Secretary—

- (1) Have any investigations been held by the Government recently into the effect which the dissemination of pornography and violence through all mediums, has on the community?
- (2) If so, when and by whom?
- (3) If not, is it expected to hold any inquiries into this matter?

To the first part of the question the Chief Secretary replied, "No". No action had been taken. The answer to parts (2) and (3) of the question was as follows—

- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) This is an area that is continually under general review, but at this stage no specific investigation is envisaged.

That was dealing with the first of the 10 policy items. We are looking for good stable government but this is the sort of reply we received to the questions we asked.

With regards to minerals and energy, the NCP policy statement reads—

The National Country Party reaffirms its belief in the fundamental, economic and social superiority of the free enterprise system with the minimum of Government control.

It supports recommendations for the Act to be amended to give security of tenure for the position of mining wardens to be elevated to judge status and for provision to be made for the right of appeal.

The question and answer in relation to that matter were—

1117. Mr PEARCE to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Has the Government considered elevating the position of mining wardens to judge status?
- (2) If so, does it intend to take these steps?

Mr Young (for Mr MENSAROS) replied:

(1) and (2) No.

A further question was asked by the member for Yilgarn-Dundas, as follows—

1115. Mr GRILL to the Minister for Mines:

Has the Government ever considered provisions for rights of appeal in wardens' courts?

Mr Young (for Mr MENSAROS) replied:

The Mining Act already makes provisions for certain appeal rights.

Mr Bryce: Who said it was not a one-man band?

Mr DAVIES: A further policy statement in relation to minerals and energy was—

The Party believes there is justification for study on the practicality of introducing an income equalisation scheme for the mining industry.

The relevant question and answer were—

1114. Mr GRILL to the Minister for Mines:

(1) Has the Government considered holding a study on the practicability of introducing an income equalisation scheme for the mining industry?

(2) If so, does it intend to hold a study?

(3) If a study is held, when will it be held, and by whom?

Mr Young (for Mr MENSAROS) replied:

(1) No.

(2) and (3) Not applicable.

There was a variation in the answer on that occasion.

Mr Bryce: Well might the Leader of the National Country Party cringe.

Mr DAVIES: The policy on forests was—

The Party will press for the introduction of legislation to ensure the Forests Department is liable for the payment of Local Government rating on farm lands acquired for commercial softwood production or for return to native forest condition.

The question and answer were—

1118. Mr CARR to the Minister for Local Government:

(1) Has the Government considered the introduction of legislation to ensure the Forests Department is liable for the payment of local government-rating on farmlands required for commercial soft wood production?

(2) If so, will legislation be introduced?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

(1) and (2) The question has been raised and considered at various times and at present the Government does not intend to introduce legislation for this purpose.

So far the score is four out of four—no success whatever. The industrial policy statement was—

Realising the urgent necessity for improved Industrial Relations as a prerequisite for both a healthy economy and enhanced quality of work life we would promote an independent enquiry to recommend on how these objectives could be achieved.

The terms of reference of the enquiry would include Industrial Relations in the whole of Western Australia but with particular attention to the North West.

I took it upon myself to ask the following question—

1113. Mr DAVIES to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

(1) Will the Government consider holding an inquiry into the quality of work life in Western Australia with particular reference to industrial relations in the north-west?

(2) If not, why not?

That is an admirable ideal. We believe in it ourselves. The reply was—

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

(1) No.

- (2) The State Government has appointed a liaison officer, worker participation, to research all aspects of worker participation which includes elements of the quality of work life and provide an advisory service to all interested parties. A review currently being undertaken on the Industrial Arbitration Act involves consideration of industrial relations in this State and includes specific reference to the north-west. The Department of Labour and Industry, through the activities of some 90 inspectors in the various branches, is constantly monitoring aspects pertaining to the quality of work life throughout the State.

Mr O'Connor: Is that relevant to the motion before the House?

Mr DAVIES: The member for Moore mentioned stability in Government. We are trying to indicate that this is a two-party system and we would expect some of the policy matters raised by a significant arm of the Government to receive some consideration.

Mr O'Connor: Did you not say the only thing you were concerned about was the statement made under parliamentary privilege?

Mr DAVIES: Time and time again in his statement, made under parliamentary privilege, the member for Moore said he was acting in the interests of good, stable government. I am querying what is good, stable government and in whose interests he acted. I repeat that a significant arm of the Government would be expected to ensure some of its policies were carried out.

A policy statement on health was—

The Party will press for an extension of travel concessions for pensioners living in the country by providing for free return travel by Westrail rail or bus service on submission of a document signed by a doctor to certify that the journey is necessary for surgical and medical reasons.

The question and answer on that matter were—

198. The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Has the Government considered extending travel concessions for pensioners living in the country by providing for free travel by Westrail rail or bus service?

- (2) If so, does the Government intend to implement these concessions?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes, however, eligible pensioners living in the country may already travel by Westrail rail or bus services for half fare. In addition, they receive one free single or return journey a year on Westrail rail or road services. Eligible pensioners living in the country requiring specialised medical treatment in the metropolitan area also travel free of charge on Westrail rail or road services.
- (2) No further extension of existing concessions are proposed at the present time.

The policy statement on rail transport was—

The Party will seek continued modernisation of rolling stock for greater efficiency, maintenance of adequate services to country areas, and subsidised rail financing by direct charge against consolidated revenue to offset losses or depletion of working capital.

That was an excellent policy. I am sure it was taken directly from our policy. The question and answer were—

1123. Mr McIVER to the Premier:

- (1) Has the Government considered subsidising rail financing by direct charge against consolidated revenue to offset losses or depletion of work in capital?
- (2) If so, does it intend to take action on this matter?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

This question is not understood.

That seems to be a convenient answer. To continue—

All railway operating costs including provisions for depreciation and maintenance of assets, are a direct charge against Consolidated Revenue as the Public Accounts show.

It therefore follows that all operating losses are thus borne by Consolidated Revenue Fund—as are the debt servicing costs of the railways where there are operating losses, or the operating surpluses are inadequate to service railway debts.

Another one down the drain! A further policy statement on rail transport was—

The Party will seek the encouragement of the expansion and safety of commuter services within the State; to investigate the electrification of the suburban rail system and a planned study for extending the existing system for ecological advantages in a social and environmental sense.

The question and answer relating to that matter were—

1122. Mr McIVER to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Since the last State election has the Government held any further investigations into electrification of the suburban rail system?
- (2) If so, when?
- (3) If 'No' to (1), are any investigations to be held?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) The Federal Government has indicated it will not provide funds for electrification of the suburban rail system and with fewer passengers using the services the heavy capital cost required to be met by the State could not be justified in the present economic climate.
- (3) Not in the short term.

So there will be no investigation; another policy item goes down the drain.

The policy statement on roads was—

The Party will seek Federal and State funds for non-urban roads to be allocated through local councils to increase efficient use of resources and stimulate regional economics.

The question and answer were—

1124. Mr McIVER to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

Does the Government intend to urge the Federal Government that all Federal and State funds for non-urban roads be allocated through local councils?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

No. It would be quite impracticable to expect small local government authorities to be responsible for major sections of national and other

highways passing through their area.

We might say that so far the National Country Party has been a rather ineffective arm of government, although the member for Moore said he was looking for good, stable government and he acted as he did by way of seeking it.

I do not think I need to detail all the statements on the policy objectives of the National Country Party and the questions and answers relating to them. I have them all here if any member is interested to see them. If we are concerned about good, stable government, we must be concerned about the way the Government acts, and we want to ensure it is a true coalition.

Having said that, and having decided this is a very necessary part of democratic government, we would think the people concerned in running the Parliament would be concerned about upholding the privileges of Parliament. Yet the Premier connived with the member for Moore in regard to the statement that member made. The Premier knew what the member for Moore was doing and what he was stirring up. The Premier knew the contents of the statement, and he knew there would be repercussions. The Premier has now refused to take any action to deal with those repercussions. What kind of situation are we in?

It is not unfortunate that the motion was moved. I believe the member for Stirling had a duty to move it, and had he not moved it I am positive someone else would have, because we must be concerned about the privileges of Parliament. The motion is not inappropriate in any way. Parliament having been used as a vehicle to raise the matter, Parliament must follow it through to its logical conclusion.

Despite what has been said about an earlier Select Committee, and regardless of what the outcome would be, I do not believe there is any analogy between the two situations. We have here the statement which was made, and although the motion is in very broad terms the member for Stirling, in speaking to it, detailed quite clearly and precisely the matters which are of concern to him. Some of the matters are somewhat hidden in the verbiage of the statement, but I think they require attention.

I am pleased to support the motion and I will be pleased to support the appointment of a Select Committee. I do not want the Premier to tell me what will happen as far as our members are concerned. I am quite confident there are men with long experience in the Parliament who would be quite prepared to serve on a Select Committee and who would approach the matter in a non-

partisan, objective manner. I can do without the Premier's advice in these matters.

We support the motion and hope the House will carry it.

Sitting suspended from 6.12 to 7.30 p.m.

MR PEARCE (Gosnells) [7.30 p.m.]: I must confess that at first blush there does seem to be some attraction in the Premier's proposition that this matter with regard to the internecine strife in the National Country Party should be left to the party itself.

Mr Laurance: You regrouped during the dinner hour?

Mr PEARCE: That is a remarkably foolish interjection from the honourable member. If he does not understand the term "at first blush" I will spell it out for him.

Without looking deeply into the matter, it does seem that here is an affair of the National Country Party that has intruded into the parliamentary arena only because one member of Parliament in that strife took it upon himself to bring it before Parliament by way of a personal explanation.

There ought to be a fair presumption on the part of members that when a member makes a personal statement he is telling the truth. It is significant for a member to come into the House to seek leave to make a personal explanation under privilege—and in this case also by way of a statutory declaration—on a particular matter with which he is concerned. This procedure has been used by parliamentarians on a number of occasions, but always on serious occasions. It is a fair presumption that when a person decides to make a statement before other members on his honour, we ought to presume it is true; and that it is incumbent on us to believe statements made in this way. Any one of us may at some time have to make a statement of that kind.

The essential presumption is that the member for Moore ought to be believed when he made his personal statement. Unfortunately when I looked at the personal explanation and some of the statements in it, they seemed to be inherently unlikely. I did make some effort to check on some of the facts claimed by the member for Moore in his personal explanation. I did that with some trepidation, because members ought not to have a need to check on the facts.

I came to the unpalatable conclusion that the member for Moore had lied to the House in certain aspects of his statement. This is a serious matter, indeed. If a member makes a personal explanation in this Chamber on his honour and

under privilege, in which he can attack people in or out of Parliament without legal recourse against him, then if he has lied it would be a very serious matter indeed.

Point of Order

Sir CHARLES COURT: I rise on a point of order. Is it proper for a member to express the opinion such as that expressed by the member for Gosnells that he has formed the opinion that another member has lied? He has imputed improper motives on the part of one of our members.

Mr B. T. Burke: That was five minutes ago.

Sir CHARLES COURT: He went on to amplify it.

The SPEAKER: I find myself in some difficulty, because it is generally the rule that a member may not imply improper motives on the part of another member, but in the case of a specific motion then matters that might otherwise be unacceptable can be considered. However, I would request the member for Gosnells not to speak in that vein, because I feel it is probably not necessary for him to make the points he wants to make on the question before the House.

Mr O'Connor: He is taking advantage of parliamentary privilege.

Debate Resumed

Mr PEARCE: I shall be very specific in the points I make to the House. I do feel it incumbent upon myself to present to the House in advance what my conclusions are. I did not use the particular words that I used very lightly. The point to which I direct attention in the personal explanation is not the lengthy details of what he said on the telephone, the people with whom he had breakfast, and the dealings with Mr Fletcher. These are matters incapable of proof; that is, what actually transpired between Mr Fletcher and the member for Moore.

There was one area that did strike me that was, firstly, inherently unlikely and, secondly, capable of proof. I am referring to the dealings between the member for Moore and certain journalists. You, Mr Speaker, would be in the same position I was in when the member for Moore made the personal explanation; that he had said on several occasions to a number of journalists in different media that the person concerned who allegedly offered him the bribe was not Mr Fletcher. You would have heard that statement attributed to the member for Moore, on radio, on television, and in two daily newspapers.

It seems to me inherently unlikely that the explanation presented by the member for Moore

would be the sole reason that it was so widely quoted by so many different people in the different media.

I wish to quote a section of the personal explanation of the member for Moore. Before doing that I would indicate the point I am alluding to is that there appears to be strong evidence to show this portion of the statement is not accurate; in fact it is misleading and inaccurate. That being the case, the journalists who have been maligned under privilege by the member for Moore ought to have a chance to appear before a Select Committee to state their cases and protect their professional reputations which were damaged by the misleading statements.

This was what the member for Moore said in his personal explanation on Wednesday last, and I am reading from the corrected proof of his speech—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I have with me the two front pages of the *Daily News* editions. I refer to the third paragraph in the first edition in which the following appeared—

He said he had been told by the faction

supporting the State party president, Mr Jim Fletcher, that he would receive financial support for his next election campaign if he supported them.

In the subsequent edition that paragraph was amplified in a following paragraph, and this new fourth paragraph reads—

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

That is a fairly unusual alteration of a front page story in the *Daily News* in between editions.

Mr John Arthur, the journalist concerned, has assured me he would welcome the opportunity to appear before a Select Committee to make statements along these lines: that he spoke to Mr Crane over the telephone prior to a party meeting Mr Crane was attending, and as a result of a conversation with Mr Crane about this alleged bribe he wrote the front page story that appeared in the first edition.

Subsequently Mr Arthur rang the member for Moore about what happened at the party meeting. The member for Moore asked Mr Arthur to read to him over the telephone the story that Mr Arthur had written in the *Daily News*. When it was read out to the member for Moore, he insisted that the fourth paragraph in the subsequent edition be added specifically, saying it was not Mr Fletcher who had offered him the alleged bribe.

The person who read the story over the telephone to the member for Moore was, in fact, John Arthur the journalist; and as a result of that reading of the story the member for Moore subsequently insisted that Mr Arthur should ring his sub-editor to change the front page story to exclude specifically Mr Fletcher from consideration as the person alleged to have offered the bribe.

Mr B. T. Burke: That was not what the member for Moore said in the House.

Mr PEARCE: That is so. That brings us to another one-to-one situation; Mr Fletcher and the member for Moore were in a one-to-one situation. So it appears to be the case between Mr John Arthur and the member for Moore except that the journalist does have some collaboration. Although the conversations were conducted over the telephone, at the time Mr Arthur had a journalist next to him who could at least collaborate his half of the telephone conversation.

Mr O'Connor: Did he have somebody listening in?

Mr B. T. Burke: He heard half the story,

standing next to Mr Arthur. At least it was not his wife standing next to him.

Mr PEARCE: I am prepared to accept the point being made *sotto voce* by the member opposite. I was making the point that it is not sufficient and conclusive proof, although if we read the statement made by the member for Moore and the statement Mr Arthur would like to make before a Select Committee, we will see that Mr Arthur's story rings rather more true.

There are other persons to whom the member for Moore made the same statement that it was not Mr Fletcher who offered the bribe. One is a television journalist, Bob Willoughby, who would also like to appear before the Select Committee if it is agreed to, and attest that the member for Moore said that to him on a television film interview—which unfortunately has not been retained by Channel 9. He will attest before the Select Committee that on a totally different occasion the member for Moore told him it was not Mr Fletcher who offered him the bribe.

On the following day, following the story in the *Daily News*, there appeared a report in *The West Australian* by Mr E. A. Barker, on the front page, and the following specific reference is contained in the fourth paragraph—

The approaches had not been made by Mr Fletcher, Mr Crane said.

I was not able to contact Mr Barker this afternoon to obtain a statement from him that he would be prepared to appear before a Select Committee. We know that he is a man who does not write reports without checking the facts meticulously. When Mr Barker phoned Mr Arthur to see what was the basis of this report, Mr Barker told Mr Arthur he stood by his story.

So, there are three separate journalists in three very different circumstances—none of which is connected with the other—who have said that the member for Moore told them it was not Mr Fletcher who offered the bribe. In the light of that evidence, and comparing what they said with what the member for Moore said in his sworn statement under privilege by way of a personal explanation, the personal explanation of the member for Moore seems to be not true.

That is a most serious matter, indeed. If it is not accepted as proof positive and conclusive, just because I said it, it does raise sufficient questions of propriety and morality for the matter to be referred to a Select Committee so that these journalists may be able to clear themselves.

It seems to me that in this matter, the member for Moore has placed himself in a most serious position, because I return to my initial point: If

any member comes before this Chamber—or, for that matter, any other one—and makes a statement by way of personal explanation, under privilege, we ought to be able to believe and expect to believe that that statement will be accurate in every particular and that it will not be misleading in any way.

The only case that I could come up with in my research yesterday and today of a member who lied to a Parliament by way of personal explanation was the unfortunate Mr Profumo.

Mr Jamieson: He is not the only one; that was in the British Parliament.

Mr PEARCE: The member for Welshpool probably would know of many more instances than I. However, in the case of Mr Profumo, quite simply when his lie was proved and he had to stand before the Parliament and admit his lie, what he immediately did was to resign from the Parliament.

Mr Jamieson: He did not take out a writ so that they could not discuss the matter in Parliament.

Mr PEARCE: I believe the matter I have raised in this Parliament is a most serious one. Men's professional reputations have been put at risk by the statement of the member for Moore, and I believe those men should have the right to clear themselves.

I believe the member for Moore has put himself into a situation where he has only two options remaining. I sincerely hope he will rise to follow me in this debate to put his position.

Firstly, if the member for Moore does not believe the statements which have been made to me and the guarantees I have been given that at least two journalists will be prepared to go before a Select Committee and say what I have said they will say—if he believes the statements are wrong, or that I have misconstrued the position—he should be anxious for the appointment of a Select Committee to clear himself and to give these journalists the opportunity to clear themselves.

If he does not want to do that, and is prepared to concede what I have said is substantially accurate, I feel he has no option but to resign for the actions he has taken.

In the name of "stable government"—a Government which always talks about morality and propriety—the member for Moore, on the evidence I have before me, has done something which is most improper. If the member for Moore votes against the motion for the establishment of a Select Committee and seeks to have no further inquiry into the allegations he made here under privilege by way of sworn statement, in effect he

will be trying to hide those things which ought not to be hidden. I will be interested to see the attitude of the Premier in the light of the further information I have placed before the Parliament.

Sir Charles Court: I take it you are now telling the House and the public you are so hopelessly committed in a partisan way that you would not expect nomination to any inquiry.

Mr PEARCE: I am prepared to concede to the Premier that, having raised these matters, I would certainly be prepared to disqualify myself from being part of the committee; under the circumstances, that would be the proper thing for me to do. However, I point out to the Premier that, in the light of the new information I have placed before the Parliament, the proper thing for him to do would be to change his attitude to the whole business. It is one thing to say, as the Premier did an hour or two ago, that this is purely an internal Country Party matter—

Sir Charles Court: You should not fool yourself.

Mr PEARCE: I would be fooling myself if I thought the Premier would ever do anything in a proper manner.

Sir Charles Court: Do not be insulting.

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Order! I submit to the member for Gosnells that was an improper statement to make, and I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr PEARCE: Certainly I withdraw it, Mr Speaker, and I apologise for having made it.

Debate Resumed

Mr PEARCE: I think it would be a proper thing for members to refer this matter to a Select Committee. I am not asking the House to believe the statements I have presented to the House, which have been made to me just like that. However, I do not believe the House can dismiss them and the professional reputations of two journalists just like that, either.

This matter must be investigated further, and the only procedure open to us at present is by way of a Select Committee. I certainly support this motion.

MR B. T. BURKE (Balcatta) [7.50 p.m.]: Mr Speaker, changes in politics can be very marked over a short period of time. The Premier may find that on this issue he and his Government have a tiger by the tail. The member for Moore in bringing this matter to the House did not just use the House to obtain the redress—as he saw it—of a wrong he had suffered; he used this House to positively attack and make ground in an internal

feud he was fighting and in which he was engaged within his own party.

Having done that, it behoves the member for Moore to cover all the ground upon which he seeks to stand. Not only does it behove him to tell the truth; it also behoves the member for Moore and this House to make sure he does not abuse the privileges extended to him.

As far as I am personally concerned, this is a clear case in which the Premier, in connivance with the member for Moore, has sought to abuse the privileges of the House and bring about within The National Country Party a change in the balance of power, a change which more suited the Premier and the member for Moore.

If we are to believe the things that the member for Gosnells has placed before us tonight, then that change was wrought not by the exposition of the truth but by the exposition of deliberate mistruths. If that is the case, not only does the member for Moore have to answer the wrong he may have done the former President of the National Country Party but also he must answer for the wrong he has done in accusing journalists, acting in good faith and carrying out their duties in a professional manner. He is also responsible to answer in this House the charge that he has abused the privilege of the House by using the House in the manner in which he has.

It is quite clear the Premier had no knowledge of the sorts of things to which the member for Gosnells referred. However, it also is quite clear that unless the Premier reconsiders his position, having regard for the knowledge he now has, the things he said previously were mere politicking.

I am surprised as, no doubt, you are, Mr Speaker, that the member for Moore has not sought to rise in his place to defend himself against the charges of the member for Gosnells. It will be of more than passing interest to me and other members of the Opposition to see just which way this member jumps when the crunch comes, to see whether he is now prepared to stand behind the allegations he has made—the paltry, ridiculous and absurd way in which he carried on; the way in which he sought the leave of the House and then proceeded to abuse the privileges of the House.

For the Premier then to say this is purely a matter for the National Country Party internally is pure humbug. This matter was brought to the House by the member for Moore in a deliberate attempt to use the House to further his own position; in a deliberate attempt, in connivance with the Premier, to bring about a change in the

balance of power which rests within the different factions of the National Country Party.

How many members of this House are happy when a man such as Mr Fletcher has to suffer in the manner Mr Fletcher has suffered, simply because this member is able to stand under privilege and make serious charges and not be called to book for those charges? How many members are happy to be able to say as men and women that they allowed or encouraged the member for Moore to say those things? To do such a thing to another man, and then not allow the light of day to be cast upon those things he said, which have caused this change, is a very drastic thing to do to one particular man.

How many of us are prepared to accept from the Premier that he knew nothing of the content of this matter, when we know he spent many minutes in his office with the member for Moore prior to the leave of the House to make a personal explanation being sought by the member for Moore?

Sir Charles Court: That is not correct.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Can we believe the Premier when we know as do most members that the Minister for Fuel and Energy was hanging around the door like a bad smell, waiting to be admitted to the inner sanctum? If the member for Moore has nothing to fear from this new point raised by the member for Gosnells, let him say so, and not run around the corridors telling members that he has been instructed not to speak. Who has instructed the member for Moore not to speak? Obviously, it must be the Leader of the National Country Party, or the Premier himself.

Sir Charles Court: Can we now come back to this alleged visit by the member for Moore to my office before he made his statement? He came to my office as a matter of courtesy and, I presume, he went to the office of the Leader of the Opposition to say, "I am going to seek leave to make a statement." That is the only procedure which is possible.

Mr B. T. BURKE: How can the Premier sit there and deny that the matters raised by the member for Gosnells are so serious as to require investigation? Let us not be misled by the Premier's claim that a Select Committee is not the proper and appropriate vehicle, because we all know the Premier has the authority to establish a Royal Commission to look into this matter.

Sir Charles Court: That is not so.

Mr B. T. BURKE: In the case of a Royal Commission being appointed, there would be no need for any member of this House to be represented, so the Premier cannot throw up a

smokescreen and try to evade his responsibilities by saying that members are biased and partisan. He has the authority to establish a Royal Commission and his failure to do so is his admission that he does not want these things inquired into.

How many members in this House feel happy about what is being said about John Arthur? Most of us know him, and most of us have not had cause in the past to take issue with him on the manner in which he has carried on his profession. But now we have a situation in which the member for Moore says that the second edition of the newspaper in which John Arthur's story appeared was changed without his knowledge.

Alternatively, we have that same reporter saying that the second edition was changed, but that it was changed at the insistence of the member for Moore. Who is telling the truth?

Because these things have been said in this House, and even if John Arthur is not correctly informing members of the House, we should know about it. At the same time, if the member for Moore is deliberately misleading the House he should resign from this Parliament.

It is just not good enough for the Premier to fail to exercise some leadership and direction in this matter. The Premier is running for cover and the reason we are legitimately led to believe he is ducking for cover is simply that he knew in advance what the member for Moore was going to say in his personal explanation.

What are we going to say to the Channel 9 reporter, who independently verified the position taken up by John Arthur of the *Daily News*? Are we going to say that a person skilled in reporting the truth now is having a flight of fancy that coincides simultaneously with the flight of fancy experienced by another reporter? Of course we are not!

If I were the member for Moore I would insist on some sort of inquiry. I would not be content to have other people doing my fighting for me, or to mouth empty words about not being stood over and bought, when I was permitting these other things to happen to people.

If I were the member for Moore I would insist that some sort of inquiry be held so that if John Arthur were telling lies about me, or if Bob Willoughby were telling lies about me or if Ted Barker were misrepresenting me, they would suffer the consequences of their errors. If I were the member for Moore and if Jim Fletcher contradicted what I said about the offer I alleged he had made to me, he should be made to suffer

for having told those lies which impinged so directly on me.

What is wrong with the member for Moore that all he can do is tell members he has been instructed not to talk, or with the Premier that he can say this is a matter for the National Country Party, internally? What is wrong with the Premier that, after hearing much more serious allegations from the member for Gosnells, he can continue quite blithely to say he does not need to have these matters inquired into?

What is the Parliament of Western Australia coming to? This attitude would not be adopted by the Premier unless he had something to hide. It does not involve the Liberal Party unless its political fortunes are going to wane as a result of the revelation of what exactly did happen.

If the member for Moore is telling the truth, he has everything to gain and nothing to hide by the revelation of the facts. It is a reflection on every member of Parliament if this Government can allow the open use of its superior numbers to cast abroad the notion that members of Parliament can be offered bribes, and the Parliament is too busy or too unconcerned to investigate the allegation.

If that is what we are going to say about ourselves, then we should not complain when members of Parliament are rated in the respectability stakes below used car salesmen and life insurance salesmen. We should not complain if it can be said to the public at large that one member who claimed a bribe was offered to him, was allowed to make the claim in the face of conflicting evidence without being brought to explain his position and without being brought to verify his claim. Members should not cringe if the media think this Parliament is a toy Parliament and allegations involving senior and respected journalists can be made without having to be substantiated, because if we allow that to happen—and that is what is happening at the moment in the face of the Premier's attitude—then we deserve all we get.

It is simply not good enough for us to be dictated to by a single person, or instructed by a single person, because it is not just the Premier's reputation which is on the line; it is the reputation of every member of this House, individually and collectively. Every member who votes to suppress an inquiry into what has been claimed, is voting to downgrade the reputation of this Parliament and the reputation of every member within it. It is just not good enough.

If there is nothing to hide, why can we not get to the facts? If, as the Premier said, members of

Parliament are too partisan, why can we not have a Royal Commission? We have had Royal Commissions into much less significant matters than this. What an idle sort of position to adopt to say that members of Parliament can be offered bribes, that the House can be used to expound the fact that the bribes have been offered, and then the matter remains one for the internal consideration of a particular party. What a load of hogwash. It is just not true. The Premier is wrong.

The Premier, having first said the matter was one for the internal digestion or consumption of the National Country Party, now says the further allegations involving journalists need not be inquired into. Through you, Mr Speaker, I am perfectly prepared for the Premier to interject and tell the House that he places no value at all on the statements made by the journalists to whom the member for Gosnells referred.

Sir Charles Court: This is not a place where you deal with chapter and verse on a matter such as this. We have decided it on broad principle, and that is that.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The absurdity of the Premier's position is now illustrated by his apparent reference of the claims of the journalists to the National Country Party for its internal consumption once more. What have the internal affairs of the National Country Party got to do with allegations by journalists that the member for Moore has misled this House? Is that a matter for the internal consumption of the National Country Party? Of course it is not; and that is what has been said. John Arthur has said that the changes in the story to which the member for Moore objects were changes at the behest of the member for Moore. Bob Willoughby has said, independently of John Arthur, that similar comments were made to him by the member for Moore when he was interviewing the member on Channel 9. Ted Barker, while not confirming it, has shown by his stories that his reports included the same attribution to the member for Moore.

Now the Premier says that is a matter for the internal consumption of the National Country Party.

Sir Charles Court: The whole question is one for the National Country Party.

Mr Jamieson: Rubbish, and you know it!

Mr B. T. BURKE: It may interest the Premier and other members to know—

Sir Charles Court: Would you want us to have a Select Committee? You would want us to leave it to your own party if you had a situation like

this. You would say, "It is our business." You would not say it as politely either.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Premier may well regard this as a matter for the internal affairs of the National Country Party; but the Australian Journalists' Association does not and it will shortly—if it has not already done so—be issuing a Press release in which it supports the position of its members. The Australian Journalists' Association sees fit to say publicly that its members are being wronged and yet this Parliament is prepared to say that it need not inquire into the situation.

How can we ignore the fact that the member for Moore used the Parliament to commit the wrong that is alleged by the Australian Journalists' Association? How can that be a matter for the internal consumption of the National Country Party? Of course it is not.

I am not amazed at the Premier's indifference and his refusal to entertain some sort of inquiry, but I am amazed at the individual attitudes of the members on the Government side of the House, because I fail to see how they can suffer, how their party can suffer, or how our system of government can suffer by allowing an inquiry to establish who is telling the truth and who is not telling the truth. It is idle to say that a divergence of expression is a matter for anybody except the members of this House.

MR COWAN (Merredin) [8.05 p.m.]: I was very disappointed to read in the newspaper on the Tuesday immediately after the conference the allegations of bribery made by the member for Moore. I felt, and still feel, that this is a matter that should have been dealt with within the machinery of the National Country Party and there should never have been a necessity for it to be handled in any other way.

However, the member for Moore chose to make these allegations in the Press and, having made those allegations, was not prepared to name the person who had allegedly offered the bribes. Finally he did name the person, using parliamentary privilege.

Having used parliamentary privilege, he has immediately taken away the ability of the machinery within the National Country Party to handle the matter. A statement has been made under parliamentary privilege before the Parliament and, therefore, it is the right of Parliament to make up its mind whether it will or will not have a Select Committee of inquiry.

I remind members that today is private members' day. Today is the day when we do not necessarily have to obey instructions from the

Government or from Cabinet. That raises a very interesting point. The Leader of the National Country Party said in the Press that this was a matter for the Parliament to decide. The Premier has said that this is not a matter for the Parliament to decide and Cabinet has supported the Premier's view. I will be very interested to see whether the so-called autonomy that the leader of the Parliamentary National Country Party was talking about in a Press article recently, when he was saying we should preserve the autonomy of the National Country Party but still remain in coalition, exists. I will be very interested to see whether the wishes of the parliamentary leader that the matter be handled by Parliament, or the wishes of the Premier that it be not handled by the Parliament, are accepted. I will be interested to see which of the two alternatives back-bench members, remembering that it is private members' day and that they can vote according to their consciences rather than according to their instructions, choose. I will be very interested to see how members vote.

Mr McIver: Do you want me to tell you?

Mr COWAN: I feel the really important matter in the motion calling for a Select Committee is that a member has used parliamentary privilege to name Mr Fletcher as the person who offered the alleged bribes. Mr Fletcher now has no means by which to defend himself against that allegation, other than by a Select Committee. If the Parliament wishes to see a little justice served on Mr Fletcher, it should at least allow him to come before a Select Committee and make a statement. There is no way in the world Mr Fletcher can answer the statement that has been made by the member for Moore other than through a Select Committee.

I support the motion.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 21

Mr Barnett	Mr Jamieson
Mr Bertram	Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bryce	Mr McIver
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr McPharlin
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr Pearce
Mr Carr	Mr Skidmore
Mr Cowan	Mr Stephens
Mr Davies	Mr Taylor
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Wilson
Mr T. D. Evans	Mr Bateman
Mr Hodge	

(Teller)

	Noes 25
Mr Blaikie	Mr Old
Sir Charles Court	Mr O'Neil
Mr Coyne	Mr Ridge
Mrs Craig	Mr Rushton
Mr Grayden	Mr Sibson
Mr Grewar	Mr Sodeman
Mr Hassell	Mr Spriggs
Mr Herzfeld	Mr Tubby
Mr Laurance	Mr Watt
Mr MacKinnon	Mr Williams
Mr Mensaros	Mr Young
Mr Nanovich	Mr Shalders
Mr O'Connor	

(Teller)

	Pairs	Noes
Ayes		
Mr Harman	Mr Clarko	
Dr Troy	Mr P. V. Jones	
Mr Tonkin	Dr Dadour	

Question thus negatived.

Motion defeated.

STATE FINANCE

Federal Policy: Motion

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [8.13 p.m.]: I move—

That this House condemns the disastrous financial deal given to Western Australia by the Federal Government for the 1978-79 financial year and expresses concern that as a result—

- (a) essential public works will be delayed;
- (b) the unemployment situation will be aggravated; and
- (c) State charges have been increased.

Further, this House endorses the sentiments of the Premier, expressed following the Premiers' Conference, that the deal is a prescription for recession for W.A.

What I have stated in my motion is perfectly clear and I should imagine the House would be anxious to vote for such a motion without any further debate, because we all know what has been said and we all know what has been the fate of Western Australia as a result of the Fraser Government. But I should like to place on record some of the reasons for the motion moved tonight and that means placing on record a number of figures.

I have many detailed figures and if members would like to refer to them at any time to see how they are made up, they are quite welcome to do so. But rather than weary the House with all of those figures, I have tried to condense them in a manner with which I am sure the Premier will agree. The first reason for moving the motion is to explain the Opposition's dismay and disgust at the financial deal handed out to Western Australia by

the Federal Government. I think we must place on record our dismay and our disgust at the way we have been treated.

Secondly, I want to highlight the adverse effects it will have on the State and on the people by forcing the State Government either to cut back on services and works, or raise taxes and charges yet again. I say, "yet again" because we are all aware that since the last Premiers' Conference we have had a plethora of increased taxes and charges. I am sure there are more to come. The deal we have received—particularly after the Budget which was presented last night—means we can expect them to be more vicious and to come sooner than we may otherwise have expected.

The third reason for the introduction of my motion is to give to the Parliament of Western Australia, as the representative of the people, the opportunity to register a protest as to what has been done to the State. Surely every member in this place will want to register his protest. I am sure none of us can find any good at all in the deal handed to us by Canberra.

I also want to test the sincerity of the Government about statements made following the last Premiers' Conference. If those statements were sincere, then members in this place will vote for the motion which I am placing before them tonight.

Why was the deal disastrous? It is all very well for me to stand up and say it was disastrous; everyone knows it. However, we have to examine just why it was disastrous, and it is incumbent on me in moving my motion to do just that.

Initially, we intended this motion to deal only with the results of the recent Premiers' Conference. We gave notice of the motion yesterday, and when we gave that notice we had no idea of what was contained in the cruel, brutal, and disastrously misguided Federal Budget which was brought down last night. In the light of last night's horror Budget, the need for members to agree with this motion becomes even greater.

The deal handed out to the States by the Fraser Government, throughout its life, has been disastrous for Western Australia. It culminated, of course, in the deal handed to us less than 24 hours ago. I will point out to members what has happened to Western Australia during the term of the Fraser Government in the years 1976-77 and 1977-78, and what is proposed for 1978-79.

The general purpose capital funds available for Western Australia, comprising the general purpose capital grants and borrowings authorised by the Loan Council, have been slashed by \$36.1

million or 10.3 per cent in real terms after allowing for inflation. Specific purpose payments and authorised borrowings for specific purposes have been slashed by \$117.4 million, or 22 per cent in real terms. The position is worse with those specific purpose grants. The combined total of specific purpose grants and general purpose capital funds has been reduced by a massive \$153.5 million, or 17 per cent in real terms.

The deal following the recent Premiers' Conference—that is, the deal for 1978-79 which we are to get for this year—is absolutely horrendous. General purpose capital funds are down \$13.3 million, or 10 per cent in real terms for this year. Specific purpose capital funds are down \$30.9 million, or 17.6 per cent in real terms.

Total capital funds are down \$44.2 million, or 14.4 per cent in real terms. All these figures have been taken, of course, from official documents most of which are attached to my summary which was prepared in my office. The figures are indisputable. Specific purpose payments for recurrent purposes are down \$4.8 million, or 1.6 per cent in real terms. That is not as much as the others, but enough to concern us seriously.

Following the Premiers' Conference the Premier expressed himself, quite rightly, with regard to the shock and dismay he experienced at the deal which had been handed down. In *The Australian* of the 29th June, the Premier was quoted as saying—

We're on a negative growth factor so far as the loan funds are concerned. This is a prescription for recession and if you prescribe for recession, you'll get it.

How right he was. He was quoted in *The Australian* of the 29th June of this year, after reviewing the deal handed out at the Premiers' Conference, as having said—

We're on a negative growth factor so far as the loan funds are concerned. This is a prescription for recession and if you prescribe for recession, you'll get it.

I believe those remarks were well worth repeating.

The deal handed out to the States at the last Premiers' Conference in June, combined with the impact of last night's fatal folly by Fraser, will drive this State and the whole of the nation further down the road of recession. We hoped additional funds would have been available to us as a result of last night's Budget. A few more million dollars would have made all that much difference.

We were at the grass roots stage last night: we could have gone forward; we could have gone

backwards. Unfortunately, Fraser chose to put this State back. We have already travelled a long way down the road to recession, but we were hoping that we had travelled far enough. We were hoping to be able to see our way around the corner, but the corner is getting further away. It is almost out of sight after last night's Budget.

The consequences of the Federal-State financial deal are as follows: Unemployment, already at intolerably high levels, will increase; services provided by State Governments to their citizens will have to be curtailed; programmes of vital public works, to provide much needed community facilities to improve communications and to prepare the way for new development projects, will not go ahead or else they will be delayed.

State taxes and charges have already increased, and they will have to be increased further if cut-backs are to be avoided. Activity in the private sector, particularly in the already depressed construction industry, will fall even further as a result of cut-backs in Government contracts. Incentive for private investment will be reduced because of the overall gloomy economic prospects. Enormous pressure will be placed on the States to introduce a second or State income tax.

As a matter of fact, the Premier has already admitted to this—not in so many words in the House—because he says he will introduce legislation for a rebate. That legislation amounts to taking additional money; in other words, a second income tax. Both options are open to the Premier. However, the Premier always stresses the rebate; he has not stressed the income tax.

In *The West Australian* of the 29th June, it was reported—

The West Australian Premier, Sir Charles Court, said yesterday he would move to introduce a State tax later this year . . .

Sir Charles said he saw his move as positive and totally responsible. It was the only way W.A. could battle the outcome of the Premiers' Conference which he termed a prescription for recession.

There is no indication that the Premier would introduce his State tax in order to give rebates to the population. What he was saying was that the only way we can get enough money is to provide for a State income tax. We have had the words out of his own mouth. Western Australians are facing a second or State income tax almost in the immediate future. The tax will be introduced as a result of the so-called new federalism, of which the Premier was one of the architects and one of the greatest supporters.

Those words must be turning sour in his mouth at the present time.

The attraction of a State income tax is obvious. Of course, overall Commonwealth payments to Western Australia for 1978-79 are now down \$29.1 million in real terms. We are worse off in real terms this year than we were last year. That figure is derived by combining specific purpose and general-purpose payments, and authorised borrowings for both recurrent and capital purposes and checking the total against the amount needed to keep up with inflation. We are at least \$29.1 million down overall.

In answer to a question I asked in this House recently, the Premier indicated that a 1 per cent surcharge on personal income tax collections from Western Australians would raise an estimated \$10.9 million. Of course, that figure would be higher after last night's increase in personal income tax which was imposed by the Fraser Government. When I asked that question of the Premier he said that a 1 per cent surcharge on personal income tax collections from Western Australians would raise \$10.9 million.

In other words, in order to finance the shortfall in the Commonwealth's payments, a surcharge of 3 per cent would be necessary. That would raise \$32.7 million.

A 3 per cent tax surcharge has to be imposed simply to enable Western Australia to stand still. It will not enable us to go forward; it will only cover the shortfall with which we are faced. So, in order to make up that shortfall we will have to have a 3 per cent surcharge on income tax collections. The 3 per cent would raise slightly more than the shortfall of \$29.1 million. However, that will not enable us to provide any additional services and it will not enable us to undertake any capital works. It will merely enable us to carry on with what we are doing at present. There is no growth factor. The raising of an additional \$32.7 million will allow Western Australia to stand still.

Although the Premier said in the Eastern States he would impose a surcharge on income tax collections, I believe he would be reluctant to do so, and I believe he would be reluctant to say so in Western Australia.

If the surcharge is not imposed then other taxes and charges will have to be increased. They will probably be increased anyway. They will come as large increases in charges for electricity and gas, freight rates, public transport fares, and water. Water increases have been introduced under the guise of a new pay-as-you-use system. Everyone thought that would be a fair system, but it is turning out to be anything but fair. It is a rip-off.

If ever Western Australians, including members of Parliament, were conned, they certainly were conned on that issue. It is no good the Minister for Water Supplies saying that we knew all about the new system, because when the legislation was brought before Parliament it covered four ways of implementing the new charges. The Minister was not able to say which of those methods the Government would use. The Government eventually announced the scheme which is operating now. So, it is no good saying that we approved of it. We approved of the principle, but we did not approve of the way the Government has gone about changing the system.

I repeat: When the legislation went through this House we trusted the Government. We thought it would be a fair method of rating, but it turned out to be anything but fair. Indeed, it was operating practically at the time the legislation went through Parliament. People were led to believe it would not come into operation for another 12 months. No doubt, we are to face further increases.

What concerns us most is the question of unemployment. I think that is the greatest consequence of this appalling financial deal; the most tragic consequence of the deal is the enormous increase in unemployment it will bring about. I will give some figures to justify what I have said.

The rapid growth in unemployment in this State since 1974 is an absolute horror story—since this Government has been in office. In March, 1974, there were 7 527 people out of work in Western Australia. However, there were 5 500 unfilled vacancies. Therefore, there was nearly a vacancy for everyone out of work. In the building industry there were 219 vacancies, but only 145 people unemployed.

By June, 1976—27 months after the Court Government came to office—there were 21 103 people out of work and nearly 15 people competing for every vacancy. By July of this year, and with the same Government in office, 35 669 people were out of work; that is an army of unemployed. Twenty-eight Western Australians were competing for every job vacancy.

Just let us recapitulate on those figures. In 1974 there were 7 527 people out of work and 5 500 unfilled vacancies. In June, 1976, there were 21 103 people out of work—15 people competing for every job vacancy. By July of this year there were 35 669 people out of work—28 people competing for every job vacancy. Now the funds for capital works have been cut back. What

will happen? There will be further unemployment, fewer contracts, and fewer jobs.

The Federal Budget and the financial deal handed out at the Premiers' Conference condemns the nation to an unemployment figure of 500 000, and that will mean 50 000 people unemployed in Western Australia. These are not my figures, but the figures which have appeared in the Press across the nation. Even a former Prime Minister and Treasurer (Sir William McMahon) says so in this morning's paper, and he is a fairly cautious fellow. He says there will be 450 000 people out of work in Australia by the middle of next year. Our forecast figure is a little higher, but perhaps it is more realistic.

With 500 000 out of work in Australia, on a *pro rata* basis there will be 50 000 out of work in Western Australia. What a waste of skills, talent, training, and education. These are people who are trained to work and who want to work. I believe it is an irresponsible act, it is economic brutality on the part of a Government, to inflict this kind of situation on the public of Western Australia. We are seeing the impact on the community of the policies of self-proclaimed sound economic managers. Do not those words have a familiar ring? We have heard Government members say, "We are sound economic managers, we provide good housekeeping, and we are a responsible Government." These are the people who had all the answers before the election but who cannot find them now. Whatever happened to the Premier who once boasted that given six months he could cure unemployment? He was saying how bad unemployment was then when only 7 500 people were out of work.

Mr Bryce: How he would love to go back to those days.

Mr DAVIES: There was almost a vacancy for every person out of work, but now 28 people are competing for every vacancy. That is not a record to be proud of. This was the man who said that he could cure inflation as well as unemployment.

Mr Jamieson: Substantially, State by State.

Mr DAVIES: Yes, the Premier said that given six months in office he could cure inflation and unemployment. He said he would show us what he could do. We have given him four years and we are now at crisis point, disaster point, and no-one can deny it.

Whatever happened to those jobs which the then Minister for Labour and Industry referred to at the Carine High School just before the last election? We were told that within 18 months the Government would provide 100 000 jobs. No doubt some of those students are now looking for

some of those jobs, but they look in vain because the jobs are not there. At least the Premier said he would provide 100 000 jobs in seven years. If he is providing any jobs, why do we have such a huge pocket of unemployment at the present time? Why do we have 28 Western Australians competing for every vacancy? More people are chasing fewer vacancies and they will have even less chance of success in the near future.

Federal and State finances should be geared to helping these people, geared to getting the nation back to work. Instead of taking the responsible course, the Federal Government has decided, as a deliberate policy decision—and let us not fool ourselves, this is a deliberate policy decision—to reduce the chances of these people obtaining jobs, and to swell the number of unemployed substantially.

One of the mechanisms being used, of course, is the savage financial deals handed out to the States. I agree with the Premier when he said in June that the formula was a prescription for recession. Those were his words, and we cannot do other than agree with him. Where is this massive economic growth we have been told we can expect? It is certainly not happening in the metropolitan area. I wondered whether it was happening in the regional centres, but when we look around the position is just as bad there.

In June there were 1 163 people unemployed in Bunbury, and 20 people competing for each job. In Geraldton there were 1 262 people out of work and 20 people competing for each job. In Port Hedland there were 1 810 people out of work and 41 people competing for every job vacancy.

The only way to get these people back to work is to provide the funds for essential services such as electricity, water, sewerage, roads, hospitals, schools, and ports. Of course, when I say that I am merely echoing the statements made by the Premier when he addressed an organisation known as the Young Executives of America in Sydney earlier this year. He told these young executives that that is what had to be done. Money has to be provided for Governments to do these things. New development programmes will increase career opportunities, and in the long run everyone will be able to find a job.

Let us look at some of the specific effects of this financially disastrous deal handed out to the States by Mr Fraser. Of course, our road situation immediately springs to mind, and I would like to quote a few figures applying to this State.

The estimated specific purpose payments for roads in 1978-79 are not even sufficient to

maintain the level of road works undertaken with Commonwealth funds last financial year. In 1977-78 we received \$63.3 million for roads, and the estimate for this financial year is \$65 million. That is a reduction of about \$4.6 million in real terms. In other words, we have \$4.6 million less than we need to stand still. If we are not moving forward, and if we are not standing still, there is only one way to go and that is backwards. That is exactly where Western Australia is going with its roads programme.

The Fraser Government has reduced the level of road work programmes in each Budget since coming into office; it is not simply a decrease for this year. In 1975-76 Western Australia received \$62.2 million. To keep pace with that level of funding we would need more than \$80 million this year; that is not to overtake our programmes of previous years, but just to keep pace. This means we will receive \$15 million less this year than in 1975.

In just three years the Fraser Government has reduced the level of Commonwealth funding for Western Australian roads by \$22 million—almost one-third of the total. What could we do with that \$22 million? What options would the Commissioner of Main Roads decide upon if he were given that extra \$22 million? According to the answers given to questions asked recently, if the commissioner had that \$22 million in his hot little hand he would have certain options open to him. He could construct and seal 314 kilometres of highway in the Pilbara at the going rate, 275 kilometres in the Kimberley, 628 kilometres of local roads in the Pilbara, 550 kilometres of local roads in the Kimberley, or 880 kilometres of local roads in the south-west. So with that \$22 million he could accomplish any of those particular objectives on the figures which have been given to this Parliament.

The other alternative is that the commissioner could spread the funds all over the State, and I think this is what he would choose to do. We are being denied this \$22 million. If it were not for the impact of the new federalism and its effect on capital works, the residents of Mandurah would have a new bypass road. Surely that is one of the most pressing needs in that area—the bypass road and the bridge. The total cost has been estimated at \$4 million, and the work could well be accomplished within the parameters of the funds which we should have received had the rate remained the same.

Because we will not receive this \$22 million, none of these projects will come to fruition. Anyone who has travelled back from Bunbury along the coast road at the end of a long weekend

or a holiday, or even during a normal weekend, knows that a bottleneck develops at the Mandurah Bridge. This is one of the most pressing problems in the area, not only for the residents who are entitled to some assistance, but also for the hundreds of thousands of people who pass through Mandurah and who curse and swear when they reach this bottleneck. The whole project could be completed for \$4 million—almost nothing.

The State Government agrees with us that the deal handed to the States is appalling. I would like to quote the remarks of the Minister for Transport in this State. After the roads deal was announced, he was quoted in the *Daily News* of the 20th July of this year as saying that the Fraser Government's indifference to the needs of Western Australia's heavy development and export-oriented economy is tragic. The Minister said that the Fraser Government's attitude towards us is tragic. How right he was. This House should join him in condemning the Fraser Government for the kind of deal it is handing out to the States.

Now let us look at the situation in regard to hospitals. Payments to our State for the building of hospitals have been terminated. In 1975-76 we received \$11.9 million. In 1976-77 we received \$12 million. In 1977-78 this was slashed to \$4.4 million, and this year we will receive nothing. This is despite the fact that the Whitlam Government set up the Hospitals Commission which then asked all the States what they needed in regard to hospitals. The commission looked at the States' submissions, and the States were told that before they received a single penny, they would have to prove a need for the things they asked for. I know what happened in Western Australia. We cursed the authorities in Canberra because of the work involved, but we were able to prove a need for almost all the things we had asked for; we were able to prove to Canberra that they were necessary.

We argued with the Federal Government in regard to the need for the buildings and the constructions that we asked for, but then the Whitlam Government programmed money to us over a period so that we could go ahead with those projects that we considered absolutely essential.

What has happened now? I have already told members what happened. In 1975-76 we received \$11.9 million and the next year we received \$12 million. That was really a decrease when we take inflation into account. Then last financial year the payment was slashed to \$4.4 million, and this year we are on our own. Major development

programmes are under way at the Royal Perth Hospital, the Fremantle Hospital, the King Edward Memorial Hospital, and the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre.

These developments will be affected by the ending of Federal funding. The quality and availability of medical care must drop as a result. I know what the position was in respect of the then Perth Medical Centre, now the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre, when I took over as Minister for Health. There was a pall of gloom over the place; there was a great depression due to the fact that building work had practically stopped on the site. We got the building going again, we got it moving, and a tremendous atmosphere existed at the end of the three years. Now those people will drop way back into the situation they were in when the Labor Government took over in 1971.

In addition to axing the hospital development programme, the Fraser Government is pushing for an increase of 50 per cent in bed charges. There was an understandable reluctance on the part of the State Government to apply a 50 per cent increase. What the position will be now, I do not know, but one thing of which I am positive is that we will be forced into the situation of huge pressures being placed on public hospitals as a result of last night's Budget. Many, many people will not have any kind of health insurance, not because they feel they do not need it and not because they do not acknowledge they need it, but because they will not be able to afford it. Before Medibank was brought into operation it was estimated one million people were without any kind of medical cover. Where did these people go for treatment?

Mr Young: Do you want me to tell you who was included in that? Multi-millionaires were included.

Mr DAVIES: I suppose the Minister Without Portfolio is going to tell me that of that one million, 900 000 were multi-millionaires! Of course, there were many people who did not have cover although they could afford it, but they were in the minority. The people I am talking about are people such as Aborigines and people on the breadline; people covered by the Henderson poverty reports. These people could not possibly afford medical insurance and they had to rely on public hospitals.

Mr Young: Tell me one who did not get medical care when he needed it.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Blaikie): Order! The House will come to order.

Mr DAVIES: I am pleased that the Minister Without Portfolio has acknowledged that none of those people was denied medical attention, because that emphasises my point. No-one was denied attention. People might have been denied medical treatment by doctors who were not prepared to take them as patients if they could not pay, but those people could always go to a public hospital. However, there was a decrease in the number of people attending public hospitals after the Medibank scheme was introduced. Of course, we will always have that element in the community which cannot afford to pay or does not want to afford to pay for medical treatment, and they can go to the public hospitals. Now Royal Perth Hospital, the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre, and King Edward Memorial Hospital will have huge pressures placed upon them—pressures which were starting to abate as a result of Medibank. Those pressures will be back again, stronger than ever.

The Minister Without Portfolio has made my point for me: as a result of the Federal Government's Budget decision pressures will be placed on the States, and this is where the problem will arise.

Having made some mention of what is likely to happen in respect of health care, let us consider housing. I think my colleague, the member for Balcatta, who is the shadow Minister for Housing, will have something to say on this matter later in the evening. However, let me give members a few facts.

In the last three Fraser Budgets capital funds for housing have been slashed by \$17 million, or 16.7 per cent in real terms. At current costs that \$17 million would finance the construction of 809 new three-bedroomed State Housing Commission homes.

Mr MacKinnon: Have you heard how the rate of inflation has come down?

Mr Nanovich: Who gave the okay to extend the Royal Perth Hospital by 100 beds? Who was the Minister at the time?

Mr Davies: We gave the okay for that.

Mr Nanovich: And what are those 100 beds costing?

Mr DAVIES: You see, Sir, this shows that the member for Whitford either does not follow the argument, is intensely dense, or does not want to follow the argument. As I said, fixed programmes were decided upon by the Hospitals Commission under the Whitlam Government which said, "You have proved to us that you need these things. We will give you the money." The Fraser Government has reneged on that deal. That Government is

now not giving us any money for capital development. It was agreed and acknowledged that the need existed; the money was provided for a period, and we were to get the beds. The work was half completed, and now we are in the situation of the Fraser Government breaking another of its many promises. Mr Fraser has reneged, and the State will be in a difficult position because of it.

I am sorry that we had to go back to hospitals. Let us now talk of housing. I said that capital funds for housing had been slashed by \$17 million which at current costs would finance the construction of 809 new three-bedroomed State Housing Commission homes this financial year.

As a consequence of that money not going into the building industry, that industry will be further depressed. People will have to wait longer for a home of their own. Let me illustrate the waiting lists. At present 4 982 families in the metropolitan area are waiting for State Housing Commission homes. In Albany there are 343, in Bunbury 595, and in Port Hedland 492. These figures are all available in answers to questions given in the Parliament. I was going to say the building industry is in a parlous condition, but it is in an absolute state of collapse. In 1974, as mentioned earlier, there were more job vacancies than people unemployed in the building industry. In June of this year, 58 building workers were competing for every vacancy. This is the record of the Government, and it has been forced into this position by the Fraser Government. In June of this year 1 683 people were looking for 29 jobs in the building industry, according to official figures.

The implications of the latest Fraser Budget are disastrous for the building industry and, naturally, for the economy of Western Australia. I have always been of the opinion that if the agricultural and building sectors of the economy are healthy, then the State is healthy. Unfortunately the agricultural sector has taken quite a knock over the past few years, and it is only now starting slowly to recover. The building industry at the present time does not look like it will ever recover.

In 1978-79, as a result of the Fraser Budget, the building and construction industries are faced with cut-backs in expenditure on capital works of \$44.2 million. That would keep quite a few people employed for a while, and that amount would only keep up with what we hoped we would get, without getting ahead.

This means there will be a further decline in projects and large and small builders will go out

of business. Of course, many of the ancillary firms associated with builders will also close down.

The Premier was quoted in *The West Australian* of the 23rd June as follows—

This is going to be disastrous from our point of view, particularly for the building industry.

How right he was. I do not often get the chance to agree with the Premier in public, but I say tonight he has been right in all the statements he made in this respect. He has been dead right; he has been spot on; it has been a disaster.

I have picked the areas of roads, hospitals, and housing, and I am sure other speakers will develop those areas further and introduce others. I have mentioned them to demonstrate my point about the severe impact on Western Australia, in terms of economic activity, employment, and public works, of the financial deal handed out to the States in last night's Budget and the Premiers' Conference in June. I could have picked many other areas, but whichever way one looks at it the pattern is exactly the same. There is no room for joy, we are not going forwards, but backwards.

Therefore, in summary I make these points: We now have a clear idea of the magnitude of the disaster. It is a disaster on a massive scale. Capital funds have been slashed by 17 per cent in real terms since the Fraser Government took office. They have been cut by 14.2 per cent in real terms in the latest Budget. The net overall reduction in Commonwealth funds to Western Australia this financial year is about \$30 million. Unemployment will rise dramatically, probably to 50 000 in Western Australia. Eight hundred houses will not be built. Hundreds of kilometres of roads will not be sealed. Hospital projects will be curtailed. Other public works, vital to the State's development, will not be carried out. Government services will be cut back. State Government taxes and charges will have to rise even further. The pressure on the State to impose a second or State income tax will be enormous. The level of economic activity will fall and businesses will shut their doors.

This is the financial package which those sound, economic managers in the Fraser Government have handed down to us.

Mr Jamieson: This is the new federalism.

Mr DAVIES: As the member for Welshpool says, this is the new federalism. This is irresponsibility; this is a disaster.

I invite the House to support this motion and condemn the deal—condemn it because it is bad economics; condemn it because it is short-sighted;

condemn it because it is callous; condemn it because it will create unemployment; condemn it because it is hurting Western Australia; and condemn it because it is hurting Western Australians.

The Premier was right when he said that the Federal-State financial deal handed out in June and in last night's Budget was a prescription for recession. As I have said, I do not often agree with the Premier but on this occasion I do so, and I invite members to endorse his sentiments.

MR BRYCE (Ascot—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [8.59 p.m.]: I have a great deal of pleasure in seconding the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. If at any time in the history of this Chamber its members ought collectively to condemn a national Government for the financial deal it has given to this State, tonight is that time. The financial policies of the national Government are translated to the people through two principal arms at its disposal. On one hand we have the Premiers' Conferences and the Loan Council, and on the other hand the national Budget. Together, the 1978-79 Premiers' Conference in June of this year and the Budget that was handed down only last night comprise an act of economic vandalism. It could be described in no different a term.

Mr Laurance: What would you do?

Mr BRYCE: I suggest to the member for Gascoyne that I would not be preoccupied in a single-minded fashion, as is the Prime Minister, with the single element of inflation. Someone ought to remind the member for Gascoyne and some of his back-bench colleagues and his colleagues in Canberra that a Government has a much greater spread of responsibilities than simply the question of inflation.

The Prime Minister is prepared to pursue his single-minded preoccupation with inflation to the point where he will have practically no economy left by the time he achieves his lauded goal of single digit rates of inflation. If the member for Gascoyne wants some examples I suggest when he goes overseas that, instead of wasting time with the people he does, he should speak to Government officials to see what they are doing in Japan and West Germany and see how the United States has learnt from its mistakes.

Those officials are absolutely staggered that the Fraser Government is continuing to deflate its economy in such a single-minded way. There are people in those parts of the world who expected this Government would have learnt its lesson. They are surprised to say the least that there is no attempt made to refloat the economy.

(75)

Mr Laurance: Japan's balance of payments is a lot different from ours.

Mr BRYCE: The point we have had illustrated to us was that the member for Gascoyne concurs with the Prime Minister in the desirability of bringing down the rate of inflation no matter what the cost. The member agrees this should be done first and foremost; he is not the slightest bit concerned about the human cost.

We can expect that there will be a litany of disastrous consequences for Western Australia. There is absolutely no question that the State Government is poised right now to introduce legislation to impose a form of double income tax on the incomes of Western Australians. The Leader of the Opposition has quite adequately pointed out to the Chamber that this State Government is \$30 million short of last year's allocation of Commonwealth moneys for capital grants and for recurrent purposes. That \$30 million has to come from somewhere and it would amount to a very convenient 3 per cent surcharge on Western Australians' incomes.

The Premier has said he will bring the legislation to this Chamber. In another State he has said he supports the imposition of a surcharge on people's incomes in this State and we can expect, as a result of the disastrous Budget last night, that Western Australians could be paying a second tax on their personal incomes for the first time in almost 40 years. I will be very interested to see the member for Gascoyne return to his electorate and explain to the people of Carnarvon, Exmouth, and other centres that he supports the idea of a second tax on the people's incomes. I will be waiting for him to call public meetings so he can show he believes this is economic responsibility.

The second serious consequence that we can expect also was referred to by the Leader of the Opposition. The building industry in this State is at the point of collapse, and no-one questions this. The financial deal handed down to Western Australia last night and at the Premiers' Conference in June has been largely responsible for this collapse. The rest of the responsibility lies at the feet of the Fraser Government over the last two years.

This is not a recent phenomenon; it is part of a very carefully planned and deliberately implemented policy to wind down the amount of money paid to the States. The consequences of doing so are perfectly clear to anyone who understands.

The member for Gascoyne's own leader branded the disastrous Premiers' Conference as a

prescription for recession. The Premier was disgusted when he came out of the conference; he knew there would be a further downturn in the economy of Western Australia.

We have reached the stage in this economic debate where there is no longer reason to talk in terms of a recession. To everyone but economists it may be a rhetorical question as to when a recession becomes a depression. Might I suggest in answer to such a rhetorical question that when an economy or a community finds itself in the midst of a recession and someone or something deliberately turns the lights out like the Federal Government did last night, then we have a prescription for a depression and not a recession.

We have had a recession in this State for three years. What this State and this nation needed last night—and this is through the eyes of the principal newspapers as well as numerous academics in institutions across the nation—was a form of encouragement to industry, investors, workers, State Governments, and local governments. The response that would have provided a degree of encouragement to the economy, that would give some sense of hope to the people who make economic decisions was what we were looking for.

Mr Sodeman interjected.

Mr BRYCE: If the member for Pilbara wants to join in this debate he can do so at a later stage, but I am limited to 37 minutes and I wish to use my time to develop my argument.

Mr Sodeman interjected.

Mr BRYCE: Let me put the member for Pilbara back in his box. One of the diabolical consequences of last night's Budget was that the North-West Shelf gas project could be threatened. This is a project that should be near and dear to the member for Pilbara. In discussions with the joint venturers a few days ago they demonstrated clearly that a significant proportion of the funds necessary to get the project off the ground would be expected to be generated in Australia itself. Admittedly, the bulk of the money would come from overseas.

In the climate of depression and despair that will be a certain result of last night's Budget and this year's Premiers' Conference we can expect there could be difficulties. I am talking about the years to come and not the immediate future. The Premier knows this because he knows that a depression mentality assumes an energy and a mind of its own. We are submitting that the Fraser Government has gone too far.

For the benefit of the member for Pilbara, perhaps I should refer again to the North-West

Shelf project and demonstrate to him that so severely damaged—as a result of the Fraser Government and Court Government policies which are restricting economic activity in this State and for which they have to accept the responsibility—are our building, construction, and building supplies industries and our fabrication works, and so much more will they be depressed in the years immediately ahead, that we can expect when that project gets off the ground it will be a monumental boost to the economies of Singapore, Taiwan, and Japan.

This is so because the way our State and Federal Governments are going in respect of this project we can expect that our own construction and fabrication industries will not be able to capitalise on the opportunities that will be presented to them when the project does get off the ground.

The Premier knows that in many of our large building industries and fabrication works some of the planning division staff have had to be laid off. If that tendency continues it will mean we will earn for ourselves, in terms of economic spinoff, an even smaller proportion of the work that will be generated by the project than the British economy won for itself when the North Sea oil project started.

Sir Charles Court interjected.

Mr BRYCE: If the Premier wants to encourage a question and answer time, will he guarantee that I receive extra time to finish my remarks? The Premier just wants to take up my time. A further disastrous consequence of this Budget which has been referred to by my leader is the inevitable consequences as far as the actual long list of unemployed in Western Australia is concerned. Even the Premier's own colleague in the national Parliament, the former Prime Minister and respected Liberal Party Treasurer (Sir William McMahon) has predicted there will be 500 000 unemployed by June 1979. It could well be in excess of that.

We all remember the promises that rang around this State, made by the Premier and the Prime Minister, to turn the lights on and provide an extra 100 000 or more jobs. These are the promises the people think about and what we are reminded of, but in the fifth year of office we find that the State Government would love to be back in the days of 1974 when Western Australia had only 7 500 people out of work.

According to the Premier's own standards, the hallmark of the success of any Government is its ability to provide work opportunities for its citizens. In the fifth year of office of the Court

Government we find the number of unemployed has skyrocketed to nearly 36 000.

Mr Sodeman: Tell us about the influx of overseas capital over recent years.

Mr BRYCE: It is almost mind boggling to find that the members of the Government back-benches still blame the Whitlam Government three years after it was defeated. Economists throughout this country and the world know that if the Fraser Government wanted to reinflate our economy and get it back on its feet it could have done so last year or this year. However, it has stuck to a single-minded preoccupation. The Treasurer (Mr Howard) has said he is looking to the day when inflation is down to 3 or 5 per cent.

I, too, would be happy to see that day arrive. I am happy to acknowledge also that unlike the member for Pilbara and his colleagues I am not prepared to see the Government achieve any such measure in such a short space of time and so achieve the reduction at the expense of nearly 500 000 or one million jobs in this country. No-one should be prepared to sit back in a comfortable seat in Parliament House and say, "What does it matter that 500 000 or one million people will be thrown out of work?"

Mr Sodeman: No-one has said that.

Mr BRYCE: I believe the implication is perfectly clear. The member for Gascoyne is acknowledging that the single most important objective of the national Government is to bring down the rate of inflation. If he does not approve of the way the Government is going about that; if he disapproves of the handling of the State's finances and is worried about people losing jobs then let him be sincere and cross the floor to vote for this laudable motion.

Mr Laurance: You have not answered my question yet.

Mr MacKinnon: He has not given any suggestion at all.

Mr BRYCE: If members opposite want me to run the finances of the State, I suggest they make me the Treasurer and I will be very happy to do it.

Unfortunately, associated with this catastrophe in the building industry in Western Australia at present there is a vast array of small businesses which supply building materials and so many other facets required in the building industry itself. We can expect that many of these small businesses will go to the wall in the next 12 months in this State and it will be as a direct result—a direct consequence—of the deliberate Fraser-fashion depression introduced and starting

from last night. Last night was the point in time when a recession was transformed into the beginning of a depression.

In answer to interjections from several Government back-benchers, I have suggested to the House that members should spend a little time reading to find out what is happening in other parts of the world. When they do so they will discover their Prime Minister and their own national Government stand almost entirely alone in respect of economic policies. Their determination virtually to wreck the Australian economy is because of their single-minded preoccupation with this question of the rate of inflation. The Prime Minister, with this single-minded preoccupation with inflation, is about to do to the Australian people, what he did, and with the same clinical efficiency, to Prime Minister Gorton, the then Federal Leader of the Opposition (Mr Snedden), and to Gough Whitlam, with the assistance of the Governor General.

Mr Jamieson: You mean surgical efficiency.

Mr BRYCE: It was surgical all right. He is quite happy to stab the people in the back now in precisely the same way as he stabbed Gorton, Snedden, and Whitlam in the back.

Mr Bertram: What about Withers?

Mr BRYCE: Gorton trusted him, Snedden trusted him, and Whitlam trusted him. Whitlam trusted Fraser and Kerr to uphold certain constitutional decencies; and, believe it or not, the people trusted Fraser at the last election. He promised the people he would leave Medibank untouched; he promised the people economic recovery and jobs galore; he promised the people they could expect taxation relief.

We ask ourselves: What has happened? Medibank has been emasculated; depression instead of recovery has followed the recession of 1977, and the taxation relief that he promised—

Sir Charles Court: Record levels.

Mr BRYCE: —has turned into the most monumental confidence trick. He gave to the people with one hand last year, and took it away from them with the other hand this year.

Sir Charles Court: Only part of it. You cannot do your sums.

Mr BRYCE: It was a confidence trick, and everyone knows it.

The net result of the Premiers' Conference in June of this year and the Budget last night is that the amount of money made available to this State for general purpose capital grants is down in real terms—I am not sure members of Parliament

realise the gravity of this—by 10.3 per cent. The specific purpose capital grants are down in real terms by 17.6 per cent. I am not talking in money terms. So, the combined decline of capital funds available to Western Australia over this period is 14.4 per cent. That has to be found from somewhere. If the Fraser Government has turned off the tap, the money for recurrent purposes and capital works purposes must be found from somewhere.

I have already suggested that the Leader of the Opposition is quite right about what the people of Western Australia would do—as they have in other parts of the world—if they knew that this State was poised ready to bring in a tax on their incomes—

Mr Bertram: Double tax.

Mr BRYCE: Yes, it is double taxation. This tax will be imposed to make up the shortfall that has been deliberately built into the finances of the State by the stringencies of the Fraser Government.

The building industry in Western Australia is at the very heart of our economy. No-one questions that. It is the health of the building industry which almost determines the pulse of economic activity in Western Australia. This is why it almost defies imagination that the Fraser Government would be so deliberate and calculating in its determination to bring our construction and building industry in this State to the point of virtual collapse.

The total building approvals over this last 12 months have nosedived by 25 per cent. In respect of actual money made available for capital grants programmes in last night's Budget, in this State we have seen a drastic cut of \$44.2 million from the capital works programmes for the next year—a reduction in real terms of 14 per cent. This is a tremendous slice taken right off the top of capital grants money allocated to this State.

The home building programme, which normally accounts for about 80 per cent of building activity in this State, has dropped to the level of 1970. As I have already said, it is not just the home building industry which is affected because there is a multifarious list of ancillary industries attached to and dependent upon the building and construction industry for their survival.

When this Government came into office there were fewer than 300 skilled building workers out of a job and registered for work. Today, after Sir Charles Court has been at the helm for four years, and made the promise that he would solve unemployment within six months of getting back into office—that was in 1974—and after he made

the promise in 1977 that the glorious golden days were just around the corner and he had up his sleeve more than 100 000 additional jobs, and the people of Western Australia believed him, in that single industry there are 1 683 skilled craftsmen listed as unemployed.

My leader referred to the figures which tell the story in respect of the State Housing Commission. Over the last three years the Fraser Government has slashed \$17 million off the State Housing Commission allocation of funds for the building of homes. That amounts to a tidy number of 809 new three-bedroomed homes that this State should have if not in reality, at least under construction. The Fraser Government has skimmed \$17 million off that housing allocation. Is there any wonder that the building industry, and the home building industry in particular, is in a serious state of decline?

On top of that, last night we saw in that disastrous Budget, that the Fraser Government has made the decision to deprive all those low and middle-income families, who are purchasing their first home, the right to claim a tax rebate on the interest they pay on those homes. It is difficult to imagine if ever or whenever before in the history of this State such a concerted attack was levelled at the building and construction industry.

I conclude on this particular aspect by emphasising that this is more important in Western Australia than in any other State. Western Australia's economy is nowhere near as diversified as the economies of the larger States. The building and construction industry in this State plays a far more significant role than does any other individual industry by comparison with any other State; and that is why the consequences here are so much more serious.

I would like to conclude by asking the members of the Chamber to consider what really amounts to the ultimate hypocrisy in recent political times with the decisions and actions of the Prime Minister himself. All of us can remember very clearly when Malcolm Fraser went into office. He said, "What this nation needs is not a tourist for a Prime Minister". Shortly after his election he said there would be no overseas junkets at public expense. Then shortly afterwards he made his famous claim that life was not meant to be easy.

We were all told that we were to pull our belts in. Small businessmen, pensioners, farmers, tradesmen, professional people, investors generally, and particularly State Governments were told that life was not meant to be easy. They were told to gird their loins because times were

going to be tough and it was necessary to pull in their belts.

One would imagine that anyone who had the gall to make those statements to the people on the hustings, and shortly after the election, would be reasonably consistent and follow the theory through. However, it is very interesting for us to make a few observations about the behaviour of our friend the Prime Minister in his own personal life style at the expense of the taxpayer following the statements to which I have just referred.

Let me preface this illustration by saying that I would be the last member of Parliament or individual ever to criticise Ministers of the Crown for travelling interstate or overseas, and I refer to Ministers of this Parliament and to Ministers of any Parliament. I believe that one of the worst features of our geographical isolation in Australia—and more particularly in Western Australia—is that it has produced a very dangerous form of parochialism and self-satisfaction economically, socially, and culturally.

However, it was the Prime Minister of the present national Government who went to the people in 1975 and kept on insisting that what this nation needed was "not a tourist for a Prime Minister". So he constructed his own petard and how he is hoist on that petard today!

Here are some of the more interesting realities of the Prime Minister's own lifestyle, after he told the people of this nation, and this State in particular, that they should expect to be out of work because of his economic policies. This is how he lived it up himself. In the time he has been in office, this same Prime Minister who said we do not want a tourist for a Prime Minister, has been overseas no fewer than 11 times. I regret I do not have the total cost involved, but I expect to have it tomorrow, and members can be assured that I will refer to it in this place before long.

The most classic recent trip he made was in May this year when he took off, while five sitting days of the House still remained, and went on a 35-day world binge in the best tourist tradition.

Some of the best photographs and news items which came back to this country while the Prime Minister was overseas related to his being reunited with his sister in Rome and members of his ancient family in Scotland. The same hypocrite who said, "There will be no overseas junkets at public expense", spent five days fishing in Scotland.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: His last trip, with his entourage of 21 people, cost this nation \$250 000. This is the same Prime Minister who, together with his

colleagues, makes statements in the Press and in the national Parliament denigrating people who are out of work and suggesting they ought to live on half the unemployment benefit they are currently receiving. This man spent \$250 000 on his latest trip.

When the Prime Minister was in New York, he spent \$600 a night on a hotel room. I have been to New York, as also have many Ministers. We still have not the accounting of the Premier's visit overseas but I am certain he would not have squandered the money of this State to the tune of \$600 a night for a room. We are told while he was in New York the Prime Minister spent most of his time in that room sulking because the President of the United States would not grant him an audience on this particular trip. At the same time, \$15 000 of the Australian taxpayers' money was spent in New York on Cadillacs which had to be available 24 hours a day. For six days in New York it cost \$15 000 for Cadillacs, and I am reminded expenditure of \$5 000 was incurred on telephone calls alone.

After making special and expensive arrangements to fly his entourage across the Atlantic on the Concorde, when he reached Paris the Prime Minister was not prepared to occupy the luxurious suite which had been specially provided in the Australian Embassy for the former Australian Governor General, the famous John Kerr, who never occupied that suite. The Prime Minister was not prepared to occupy it. He insisted on moving into the most expensive hotel in Paris, which cost the taxpayers \$50 000—just while he was in Paris. He insisted that all the office equipment in the suite at the embassy be moved to the luxury hotel—the telephones and all the additional equipment needed.

This is the man who suggested life was not meant to be easy; it was meant to be difficult. That is his assessment and implication—that for ordinary people, for the likes of the people who put him in office, life was meant to be difficult. This is how he is squandering the taxpayers' money. This is the hypocrite he really is in terms of his own life style.

Last year, \$250 000 was spent on upgrading the Prime Minister's Lodge. The wife of the Prime Minister is quoted in the media as saying, "Nobody would want to live there unless they really had to." I have been to the Prime Minister's Lodge—not, I might add, in recent years—and it is in fact one of the most delightful residences I have ever set foot in. It is astonishing that anybody could squander \$250 000 in this economic climate on the upgrading of the Prime Minister's Lodge.

The story goes further. The same Prime Minister and his wife decided that the crockery at the Lodge was not satisfactory and they spent \$8 100 on new china—an average cost of \$150 a plate. This is the man who says to the pensioners, the businessmen, the farmers, and the traders of this country, "Life was not meant to be easy."

The same Prime Minister who made these rash promises about staying at home and governing Australia from Australia has not only made 11 trips overseas but also has gone to the absurd length of spending \$24 million to buy two Boeing 727 jet aircraft so that he can have them refitted. That is his intention. We will see whether in fact it is carried out. He has justified it. He says they are necessary. This is the man who says we do not want a tourist for a Prime Minister. He is certainly making arrangements for a few tours if he is prepared to go to those lengths.

A special airstrip is being constructed at his Nareen farm so that he can jet in at weekends. At whose expense? I have yet to find the exact sum of money that will cost, but I can assure you, Mr Speaker, the House will be told when the truth comes to light.

On his recent visit to Western Australia the flight officers who flew him in in his VIP aircraft would have had too many hours up to fly him straight back so that he could be on Nareen farm the next day, Sunday, and spend the day back at the ranch. So to enable him to get back to Nareen the next day, the Prime Minister flew across to Perth ahead of his VIP aircraft a flight crew which could be here to fly him back the next morning. If that is not a shameful squandering of the taxpayers' money by a man who says that what we as ordinary Australian citizens must accept is that life was not meant to be easy, I do not know what is.

The final illustration—which I regret I cannot document tonight but I know everybody read about it recently—is that this same Prime Minister who wants things to be so difficult for everybody else recently publicly complained that the upholstery in the chauffeur-driven limousine he rides around in was not real leather but was synthetic. This is without doubt an illustration of monumental hypocrisy, and we in this Legislative Assembly have an opportunity tonight to tell the Federal Government, by supporting this motion, that we condemn the financial deal it has given the Government of this State and the people of this State, generally.

It is apparent to everyone that the Fraser-fashion contrived economic depression will take us years to recover from, and the Premier knows he

will be in dire straits when he goes to the people again in 1980, because it is impossible with an economy like ours to turn the tap on again so quickly to rectify the ruthlessness with which it was turned off. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [9.39 p.m.]: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who has just resumed his seat, has been enjoying himself with some of his rhetorical phrases which are now almost household words around the place. Before I deal with the motion, I should mention one or two matters arising from his speech. He made the rather astounding statement that last night's Budget would set back the North-West Shelf fund raising.

Mr Bryce: I said it could.

SIR CHARLES COURT: Retreating already? Had he seen the reaction of the money market today he would have found that, rather than hinder it, the Budget will help it. That is quite independent of any merit or lack of merit in the Budget.

Mr Bryce: That is not the view of the joint venturers to whom we spoke on Friday of last week.

SIR CHARLES COURT: We are talking about a Budget which was introduced last night. I thought I should mention that matter in passing because the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, in the responsible position he holds, should be careful when he makes these statements—which he hopes, I am afraid, will cause some depression, gloom, and economic fear.

Mr Bryce: You are the one who said it was a prescription for recession.

SIR CHARLES COURT: If this motion were genuinely intended, and had it been contrived with a genuine desire to show some concern for the State and some support of the Premier and Treasurer and the Government, we would welcome it; but when we get behind the scenes and strip the mask away, we find it is nothing more than a political sham. The crocodile tears shed for the Premier and Treasurer and the great play made on words are nothing but a sham. These crocodile tears shed by members opposite come from a party which literally knows no shame when it comes to economic policy. I say quite categorically that for the first time the people of Australia are starting to understand and assess the cost this nation has incurred because of the recklessness and irresponsibility of the Whitlam Administration.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will resume his seat. The House will come to order.

Sir CHARLES COURT: If members took the time to examine this situation studiously and confer with the people who really matter in terms of international finance and trade, they would find the world understands very clearly the damage which was done, and the world understands it is very easy to create a mess and very hard, time-consuming, and frustrating to clean it up.

Mr H. D. Evans: You were going to sort it out in 18 months.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I remind members that I made some very strong statements after the Premiers' Conference—

Mr Davies: We agreed with you, too.

Sir CHARLES COURT: —and after the Loan Council meeting. I stated the position very clearly so that the people of this State would know what it was all about, because I did not want to be masquerading as supporting what the Prime Minister had put forward when I believed the policy the Federal Government had followed in respect of the Premiers' Conference and the Loan Council was not the best one in the interests of Australia. At the same time I made it very clear that I supported the Prime Minister to the hilt on his programme to abate inflation and get interest rates down, because those two matters more than any others are the key to a sustained economic recovery.

Tonight we have seen complete indifference on the other side to the question of inflation. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition virtually said, "Let it rip."

Mr Bryce: That is unadulterated nonsense and so far from the truth that you ought to be absolutely ashamed of yourself.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition devoted—

Mr Bryce: You have no standards if you are prepared to say that.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition devoted a considerable amount of his speech to ridiculing the Prime Minister and accusing him of having some kind of a phobia about getting inflation down, as though it were a sin.

Mr Bryce: Precisely—"at any cost", I said.

Sir CHARLES COURT: He harped on the suggestion that the Prime Minister had a single-mindedness about getting inflation down. The one

thing we must do is get inflation and interest rates down so that we can have sustained growth.

Mr Bryce: There will be nothing left of the economy when you get it down to 3 per cent.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It would do members opposite good if they took time off to read some of the comments of the Federal Treasurer last night. Members opposite do not have to read the lot, but if they read just the first parts of the Budget speech—pages 2 and 3 for a start, and then from page 24 onwards—they will see in stark relief some of the problems that have been inherited by this nation and some of the problems that some day must be faced up to by both Government and Opposition. It is of no use the Opposition, without any responsibility for government, making these brave statements and predictions, unless it is prepared to be committed to the solutions that are necessary for the return to good health of the economy of the nation.

Mr Bryce: You forget that you are one who made irresponsible promises.

Sir CHARLES COURT: If members opposite would listen—and we gave them a fairly good hearing—I would like to remind them that in the early part of the Federal Treasurer's speech he made the following observations—

High unemployment persists.

Real wages are still too high and this remains a major cause of the unacceptable levels of unemployment.

The inescapable truth which cannot be too heavily emphasised is that the real cost of labour continues to be out of line with its productivity.

Until this is put right, growth in jobs, will be held back and unemployment will be difficult to reduce.

Now, Sir, the Federal Treasurer in presenting his Budget went on to make some pertinent observations. I do not intend to read many of them, but when we come to the latter part at page 24 under the heading, of "Budget Overview" and then the heading, "The Budget, Monetary Policy and Wages Policy" we find some remarks that I believe trade unions, Governments, Oppositions, and Employers' Federations will one day have to settle down and do something about. The cold, hard fact is that our present level of wages and the way wages got out of hand in the period to which I have referred, is such that we cannot expect to have a return to high employment, nor can we expect to have a return to sustained economic growth unless the situation is corrected.

The Federal Treasurer will no doubt be

criticised by the unions and by the Opposition for coming out so strongly in his criticism of the policies followed by the Federal Industrial Commission. The fact is that the nation, at a time when it needed support from that body, did not receive it. The commission has been more prepared to bend in the hope of getting some industrial peace and to appease the work force rather than face up to the real crux of the situation.

Mr Davies: You have really got a thing about unions.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Members opposite have heard me criticise the Commonwealth Government's attitude to money supply and what appears to be in the minds of some people an obsession about money supply. We have this great "M3" money supply measurement procedure which is always quoted, and which seems to be something of a Bible in the minds of some people in Canberra. I have been a critic of it but I have to admit that some of the basic thrusts of the arguments are soundly based and will have to be faced up to by everyone, be it employer or employee organisations, Governments, or Oppositions. It is not a pleasant thing to face, but it is something that one day we will have to face up to because we are now reaping the harvest of a period of irresponsibility the like of which we have never seen before. We went into an era of social welfare spending that the nation could not afford, and we had a period of reckless wage increases—

Mr Bryce: Let them eat cake!

Sir CHARLES COURT: —unrelated to productivity. Now the Federal Treasurer has decided to spell out the situation in the clearest of terms—and not before time—and to say that unfortunately if we cannot get some sanity in respect of wage levels and productivity the rather diabolical machinery of the money supply has to be used.

This inevitably means there will be fewer jobs, because if employers and employees do not get back to sanity about wage levels and productivity, there must be fewer jobs. The money supply machinery will have to be used to force employers to live within the means of the nation and, unfortunately, this squeezes people out of work. It comes back to the old saying which was emphasised by one of Whitlam's own Ministers: one man's wage increase is another man's job. Somehow or other we do not seem to be able to get that message across.

I want to make the point—and a debate of this kind presents a good opportunity to do it—that what the Federal Treasurer said yesterday, harsh

though it might be, hit the nail right on the head. I think members on both sides of the House should take notice of his comments. I quote a few extracts from his Budget speech, as follows—

With continuing success against inflation, the Government looks forward to further sustainable reductions in interest rates.

Then he said—

The banks and building societies are being reminded of the Government's desire that they lend to homeseekers to the maximum extent.

He went on to say—

To expand savings banks' capacity to lend for housing in 1978-79, the proportion of savings bank deposits required to be held in public securities and liquid assets will be reduced from 45 to 40 per cent.

This again indicates that the Federal Government is conscious of the need to ensure that the money is available for these purposes. However, I want to make the point that having this money available will achieve nothing unless we can get some sanity in respect of wage levels, and some degree of productivity.

Mr Wilson: He has stopped talking about the 2 per cent drop by the end of the year.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Does not the member for Dianella applaud the fact that he tried, even though he got no encouragement from that side of politics?

Mr Wilson: He misled the people of Australia.

Sir CHARLES COURT: He set out to achieve the reduction.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Sir CHARLES COURT: It is quite obvious members opposite do not want to listen.

Mr Wilson: He said there would be a 2 per cent drop in interest rates by the end of the year.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The member for Dianella is one who always pleads that he is on the side of the poor and the downtrodden. I want to remind him that—

Mr Wilson: You discredit me if you like, but what I am trying to get from you is an explanation of why the Treasurer is now backing down on what he previously said, that there would be a 2 per cent drop in interest rates by the end of this year.

Sir CHARLES COURT: We will have the next lesson in a few minutes!

Mr Wilson: Personal abuse will not help.

Sir CHARLES COURT: If the member for Dianella will remain silent for a moment I will answer him. He should be on the side of the Prime Minister for having tried to get interest rates down, and he has got them down. Perhaps he has not got them down to the extent he said he would, but he has got them down and the member for Dianella should be on his side, because once interest rates are down this makes the biggest single contribution to employment and the greatest single contribution to home buyers. It means inflation is down. The member for Dianella should have the decency to applaud him for trying. The Prime Minister is doing it, although perhaps not as quickly as he said. However, it will be done, even if over a longer period.

Mr Barnett: He is almost as big a failure as you are.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Treasurer went on further to say—

But before I develop this point in more detail, let me say something about the link between jobs and money wage gains.

The sharp increase in labour costs, relative both to the price of output and the costs of other factors of production, which occurred in 1973 and 1974—and which has not so far been wound back—has encouraged firms to shed as much labour as they can.

Again, he was repeating the philosophy that one man's wage increase is another man's job. He went on to say—

They have been replacing workers with machines; replacing full-time staff with part-time; replacing wage and salary earners with self-employed contract labour; in short, making do with less labour all round.

This is the inevitable result if we do not achieve sanity in wage levels and productivity, because money supply must then be the weapon that is used to retain some control. The inevitable result if this happens is that more and more unemployment is created. The Federal Treasurer went on to say—

That is the major reason why employment, especially of wage and salary earners, has hardly been growing at all even while output has been expanding.

He then went on to give a number of warnings that are pertinent, and I refer to a quote from page 27 as follows—

If wages rise faster than we have budgeted for, we will respond by effecting offsetting economies through a further critical examination of Budget expenditures. This

critical examination will include the number of staff employed.

That is a clear warning to members opposite and to the people of Australia that if the present irresponsible attitude continues in respect of the level of wages not being linked to productivity, then everybody including employers and Governments themselves will have to cut back within the money available to them and say, "This is the level of employment that we can have in terms of numbers of employees the money will pay for." Let us hope it does not come to that, because it would not be a good thing for the nation and it certainly would not be a good thing for the people.

Members opposite will be amazed at the degree of responsibility and understanding that exists amongst the community generally.

Mr Davies: You haven't been out of your office today.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The people generally know that things were not well when Fraser took over and something had to be done to sort out the country.

Mr Davies: Did you see the Gallup poll in *The Bulletin* this morning?

Sir CHARLES COURT: One does not run a country on Gallup polls; one does not make economic decisions on Gallup polls. One has to make decisions on what one believes is the right and proper thing to do.

Mr Pearce: You are saying that the community supports your attitude. The Gallup polls say you are wrong.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I want to tell members opposite that the average member of the community is responsible and does understand. He might react adversely and quickly and emotively to an increase in the price of beer, cigarettes, and petrol; but when it comes to the things that matter and will put the nation right, I find he is more responsible.

Let members opposite go out into the community and talk to average people; they will find them more realistic in their approach than some of the senior people in the community who profess to be better informed in respect of the economic position. Let me point out that most family people are budget conscious and have to live within a budget. They have families who have to be fed, educated and clothed and they have to budget for holidays, etc. Probably they have a more basic understanding of true budgeting and living within a means than have half the members of Parliament.

Mr Skidmore: A worker who accumulates his annual leave will be \$200 down the drain.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I want to remind members opposite also of the fact that no nation can continue with a deficit of the size that ours has been at the Federal level over the last few years, or of the size of the one that is coming up this year.

I want to make the point, because it seems to be missed, that members opposite talk about deficits as though they are only book entries; but they must be paid for. If a Government comes up with a Budget deficit like the present one of \$2 800 million, that has to be paid for in the final analysis. It must be paid for in cash, because printing money solves nothing.

I remind members again that last year we had an actual deficit of over \$3 300 million, and that has to be financed. The bigger the deficit the less money there is in the money market, because a responsible Government has to go into the market to borrow and it has to drain money from that market to pay for the deficit. This makes it much more difficult for the States and for semi and local government bodies, and in other essential borrowing areas such as housing.

It is no good shutting our eyes to this, nor can we say as was implied by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that we should let things rip and not be conscious of the deficit, because there is that large amount of money that has to be taken out.

Mr Bryce: While I was out of the Chamber you were prepared to repeat that deceitful lie.

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ascot knows that I have consistently ruled that no member shall call another member a liar or imply that he is a liar. I ask the member for Ascot to withdraw.

Mr Skidmore: Even if it is correct, you may not say it.

Mr BRYCE: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. The member for Swan should have some respect and regard for this Chair.

Mr Skidmore: I have, Mr Speaker, the utmost respect.

Mr BRYCE: Mr Speaker, I certainly retract that statement.

Debate Resumed

Mr Bryce: You are indulging in a blatant political untruth.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition made a great play about the fact that deficits do not matter.

Mr Bryce: You brought up that matter behind my back, while I was out of the Chamber.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I say it now while the honourable member is here.

Mr Bryce: You know it is palpably untrue.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition had an obsession about the fact that Fraser wanted to reduce inflation.

Mr Bryce: He was prepared to sacrifice the jobs of one million people to bring it down to 4 per cent or 5 per cent.

Sir CHARLES COURT: If we had deficits of the order being advocated by some people, heaven help the works programmes of the States, because they must be paid for somehow. If we are not going to get it out of revenue we must take it out of loan moneys. Obviously, the Commonwealth must have first bite of the cherry to finance its deficits. Just imagine what the Commonwealth is going to take out of the money market for last year's deficit.

I return now to the subject matter of the motion and to the absolute irresponsibility of members opposite on this question of Budget deficits. It is a cold, hard fact that somebody must pay. As far as this side of politics is concerned, we are not going to do it through the printing press because of the destructive results that brings.

Of course we did not get all that we wanted from the Premiers' Conference and the Loan Council; that has been made clear. It is so patently a political sham for the Opposition to jump onto this bandwagon that it collapses under its own insincerity.

The point I wish to make is that the Parliament must acknowledge that support must be given to this battle against inflation if we are to have any future as a country.

Mr Bryce: Are you prepared to reduce inflation at any price?

Sir CHARLES COURT: It does not have to be at any price.

Mr Bryce: Because of your policies, one million people will be out of work by this time next year.

Sir CHARLES COURT: All of the claptrap we are getting from members opposite has been heard so often before. Members opposite are crying crocodile tears after the Whitlam Government plunged Australia into this deficit condition, and it is the Fraser Government which has to sort it out.

Mr Skidmore: No, that was Menzies, and you know it.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition was on his bandwagon again tonight about so-called double taxation. There will come a day when all States will introduce such legislation—not necessarily to apply it, but to give them the right to impose a surcharge or to grant a rebate, as the case may be.

Mr Bryce: Give us the good news; tell us about the rebates.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I wish to remind the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that I have said not once but a dozen times publicly and in his hearing that there will be no surcharge in this Budget. How many more times do I have to say it?

Mr Bryce: It will be absolutely necessary in 1979.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Yet, listening to him tonight, he was misleading the people by giving the distinct impression we were going to do it this year. In addition, the Leader of the Opposition put forward figures to support his claim. I have said before that no surcharge will be applied in this Budget.

Mr Bryce: What about next year? Tell the truth about 1979.

Mr O'Connor: What about the year 2001, when you get in?

Mr Bryce: We will be there in 1980, ready to repeal this legislation. Your double taxation will throw you out of office.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Mr Speaker, to restore a bit of sanity and sincerity to this motion and to give it a little purpose, I propose to move an amendment.

Mr Bryce: I will bet 100 to 1 that Gough Whitlam gets a mention.

Opposition members interjected.

Amendments to Motion

Sir CHARLES COURT: Mr Speaker, I only wish we had a gallery of people to hear the irresponsible and uncouth attitude of members opposite towards a very serious national matter. I move an amendment—

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

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

can be assured, but expresses the opinion that the main strategy to achieve these purposes could have been preserved and, at the same time, economic activity generated and unemployment reduced by the infusion of a realistic sum of money into the capital works programmes of the respective State Governments.

Such capital works monies could be directed at works which would improve the efficiency and the adequacy of the basic working assets of the nation, such as railways, roads, harbours, water, sewerage, drainage and power supplies, and on a basis which would satisfy the Federal Government that the money was being applied in a way to achieve the proper objectives and generate the maximum impact on employment within the private sector.

This House is also of the opinion that more money could have been injected into housing both for purposes of meeting an urgent need and, at the same time generating a higher level of employment particularly to retain in employment skilled people within the building industry.

This House is further of the opinion that had these funds been injected on a basis of Loan monies without any charge against the Consolidated Revenue Fund Budget of the Federal Government, the expansion could have taken place without inflationary effect and possibly with some consequential benefits to the Federal Budget both in terms of tax earnings and lower demands for social welfare payments.

In moving the amendment I wish to remind members that what is contained in my amendment is consistent with what I said after the Premiers' Conference and Loan Council meetings and with what I have said in the meantime; it is consistent with what I have said about the Federal Budget since it was introduced yesterday; and, it is consistent with what I have said tonight, even though the Opposition did not want to listen to it.

It is based on responsibility and acknowledges the fact that the main thrust of the Budget should be towards getting the deficit, inflation and interest rates down and to get the economy growing again. It is based on bringing money in from a source other than the Federal Budget to enable the States to get on with some works which not only will give the economy some "nourishment" but which also are essential in the

long term to ensure the efficient working of the economy.

This is not something new; I have been saying it for the last two years. In fact, I have been the most outspoken on this issue at Premiers' Conferences and Loan Council meetings. I have moved my amendment to get this motion into some sort of order, so that it will relate to the current scene in a balanced way, in the hope that the Opposition will be prepared to get behind this thrust against inflation and interest rates and to achieve sustained economic growth.

Mr OLD: Mr Speaker, I second the amendment.

MR B. T. BURKE (Balcatta) {10.10 p.m.}: We are seeing in Australia at this time the most massive shift in the distribution of the wealth of this nation that has been evident since Federation. The Premier has returned to the old hobby horse about the just and proportionate share of the national cake that is being devoted in wages to the working part of the population.

However, let us ask ourselves just what this Premier wants. It was not very long ago that he was calling for unions to adhere to the guidelines of wage indexation, saying that the claims they were making at that time were extravagant because they exceeded the claims which would have been legitimately awarded under indexation guidelines.

When the union movement conceded the point and agreed to adhere to the indexation principles, the Premier started to talk about partial indexation, and again cut back the amount he was prepared to share to the community as wages.

When partial indexation was accepted by the majority of the union movement, the Premier started to talk about plateau indexation, and again tried to deny the share he had previously thought was proper to the wages part of the national product. Now the Premier talks about reducing the frequency with which the wages share is determined.

The truth is that the Premier is merely politicking. The Premier is trying to balance his Budget on the head of the least advantaged class in our community.

Let us find out from the Premier now when he is going to be satisfied. He called for wage indexation; the unions agreed. He called for partial indexation; the unions went along with that idea. He called for plateau indexation; and the unions went along with it. Now, he has called for the abolition of the quarterly wage adjustment, and seeks to find fault because, on this fourth and final issue, the unions are starting

to show some disquiet. What does the Premier want?

Sir Charles Court: Is it not true there is a national campaign by unions to get back everything they have lost, and to get ahead of indexation?

Mr B. T. BURKE: At the same time, the unions have consistently complied with the guidelines for indexation laid down while Governments—Federal and State—have consistently criticised the Arbitration Commission for then granting wage claims and adjustments which were in line with indexation.

The Premier misleads and, having misled, then tries to deny still further the wage claims of the people he now blames for what is happening. What does the Premier want? Does he want wages lowered, or never increased?

Sir Charles Court: We want the prospect of more employment, not a situation which will be self destructive of existing employment.

Mr B. T. BURKE: In absolute terms, is the Premier able to say whether he believes wages should not be raised for 12 months, or should be reduced for 12 months? What does he want? He has been given what he called for previously, and he is not satisfied. Can the Premier tell this House and this community what he wants?

Sir Charles Court: We want wages related to proper productivity.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Once again, in money terms and in real terms is the Premier talking about lower wages, wages not rising as quickly, or wages at the current rate? Or is the Premier going to duck and hedge as he normally does?

Sir Charles Court: We want wages related to productivity so that employment will be protected and increased employment will be created. That is what we are trying to do.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Of course, the Premier will not say what he wants in money terms and real terms. He will not tell the community at what level he believes their wages should persist because if he does, he denies himself the political avenue he has found so expedient in the past. His policy is, "Always ask for the maximum, and when you get it, seek more." That is what the Premier has done consistently. He called for wage indexation, and when he got it he called for partial indexation. When he got that he was still not happy. What does he want?

Sir Charles Court: Indexation was just a palliative of the time to try to get a little bit of industrial business and it was also a recipe for inflation. We made that clear at every hearing.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I wish to deal with that part of the economy that is my responsibility as the Opposition shadow Minister for Housing. It is good to recall the words used by the Prime Minister (Malcolm Fraser) during his 1975 election campaign when he said—

The need for facilities in large public housing estates is especially urgent. Housing opportunities for special and disadvantaged groups must be expanded.

In August, 1978, the facts are these: in three successive Budgets, there have been significant cuts in the amount of money made available for public housing. In 1976-77 the decrease was 10 per cent; in 1977-78 the decrease was 8 per cent; in 1978-79 the decrease was a massive 29.4 per cent. Those amounts were cut from the money made available for public housing. Across the nation 100 000 applicants have their names on public housing lists. In addition, many more people have not placed their names on the public housing list, which they are entitled to do, simply because of the waiting period they will endure. Public participation in housing has dropped alarmingly until public housing now builds less than 6 per cent of the total housing output in the nation in any one year. The waiting time for purchase applicants is as high as six years and the average time is four years for those seeking a State housing or public housing authority purchase home.

Referring to the expansion of housing opportunities for special and disadvantaged groups which was of such great concern to the Prime Minister in 1975, let us look at the performance in the field of Aboriginal housing. As far as the Aboriginal population is concerned, the present Minister for Aboriginal Affairs said in October, 1976—

Without housing there can only be limited improvement in health, limited opportunities for children to succeed at school, and limited hope of gaining regular employment. There is also little chance for the foundation of family stability and the growth of self-respect. This is the poverty cycle. To break it, housing must be provided.

At that time the Minister was talking about the Aboriginal population in 1976. In August, 1978, these are the facts and this is an example of the Government's performance: 50 to 60 per cent of the Australian Aboriginal population is either unhoused or inadequately housed; 57 per cent of the Aboriginal work force is unemployed and in three successive Budgets there have been massive cuts in the money made available for Aboriginal

housing. The cut in 1975-76 was 12 per cent; in 1976-77 it was 18.2 per cent; and in 1977-78 it was 23.2 per cent. In the Budget just released another massive cut is envisaged.

At the same time social security outlays have risen by 36 per cent since 1974-75. Expenditure on Aboriginal affairs has fallen by 22 per cent. In 1976-77 the Department of Aboriginal Affairs underspent its allocation by \$17.7 million, which it returned to the Consolidated Revenue Fund. This is the sort of record that the Premier pretends to defend and of which he pretends to be proud.

The problem with respect to the Australian Aboriginal population should be considered in the context of that population being only 1 per cent of the total Australian population. It is not a problem of massive proportions. It is not a problem that a committed and caring Government could not set about solving, if only in the housing area; but it is certainly a problem on which the Government has failed and it is certainly an area in which real need has been ignored.

As far as the aged are concerned, the Premier well knows that the present Minister admitted that 11 per cent of the aged population of this nation—that is 133 000 people—were living in unsatisfactory dwellings. The proposition was confirmed by the Henderson report on poverty. In 1976 the Government made available \$225 million which it said would be provided over three years for special aged housing projects. After spending just over \$95 million of the money made available, it extended the period over which it could be spent from three to four years. The Government has now announced that the programme will be cut out.

As far as the Opposition is concerned, the private housing sector speaks for itself. Commencements are lower now in Western Australia than they have been in any month since March, 1975. Approvals are similarly languishing. The work force currently engaged in the building industry is being diminished to the stage where it is now 15 per cent lower than it was three years ago and 2 000 construction workers and building industry workers are now out of work.

Mr Skidmore: That would not worry them.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Premier makes light of the criticism of the member for Dianella on the question of interest rates and accuses the member of being insincere because he is not supporting the Prime Minister. But, of course, the member for Dianella and the Opposition never asked the

Prime Minister to promise that he would lower interest rates by 2 per cent by the end of the year. We did not ask the Prime Minister to make the promise. He made the promise himself.

Sir Charles Court: I hope you would want him to.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Of course I would not want him to make a promise he could not keep.

Sir Charles Court: He tried, did he not?

Mr B. T. BURKE: He did not say he would try. He said he would do it.

Sir Charles Court: You would want him to.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Of course I would want him to lower interest rates, but I would not want him to mislead the public in a cruel fashion.

Sir Charles Court: And interest rates have come down.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Interest rates, as they affect the bulk of the community, have not fallen one whit.

Sir Charles Court: They have come down substantially.

Mr Skidmore: In what area?

Sir Charles Court: Public funds have come down in cost considerably in the last year.

Mr Skidmore: What is the interest rate?

Sir Charles Court: Most of them have come down more than ½ per cent and some have come down over 1 per cent.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Premier talks of a Canberra imposed, selectively applied interest reduction of ½ per cent, and still ignores the fact that the Prime Minister did not promise to try to lower interest rates. The Prime Minister did not say he would have a bash at it. The Prime Minister said he would do it and he failed.

Mr Bryce: In the same way as you said you would provide 100 000 jobs.

Sir Charles Court: You will be disappointed if it comes down and he succeeds. I would like to hear you people advocate some reduction of interest, because I have not heard you get behind this campaign.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I have told the Parliament time and time again that interest rate reductions are possible when the Government gets serious about controlling the finances of the country. When the Government decides it will control the repatriation of overseas funds, it can afford to get dinkum about telling us that interest rates will come down; but when the Premier knows, as well as I do, the unemployment, the deflation, and the stagnation which will result from the repatriation

of massive funds as a result of a Canberra imposed interest rate reduction which we will be faced with politically, it is just not a proposition.

Sir Charles Court: You are so unrealistic and advocating a retention of high interest rates. That is what you are advocating. The only way you will get them down is by getting inflation down.

Mr Skidmore: Tell us how you will do that.

Sir Charles Court: It is being done.

Mr Skidmore: Thousands of workers are out of work. That is a good way to achieve it.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Is it not strange that the Premier is not prepared to criticise the Prime Minister for making rash promises? He is not even prepared to say the Prime Minister promised something and failed; and yet he wants to take to task the member for Dianella because he says, "Why did the Prime Minister promise to do something he could not do?" Having failed to fulfil his promised undertaking, the Premier now springs to the defence of the Prime Minister and blames the member for Dianella. What convoluted logic.

Sir Charles Court: I blamed the member for Dianella for not having the decency to admit that the Prime Minister set out to do what was right.

Mr Davies: And broke a promise. He said, "I will do it."

Mr B. T. BURKE: This Premier and this Prime Minister trade in promises for political purposes; promises they cannot hope to fulfil; promises they do not intend to fulfil; and promises they are incapable of fulfilling and yet they make these promises simply for political purposes. We all heard about the 100 000 jobs which would be provided in 18 months. Where are they?

Sir Charles Court: Who said that?

Mr Davies: Your former Minister.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Premier's former Minister for Labour and Industry is on public record as having said, "100 000 jobs will be provided within 18 months."

Sir Charles Court: And you know that the official policy he explained to the House was that in a given period of three years this would be done.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Premier does not take long to turn on his colleagues when faced with the truth. Now he is denying the former Minister.

Sir Charles Court: It is written into the policy.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Is the Premier not capable of controlling his Ministry? His Ministers rush off in all directions making different promises. A promise was made in the name of this

Government that 100 000 jobs would be supplied within 18 months. Where are they?

Mr Grayden: Within the next few years.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Where are the jobs?

Mr Davies: It was within 18 months.

Mr Skidmore: They are non-existent.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Of course the jobs are non-existent. Where are the lower interest rates? They are non-existent.

Sir Charles Court: They are down.

Mr B. T. BURKE: What nonsense!

Sir Charles Court: Do you want us to put them up again?

Mr B. T. BURKE: Where are the lower taxes and charges which will work to reduce inflation? Where are the productive expenditures in areas of capital works? They are non-existent. As far as this Government is concerned the promises it makes at election time are forgotten the day after the election and then the Premier blames the member for Dianella because the Prime Minister has failed to reduce interests rates. As far as this Government is concerned, especially in the area of housing, it has denied to a whole class of people one of the things it says it holds dear to its own aims and that is home ownership. It has denied by high interest rate policies and by restrictive monetary policies, the prospect of people to house their families in their own homes.

The Premier is blithely prepared to continue supporting the Prime Minister and has raised only a mild voice in protest. Had it been the Whitlam Government, we would have seen supply blocked five times; Whitlam would have been impeached; and criminal charges would have been brought against members of Parliament; but because it is the Fraser Government, the Premier has framed some small and mealy-mouthed statements which reek of insincerity. As far as the Opposition is concerned, the amendment moved by the Premier does not deserve to be supported and the motion in its original form should proceed. Of course, if the motion is defeated the Opposition is prepared to support any reproof of the Federal Government's terrible financial dealings.

MR LAURANCE (Gascoyne) [10.28 p.m.]: We have heard from three speakers opposite tonight telling us how bad the situation is. They have taken the opportunity to jump onto their feet and tell us how bad the Government is. They have said that they foresaw the situation yesterday and decided to take this opportunity. We have heard a great deal of carping criticism from all of them. In a debate based on economics we have heard

nothing from any of the speakers from the opposite side about what they would do.

Mr Bryce: Increase public works.

Mr LAURANCE: The member did not say that.

Mr B. T. Burke: Of course he did.

Mr LAURANCE: So we have come to learn that the Opposition can only give us—

Mr B. T. Burke: I think you made up your speeches in the morning.

Mr LAURANCE:—carping criticism. In fact I think the public of Western Australia have learnt to summarise this Opposition by saying, "Knock, knock, who is there? The Labor Party." That is all they can do.

Mr Davies: It is extremely funny. By golly that is witty!

Mr LAURANCE: It would not be funny for members opposite, because it is so accurate.

Mr Skidmore: Tell me when I have to laugh.

Mr B. T. Burke: You are not being particularly constructive.

Mr LAURANCE: I am referring to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. He knows in the last financial year the deficit was \$3 300 million. In this financial year he knows the budgeted deficit is \$2 800 million. I repeatedly asked him in his comments about inflation and the economy at what level he would fund the deficit. He had no reply.

Mr Bryce: Probably finish up with \$4 000 million.

Mr LAURANCE: We have the situation where, if the Federal Government tries to bring down a deficit in any area, there is criticism from the Opposition about reducing expenditure in that particular area. If one cannot reduce expenditure then income must go up, unless one has the totally unacceptable method of funding the deficit by rushing to the printing press. The other way to do it is to reduce expenditure.

Members opposite know that whenever a particular area in which they happen to be interested looks as though it is in for the chop, they are the first to criticise that reduction in expenditure. But the only way to prevent a reduction in expenditure is to increase the revenue.

Mr Bryce: Why do you not remember Utah? Your Government gave \$54 million to Utah as a Christmas present by cutting back the levy. That was a legitimate source of funding by the Federal Government.

Mr LAURANCE: Mr Hawke has something to answer for in regard to Utah.

Mr Bryce: I would like to hear your comment.

Mr LAURANCE: The criticism about the Budget is largely on the increase in revenue. I have already said that no member on the opposite side has indicated any area where he would like to see expenditure cut back in order to bring about increased revenue raising. As we have seen, this will continue to reduce inflation and give us a stable economy.

Mr Davies: Why cancel death duties, if the Government wants money?

Mr LAURANCE: The jobs we get as a result of the Budget will be stable.

Mr McIver: What about the \$8 million the Government gave to the brewery. There was a source of income.

Mr LAURANCE: The honourable member will have to explain that himself. I do not have the time.

I will refer to one economic indicator, the "National Bank Monthly Summary". It was published in the last few days, and prior to the Budget. When referring to the overall prospects in Australia, the publication stated—

An examination of the various components of spending highlights the major stimulus provided by business investment during the past year.

This economic journal gives the lie to what the Leader of the Opposition was saying that everything was in a state of depression. The summary by the National Bank states that a major stimulus has been provided during the past year. It states that expenditure by businesses on plant and equipment, and for building and construction, grew by an estimated 6.5 per cent in real terms during 1977-78, with growth being particularly strong during the second half of the year. The summary states that Australia's external sector grew also.

So, while such indicators are good, the article does indicate that there are some areas which are not so good.

Mr Skidmore: Such as wages for workers.

Mr LAURANCE: The summary also stated that the weakest area of expenditure was private dwelling construction. That is reflected in the amendment moved by the Premier, which I am supporting. I will refer to the relevant section of the amendment as follows—

This House is also of the opinion that more money could have been injected into housing

both for purposes of meeting an urgent need and, at the same time generating a higher level of employment. . .

So, that one area where there is an economic downturn is taken care of in the amendment. We acknowledge that downturn and recognise that we are calling on the Federal Government for greater spending in that area.

Another area which has been disappointing in 1977-78 is employment, and this has been concentrated largely in the private sector. During the 12 months ended last July, the number of jobs, in fact, slightly increased because of an increase in the Government sector.

Mr Bryce: Unemployment still jumped from 7 000 to 36 000 in four years.

Mr LAURANCE: We know the reason for this, and we have seen it become entrenched in the economy. When the colleagues of members opposite were in power in the Federal sphere it commenced. There are many reasons. The Premier has already referred to some of them, but I will repeat them. Unions, particularly, have made sure that there have been better and better jobs for fewer and fewer people. Members opposite have supported that approach; members opposite have gone right along with it.

Mr Jamieson: Do you think the conditions of the workers should be whittled away?

Mr LAURANCE: Better and better jobs have been provided, but the unions are now on the horns of a dilemma. Decisions have to be made.

Mr Jamieson: You have to make a decision.

Mr LAURANCE: The unions sought better jobs for fewer people. The wage structure of young people is too high, and once again that is endorsed by members opposite and by the union movement. The union movement wants higher and higher wages for young people to the point where the employers of labour will not have them.

We have heard many reasons about people putting capital expenditure into businesses and trying to make sure that the capital purchases machinery rather than labour. The real answer lies not in the Budget we have seen.

There has been considerable emotionalism from members opposite, particularly about revenue increases contained in the Budget which was presented last night. I want to talk about some of the real hope for our economy; the real answers to the problems that confront the economy. Most decisions have been taken over recent months, and they did not relate particularly to last night's Budget.

I believe the real answer lies in such things as

the Federal Government's commitment to the Australian public that there will be no resources tax on petroleum and uranium. That, I believe is a major undertaking which has been given by the Federal Government after what was too long a delay. Another answer is in retaining the investment allowance. I have already indicated that one of the economic journals has said the stimulus provided by business investment in the past year has been of major importance. Another answer is the relaxing of guidelines on foreign ownership. That is an important decision. Only recently greater encouragement has been given to overseas investment.

These are areas where I believe the Federal Government is at least being bold enough to throw off the shackles of economic mumbo-jumbo and socialist dogma as a result of the Whitlam Government. We did hope they would have stopped immediately there was a change of Government, and we were disappointed to see that perhaps because of the bureaucracy the Fraser Government did not do anything about these things immediately. It has taken time to get some of these things out of the system. Fortunately, some major decisions in recent times will make sure that the North-West Shelf development will proceed. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition did some scaremongering tonight when he tried to scare people away from investment in this country. I believe some of the criticism levelled at his Federal leader should have been levelled at him tonight.

The Leader of the Opposition tonight has tried to drive people away from investing in this country.

Mr Bryce: Rubbish!

Mr LAURANCE: Fortunately, the Fraser Government has made a strong statement with regard to attracting overseas investment. It would appear that on the other side of the House private enterprise is a dirty word, and that overseas capital is no longer wanted in this country. Fortunately, we now have a Federal Government which is trying to attract that sort of investment.

I endorse the amendment for another reason.

Mr Jamieson: A special reason!

Mr LAURANCE: I would like the member opposite to just hold his grin for a moment while he listens to my reason. The Premier has told the Federal Government how he would like to see the economy dealt with, rather than have it dealt with under the Fraser method. That is reflected in this motion.

Let us look back to the Tonkin Government, when it was in similar trouble with its Federal

counterpart. What did we see then? We heard a lonely bleat from the then Minister for Housing (Mr Bickerton) which did not do him much good as it turned out. Members opposite lie down in similar situations.

Mr Jamieson: That is how little you know.

Mr LAURANCE: The member opposite makes the story sound that way.

Mr Jamieson: The former Minister for Transport would be able to enlighten you.

Mr LAURANCE: The amendment proposed by the Premier reflects the stand taken by this Government. We recognise the efforts by the Federal Government, but there are ways we could alter the Federal policy to bring about a better result. I can only repeat that not one positive suggestion or even one single alternative was advanced from the other side. There is nothing but the usual knocking. I support the amendment.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren) [10.41 p.m.]: The amendment moved by the Premier indicates that he realises the Budget has grave deficiencies in it. It also indicates that he appreciates the line that has been taken, but that does not alter the fact that the Federal Budget is a horror document. It was brought down by those of the same political philosophy as the Government in this State. The determination of the Federal Government to continue its fight against inflation is applauded by the Government. If it is such a wonderful effort on the part of the Federal Government, why has the most inflationary commodity that we use, fuel, been subjected to a very savage increase of 3.5c per litre at the same time as Esso-BHP is doing very nicely?

To follow that through, I was concerned particularly with the effect of the increase in fuel prices in country areas. Whether or not the increase is inflationary, every farm and every piece of rural produce requires transportation. In spite of that, here is a move to jack-up costs which must necessarily reflect in the costs of products down through the wholesalers and retailers. That must reflect in further inflation. How can that be applauded in the first instance?

Other measures taken against rural producers by this Government include increased electricity charges, increased water charges, and in fact every other charge which this Government can raise. These increases have not only applied to rural producers, but to every single dweller in the country.

An amendment of the type now before us applauds the fight against inflation while at the same time it supports a measure of that sort. The Government in Canberra quite deliberately and

cold-bloodedly has attempted to bring down inflation. It has claimed that in so doing it would generate a climate conducive to foreign investment. I do not know where that has been very noticeable in the last 12 months. Foreign investment has been in reverse and funds have been going out of Australia at a much more rapid rate than they have been coming in.

The Fraser Government had to borrow \$200 million. Do not forget what happened when Whitlam had to borrow overseas.

Sir Charles Court: Khemlani; back-door money.

Mr H. D. EVANS: It is respectable when it is done by the Fraser Government, even though a far greater sum of money was involved.

Mr Laurance: It is respectable if it is done through correct channels.

Mr H. D. EVANS: We have heard the suggestion that economic activity has been generated. How can economic activity be generated in the face of unprecedented unemployment? If we take unemployment as one aspect and the impact of the charges imposed as the other aspect, we find the effect will be the reverse of that claim.

When 500 000 people are unemployed, their capacity to purchase is reduced considerably. It would be at least halved, and probably down to one-third. In that situation how can we expect to generate economic activity? That is just so much poppycock.

It is estimated that 50 000 people will be unemployed in Western Australia. In June of this year 1 163 people were unemployed in the Bunbury area, and there were 20 applicants for every job. We are all aware of the unemployment situation in country areas, and it is especially difficult for girls to find employment of any kind.

The taxpayers have been subjected to an amazing range of increases in taxes and charges. Some of these increases are rather trivial, but some are very grave. Pensions will now be adjusted once a year only, in November. Maternity allowances will be abolished. There is a long list of such imposts, and we must not forget the suggested increase of 1½ per cent in direct taxation is more likely to be a rise of nearly 10 per cent for the average wage earner.

The average family faces a decline in terms of real spending power of \$9 a week. Families do not hoard money in trunks under beds, the money is spent to purchase consumer goods.

Mr Bertram: When they have confidence.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Yes, and when they have

money. If we decrease the average family's purchasing power by \$9 a week, the only consequence of that must be a decrease in economic activity, and not an increase as suggested by the Premier. This is the fallacy in the Federal Budget.

When the people living in country areas—and not just the primary producers—look more closely at the provisions of the Budget they will find that not only are they faced with an impost of 3c a litre on fuel, but also there will be some unpleasant changes in the taxation averaging scheme, the provisional tax scheme applied to the primary sector. The new system will not be as easy and as smooth in its operation as the old one was.

Let us look at the situation of the fruit grower. Assistance to fruit growers from the Commonwealth Government has been reduced from \$237 000 to \$3 000, and that must have some far-reaching consequences. It will certainly cause a lack of confidence in that industry.

I note that the Budget provides nothing for the disposal of ships' garbage. This might appear to be a trivial matter, but if we have regard for the exotic diseases that are threatening our stock from our near neighbours in the north, we realise it is a matter of great concern. Probably the Federal Government could have provided for this service with the money needed to supply morning tea in Government departments, but here it is putting at risk one of our great rural industries.

As the weeks roll by, more and more Western Australians will discover just what the Budget contains. Of course it is desirable to lower inflation and to lower interest rates, but the cost of doing this can be high, and it can be too high in terms of social suffering, justice, and inequality.

There has been a greater transposition of national income under the Fraser Government than under any other Government in Australia, and it has been a one-way traffic. Certainly it has not been directed towards the wage and salary earner, and to blame the wage earner for the present situation is nothing short of ludicrous. How does one equate wages and productivity? In any industry one can name, the output per man hour unit has increased.

Because of improved technology on the wharves, the number of personnel involved there is declining. The work force in timber mills has been greatly reduced, and yet production figures are up. In the mining industry and in any other sector we find the same story. To say that the national income is generated by fewer individuals and that those individuals should not participate

one way or the other in this achievement of national income is a complete and utter injustice.

The cry from the other side has been, "What would you do?" It seems more than passing strange that while the Commonwealth Government and the State Governments are crying poor mouth, our State Government plans to abolish death duties. This will mean \$14 million less annually from this source, and it will have to be made up at a time when Federal grants have been reduced dramatically.

I have here the figures which have been quoted already by the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and they bear full and complete testimony about what has happened in this State. Housing will be the hardest hit area, and this will happen at a time when the building industry is at a dangerously low ebb. One action which could have been taken by the Federal Government was ignored completely. Some steps could have been taken in a gentle manner to stimulate the economy.

The Premier's amendment asks us to congratulate the Federal Government on the economic activity which it has generated. That is just so much twaddle. The grant for hospitals is virtually non-existent. Road funds will be cut considerably, and this will affect people living in rural areas, not only the rural producers, but every single rural dweller. With the decreased road funds available, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the State to maintain its present expenditure without the added factor of inflation.

The Premier asks us to applaud the determination of the Government to continue the fight against inflation and its efforts to get interest rates down. The Government has not been very successful in regard to interest rates. The decreases were very slight and seemed to be more of a gesture than representing any practical impact on the economic growth of Australia. This was revealed in the amount of foreign funds which have been withdrawn from this country.

The plight of the pensioners has been ignored. Henceforth pensioners can look forward to annual indexation only. The unemployed, and especially the single unemployed, must face the fact that unemployment benefits will not be increased for at least a year, and even at the end of that period, there is no guarantee of an increase.

In this day and age it is almost impossible to understand why the wage and salary earner should suffer the brunt of the implementation of a policy that is aimed at reducing inflation. The Conciliation and Arbitration Commission has been blamed as being the vehicle through which

wages got out of hand. That is an autonomous body of selected professional men, and it has taken the setting of wages away from the ambit of government. Increases in wages are now decided in a specified and scientific manner. It is certainly not correct now to blame our arbitration system and the Whitlam Government. After four years surely the Premier can realise how hollow and ludicrous his claim is becoming.

Mr Davies: The electorate realises it.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The Premier will catch up in due course. That old cry is now very thin and threadbare. The only initiative the Premier could take was to blame the wages situation on the unions. That suggestion is untenable and unjust.

While I deplore the contents of the Federal Budget and its approach to restoring the economy, I must necessarily disagree with the first two paragraphs of the amendment. I cannot do otherwise. The policies of the Federal Government have not lowered interest rates and they have not generated economic activity. They have succeeded in some small measure in decreasing the inflation rate, but this has been at far too great a cost for the benefits derived.

I applaud the Premier in his criticism of the Federal Government as contained in the final three paragraphs of the amendment. It is only right and proper that he should criticise his Canberra counterparts for what is contained in the Budget. He has shown the weakness of the Federal Government to a large degree.

MR BERTRAM (Mt. Hawthorn) [11.00 p.m.]: The people of Western Australia have reached the stage where they are heartily sick and tired of the Premier's lament that predominantly all the troubles to do with inflation are the result of the inability and refusal of people and the activities of industrial unions to keep wages down. That is his lament. The fact of the matter is that the Premier has the power in Western Australia to do something about that and refuses to do anything about it.

Several times earlier in this debate I inquired of the Premier why he does not do something about it. He has the power and he believes in the use of firm hands in government. He enjoys power and goes to all sorts of lengths to acquire it. He has the power but refuses to use it and he is not satisfied with that. He continues to tell the people high wages are the problem when he is the only one with power to do something about it in Western Australia.

He has the power to control wages. This is his lament to the problem of inflation; it is his stock answer. In answer to a question I asked yesterday

to do with centralism the Premier pointed out that the problem of the computer was a minor one and that the real problem was to do with productivity and costs. He said further, as he has pointed out to the people until they are heartily sick of it, that the biggest content in costs is wages.

The Premier possesses the power to do something about wages. He knows it and he refuses to do anything about it. How genuine is he? In other words, what he is saying to the people is, "We are a poor old Government in performance but so long as we have an excuse we will keep it; we will not erase it."

In this State he has absolute power and he has gone to great lengths in accumulating it. He has the power to fix wages and thereby reduce the costs. There is no question that he does not have the power. The Premier is as silent as the grave and he does not dispute what I say.

How genuine is the Premier and how dinkum is the Government in its desire and assertion that costs are too high and that real wages are too high? He is not going to do anything about it because he wants an excuse. He knows the excuse is all right for the people outside who have a degree of trust and to some extent a lesser knowledge than we have, but he should not offer such nonsense to us in the Opposition.

He has the power to fix the wages of people under State awards and also other people under the powers of the Commonwealth Constitution. I refer to wages that are fixed by the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Courts. He refuses to use that power also.

Why should this man and this Government and all those people opposite who are condoning this activity, lament the situation and complain about it unremittently and say that the problem is high wages inflating the costs, when the Premier is the only person with power to do anything about it and refuses to do so? He has the power so far as State wage fixation is concerned to fix the wages himself. He is the one doing the complaining.

The member for Gascoyne wanted some suggestions as to what the Government should do. The first thing we would suggest would be to use the powers the Government has to deal with the problem which it alleges exists. The all transcending problem, according to the Government, is completely within its power to correct. The Government has undoubted ability, so far as people under non-State awards are concerned, to refer power to the Commonwealth Parliament so it can bring in whatever legislation this State asks it to bring in. There is no reason at all that the Commonwealth Government could

not bring in the necessary legislation. The Fraser Government has an unlimited majority.

Once again, the Premier refuses to refer the power to the Commonwealth Government so that the whole thing could be brought under his firm control and so clean up once and for all the problem he alleges exists. Unfortunately he will not do that either. How genuine is the Premier on this score when he has the power to do something and wilfully refuses to do anything and continues to tell the people outside what the problem is?

Of course the problem is always considered to be the unions. The unions have nowhere near the power the Premier has; they never have had and they never will have. The Premier habitually blames the unions and everyone else when the Government itself has a complete and absolute remedy it could invoke within a few minutes if it wanted to do so. That is the first suggestion to the former insurance executive, the member for Gascoyne, and one he ought to follow if he is genuine and if he is really sincere when he says that wages are the problem because they are inflating costs.

The second thing the Government should do, since the member for Gascoyne wanted further suggestions, is to reduce the rate of income tax.

Mr Laurance: We have done that.

Mr BERTRAM: I have read the paper today and it seems to me the Liberal Party has not done that.

Mr Bryce: Give with one hand and take back with the other.

Mr BERTRAM: The Federal Government has not reduced the rate of income tax and that is what it should do. The Federal Government said it was going to reduce tax and now the whole of Australia is up against Mr Fraser. By reducing income tax more money will be put into circulation which will enable the people to spend more; help stimulate production; increase employment; and increase the total income tax take in the process.

I seem to remember that some time ago the member for Gascoyne indicated he did not have too much trust for a certain person and he does not seem to have much trust in himself. In other parts of the world what I have said has worked. The rate of income tax has been reduced, encouraging people to spend. They have spent and as this has happened so incomes have increased and the total income tax take has also increased. There are movements in other countries for this course of action to be pursued with great vigour.

Mr Skidmore: How does that grab the member for Gascoyne?

Mr BERTRAM: The member for Gascoyne asked for suggestions but when they are offered he takes no heed. How genuine is the member?

Mr Jamieson: He is not genuine.

Mr BERTRAM: The member for Gascoyne has also forgotten that inflation has been going on for years, so taxes would increase anyway. Not only has the Government increased the rate of tax but also it has been scoring wonderfully out of the inflationary effects upon income and the tax on wages as they are applied to the inflated incomes of people.

It seems to be extraordinarily cowardly for anyone to convict, condemn, and criticise a person, people or a tribunal unable to answer accusations. A year or so ago we heard a lot from the then Minister for Police who habitually condemned magistrates for the penalties they were imposing in the Courts of Petty Sessions. That Minister condemned magistrates and judges, none of whom were in a position to reply. These were people appointed by Governments in the first place, I might add. We have yet another display of this at the Commonwealth level.

The Federal Treasurer condemns and blames the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission for the nation's problems, but he does not take any steps to remove the commissioners for inefficiency. When there is a wage application the Government is heard and evidence is adduced by commissioners appointed by the Government. When the commission brings down a judgment which does not suit the Commonwealth Government, the Government complains in this cowardly manner. It complains in an unjust and thoroughly reprehensible but typical manner of the present regime. It is a practice which has been pursued in this State concerning other jurisdictions of courts.

All these measures are said to be directed towards reducing inflation and perhaps someone on the Government side may explain how the 16c increase per gallon of petrol is going to assist in bringing the inflation rate down. In fact, it is going to hurt the person who is usually hurt by measures brought in by Liberal Governments, certainly in the preponderance of cases; and of course I am referring to the family man.

The Premier and those people who sit behind him are supporting the Budget and treating this debate in a light-hearted manner. They could not care less. In fact, the Budget is merely the manifestation of the decisions of the Premiers' Conference.

The Premier goes to the Premiers' Conference

and finds he is to receive insufficient funds to the very serious detriment of this State. Habitually he sends for the Press to inform the people of Western Australia how crook the Prime Minister is. He indicates what a terrible thing the Prime Minister is doing to Western Australia. When he gets the opportunity in a motion such as the one before us this evening to nail home to Mr Fraser his objections on behalf of the peasantry of this State, the "Joe Blows", he rejects the opportunity and opposes the motion.

When the acid test comes for the Premier to transmit to the Commonwealth Government and to the Prime Minister his real beliefs, he does not live up to the show he displays immediately following every Premiers' Conference. How much notice is one supposed to take of the Premier? Where is his credibility rating on this? Is his credibility rating at the same level as it is with respect to a statement he made to this House in September, 1972? That is something which the people of this State should take into account. The next time the Premier returns from a Premiers' Conference with insufficient funds, because of the policy of the Fraser Government, he should be told where to get off when he puts on such a performance. It is all an act, a charade, a sham, and a display, because when the acid test is applied and the Premier can join with the Parliament and with the people of Western Australia and inform the Prime Minister precisely where he stands by supporting a motion in this House, he will not do so. It is extraordinary in the extreme.

The people should remember the true position: Although we have a separate Government in Canberra—we have State and Federal Governments—the fact of the matter is both Governments belong to the same political party and the shamming displayed by the Premier should be recognised by the people. In other words, the Premier is as culpable for this Budget as is the Prime Minister.

It is a horror Budget. It is not the Prime Minister's sole responsibility. The Premier is as involved with it and is as responsible for it as is the Prime Minister. I urge the people to remember this, because we will have another election in a year or two and the Government is working on the basis that the memories of the people will be short. The Government always works on that basis. However, the people should remember this Budget and when an improved Budget appears in a year or two, the people should say, "We will not fall for it this time." The people should keep in mind this Budget and when they go to the polls in two years' time they should

let the Prime Minister know what they think about this horror Budget.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [11.18 p.m.]: I am a little disappointed the amendment has been moved, although I knew it was going to be moved. The reason I am disappointed is I will not be able to reply in detail to some of the outlandish and outrageous statements made by the Premier. They are only outlandish and outrageous because they are his set rhetoric and they are meant to fit any situation.

Mr O'Connor: Are you not doing that now?

Mr DAVIES: The Premier tried to make his remarks fit the situation tonight and they did not fool anybody. But as the Minister—what is he the Minister for currently? Is he the Minister for Labour and Industry, Works and Water Supplies—?

Mr O'Connor: Everything.

Mr Nanovich: That is very smart and very stupid of you too.

Mr DAVIES: What was that from the back?

Mr Nanovich: You are being very smart and very stupid.

Mr Pearce: There is an intelligent giant speaking to us.

Mr DAVIES: Whatever did we do to disturb the member for Whitford? Why did he ever come back from the dining room? We thought the member was well entrenched in the dining room and would not disturb us. However, if we are upsetting the member, he should tell us and we will try to treat him a little more gently. Is the member worried about obtaining insufficient funds for his hospital at Wanneroo? Is that the problem?

Mr Nanovich: We will build the hospital. Do not worry about that.

Mr DAVIES: I see the Minister Without Portfolio is having a wry smile.

Mr Young: I was looking at the clock actually.

Mr DAVIES: Unless the member for Whitford is very kind to the Minister Without Portfolio he will not get his hospital. I am sorry to hear the Minister Without Portfolio is already developing into a clock watcher. It is a little distressing to us.

I am sorry an amendment has been moved and I will not have the opportunity to reply. I would try to reply now, but I am sure, you, Sir, would rule me out of order. Some old, tired arguments have been trotted out. I notice in the political column in tomorrow's paper the Premier is blaming the Whitlam Government for the present

Budget. That will raise the biggest laugh in the community since Bob Hope was here. It may give the Premier pleasure to say that, but it is convincing no-one. That may be his frame of mind, but we have indicated already at length our frame of mind. I think we might as well proceed with the amendment. It is not hard to agree to it, because its meaning is almost the same as that of the motion. The Premier must have been on the horns of a dilemma. I have never seen a dilemma, so I do not know what kind of horns it has. However, the Premier did not know quite what to do with this motion. Of course, if he rejected it completely, he rejected his own statements. If he was trying to give some support to the Federal Government, he would have to reject the motion completely and at the same time reject his own statements.

The Premier obviously wants to support it because I think deep down, like the rest of us, he realises what a disaster Fraser is. However, if he supported it he would then be giving himself a pat on the back, so he was in a quandary and the only thing he could do was throw it out and start afresh.

The words which we are asked to delete state that we condemn the disastrous financial deal given to Western Australia by the Federal Government for the 1978-79 financial year and express concern that as a result essential public works will be delayed and the unemployment situation will be aggravated.

If we read in great detail the proposed amendment, we find it states exactly what we said. However, typical of the Premier, he takes 10 times as many words as anyone else to say anything. We are quite happy with our concise motion on the notice paper which is there for anyone to understand. We do not want to indulge in double talk; we never have. We like to be clear and concise and that is exactly what we are being tonight. However, the Premier, as I said, is up to his old tricks of trying to disguise what he is saying with a multitude of words.

Nevertheless, if we read our motion and the amendment carefully we find they say precisely the same thing—almost. All that the amendment does not acknowledge is that State charges have been increased. I do not want the house to acknowledge that because every elector in Western Australia knows that charges have been increased, and increased outrageously. We included that portion in the motion by way of comment, hoping we could take the heat off the Government and let the people realise we were not blaming the State Government entirely for having increased the rates and charges, but also

the Federal Government. However, if the Premier wants to take all the blame unto himself, we are quite happy to let him do so.

In his amendment, the Premier has not mentioned anything about State charges, but he does not have to because, as I have said, everyone knows they have been increased outrageously and are ahead of the inflation rate. They should at least cover all contingencies until next year, or at least we thought they would until we saw last night's Budget.

Mr Laurance: If you had been Treasurer how would you fund the deficit if you had not increased State charges?

Mr DAVIES: We would not be in the same position as members opposite. We have tried to explain that we have different methods of doing things.

We disagree with only two words in the amendment, and if you will bear with me, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Watt), and let me deal with this aspect, it will save my having to speak again at a later stage.

The amendment applauds the determination by the Federal Government to continue the fight against inflation. We applaud any Government's fight against inflation. We are all behind it. The amendment also states that the House applauds the determination by the Federal Government to continue the fight against inflation and efforts to get interest rates down. Goodness knows we would love to do that. The Premier takes some pride in the fact that interest rates somewhere have fallen. We have not discovered where they have fallen. The only place is in building society deposit accounts. I do not know of any single person who has a housing loan who has had repayments reduced as a result of a drop in the interest rate.

Mr Young: They all have been.

Mr DAVIES: If the Minister can point some out to me I would be delighted to hear them.

Mr Young: Every building society has reduced its rates within the last three months.

Mr DAVIES: That is true, but has it been passed on to the person who has the loan? Is his weekly payment any lower? The building societies were quick enough to put the payments up but there is no evidence of any alacrity on their part to reduce them.

Mr Skidmore: Mine did not come down. The WA Building Society has remained the same for 18 months.

Mr DAVIES: Somewhere the rates have been reduced by a quarter or a half of one per cent but

there is no evidence of the cost of living having been reduced as a result.

Nevertheless we applaud any Government's attempts to get rates down. It is the way it is done we do not like. The proposed amendment goes on to read—

.....because these are the two main avenues through which sustained economic recovery can be assured. . . .

This is where we disagree with the Premier. We do not like the inclusion of the words "the" and "main". If he said that these are two avenues through which sustained economic recovery could be assured, we would not have anything at which to cavil. All we say is that they are not the main avenues. They are two important avenues, but not the two main avenues. We agree they will help substantially and they are important.

Of course we realise that the Government has the numbers and that we can talk until we are blue or red in the face, as the case may be, and it will make no difference whatever because the Government's mind is made up and this is the only way it can get out of the motion on the notice paper while at the same time having a swipe at the Fraser Government. That is precisely what the Government is doing and we want it to go on record that we are opposed to what the Fraser Government is doing.

In his amendment the Premier goes on to say that some injection of money into the State could be mildly inflationary, but would be worth the risk, and that is what we have been saying for weeks and weeks; and that is what the motion says. Therefore he is saying exactly what we are saying and we are happy to endorse that portion of his amendment.

I do not want to delay the House any more when we can basically agree. We are pleased to have the Government join with us in a swipe against the Fraser Government. It is a mild swipe but it is as much as we can possibly hope for.

I am sorry that in his modesty the Premier has not asked the House to endorse the sentiments he expressed after the Premiers' Conference. He seemed a little reluctant to acknowledge those sentiments when he was talking tonight, but they are in black and white in *The Australian* of, I think, the 29th June, and he could not really reject them altogether. However, if he does not want the House to be behind him and endorse his sentiments, that is entirely up to him.

As far as the amendment goes it attacks the Federal Government. It swipes at Fraser and it does precisely what we want it to do. It places on record our policy of injecting some more money

into public works, roads, harbours, hospitals, and the like which is precisely what we have been saying. Consequently there is no need for us to differ except to say we would like the words "the" and "main" deleted, making the amendment read—

... because these are two avenues through which sustained economic recovery can be assured. . .

instead of referring to them as being the two main avenues.

At this late hour I will not debate the matter any further. We are quite happy to go along with the proposal and we are pleased to see that the Government has sense enough to agree with us in what we are proposing to do.

MR BRYCE (Ascol—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [11.30 p.m.]: I would like to convey my congratulations to the Premier for his rather astonishing but very clever political back-flip. It was wonderful to see him present to us an amendment which, in fact, complies with the arguments we were putting to the House. At least, about nine-tenths of the amendment complies with our proposal.

It is typical of the Premier; his amendment is a little verbose. What the Leader of the Opposition said in half a dozen lines, the Premier says in half a dozen paragraphs. We think he was a little cheeky in what he said, and a little cheeky to plagiarise to the extent he did. However, we forgive him.

I emphasise we do not wholeheartedly agree that these are the two main avenues to secure Australia's economic recovery. The Premier has overlooked a third and very important avenue for our economic recovery. In explicit terms, he went on to talk about the proposal in the last three paragraphs of his amendment. I would like to draw the attention of members to the fact that the third and very important avenue is an increased injection of funds into the public sector.

The member for Gascoyne conveniently failed to hear my suggestion at an earlier stage of this debate. The answer is in the requirement of the Federal Government to provide additional funds for capital works, particularly by State Governments.

Mr Laurance: Where would the funds come from?

Mr BRYCE: I am about to tell the member for Gascoyne. The figure which has been produced for this year's anticipated national deficit is \$2.8 billion. In my candid and humble opinion, that is

a dishonest figure. I believe it will be considerably higher.

Might I suggest to the member for Gascoyne that if the Fraser Government had budgeted for a deficit of \$3.3 billion, which was last year's deficit, it could have provided an additional \$500 million to be allocated to the States for capital purposes. We could have reasonably expected about one-tenth of that money to come to Western Australia, which would have been an additional \$50 million injected into the building construction industry which is on the point of collapse. Allowing for the multiplier effect private jobs and investment opportunities for a vastly increased number of individuals and workers in our community would have been provided. The member opposite asked for the details, and that is my suggestion.

The Premier, in the last three paragraphs of his amendment, sets out what he considers should happen. However, he does not refer to the figures I have given as the example.

Mr Laurance: He talks about loan raising.

Mr BRYCE: The Premier said, in the course of his amendment, that this House is also of the opinion that more money could have been injected into housing both for the purposes of meeting an urgent need and, at the same time, generating a higher level of employment. I have suggested that could quite easily have been done and we certainly have no objection.

I will conclude by emphasising, for the benefit of the Premier, that at the very beginning of the amendment we do disagree with the Fraser Government in its bloodmindedness and its preoccupation with solving inflation at any cost. I have said it earlier, and I say it again now; my statements were distorted quite unashamedly by the Premier. We are not in favour of this single-minded approach although we quite categorically endorse the energy that has been put into the fight against inflation, and the endeavours to bring about a reduction in interest rates. However, we do not agree that all the eggs should be put into the one basket because the Government has a particular responsibility to the people as well as to the captains of industry, who are the people preoccupied with a reduction in inflation.

I hope that the record has been put quite clear; we on this side of the House endorse those energies and efforts, but we certainly are not prepared to place half a million or one million jobs at risk. We believe in less speed and less haste.

Amendment put and passed.

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

Substitute the following for the words deleted—

applauds the determination by the Federal Government to continue the fight against inflation and efforts to get interest rates down because these are the two main avenues through which sustained economic recovery can be assured, but expresses the opinion that the main strategy to achieve these purposes could have been preserved and, at the same time, economic activity generated and unemployment reduced by the infusion of a realistic sum of money into the capital works programmes of the respective State Governments.

Such capital works monies could be directed at works which would improve the efficiency and the adequacy of the basic working assets of the nation, such as railways, roads, harbours, water, sewerage, drainage and power supplies, and on a basis which would satisfy the Federal Government that the money was being applied in a way to achieve the proper objectives and generate the maximum impact on employment within the private sector.

This House is also of the opinion that more money could have been injected into housing both for purposes of meeting an urgent need and, at the same time generating a higher level of employment particularly to retain in employment skilled people within the building industry.

This House is further of the opinion that had these funds been injected on a basis of Loan monies without any charge against the Consolidated Revenue Fund Budget of the Federal Government, the expansion could have taken place without inflationary effect and possibly with some consequential benefits to the Federal Budget both in terms of tax earnings and lower demands for social welfare payments.

Mr Bryce: You must agree, it is very verbose.

Mr OLD: I second the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Debate on (motion, as amended) Resumed

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 11.38 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE COMMUNITY WELFARE

Children's Services Programmes: Federal Funds

1185. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What will be the effect on children's service programmes in Western Australia of the Federal Government's cutbacks in this area?
- (2) Will he outline specific projects which may be affected?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) It is assumed that the member refers to educational programmes within the Early Childhood branch of the Education Department, and by pre-schools.

Although the Commonwealth Government has reduced (in real terms) the block grant for these programmes, the State Government will continue to expand the provision of a year of sessional pre-school on a voluntary basis.

TRAFFIC

Motor Vehicles: Animal Rescue and Transport Society

1200. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Has the Road Traffic Authority received a request for a flashing amber hazard light on a vehicle operated by the Animal Rescue and Transport Society?
- (2) If so, why cannot permission be granted?
- (3) What will the Government do to rectify the position so that that organisation can be assisted to continue its humane work?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The regulations do not permit such lamps being used for this purpose.
- (3) It is not considered the regulations should be amended. The society could adapt the existing signal lamps on its vehicle to a four-way flashing system.

TRAFFIC

Noise: Levels on Metropolitan Roads

1201. Mr HODGE, to the Premier:

In view of the conflicting and contradictory answers given by Government Ministers to questions 1037, 1038, 1039 and 1063 of 1978, concerning traffic noise, will he advise:

- (1) Who is the Minister responsible for traffic noise control?
- (2) Which Government department has responsibility for traffic noise monitoring and control?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

It is not conceded that the answers given indicate any conflict.

1202. *This question was postponed.*

LAND

Cape Naturaliste

1203. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Tourism:

- (1) Did the Director of the Department of Tourism at any time express strong support for a proposal by the Wake-English Syndicate to develop a landholding at Cape Naturaliste?
- (2) If "Yes" how was this support expressed?
- (3) If written, will the Minister please table the correspondence?
- (4) Is it a fact that at the time of this expression of support the Government was proceeding with plans to compulsorily acquire this landholding?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Verbally and in writing.
- (3) Copy of letter dated the 11th November, 1974, tabled herewith.
- (4) The notice of intention to resume Sussex location 1340 and portion of Sussex location 1341 was published in the *Government Gazette* of the 13th June, 1975.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 309).

1204. *This question was postponed.*

LAND

Cape Naturaliste

1205. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Did Public Works Department valuations officer E. Toop advise R. L. English that he had been instructed to offer \$110 000 as full compensation for the acquisition of land owned by the English-Wake Partnership at Cape Naturaliste?
- (2) Did E. Toop, when making the offer, term it an insult and say that he knew the partnership would not accept it?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Mr E. Toop cannot recall that he advised R. L. English that he had been instructed to offer \$110 000.
- (2) Mr Toop does not recall stating that the offer of \$110 000 was an insult, or that he knew the partnership would not accept it.

1206. *This question was postponed.*

TRANSPORT

South-east Corridor

1207. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

In the light of statements made recently by the Minister for Transport, regarding the need for improving the standard of public transport in the south-east corridor, is the widening of Sevenoaks Street, between the proposed Roe Freeway alignment and Welshpool Road, to be a part of that improvement?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

No.

ROADS

Spencer-Chapman Roads Link

1208. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

If the proposed Spencer Road-Chapman Road link was made, what is considered to be the normal dispersal routes of the traffic emerging from the northern end of the proposed link and how will this affect the traffic patterns currently operating in this area?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

The details of likely traffic dispersal are currently under study and results are not yet available.

RAILWAYS

South-east Corridor

1209. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Have any proposals been considered or made by the Minister or his department with a view to improving rail services in the south-east corridor?
- (2) If "Yes" what are these proposals or considerations?
- (3) Have any cost estimates of these proposals been made?
- (4) If "Yes" what are the details of these estimates?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The acquisition of new railcars and improvements to rail services.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) Buses \$1.65 million
- Railcars \$6.25 million
- Bus-rail facilities \$2.09 million

Total \$9.99 million*

*The costs shown are for the complete co-ordination as set out in the answer to question 1210 of 1978.

It must be clearly understood that no finality has been reached on these proposals.

RAILWAYS

South-east Corridor

1210. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Have any proposals been considered or made by the Minister or his department with a view to providing better access to the railway system in the south-east corridor?
- (2) If "Yes" what are these proposals or considerations?
- (3) Have any cost estimates of these proposals been made?
- (4) If "Yes" what are the details of these estimates?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) By co-ordination of the bus and rail systems.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) Buses \$1.65 million

Railcars \$6.25 million

Bus-rail facilities \$2.09 million

Total \$9.99 million

It must be clearly understood that no finality has been reached on these proposals.

ROADS

Spencer-Chapman Roads Link

1211. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning.

- (1) Has the technical study group, studying the Spencer Road-Chapman Road link road submitted its report?
- (2) If not, when is it likely to do so?
- (3) When the report is submitted will it be made available for public comment?
- (4) How many alternative routes, other than those adjacent to the Canning River, have or are being considered by the study group?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) No.

- (2) It is hoped that the results of studies will be released in report form before the end of this year.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) There are five basic alternative routes being examined together with numerous variations to each route.

ROADS

Spencer-Chapman Roads Link

1212. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is it a fact that a landscape architect was recently briefed or commissioned in relation to the proposed road link between Spencer and Chapman Roads?
- (2) For what purpose was the landscape architect briefed or commissioned?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) To advise the Metropolitan Regional Planning Authority study group on landscaping matters in relation to the proposed road link.

SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS

Perth City Council: Ticker-tape Welcome to Colonel John Glenn

1213. Mr BATEMAN, to the Premier:

- (1) Is he aware that the Perth City Council is contemplating a ticker-tape welcome for Colonel John Glenn for the 150th Western Australian Anniversary Celebrations?
- (2) As ticker-tape welcomes possibly cause a litter problem does he still intend to proceed with the proposed legislation to tighten up our anti-litter laws which are binding on all residents in Western Australia?
- (3) If (2) is "No" will he give his reasons?
- (4) If (2) is "Yes" will he advise the Perth City Council to abandon the ticker-tape welcome?
- (5) If not, why not?

Sir CHARLES COURT: replied:

- (1) to (5) I can only assume the member has asked his question in a light-hearted way, as I can hardly

imagine he would not welcome a visit next year by John Glenn who—quite apart from his place in history as a pioneer in space travel—is closely linked with Perth because of the "City of Light" title which became known throughout the world and associated with John Glenn during his memorable space flight in "Friendship 7" in February, 1962.

I think we can leave the form of his welcome to the good sense of the Perth City Council.

It is perhaps unnecessary for me to remind the member of the ticker-tape welcome in New York for John Glenn on the 2nd March, 1962, in which the then Lord Mayor of Perth participated as an honoured guest.

TAVERN

Maddington

1214. Mr BATEMAN, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Has he received complaints from any constituents living in the Maddington area against a tavern in that area?
- (2) If so, how many of those complaints and objections has he received?
- (3) Has he received a petition from those supporting the construction of a tavern in the Maddington area?
- (4) If "Yes" how many signatures were received?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) and (2) No. However, inquiries reveal that an application for a tavern in the Maddington area has been lodged at the Licensing Court and a hearing will commence on the 10th October, 1978. Two licensees and 1 278 residents have lodged objections at the court.
- (3) No.
- (4) Not applicable.

HEALTH

Drugs: Awareness Year

1215. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What is drug awareness year?

- (2) What role does the Public Health Department have in drug awareness year?
- (3) Is the Health Education Council concerned with drug awareness year?
- (4) If, as is rumoured, the council is abolished and its staff depleted, what Government agency will be available to support this kind of community effort in health promotion?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) Drug awareness year is a Rotary International national project to raise the level of community understanding on the drug issue. Both districts in Western Australia are involved. Apex has a separate drug awareness year and I understand that Lions and JC's are discussing plans for a similar purpose.
- (2) None so far. Departmental officers are always available for consultation.
- (3) The Health Education Council has agreed to a request by the Rotary organising committee to develop a series of regional seminars for Rotary and Apex. One all-day seminar was held on Sunday, the 6th August. Evaluation indicated that the seminar was successful. Individual clubs have already begun local programmes, using HEC staff as consultants.
- (4) The Alcohol and Drug Authority, Public Health Department and any other agencies considered appropriate.

HEALTH

Health Education Council

1216. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) With a view to resolving persistent rumours, will he clarify the position of the Health Education Council?
- (2) Is the council to be abolished?
- (3) If so, why?
- (4) What is to replace it?
- (5) If answer to (2) is "Yes" what will be done with the council's staff?
- (6) Is it a fact that key members of the Health Education Council's staff are seeking other employment because of the uncertainty of their future?

- (7) If "Yes" what is the status of this staff group, relative to health education units in other States?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) to (5) I understand that a working party set up by the council recommended that the council remains as an advisory body and that the staff members be absorbed into the Public Health Department as a separate branch or part of a separate branch. The Health Education Council has considered this but has not made any recommendation to me. In view of the member's comment regarding uncertainty, I will take this matter up with the Health Education Council.
- (6) Two staff members are seeking other employment, whether or not because of uncertainty is not known to me.
- (7) The status of this group is unique in that in all other States similar staff are employed by the Health Department or Health Commission.

TRAFFIC

Noise: Levels on Metropolitan Roads

1217. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Which departments are represented on the inter-departmental committee that he established recently to look at the traffic noise problem?
- (2) Has he given the committee any specific guidelines for their operation?
- (3) If "Yes" what are the guidelines?
- (4) Does the committee report back to him on their progress?
- (5) If "Yes" has he received a report yet?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) Public Health Department, Department of Conservation and Environment, Road Traffic Authority, Director General of Transport, Main Roads Department and Town Planning Department.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Report on—
 - (a) the magnitude and extent of the traffic noise problem in Western Australia now, and in the immediate future;
 - (b) the traffic noise levels that should be considered acceptable for the different land usages and activities in the various communities;

- (c) existing legislation and suitability and success in reducing traffic noise problems;

and make recommendations concerning—

- (a) proposals to reduce the nuisance caused by traffic noise;
- (b) the possible need to alter existing legislation and/or create new legislation with respect to the control of traffic noise;
- (c) co-ordination of department activities in the administration of controls on traffic noise.
- (4) and (5) As the member is aware, it is unlikely that there will be any short term answers to this problem. The committee will report progress but I do not expect an early report.

SUGAR

Ord River Irrigation Scheme: Production

1218. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) How many hectares of sugar cane were grown on the Ord in the current season?
- (2) What quantity of sugar did this area yield?
- (3) How many hectares of sugar is it proposed will be grown on the Ord next season?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) 1977-78 crop—65 hectares mostly sown in May, 1977, and harvested in August, 1978, of which a small proportion was ratoon crop.
- (2) 10 000 tonnes sugar cane. It is estimated that the average sugar content would not have been below 12 per cent.
- (3) 1978-79 crop—85 hectares mostly sown in May, 1978, which will be harvested in August, 1979, of which a small proportion will be ratoon crop.

SUGAR

Ord River Irrigation Scheme: Market

1219. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Has any approach been made to ascertain if any entitlement to sell sugar grown on the Ord on the Australian market has been made?

- (2) If "Yes" through what channels was such approach(s) made and with what result?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) and (2) Only informal discussions have taken place on the marketing of the Ord's future sugar production.

STATE FORESTS

Karri

1220. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Forests:

- (1) Have any areas in the karri forest been set aside as forest national park or similar designation in the past three years?
- (2) If "Yes":
 - (a) what areas have been so designated;
 - (b) what is the area of karri forest held under various kinds of reserves, including State Forest?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) Yes. Areas in the karri forest on which management for conservation or recreation is the priority, are listed in general working plan No. 86.
- (2) (a) 43 000 ha approximately;
- (b) 148 000 ha approximately.

DAIRYING

Milk: Irrigation Districts in South-west

1221. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

How many dairy farmers irrigate pastures for milk production in each of the irrigation districts of the south-west?

Mr OLD replied:

It is not possible to determine precisely the number of dairyfarmers in each of the irrigation districts at short notice but the following numbers are reasonably accurate—

Waroona district: 23 dairy farmers;
Harvey district: 95 dairyfarmers;

Collie and Preston districts: 137 dairyfarmers.

Engineer of Western Australia, terminated by the Mines Department?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

Mr Morgan retired from the Department of Mines on 1st February, 1961.

RAILWAYS

Bridgetown Depot: Transfer to Manjimup

1222. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What has been the saving by Westrail in the 1977-78 financial year derived by moving the railway depot from Bridgetown to Manjimup?
- (2) In what specific ways was this saving achieved?
- (3) What was the anticipated saving quoted by Westrail through moving the Bridgetown depot prior to the actual shift?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

Considerable work is involved in isolating the figures required to answer the member's question.

I will forward the information to him as soon as it is available.

MINING

Bauxite: Stanford Institute Report

1223. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Premier:

- (1) Has the report of the Stanford Institute on bauxite mining in the Darling scarp been received by the Government?
- (2) If "Yes" will he table a copy in the Legislative Assembly?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) The report has just been received.
- (2) As the study is aimed at improving Government machinery for land use planning in the Darling Range, it is seen essentially as an internal report.

MINING: COAL

Mining Engineer: Termination of Services

1224. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Mines:

When were the services of the late Mr G. Morgan, former Coal Mining

MINING: COAL

Collie: Tests by Government Chemical Laboratories

1225. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) When were the services of Mr P. Donnelly terminated by the Government Chemical Laboratories?
- (2) After the termination of his services was anybody reappointed to the position?
- (3) At what date were the last tests conducted by the Government Chemical Laboratories into research on Collie coal?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Mr Donnelly's services were not terminated. He retired early at his own request on 29th August, 1969.
- (2) No.
- (3) Tests are currently being conducted on Collie coal.

1226. *This question was postponed.*

NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF: CYCLONE "ALBY"

Orchardists and Farmers: Applications

1227. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Agriculture:

In view of the fact that Parliament recently passed a motion calling on the Government to re-examine the criteria under which assistance was granted to people subjected to cyclone "Alby", will he please advise—

- (1) What action has been taken by the Government to re-examine the criteria?

- (2) Will orchardists farmers and others involved, who require additional assistance, have to reapply or will their previous applications be reconsidered?
- (3) If farmers and others are required to reapply, to what body do their applications have to be forwarded?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) to (3) A comprehensive statement on natural disasters including cyclone "Alby" is to be made and I suggest the member waits until that statement is available.

DAIRYING

Milk: Production Costs in South-west

1228. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

What was the cost of production of milk per gallon or litre in each of the following centres in 1977-78:

- (a) Pinjarra;
- (b) Waroona;
- (c) Harvey;
- (d) Busselton;
- (e) Northcliffe;
- (f) Walpole; and
- (g) Manjimup?

Mr OLD replied:

The information sought is not known. The last cost of production survey undertaken by my department was for the year 1976-77 and was not designed to yield district comparisons.

WATER SUPPLIES

Country Areas Scheme

1229. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Referring to question 1087 of 1978 dealing with country areas water supplies, could he advise as to whether the Government intends reducing the number of workers employed on the country areas water supply scheme?
- (2) If it does, could he indicate as to what number of workers the said workforce is to be reduced by natural wastage or otherwise?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) No, but decisions on employment depend on fund allocations.

MINING

Nickel: Kambalda Fatalities

1230. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Mines:

Referring to question 1066 of 1978 dealing with accidents at Western Mining's Kambalda operations, could he supply the names of the men killed?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

Rymer, B. D., 28th December, 1966.

Raymond, J. D., 12th November, 1969.

Baumgartner, J., 16th May, 1970.

O'Connor, S., 31st May, 1970.

Prosenyak, G., 16th March, 1971.

Jaceglav, J., 24th May, 1971.

Chisholm, R., 11th June, 1972.

Browne, G. J., 20th June, 1972.

Seibel, E., 16th February, 1973.

Hogg, W. J., 28th February, 1973.

Burrows, C. F., 4th June, 1975.

Buncic, B., 12th June, 1975.

Deakin, E., 25th September, 1975.

Rourke, M., 10th March, 1976.

Sandeman, H., 30th April, 1976.

O'Dwyer, A. F., 13th January, 1977.

Ramsey, D. D., 15th March, 1978.

HOSPITALS

Beds: Number

1231. Dr DADOUR, to the Minister for Health:

What is the total number of hospital beds ("A"-class) in Western Australia—

- (a) State Government owned; and
- (b) private sector?

Mr RIDGE replied:

The lists prepared by the Commonwealth Government dated 1st April, 1978, show the following number of private "A"-class beds in Western Australia:

- (a) State Government owned—6 514;
- (b) private sector—1 690.

HOSPITAL

Mirrabooka Area

1232. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Can he confirm that some maps issued by the State Housing Commission show an area immediately east of Mirrabooka Avenue and north of the proposed northern perimeter highway, as being set aside for a hospital site?
- (2) If "Yes" can he say whether this designation still applies and, if not, why not?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Preliminary planning made provision for the possibility of a hospital being required in this area. Discussions with the Medical Department from time to time will decide whether that possibility is likely to be realised, and so will determine the final planning.

POLICE

Crime Commission

1233. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) With respect to his answer to question 1080 of 1978 in connection with the establishment of a crime commission, what are the circumstances in this State which would make the proposal of a crime commission not practicable?
- (2) What provision is there in Western Australia for planning and evaluating criminal justice services?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) The establishment of a crime commission involves the setting up of a secretariat with experts, researchers, investigators and planners with a role including monitoring overseas and local research. Western Australia contributes to the criminology fund, is represented on the Criminology Research Council and is kept informed of research conducted by the Institute of Criminology. The institute advises on overseas research and experimentation and is involved in social defence planning, the progress of which has been observed by this State.

Access to the resources of the Institute of Criminology with its high level of professional expertise provides an up to date information and advisory service to branches of the criminal justice system. In these circumstances, it would not be practical nor justified to set up a similar local organisation.

- (2) The criminal justice services are under constant review and new initiatives are proposed after considerable research, liaison with other departments and examination of experimentation elsewhere.

Agencies such as the Law Reform Commission seek public reaction and advice to certain proposals.

Cabinet consideration of new initiatives ensures co-ordination of services.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Fixed Interest Bearing Deposits

1234. Mr WILSON, to the Treasurer:

Can he detail the amounts being held in fixed interest bearing deposits by each State Government department as at 30th June, 1978?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

The purpose of the question is not understood and, in particular, the reference to "held in fixed interest bearing deposits by each State Government department". If the member can clarify the information he seeks, I shall endeavour to obtain the appropriate details.

EDUCATION

Schools: Covered Assembly Areas

1235. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What consideration, if any, is being given to the provision of covered assembly areas in established primary schools without such facilities?
- (2) If such provision is being made, how many covered assembly areas have been built in established primary schools in the past four years and at which schools have they been built?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Within the limits of available funding, consideration is given to the building of covered assembly areas at conventional schools. Cluster or open area schools have a covered area built with either stage 2 or stage 3 of the building.
- (2) Twelve.
 - Ashfield
 - Beaconsfield
 - Bentley
 - East Fremantle
 - East Victoria Park
 - Guildford
 - Kelmscott
 - Lesmurdie
 - Mt. Lawley
 - South Bunbury
 - Spearwood
 - Wandarra.

SHOPPING CENTRE

Mirraboooka: MTT Arrangements

1236. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) In view of the fact that the State Housing Commission is responsible for the overall management of the Mirraboooka centre development, what is the attitude of the commission to the MTT's proposals to provide only a shuttle service to the new centre prior to the completion of a bus transfer station?
- (2) Has there been any approach by him or the State Housing Commission to the Minister for Transport or the MTT in an attempt to have direct bus services provided to the centre from the suburbs of Balga, Girrawheen and Koondoola, to facilitate access for shoppers and shop assistants prior to the completion of a bus transfer station?
- (3) If "No" to (2), will he consider such an approach particularly on behalf of possibly hundreds of people from these areas who will be looking to have direct public transport to and from the centre for access to the new work opportunities it will provide?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) to (3) As part of its endeavours to provide a range of services to people served by the Mirraboooka district centre, the commission has had many discussions with the MTT to keep that authority informed of developments and to encourage provision of a bus transfer station. The commission cannot interfere in questions of MTT operations to provide services.

FLORA

Native Flora Act and Supervision of Commercial Pickers

1237. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Is it a fact that the Wildlife Conservation Act 1976 No. 86 which repealed the Native Flora Act of 1938, was assented to on 4th November, 1976?
- (2) Is it also a fact that this Act has not as yet been proclaimed?
- (3) If so, why?
- (4) If "Yes" to (2), who is now supervising the commercial flora pickers?
- (5) Is there such a committee as a flora sub-committee, when was it formed, and who are the members who comprise such a committee?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes.
- (3) Further amendments are necessary.
- (4) The Conservator of Forests.
- (5) Yes. It consists of the following persons:—

Mr B. K. Bowen—Chairman.

Mr H. B. Shugg—Deputy Chairman.

Mr B. J. Beggs.

Dr J. W. Green.

Mr R. A. Aitken.

Dr N. Marchant.

Dr P. R. Wycherley.

Professor J. S. Pate.

Mrs M. Blackwell.

ENERGY

Electricity and Gas: Deposit by Business Houses

1238. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) What is the current formula used when assessing a deposit required by a business consumer when seeking to have premises connected to the commission's supply when—
 - (a) the business is a new one;
 - (b) the business is an existing one merely changing hands?
- (2) Are deposits reviewed from time to time, and if so, under what conditions?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) The formula for deposit is designed to cover the estimated amount of an account at the time it may become clear that the customer is not going to pay. For quarterly accounts a figure of one and one half times the average account is used and for monthly accounts a figure of twice the average account is applied.
 - (a) For a new customer the above formula is applied on the basis of the estimated account.
 - (b) Where an existing business is changing hands the formula is applied to the average of the account history of the previous customer taking into consideration known variations.
- (2) The level of the deposit can be reviewed in the light of changed consumption pattern.

HOSPITALS

Meals: Production Costs

1239. Dr DADOUR, to the Minister for Health:

Further to question 1178 of 1978 concerning production costs of meals, how many meals (indicate how many courses) are there per kilogram?

Mr RIDGE replied:

Food is produced in bulk quantities of each item (for example meat, vegetables, etc.). The number of serves varies according to the particular item and it is not therefore possible to determine accurately how many meals

there are per kilogram. However, it is estimated that the average weight of each meal would be 500 grams.

WATER SUPPLIES

Water Table in Potato Swamps, Albany Shire

1240. Mr STEPHENS, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

With respect to the problem of lowered water table in the potato swamps in the vicinity of Princess Road in the Albany Shire, currently being tested and investigated:

- (1) When will testing conclude?
- (2) Can any conclusions be made at this stage?
- (3) When is a decision as to compensation likely to be made?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) The monitoring of the water table in the vicinity of Princess Road commenced in March, 1978 and will continue for a number of years.
- (2) No.
- (3) At this stage the matter of compensation has not been considered.

MEMBER FOR ASCOT: ALLEGATIONS AGAINST A MINISTER OR MINISTERS

Inquiry by Select Committee: Costs

1241. Mr STEPHENS, to the Speaker:

With respect to the Parliamentary Select Committee appointed to inquire into allegations made by the Member of Ascot in November 1976, what was the total cost and the breakdown of these costs?

The SPEAKER replied:

No specific amount can be identified as being a direct cost incurred by this inquiry. Relatively minor sums would have been spent on items such as photocopying. There was no expenditure on travelling or printing, and the cost of staff time could only be regarded as coming within the overall cost of running Parliament at that time.

HEALTH: MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS*Birth Deformities and Abnormalities: Report*

1242. Mr HERZFELD, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Are medical practitioners required to report physical abnormalities or deformities detected at birth to his department?
- (2) If "Yes" will he advise if the resulting statistical data are available publicly and in which publication?
- (3) If "No" to (1) will he give consideration to legislating to require medical practitioners to do so?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) No. This information is provided on the Midwives Notification of Birth form, data from which are at present being collated for publication.

BEEKEEPING*European Foul Brood and Honey Imports*

1243. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Would he advise the number of known instances of outbreak of European Foul Brood in this State since 1976?
- (2) What are the recommended methods of treating affected hives?
- (3) Can he advise those Australian States where European Foul Brood has been detected and the extent of hives known to be affected?
- (4) In the event of a serious outbreak of this disease in Western Australia can he advise those countries that would not permit import of honey and honey products?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) Nil.
- (2) Quarantine apiaries and burn infected hives.
- (3) New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

The precise information sought will be obtained from these States and I shall advise the member in due course.

- (4) My department is unaware of any specific requirement laid down by importing countries in respect of European Foul Brood which would interfere with the export of honey.

PRISONS: INMATES*Number and Drug Offenders*

1244. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) How many convicted people were in Western Australian prisons at—
 - (a) 30th June, 1977;
 - (b) 30th June, 1978?
- (2) What proportion of each of these had been sentenced for drug offences, not including alcohol?
- (3) What proportion of each of the two groups had been convicted of offences involving—
 - (a) cannabis/marijuana and derivatives;
 - (b) heroin; and
 - (c) other illegal drugs?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) (a) 1 032 convicted and sentenced.
(b) 1 121 convicted and sentenced.
- (2) Statistics are not at present available in a form which would make it possible to answer this question but it is possible to give figures for the number of commitments (drug charges on which prisoners were sentenced to imprisonment) for the 1976/77 and 1977/78 financial years.
 - (a) 1976/77—118 commitments.
 - (b) 1977/78—209 commitments.
- (3) It is not possible to answer this question in the form given. However, a study carried out in January 1978 gave the following figures:

There were a total of 117 persons serving sentences for drug offences and drug related offences as at 1st January, 1978. With a prison population of 1 150 at the time, this represents about 9.3 per cent of the prison population.

69 were serving sentences related to marijuana and its derivatives. This represented 6 per cent of the prison population at the time.

32 were serving sentences related to other illegal drugs. This represented 2.7 per cent of the prison population at the time.

The remaining 16 were serving sentences for drug related offences (for example breaking and entering) but had not been sentenced on drug charges. This represented 1.3 per cent of the prison population at the time.

SECURITY INDUSTRY

Private Companies: Number and Police Investigations

1245. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

Referring to question 1192 of 1978 in connection with security companies:

- (1) What security company was investigated?
- (2) Why were the investigations carried out?
- (3) What were their nature?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Wormalds International Security.
- (2) Because an objection was lodged to an application for a security agents licence.
- (3) The majority of clients of the company were interviewed. The company's records were examined and the circuits physically checked.

TOURISM

Hotel Workers' Penalty Rates and Internal Air Fares

1246. Mr HODGE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Tourism:

- (1) Is it the policy of the Government to support the concept that penalty rates for hotel workers be abolished?
- (2) Is it the Government's policy to reduce the wages paid to workers in the Western Australian hotel industry?
- (3) Is there any evidence that penalty rates for Western Australian hotel workers are higher than those applicable to hotel workers in other States?

(4) Has the Australian Hotels Association complained to the Minister about the level of penalty rates paid to hotel workers?

(5) If "Yes" on what date was the complaint made and by whom?

(6) Has the Confederation of Western Australian Industry complained to the Minister about the level of penalty rates in the hotel industry?

(7) Has the Confederation of Western Australian Industry also complained to the Minister about rates of pay or penalty rates payable to workers in any other industry that could affect tourism?

(8) Has any employer in the hotel industry or the Australian Hotels Association indicated support to the Minister for his suggestion that time off should be given to shift workers in lieu of penalty rates?

(9) Is it the intention of the Government to use the 150th Birthday celebration as an excuse to launch an attack on the working conditions of hotel workers?

(10) Does the Government consider that the internal airline fares in Australia are too high and discourage tourism?

(11) Does the Government support the retention of penalty rates for hotel workers who work on public holidays such as Christmas Day?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

(1) to (9) and (11) At the 18th Annual Conference of the Tourist Ministers' Council held at Alice Springs on 28th June, 1976 the then Minister for Tourism, Hon. K. A. Ridge, M.L.A., successfully moved for the creation of a special task force to study the question of penalty rates in the hospitality industry, their effect on the tourist industry and to identify possible corrective action.

Mr Ridge was strongly supported by Tourist Ministers from New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania, and a task force was established under the chairmanship of Senator Cotton, with the Tourist Ministers for the States of Tasmania and Western Australia forming a three-man task force.

With the subsequent change of portfolio, the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon joined the task force, which met on a number of occasions in 1977, with a wide representative body from the hospitality industry, both employers and union representatives. From these discussions, it was clear that the present system of penalty awards, whether they be under consent agreement or otherwise, was inhibiting the growth of the tourist industry in Australia, and was working to the disadvantage of all those engaged in the overall hospitality industry, whether they be employers or employees.

The final meeting of the task force was held with representatives of trade unions involved in the overall hospitality industry, and at this meeting, the union representatives advised the task force that they were not prepared to continue discussions on the issue of penalty rates, nor were they prepared to offer any comment or enter into any discussion on the subject with the task force. This action successfully thwarted the aims of the task force, which has not met subsequently.

It is a matter of record that the entire hospitality industry is becoming increasingly concerned at the negative effect on the stability of the industry of penalty rates as they presently stand. Not only is the development of additional plant throughout Australia being held back, but services previously available in hotels, motels and like service facilities are being drastically restricted, especially weekends. This lack of development, and the restriction of services is already having a serious effect on those who earn their living in the hospitality industry.

The establishment by Hon. K. A. Ridge in 1976 of the task force in an effort to find a sensible solution to this national problem, was in itself a most progressive step. It is unfortunate that the efforts of the task force were so quickly thwarted. The task force stands ready to reconvene and seek a mutually acceptable solution to this great problem, and as a member of that task force, the Minister would welcome an approach from the employee organisations that would enable the task force to continue its efforts to find a

sensible solution to this problem. Such a solution would enable the tourist industry of this State and the nation to move ahead to take advantage of the great potential that exists in this expanding industry, and would enable the job opportunities within the hospitality industry not only to be protected but greatly expanded to the advantage of everybody concerned in the industry.

- (10) Yes, especially in respect to Western Australia. This Government has for many years pressed strongly for a restructuring of domestic fares, particularly in regard to the long haul flights to and from Western Australia, and is at present in negotiations with the Federal Government in this regard.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Building Industry

1. Dr TROY, to the Premier:

Will the Premier bring forward a programme of necessary public works to absorb unemployment in the building industry?

If, "No", how does he intend to resolve the problem?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

In answer to the honourable member, I think I have made a number of statements both arising from the Premiers' Conference and the Loan Council meetings and, subsequently, about the concern of the Government regarding the amount of capital works money available and the action we are taking.

All I can suggest to the honourable member is that he await the introduction of the loan funds Budget,

which will be coming down next month, if not sooner. When we introduce the Budget he will see what the Government has done with available funds at its disposal.

**DAVID JONES (AUSTRALIA)
PTY. LTD.**

Closure

2. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the reported closing down of the David Jones group of stores in Western Australia?
- (2) Can the Minister advise whether those reports are correct?
- (3) Can he advise further whether he has taken any action to offer assistance to those large numbers of people who will be seriously disadvantaged as a result of loss of jobs?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) to (3) The issue first came to notice last evening.

Mr Tonkin: Did you receive some notice of the question?

Mr O'CONNOR: Very brief.

Several members interjected.

Mr O'CONNOR: The member for Warren may not be concerned about these people, but we are. The initial indication was that about 1 200 jobs were at stake. Last evening I contacted a representative of David Jones (Australia) Pty. Ltd., the union, and the major retailers to see what could be done.

This morning I again talked with a representative of David Jones and he indicated that the situation set out in this morning's Press is virtually correct. It is the company's intention to close down its stores in Western Australia, and this includes its stores in Albany, Katanning, and Narrogin. In these three country towns the executives of the company and the employees will take the stores over.

The stores at Garden City and Karrinyup will be taken over by Boans Ltd. and most of the employees concerned will be absorbed in this way. The major problem then is the 520

employees of the central store. The representative of David Jones indicated that some of these employees will be offered jobs in the David Jones' stores in the Eastern States.

The representatives of the other major stores to whom I spoke indicated very clearly that their economic situation is quite different from that of David Jones. They are doing extremely well, and they indicated there is no need for concern. In fact, all stores indicated that they intend to expand their operations in Western Australia. One major company intends to open four stores before Christmas, and at one store which will open on the 1st October, 30 extra employees will be needed. I was extremely pleased with the co-operation of the retailers. They all indicated that they will endeavour to absorb as many of the David Jones employees as possible, either into their established stores or into new ventures.

The owners of some other smaller stores telephoned the department to say that it is their intention to open other or expand their present stores, and so they will be able to offer jobs to some of these people. The matter has been discussed with the union, and we agreed to draw up a list indicating the people presently unemployed and the nature of the work they have been engaged in for the last few years. This list will be circularised to all the major retail stores and an effort will be made to find jobs for as many people as possible. An inspector of the Department of Labour and Industry has been appointed as a liaison officer between the union, the stores, and the employees so that action can be taken as quickly as possible.

LAND

Cape Naturaliste

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

I would like to ask the Minister representing the Minister for Tourism to investigate this matter and to advise me subsequently on it. In question 1203 on today's notice paper I asked the Minister whether the Director of the

Department of Tourism had indicated support for a certain proposal at the time the Government had moved to resume the land involved in the proposal.

The SPEAKER: Would the member please resume his seat? It has been a clearly established practice that questions without notice may not be asked of a Minister representing a Minister in another place. I appreciate that the member's question may simply be to ask the Minister to ascertain something from another Minister, but I adhere to the established practice that such questions are out of order.

Points of Order

Mr B. T. BURKE: My point of order, Sir, is that my question without notice may well involve information which the Minister has in his possession as a result of my question 1203 on today's notice paper. I wish simply to ask whether the Minister representing the Minister for Tourism in this House has this information.

The SPEAKER: I still adhere to my ruling that such questions are not acceptable, and I point out to the member that in putting his question he may raise an issue of controversy that cannot be answered by the Minister here because he does not have access to the information involved.

Mr B. T. BURKE: On a further point of order, Sir, I feel it is about time the Ministers in this place were told to answer questions correctly and not to mislead the House.

The SPEAKER: I do not see that as a point of order, but rather as a reflection on the Chair. I ask the member for Balcatta to apologise.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am quite happy to, Mr Speaker.

Questions (without notice) Resumed

TRAFFIC NOISE

Levels on Metropolitan Roads

4. Mr HODGE, to the Premier:

I wish to ask a question arising from the Premier's answer to question 1201. Will the Premier advise me which Minister is responsible for traffic noise control in

Western Australia, and which Government department has responsibility for traffic noise monitoring and control?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

In view of the fact that the member seems to have become involved in a question of interpretation, I suggest that he should put this specific question on the notice paper, and I will endeavour to obtain a reply for him.

Mr Carr: He put a question on the notice paper.

Mr Bertram: Why not answer his question?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I studied the question he had placed on the notice paper and—

Mr Davies: You didn't know the answer.

Sir CHARLES COURT:—I looked at the questions and answers to which he referred, and I could come to no other conclusion but the one I did. However, if the member wants me to pursue the matter, I will do so.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Liquor, Petrol, and Cigarettes: Profiteering

5. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

Will any officers of the Bureau of Consumer Affairs police retail outlets to see whether any unfair profiteering takes place as a result of the recent cruel rises in the prices of certain commodities which are generally in fairly keen demand? Is the Minister watching the position to see whether any profiteering is taking place, and if so, what action is proposed?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

I assume the member is referring to—

Mr Davies: Liquor, petrol and cigarettes.

Mr O'CONNOR:—the increase in tax on certain items as a result of the Federal Budget. I was very busy this morning on another matter, but I am quite sure the bureau will watch the situation. If any profiteering occurs, the public are very quick to report it. I will confer with the head of the bureau in the morning.

LAND

Cape Naturaliste

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

Further to my question 1205 on today's notice paper, I would like some further information from the Minister, and I hope he does not think I am being pedantic. In reply to my question the Minister said that a certain officer could not recall having made statements about a valuation placed on certain property that was the subject of resumption moves by the Government. I simply want to know whether this means that the officer concerned may well have made the statement.

Mr O'Neil: How would the Minister know?

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am asking whether the officer denies making the statement, that is all.

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

I requested that the officer be contacted and he indicated he had no recollection at all of a discussion of the nature suggested.

WATER SUPPLIES

Reports

7. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

On the 3rd August I asked the Minister for Water Supplies a question relating to the reports of the Water Purity

Committee and the Water Resources Council. Yesterday I asked him the question again, but he said that he had returned the answer to his office and he would have it here today. If the answer is handy, I would like to give him the opportunity once again to reply to my question.

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

I do not have the answer with me, I am sorry.

Mr Davies: I will ask the question again tomorrow, I promise.

STATE FINANCE

Federal Policy

8. Mr BRYCE, to the Premier:

In the light of the Premier's comments following the most recent Premiers' Conference in which he described the deal that Western Australia received as a prescription for financial disaster, and in the light of the disturbing news that a company as large as David Jones (Australia) Pty. Ltd. will close its doors, does his Government concede that the Fraser Government's financial policies have led the economy of Western Australia from a state of recession into a state of depression?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

The answer to the member's question is "No".

