

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 30th March, 1976

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

DEPUTY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Appointment

THE SPEAKER (Mr Hutchinson): I wish to inform the House that I have appointed the member for Vasse (Mr Blaikie), the member for Moore (Mr Crane), and the member for Canning (Mr Bateman) to be Deputy Chairmen of Committees during the present session.

JUMBO STEELWORKS

Moore River Area: Petition

MR A. R. TONKIN (Morley) [4.32 p.m.]: I have a petition relating to the establishment of a jumbo steel mill in the Moore River area. As it is a long petition I refer in particular only to part of it. The finale of the petition asks—

- (1) That this issue is debated in the House.
- (2) That the Ministers concerned should be fully informed about our wishes in this matter.
- (3) That the Ministers responsible should do all in their power to prevent the erection of the proposed jumbo steel mill in the Moore River area, or in any place so near to Metropolitan Perth until the citizens have clearly showed that they wish such a mill to be built there.

I have signed this petition to show that it is in accordance with the rules of the House. It contains 173 signatures.

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

The petition was tabled (see paper No. 103).

QUESTIONS (27): ON NOTICE

1. HOUSING

Strata Title Units: Prohibition on Dogs

Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is it a fact that regulations pertaining to people purchasing strata title units prohibit the owners of those units from keeping a dog as a pet?
- (2) If so, why?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) As the administration of the Strata Titles Act does not come within the Housing portfolio, I am not able to give a definitive

answer to this question. However, I am informed it would appear to be within the competence of the body corporate for any particular strata title to make in respect to units within that title by-laws prohibiting the owners of those units from keeping all or any specified type of pets.

There could be any number of reasons why by-laws described above should be permitted since it is open to the body corporate to make any by-laws conducive to peaceful enjoyment of properties by all owners within the strata title.

The State Housing Commission has a policy preventing tenants from keeping pets in rental units, which have no private yard or court—irrespective of whether those units are, or could be, on strata title. That policy rests on the provisions of Sections 181-185 of the Health Act, and in particular, Section 182 which refers to—

“any animal kept in any district or premises which constitutes a nuisance or is injurious or dangerous to health”.

It is understood the Health Act gives power to the local authority health surveyor in these cases to determine any risk and act accordingly.

2. ROCKINGHAM SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOL

Enrolments

Mr BARNETT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

Could the Minister advise the number of children currently enrolled at—

- (a) Baldavis School;
- (b) Rockingham Beach Primary School;
- (c) Safety Bay Primary School;
- (d) Hillman Primary School;
- (e) Warnbro Primary School;
- (f) Bungaree Primary School;
- (g) Rockingham High School?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (a) Baldavis School, 49;
- (b) Rockingham Beach, 453;
- (c) Safety Bay, 726;
- (d) Hillman, 357;
- (e) Warnbro, 320;
- (f) Bungaree, 590;
- (g) Rockingham Senior High, 1 269.

3. SCHOOL AT COOLOONGUP

Establishment

Mr BARNETT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

In view of the rapid increase in population in the Cooloongup postal area, locally known as the Grange in Rockingham, could the Minister please advise when it is envisaged that a primary school will be provided for this area?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

A new primary school for the Cooloongup area has not been listed on the initial 1976-77 school building programme. Officers of the Education Department are monitoring increased primary level enrolments and subdivisional and housing developments in the general Rockingham area. It is not possible at this time to specify definitely when a new primary school will be established in the Cooloongup area. The establishment of a school for the area will be dependent on the build-up of primary aged enrolments in Cooloongup, the availability of loan funds and competing needs for educational facilities in other areas of the State.

4. COCKBURN SOUND

"Eutrophication in Cockburn Sound" Report

Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Is he aware of a recent report prepared for Fremantle Port Authority entitled: *Eutrophication in Cockburn Sound*?
- (2) (a) Is he also aware that endeavours by myself to obtain a copy of this report have been unsuccessful;
- (b) Is he aware that copies of this report have been made available to the Cockburn Conservation Committee and others?
- (3) In the light of information that the report can be made available, to the Conservation Committee and others, will he make arrangements for a copy of the report to be forwarded to myself and other Members who have electorates bordering the Cockburn Sound in the interests of an enlightened Government?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) No.
- (b) Yes.
- (3) Only a limited number of copies of the report were printed and these have been distributed to the

relevant Kwinana Industries, University of Western Australia, the Western Australian Institute of Technology and the State Library, and to the Cockburn Sound Conservation Committee for use by its members.

Arrangements have been made for a copy to be made available on loan to the Parliamentary Library as has been the case in regard to previous reports on the ecology of Cockburn Sound.

5. MOTOR VEHICLES

Illegal Accessories

Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Police:

- (1) Is he aware that shops in Perth are currently selling accessories to the general public which when placed on vehicles caused the owners to be charged, e.g., mag wheels, special air horns?
- (2) In view of the fact that people are currently being charged for having these accessories on their vehicles, will the Minister please legislate or otherwise to ensure that illegal car accessories are not available to the general public?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The matter of legislation to prohibit the sale of non-standard motor vehicle accessories is under consideration.

6. NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS

Premier's Statement: Press Report

Mr BARNETT, to the Premier:

- (1) Is he correctly reported in the *Sound Advertiser* of Wednesday, 28th January, when he stated:—
 - (a) he had no qualms about nuclear powered warships or submarines using the base;
 - (b) when asked whether he would rather be within five miles of either a conventional or nuclear powered warship if it blew up, that he asked if there was any difference between nuclear armaments or conventional weapons when they blew up?
- (2) If he is correctly reported in (1) (b), could he please advise this House if he has taken the time and trouble to enlighten himself on the subject of nuclear explosions as yet?

- (3) In the interests of the safety of the public of Western Australia, can he outline what steps he took to enlighten himself?
- (4) If no steps have been taken to enlighten himself on the difference between nuclear explosions and conventional explosions, would he please undertake to do such studies as are necessary and refrain from making public announcements until he does become enlightened?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) (a) Yes. If the Member understood the precautions and techniques employed with these vessels he would have the same views unless, of course, he sought to deny our allies the use of Western Australian port facilities.
- (b) The Member seeks to either misinterpret the reported comments—which I cannot state whether or not they are correct, as I am unable to recall being asked a question, or giving an answer, in these precise terms—or he is sadly lacking in practical experience.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: Answer the question.

Sir CHARLES COURT:

Even if he lacks practical experience of war and weapons, if he ponders awhile, he will appreciate that either case would be serious, according to the nature of the circumstances and the degree of destruction resulting from any conjectured mishap.

- (2) to (4) My studies are extensive, and I would hazard a guess that the degree of my study and understanding of the subject in question and its implications would be at least as thorough as the Member's knowledge of the subject—if not more so.

Mr Barnett: You have not answered the question yet.

Sir CHARLES COURT:

Likewise, my colleagues and I have a responsibility to encourage, and if possible, ensure the proper defence of this State.

I would hope the Member would, in future, dedicate himself to such a course instead of wasting time playing around with words in a childish way.

Mr Harman: Every time you are caught you do the same thing.

Sir CHARLES COURT:

Incidentally, now that I have had a chance to read the article in *The Sound Advertiser* to which the Member refers, I notice there is this reference:—

Mr Killen said earlier that Cockburn Sound would be available to all friendly and allied Navies but now has withdrawn his previous statement that he envisaged nuclear-powered or nuclear-armed ships using the facility.

I am assured by Mr Killen that at no stage has he ever withdrawn his previous statement about the use of Cockburn Sound by nuclear ships.

7. ROCKINGHAM HOSPITAL *Doctors*

Mr BARNETT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is it proposed to staff the Rockingham hospital with—
 - (a) permanent doctors; or
 - (b) doctors on a "call in" basis only?
- (2) If the answer to (1) is (1) (b), why?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) and (2) Negotiations with the medical groups in the area are proceeding at present regarding medical staffing at the hospital.

8. BRUNSWICK AND BALDIVIS *SCHOOLS*

Expenditure on Works

Mr BARNETT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Could the Minister please advise what was the cost of the recently completed work at the Brunswick Primary School, i.e., enclosing the verandahs?
- (2) Could the Minister please advise what was the justification for this expenditure in relation to the very real needs of the Baldavis Primary School?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) \$33 000 was spent on doubling the width of the verandahs, enclosing this addition to make a practical area, converting two cloakrooms, providing new access ramps and installing additional lighting.
- (2) Funding available for improvements and upgrading has been used at many schools to effect significant improvements in the conditions for pupils and staff. Baldavis needs a replacement

school, a project which is expected to cost much more than the \$33 000 spent at Brunswick. Consideration will be given to the erection of a replacement school when further funding for such works comes to hand.

9. HEN LICENCES

Addition

Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is it a fact that he issued an extra egg producer's licence in the latter half of 1975?
- (2) How many birds was the licence for?
- (3) Was the licence for any particular area; if so, which area?
- (4) Is it a fact that producers have been assured that no more licences would be issued while they are still on quota cuts?
- (5) Was any advice received by him or his department from the Crown Law Department advising against the issue of the said licence?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) and (3) I am aware that the Egg Marketing Board issued a licence for 5 000 fowls on 4th August, 1975, to a person at Mt. Newman.
- (4) Yes, but only in respect to the South West Land Division in terms of the conditions set out in the Bases and Principles for the years from 1972-73 to 1975-76.
- (5) Not at the time of issue of the licence.
Crown Law Department advice was, however, sought subsequently to confirm an opinion by the board's legal advisers to the board concerning the issue of the licence. I am informed by the board that the person to whom the board issued the licence no longer plans to establish a poultry farm, and that the board is currently taking steps to cancel the licence.

10. WOOROLOO SCHOOL

Construction Cost

Mr MOILER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) What was the cost of constructing the new Wooroloo Primary School?
- (2) How much of the cost was covered by Australian Government funds?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) The total cost will approximate \$196 000.

- (2) All of the cost was met from funds provided from Commonwealth sources.

11. DENTAL THERAPY CENTRES

Schools

Mr MOILER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many dental therapy centres have been built at primary schools?
- (2) What were the individual costs for each unit?
- (3) At which schools have they been established and would he list the dates each commenced to operate?
- (4) What is the total enrolment of each of the schools at which dental units are established?
- (5) At which schools are units at present under construction or at least in the process of tenders being called for the construction of units?
- (6) How much of the total cost for the construction of the units has been provided by Australian Government funds and what percentage of the total cost would that be?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) 33.
- (2) to (5) I table the answer to these questions.
- (6) 100%.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 104.)

12. FORRESTFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

Construction of First Stage

Mr MOILER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) When was construction of the first stage of Forrestfield High School commenced?
- (2) What was the contracted completion date for the first stage?
- (3) Was the first stage completed on the scheduled date; if not, what was the period of delay and what were the reasons for the delay?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) The contract was let on 8th July, 1974.
- (2) Completion was proposed in two parts.
- (3) Portion of the school was occupied on 9th April, 1975. Where delay occurred it was caused by the need to re-draft plans to get foundations into better soil, improve conditions for sub-soil drainage

and the disposal of storm water. A 48-day period was added to the nominated completion dates to allow for the complications caused by the site not coming up to the expectations of the test boring. Shortages of steel and ceiling materials for the hall/gymnasium were also factors delaying completion.

13. SWAN VIEW HIGH SCHOOL

Tenders for Construction

Mr MOILER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it proposed to call tenders for the construction of the first stage of the Swan View High School; if so, on what date will tenders be called?
- (2) When is it anticipated that construction will commence and what is the anticipated completion date of stage one?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) and (2) It is anticipated that tenders will be called late in April. Construction should commence early in June and the building is scheduled for opening on the first school day in 1977.

14. SAWYERS VALLEY SCHOOL

Enrolments and Improvements

Mr MOILER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) How many children at present attend the Sawyers Valley Primary School?
- (2) Is it proposed to carry out any improvements at the school to relieve the present very poor conditions of the school?
- (3) If not, why not?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) Twenty.
- (2) No.
- (3) The school will be considered for replacement when further funds for such works come to hand.

15. MIDLAND JUNCTION ABATTOIR

Effluent Disposal

Mr MOILER, to the Minister for Agriculture:

In reference to the effluent disposal from the Midland abattoirs contained in the 1974 Midland Junction Abattoir Board annual report, the Chairman stated *inter alia*—

"... a large percentage (capital works) being expended on the completion of the new effluent disposal plant. The commissioning of the plant and the

installation of a tertiary water treatment plant will enable re-use of the processed water in the saleyards and selected areas in the works, thereby saving the board and the community a significant quantity of fresh water."

- (1) Would he please advise whether this stated objective has been achieved and maintained?

- (2) In the event that it has not, would he please advise—

(a) the method and location of disposal of the present effluent; and

(b) whether the average level of B.O.D., suspended solids and total solids have been recorded and if so, details thereof?

- (3) As contained in *The West Australian* published on 22nd March, 1976, he was reported to have said, *inter alia*—

"Four more aerators had been ordered for installation in the effluent equalisation basin."

(a) when does he anticipate the aerators will be operative;

(b) what improvements does he anticipate with the installations;

(c) what would be the capital cost, including installation, for the four additional aerators;

(d) what is the estimated annual operating cost, including maintenance?

- (4) Would he please provide information as to whether the consultants who were engaged to design and commission the existing treatment plant provided or entered into a contractual obligation in respect of specified levels of performance of the plant, i.e., final levels of B.O.D., bacterial count, suspended solids, total solids, etc.?

- (5) Should such a contractual obligation exist then what is the present position in regard thereto?

- (6) Would he advise whether the tertiary water treatment plant has been commissioned, and if so, details of the results achieved to date?

- (7) Since the commencement of the current financial year, 1st July, 1975, has the management of Midland Abattoir

Board been engaged in discussions and/or experimental tests with their consultant and/or any other party for modifications (mechanical or otherwise) to the then existing treatment plant; if so, would he advise the general nature of such discussions, etc., and the outcome thereof?

Mr OLD replied:

Management of Midland Junction Abattoir has advised as follows:

- (1) No. The commissioning of the tertiary water treatment plant has been delayed by the closing of the equalisation basin. On installation of the new aerators and commissioning of the effluent disposal plant, the tertiary water treatment plant will become operative.
- (2) (a) Waste water is being diverted through the existing plant, treated and then transferred via the lagoon system for spray irrigation.
- (b) Yes. Daily records are kept and can be inspected at the board's premises.
- (3) (a) At the end of April. The installation of electrical equipment is proceeding at present.
- (b) The board's consultants consider that with the extra aerators no offensive odours will be emitted. As a safeguard, provision has been made for the chemical treatment of waste water prior to it entering the equalisation basin.
- (c) Estimated to be \$76 000.
- (d) Precise operating costs will not be known until the system is fully operational.
- (4) Yes. 20 ppm BOD. 30 ppm suspended solids.
- (5) The consultants' contractual arrangement has been achieved, but owing to pressure from the Shire of Swan the equalisation basin was closed and cleared. The consultants have at all times honoured their obligations.
- (6) Answered by (1).
- (7) Yes. The provision of the four additional aerators resulted from a recommendation during November, 1975, from the board's consultants.

Discussions were also held with other consultants and subsequently chemical treatment tests have been undertaken. The final outcome of these tests will not be known until after the additional aerators are installed and the effluent system is fully functional.

16.

SCHOOLS

Libraries and Resource Centres

Mr McPHARLIN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) How many primary schools in Western Australia have had library and resource centres erected adjacent to the schools?
- (2) In which towns have these been erected?
- (3) Which towns are listed for supply and erection in the next financial year, i.e. 1976-1977?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) 86.
- (2) Karratha.
Port Hedland (2).
Bunbury (2).
Carnarvon (2).
Katanning.
Mandurah.
Mt. Barker.
Kalgoorlie.
Geraldton (3).
Kambalda.
Busselton.
Albany.
Manjimup.
Fitzroy.
Pinjarra.
The remaining 66 centres have been built at schools in the metropolitan area.
- (3) Details of funding available for 1976-77 is not yet to hand. Until details do become available, no firm indication of a building programme can be given.

17.

EDUCATION

Physical and Mental Defectives: Number

Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

How many Western Australian children, between the ages of—

- (a) 0-5 years;
- (b) 6-17 years,

are classified as blind, deaf, mute, cerebrally palsied or mentally defective, as at December, 1975?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (a) No statistics are available.
- (b) Visually impaired:

- Blind, 29;
- Partially sighted, 30.
- Hearing impaired:
- Deaf, 91;
- Partial hearing, 66;
- Visited by supporting teachers, 98;
- Cerebral palsied, 194.

18. **EDUCATION**

Physical and Mental Defectives: Institutions

Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

What institutions are provided by the State to cater for the educational needs of blind, deaf, mute and cerebrally palsied children?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) Sutherland Blind Centre.
- (2) Classes (2) for partially sighted at Thomas Street Primary School.
- (3) Support teachers (2) for blind students in high schools.
- (4) School for the Deaf—Mosman Park.
- (5) School for partially hearing—Cottesloe.
- (6) State Educational Assessment and Parent Guidance Centre for Children with impaired hearing—Cottesloe.
- (7) High school classes (2) for partially hearing—Swanbourne Senior High.
- (8) Visiting teacher service for children with impaired hearing not in special schools.
- (9) Speech and Hearing Centre (State provides the teachers only).
- (10) Sir James Mitchell School for cerebral palsied children.

19. **EDUCATION**

Physical and Mental Defectives: Approaches to Minister

Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

How many parents having the actual custody of a blind, deaf, mute, cerebrally palsied, or mentally defective child have given notice, in writing, to the Minister of their inability to provide an efficient and suitable education for their child during the period 1965-1975?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

The Education Act makes provision for certain action to be carried out and, if necessary, enforced. In recent years it has not been necessary to enforce these provisions since parents have been only too anxious to

avail themselves of the services provided. Parents and the Minister, through the Department of Education have co-operated in the best interests of handicapped children without recourse to the letter of the law.

20.

EDUCATION

Retarded Children: Number

Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

What number of children/adults in Western Australia, as at December 1975, were classified as "retarded" in the following categories—borderline, mild, moderate, severe, profound, unspecified—for the following age groups—

- (a) 0-5 years;
- (b) 6-17 years;
- (c) 17 + years?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (a) No statistics are available.
- (b) 1 156—mild to borderline; 857—moderate to mild.
- (c) No statistics are available.

21.

EDUCATION

Physical and Mental Defectives: Institutions

Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

During the period 1965-1975, on how many occasions has the Minister directed a parent of a blind, deaf, mute, cerebrally palsied or mentally defective child, to send such a child to a specified institution?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

The answer given to question 19 is also appropriate and applicable to this question.

22.

EDUCATION

Physical Defectives: Notification of Whereabouts

Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

Between 1965 and 1975 how many parents of deaf or mute children notified the Minister in writing of the name and whereabouts of their child—

- (a) within one month of the child attaining the age of three years;
- (b) at any given time?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

The answer given to question 19 is also appropriate and applicable to this question.

23. EDUCATION

*Physical and Mental Defectives:
Notification of Whereabouts*

Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

Between 1965 and 1975 how many parents of blind, cerebrally palsied or mentally defective children notified the Minister in writing of the name and whereabouts of their child—

(a) within one month of the child attaining the age of four years;

(b) at any given time?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

The answer given to question 19 is also appropriate and applicable to this question.

24. EDUCATION

*Physical and Mental Defectives:
Prosecution of Parents*

Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

On how many occasions between 1965 and 1975 has the Minister taken action against a parent as provided for under section 20 (4) of the Education Act?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

On no occasion has action been taken in this period.

25. EDUCATION

*Physical and Mental Defectives:
Committal*

Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

During the period 1965-1975 on how many occasions has a children's court, following initiatives by the Minister, committed a blind, deaf, mute or cerebrally palsied or mentally defective child to a specified institution?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

On no occasion has this action been taken.

26. EDUCATION

*Physical and Mental Defectives:
Responsibility of Parents*

Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

Is it the intention of the Government to insist that it shall be the duty of a parent of a blind, deaf, mute, cerebrally palsied, or mentally defective child, to provide efficient and suitable education for the child?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

The Council for Special Education has recommended that the obligation for schooling required generally of parents, should apply equally to parents of handicapped children. The Government is considering the recommendation.

27. EDUCATION

*Physical and Mental Defectives:
Repeal of Section 20*

Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

(1) Has the Minister received representations from an organisation known as "Watch Dog" with a request for the Government to repeal section 20 of the Education Act?

(2) Has the Minister replied to their representations?

(3) If so, what was the nature of his reply?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) and (3). A reply was sent on 28th August, 1975, advising that the matters raised by "Watchdog" would be referred to the Council for Special Education.

QUESTIONS (12): WITHOUT NOTICE

1. CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMME

Cutback

Mr J. T. TONKIN, to the Treasurer:

(1) When did it first become apparent to him that it was inevitable there would be a lag in the State's capital works programme and that there would be a necessary cutback in services provided by the State next year?

(2) Will he specify—

(a) the capital works, the commencement of which it is expected will have to be deferred beyond this financial year; and

(b) the services to which a cutback will be applied next year?

(3) What is the amount of the anticipated saving in expenditure expected to result from—

(a) the lag in the capital works programme; and

(b) the cutback in services?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

(1) As the year has progressed it has become apparent that continued high cost inflation in the building and construction industry would prevent the Government from

achieving the whole of the physical work programme planned in the capital works budget.

It is equally apparent, as it is to all employers, that continued large increases in award wages, unrelated to the required productivity, must erode our capacity to provide services to the public from the funds available.

- (2) (a) It is not practicable at this stage of the year to specify individual works that may have to be dropped out of the programme. However, it is likely that all sections of the programme will be affected to a greater or lesser degree.
- (b) This question cannot be answered until we know the cost structure with which we will be faced next year and the funds likely to be available. The Commonwealth is currently examining all programmes financed by that Government in an effort to reduce its huge prospective deficit next year, but at this stage we have had no advice as to specific programmes which may be affected.
- (3) (a) and (b) It is not expected that there will be "savings" as the cost of providing works and services tends to exceed the funds available.

2.

HOUSING

Group Tenders

Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Does the State Housing Commission propose to call tenders for the building of new houses *en bloc* for various regions?
- (2) If "Yes" to (1), in what regions is it proposed to call tenders for the erection of new houses, and how many houses are involved in each region?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

I thank the member for Warren for some notice of this question. The answer is as follows—

- (1) Yes, in the four Housing Commission administrative regions outside the north-west of the State.
- (2) Southern region—55 housing units
South-western region—121 housing units
North central region—77 housing units
Central region—107 housing units

I would like to emphasise that this is not the size of the tender, but the number of units we will attempt to build in each of the regions over a protracted period.

3. UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

Fees

Mr BRYCE, to the Premier:

- (a) Is the policy of the Government to support the maintenance of free post-secondary education in Western Australia?
- (b) Will the Government fiercely oppose any moves by the Fraser Government to reintroduce tuition fees at universities and colleges of advanced education?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (a) Yes.
- (b) There is no need—rather we are fiercely opposed to the mischievous spreading of such a rumour.

4. NATIONAL COUNTRY PARTY

Leader and Undertakings

Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is the Minister the leader of the Country Party in this Chamber?
- (2) To whom should I address questions relating to the policy of the Country Party and undertakings given by that party prior to the last State election?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) and (2) I am the Leader of the National Country Party, and questions should be addressed to me.

5.

FLATS

Prohibition on Birds

Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is it a fact that tenants of State Housing Commission flats are not permitted to keep a canary or budgerigar as a pet?
- Mr Nanovich: What about cockroaches; are you including them?
- Mr BARNETT: Which member opposite is referring to himself? To continue—
- (2) If the answer to (1) is "Yes", is he aware of the extreme distress being caused to some tenants by the carrying out of this ruling?
- (3) In view of the distress being caused by the ruling will he agree to amend the regulations to allow State Housing Commission tenants to keep a pet bird such as a canary or budgerigar?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (3) I refer the member for Rockingham to the answer to question 1 on today's notice paper, in which I indicated quite clearly that the State Housing Commission has a policy which prevents tenants from keeping pets in rental units where there is no courtyard or private enclosure.

This relates basically not to a specific policy of the State Housing Commission as such, but to local government by-laws; and as I indicated in the answer to question 1 it relates specifically to sections of the Health Act.

In amplification of the answer, I would indicate that we have a responsibility not only to the tenant who wishes to keep a pet of any sort, but also to the tenants on either side of him. The answer to part (3) of his question is "No".

6. POLICE STABLES

Relocation

Mr YOUNG, to the Minister for Police:

- (1) When is it anticipated that the police stables in Pearson Street, Woodlands, will be removed?
- (2) When is it anticipated that the new police stables will be—
- (a) commenced, and
 - (b) completed?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

I thank the member for Scarborough for some notice of this question. The answer is as follows—

- (1) Through the co-operation of the WA Turf Club we have been offered premises at the Belmont Racecourse, and I inspected these premises this morning with the sergeant in charge of the police stables. We expect to shift some of the gear there during this week and completely to vacate the Pearson Street premises before Friday.
- (2) (a) and (b) The building at Maylands has been commenced, and according to the Public Works Department it should be completed by the 30th June.

7. EDUCATION FUNDS

Allocation, and Assessment of Needs

Mr BRYCE, to the Premier:

This question relates directly to his statement in *The Record* of the 26th March. That statement was that the allocation of funds for education on a needs basis was strictly in accordance with

Government policy and the Premier's own beliefs. Arising out of that statement, I ask the Premier—

- (1) Is it not a fact that funding of independent school systems by his Government is made on a flat rate, *per capita* basis?
- (2) Will he outline the criteria the Government employs in assessing needs?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) In view of the fact that I have not seen the article to which the honourable member refers, I will acquaint myself with it to see whether it is a report of a Press release I made on this matter last week, and then I will give him the answer he seeks; or, at least, I will give him a considered answer, but not necessarily the one he wants. I do not quite follow the significance of his remarks, and I am not attempting to be evasive. However, when I read the article I will give him my views on the matter and also a copy of my Press release.

8. EDUCATION FUNDS

Assessment of Needs

Mr BRYCE, to the Premier:

Could I rephrase that question slightly and ask the Premier whether it is the policy of the Government to fund independent schools on a needs basis?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I am not prepared to answer the question just in those terms, and as an answer to one question which may be taken out of context. I repeat that I will look at the article to which he refers and then give him a considered answer on our total policy and its administration.

9. POLICE AND ROAD TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

Officers: Differentiation

Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Police: As the Minister was so helpful to the member for Scarborough, he may be able to answer a query put to me this afternoon. Can he advise how a member of the public can differentiate by visual inspection between a member of the Police Force and a member of the Road Traffic Authority?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

If the officer is in a vehicle, the vehicle is marked "RTA" or "Police". The uniforms are the same.

10.

HOUSING

Group Tenders

Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Housing:

Referring to the reply he gave me a little while ago, what are the sizes of the tenders which will be let initially in each of the regions to which he referred as they pertain to the State Housing Commission?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

This has not yet been completely finalised. We have some estimate of what they might be, and they will be going up for tender next month. If the member places this question on the notice paper I will be able to give him more accurate information.

11. CONSUMER PROTECTION

Funeral Costs

Mr CARR, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Has the Consumer Affairs Bureau taken any steps to examine whether the high prices being charged for funerals are in fact justified?
- (2) If "Yes", will he advise the results of such examination?
- (3) If "No", will he consider requesting that such an examination be made?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) to (3) I know that this question has come up but I do not know what stage the bureau's inquiries have reached. However, I will certainly obtain the information.

12. OMEGA FACILITY

Siting in Australia

Mr LAURANCE, to the Premier:

Has the Premier had any discussions with the Prime Minister regarding the possible siting of the Omega facility in Australia; and, if so, is he prepared to give any details?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I have had no detailed discussion with the Prime Minister on this question, but I have made it very clear to him that if he wishes to discuss a site in Western Australia he would be very welcome to do so, and we will find a place that is suitable for him and make the project welcome.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE

Days and Hours

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [5.11 p.m.]: I move—

That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 4.30 p.m., and on Thursdays at 2.15 p.m., and shall sit until 6.15 p.m., if necessary, and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m. onwards.

This motion is a normal one at this time of the session. The hours that are set down within it are the ones that we have followed for some considerable time and, of course, they may be varied by the House from time to time.

Mr Harman: It's about time you changed them.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Well, I am always open to suggestions.

Mr O'Neill: You could move an amendment to the motion.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I remind the honourable member that from time to time discussions take place between the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier of the day, and variations occur. In fact, I am about to refer to one variation.

To enable members to adjust their private affairs, I feel it is desirable to indicate that so far as Easter is concerned it is suggested that we rise on Thursday, the 15th April, and resume on Tuesday, the 4th May. In other words, we will have off the whole of Easter week and the week after, and resume on the 4th May. I will discuss with the Leader of the Opposition the hours of sitting for Thursday, the 15th April, which is Easter eve. Some members will want to get back to their electorates; and possibly if it is convenient to both sides of the House we could meet fairly early on that morning and terminate the proceedings in mid-afternoon, instead of at the normal time of 6.15 p.m. I merely give that by way of notice of a suggestion regarding the Easter break.

I do not think I need make any further comment. I expect members will appreciate that, as usual, the session will be in two parts. I could not hazard a guess as to when the first part will terminate or when the second part will begin. That will depend on the determination of business. For instance, the land tax Bill has to be passed so that it may be effective from the 1st July in order that the people concerned may receive concessions. Obviously it will have to be passed in the first part of the session.

Question put and passed.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Precedence on Tuesdays and Thursdays

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [5.13 p.m.]: I move—

That on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Government business shall take precedence of all Motions and Orders of the Day.

This is a normal motion which provides in practical effect that private members' business has precedence on Wednesdays, except for business that has been accepted by the House as formal business.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION

Appointment

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [5.14 p.m.]: I move—

That for the present session—

- (1) The Library Committee shall consist of Mr Speaker, Dr Dadour and Mr Bryce.
- (2) The Standing Orders Committee shall consist of Mr Speaker, The Chairman of Committees, Mr Sibson, Mr Bateman, and Mr Hartrey.
- (3) The House Committee shall consist of Mr Speaker, Mr O'Neil, Mr Old, Mr Bateman, and Mr Taylor.
- (4) The Printing Committee shall consist of Mr Speaker, Mr Coyne, and Mr Fletcher.
- (5) The Public Accounts Committee shall consist of Mr Clarko, Mr Cowan, Mr Laurance, Mr Bertram and Mr Moller.

This is a motion which is normally moved at this time of the session.

MR HARMAN (Maylands) [5.15 p.m.]: I intend to support this motion but in doing so I should like to make some comments relating to the Public Accounts Committee. I realise that in making these comments, I will be referring directly to the chairman of that committee, and when I make such comments, I make them in the belief that he has been in good health and has not been away from the State for any extended period. However, if that is not the case, some of my comments may not apply as much as they would under normal circumstances.

These committees are appointed by the Legislative Assembly to perform specific tasks. To me, the Library Committee would appear to be an important committee, but one which is mainly responsible for the management and smooth functioning of our library. I would expect that committee to meet fairly regularly. The Standing Orders Committee too fulfils an important function in this House but is limited to considering the various matters which affect our Standing Orders, members of

Parliament, and the conduct of this House. Even so, I would imagine this committee would meet regularly in order to undertake its business.

The House Committee is another important committee of this Parliament but, again, its operations are confined to the smooth running and functioning of the facilities associated with the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council. Again, I would imagine that despite its limited function, it would meet fairly regularly to undertake its business. The Printing Committee is another important committee but, again, it is related to the functions of this House. I would expect that committee to meet fairly regularly in order to fulfil its responsibilities.

The last committee referred to by the Premier is the Public Accounts Committee, which deals with a much wider area than any of the other committees. Under the Standing Orders, this committee is charged with the responsibility of looking at matters affecting the Public Accounts. As you know, Mr Speaker, the Public Accounts run into millions of dollars; therefore, this committee has a fairly onerous task in supplying to this House information concerning the Public Accounts.

In addition, the Auditor-General is charged with the responsibility of auditing the accounts, and making a report to this Parliament.

Having explained in a few sentences to members just how important is the Public Accounts Committee, one would think it would meet fairly regularly. However, my information is that the committee has not met since prior to last Christmas, a period of almost three months. It could be said that committees do not normally meet in the month of January and that therefore the Public Accounts Committee could be excused for not meeting during that month. But I do not believe the House can excuse the Public Accounts Committee for not meeting in February and March. I do not know when it will meet again.

Why did this committee not meet during the last three months? Was it because it had no business to which it could attend? Was it because the members of the committee were not able to come together to form a meeting of the committee? Was it because the chairman felt there was no need to have the Public Accounts Committee functioning? I do not know what was in the chairman's mind, but I know that in my mind there have been a number of matters to which the Public Accounts Committee could have given its attention over the last two or three months.

One of the matters the Public Accounts Committee used to investigate was the excess expenditure over and above the votes approved in this House. In the early days of the Public Accounts Committee, no real explanation was given by the Auditor-General of the variation in expenditure of

the appropriations approved by Parliament. However, lately, the Auditor-General's reports have provided some reasons for the excess expenditure. That might be satisfactory for some people and I imagine that the information given to the Auditor-General is satisfactory for his purposes.

The Auditor-General's report merely makes a very short reference to the reasons for the expenditure exceeding the vote, and I believe that one of the functions of the Public Accounts Committee should be to investigate these excesses. I should like to mention some of these items so that members can appreciate the importance of the point I am making. The items to which I refer relate to the financial year ended June, 1975. During that year, the Government Printing Office incurred an excess of \$667 000, which apparently was due to an increased expenditure on paper and consumer materials.

The Department of Agriculture had an excess of about \$170 000 because of additional administrative expenses. The Police Department incurred an excess in printing and stationery of \$135 000; Police Force "expenses" exceeded the vote by \$419 000; and, the item of transportation under the Police Department indicates an excess of over \$250 000.

I believe Parliament should be provided with information relating to the reasons for these large excesses over and above the appropriations approved in this House during the Estimates debate in 1974. The Department of Corrections incurred an excess of \$137 000. Under item 33, "Assistance to Cotton Growers", the Department of Country Water Supply incurred an excess of nearly \$500 000. I do not know how that department managed to exceed the original vote of \$500 000 by almost another \$500 000 because my information is that there is now no cotton growing in the Ord River area, and that there are only some 10 or 12 farmers actually on their farms in that area. Parliament certainly should be informed of the reasons the department spent nearly \$1 million, half of which was not approved by this House, on 10 cotton farmers in the Ord River district.

That is only one department which has provided assistance to cotton growers; Parliament does not know whether other assistance is being provided under some other vote. Parliament should know why the Government is spending large amounts of taxpayers' money on some 10 farmers in the Ord River area.

The last item I extracted from the Auditor-General's report relates to part IX, a reception centre provided under the vote of the Immigration Department. Expenditure exceeded the vote by nearly \$100 000.

This is one area to which the Public Accounts Committee could have devoted its attention for at least two months. I often remember the remarks made in this

House when the Public Accounts Committee was first mooted. I also remember statements made by members of Public Accounts Committees in other States and countries to the effect that the system of establishing such committees had the desired effect and that the committees were the Parliaments' watchdogs of the Public Accounts; the committees made public servants aware there was some person other than the Auditor-General to whom they would have to account for any excesses in the vote. I understand such excesses must occur; I am not saying we should not have such excesses. However, Parliament should know the reasons they occur.

Mr Laurance: But the Auditor-General advises the committee which Budget excesses he is not happy with. No doubt he also did this for the committee when you were chairman.

Mr HARMAN: That is right; that is another area which the Public Accounts Committee should investigate. If the Public Accounts Committee feels there is no need to investigate these excesses, it should examine some of the extravagances and wasteful expenditure of this Government. I can refer to two items immediately. I recall a recent Sunday when I was driving around the city; I noticed a Government vehicle being driven, I presume, by a public servant and in the car with him were—again I presume—his wife, his mother, and his family; they were all going for a Sunday afternoon drive. We might excuse the public servant for that, but when he has his family dog in the back of the Government station wagon I believe he is really stretching things a little too far!

It is those sorts of individuals in the Public Service who make it very difficult for the other officers who have the privilege of taking home Government vehicles after work, and using them on the weekends. It may be necessary for the Public Accounts Committee to look at the system relating to Government motor vehicles.

The Public Accounts Committee could also investigate the entertainment which is provided by this Government. Why was it necessary to spend \$X—I do not know the amount but I imagine it was hundreds of dollars—on a champagne breakfast at a tavern? This may be only an isolated case.

Mr Sibson: Who was involved in that?

Mr HARMAN: The present Government.

Sir Charles Court: Which function was this?

Mr HARMAN: It was a champagne breakfast at a tavern fairly close to town. I believe it had something to do with the opening of a section of the Mitchell Freeway.

Mr O'Connor: Did you see any of the champagne?

Mr HARMAN: No.

Mr O'Connor: Neither did I!

Mr HARMAN: But a show was held, was it not?

Mr O'Connor: Yes, at a tavern.

Sir Charles Court: Did your Government not have luncheons in the middle of the day?

Mr HARMAN: How many of these functions are held?

Sir Charles Court: Very lavish functions were arranged by your Government when a particular works was opened.

Mr HARMAN: Does the Premier not think that Parliament, through the Public Accounts Committee, should have the chance to see whether this type of entertainment is warranted? Is it something which occurs only now and again, or is it a consistent feature of this Government? Which departments hold such functions most often?

Sir Charles Court: You are sticking your head out now! I have a little list.

Mr HARMAN: These are matters with which the Public Accounts Committee should concern itself.

Mr O'Connor: Was that the one which the Stirling senior representatives and Mayor Venville attended?

Mr HARMAN: I believe this matter should be investigated by the Public Accounts Committee. I do not know how we are going to solve this problem. If the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee feels it is not necessary to call meetings, all I and other members can do is to bring to the attention of this House the facts as we see them.

If the chairman feels there is no case to answer and he does not think he need call the committee together to examine such matters, or to initiate any other inquiry into the Public Accounts, then that presumably is his business. However, I do not think it is in the best interests of Parliament that it ought to be allowed to continue. I think in future we ought to adopt some system by which the number of meetings of the Public Accounts Committee is, from time to time, brought to the notice of the House.

The member for Karrinyup who is the chairman of this committee might feel that it is a case of sour grapes, because last year I put before him a proposition that he should investigate the letting of a contract by the Metropolitan Water Board which culminated in a very reputable and long-standing Western Australian company going into liquidation.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member has five more minutes.

Mr HARMAN: I sought to have that investigation, because at the time I felt that the Public Works Department and

the Water Board might not have the expertise to examine the deep bores contract involved, and that after examining the matter they might consider the possibility of recommending the appointment of an expert body, to comprise officers of the Mines Department, to look at the specifications and the types of contracts which had been let for deep drilling by those departments; and furthermore to examine the type of equipment, the expertise available to the individual companies that were tendering, and then to make a recommendation to the department concerned, whether it be the SEC, the Water Board or the Mines Department.

In that way we could bring some expert advice to the Government department that was letting the contract. That particular contract amounted to nearly \$200 000. As it turned out that firm was not able to complete the contract, because it was not able to carry out the work for which it had tendered originally.

Mr O'Neill: It was told that, but it denied that.

Mr HARMAN: That is right. I asked the Government to investigate this, but it did nothing, and the company went to the wall. I thought that in order to avoid the same thing happening on another occasion I would ask the Public Accounts Committee to investigate the matter.

When the Public Accounts Committee received my application the chairman referred the matter to the Crown Law Department, and that department gave him an opinion that the Public Accounts Committee was not entitled to investigate the request I had made. However, that was only the opinion of the Crown Law Department. If we are to act on opinion—and this was an opinion which was expressed about a quote by myself in the application I had made to the Public Accounts Committee—we will never get anywhere.

My feeling was that the Public Accounts Committee should have investigated the complaint that I had put before it. I think that on an examination of the Standing Orders it will be found that the request I had made was in order. However, the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee decided that he would not investigate the matter.

The only alternative I have is to move a motion in this House next week that, in the opinion of the House the matter to which I have just referred should be investigated by the Public Accounts Committee. That means I will have to waste the time of this House, because it may take me up to three quarters of an hour to explain all facets of that contract. I will have to read out the expert opinions which have been obtained relating to the expertise of this firm, and the amount of equipment it had at the time. I will have to waste the time of the House to expose all that, hoping I can get the House to agree that the

matter be referred to the Public Accounts Committee. I suggest that matters like opinions from the Crown Law Department and party politics should not enter into this matter.

The SPEAKER: Will you be discussing this matter subsequently? The honourable member should be wary if he intends to move a motion later on.

Mr HARMAN: I am aware of that, Mr Speaker. An allegation could be made that it is a case of sour grapes with the member for Maylands, because his application to the Public Accounts Committee has been rejected. That is not so. We have the Public Accounts Committee, and it should do the job for which it has been elected. I hope after these few remarks I have made that before Parliament is prorogued the committee will go about its job.

MR CLARKO (Karrinyup) [5.37 p.m.]: The member for Maylands, as has been his practice since I have been a member of this House, has come up with a few remarks which he has described as not being a case of sour grapes. However, it has been his practice to speak at some length on the Public Accounts Committee, apparently on the basis that he was once a member of this committee. If he is so interested in the workings of the Public Accounts Committee I wonder why he does not seek to be reappointed to it.

It also intrigues me that he should turn his remarks, not only on this occasion when I am chairman but also on the last occasion when the member for Scarborough was chairman, to create the impression that the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee is some sort of Idi Amin.

I would assure the member for Maylands that what happens in the Public Accounts Committee is that the committee as a whole and each member individually share the responsibility and support its judgment.

For the member for Maylands to assert that I as chairman make the decisions, and that I decided the Public Accounts Committee should not undertake some sort of investigation, is to indulge in a complete and utter falsehood. He has grossly distorted the situation in asserting that.

I would invite the member for Maylands to ask his two Labor colleagues on that committee to inform him whether they support him in his suggestion that I as chairman decide what the committee shall do. The four other members of the committee have too much intelligence to allow the member for Maylands to assert that in some way I lead the other members along the track. It is not true for him to say that, because all the members work closely together.

I say again that if the member for Maylands is interested in this committee he should seek to rejoin it.

I wonder whether the reason he has not sought to rejoin the committee is that the members are still not paid for their service on that committee. On the last occasion he spoke on this subject he did so in a way which of course cannot be described as a case of sour grapes, but he did say that members should be paid for their services on an hourly basis. Perhaps the member for Maylands can bring about a *coup d'état* and rejoin this committee so that for the many hours he serves on it he will be paid for his services.

Normally during the parliamentary session the Public Accounts Committee meets approximately weekly, and occasionally more than once a week. That is the wish of the five members. I as chairman do not decide when the committee meets; the five members as a whole decide that.

A great deal has been said by the Opposition about democracy. I agree that this is the proper way to run a committee, and that is precisely how we as members run the Public Accounts Committee. The member for Maylands said that it was probably reasonable that we did not meet in the last pre and post-Christmas periods. He said he did not think that we should meet in January, but that we should meet in February and March.

Despite his length of service in this House, and he has been a member for longer than I have been, he does not seem to be aware that the House was prorogued on the 11th February last, and that we as the Public Accounts Committee could not have met after that date. There was only one possible day when the committee could have met as it normally did on a Wednesday, and that was on the 4th February. In my opinion the member for Maylands is wasting the time of the House once again by suggesting that the committee should have met because he wants it to meet. In any case, the majority among the five members decide when the committee meets. The member for Maylands can bleat as long as he likes on when the Public Accounts Committee should meet but unless he joins the committee or is able to persuade the members otherwise, we will meet as often as we decide. I doubt whether we will be paid for our services on the committee. It is not the hours of work that count, but the quality of the work that we do that counts.

The member for Maylands referred to a matter that he brought to my attention regarding a contract with a water boring firm. I am not surprised that he has made some comment about a boring firm, because I have heard him speak in a boring way here on this matter each year! The member for Maylands claimed that I as chairman decided that the committee would not investigate the matter he had raised, but that is a total and utter falsehood. What happened was the committee decided it would not investigate the matter any further; certainly I did

not make that decision. The committee as a whole decided that. If, however, the majority of the members of the committee wish to investigate the matter I will be happy to concur.

I appreciate the work which the honourable member has put into the Public Accounts Committee. I am critical of him, because he has been critical of the committee. I am merely defending the committee, as well as myself as chairman. Last year he criticised the chairman, and I suppose next year he will do the same.

Mr Harman: If the chairman is a Labor member I will not!

Mr CLARKO: The committee will meet as often as it wants. The advice obtained from the Crown Law Department on this matter was that it was not pertinent for the committee to investigate further; and that was what the committee decided. We are free to act in that way, just as the member for Maylands is free to raise the matter next week in the House! If his motion is successful we are prepared to investigate the matter. We are prepared to investigate it as we are the watchdogs of the expenditure of the State. We are happy to look into matters where there is adequate evidence to justify an examination. However, we cannot examine everything that is put before us merely as a result of someone's point of view.

What has happened in this case is that we have again heard the regular diatribe from the member for Maylands. I repeat that the Public Accounts Committee is an excellent one, and I believe it is doing the job for which it has been established. If the member for Maylands has any views he wishes to place before the committee he can do so through the members of his own party on the committee; if he does we will do our best to inquire into it properly.

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [5.43 p.m.]: Out of courtesy to the member for Maylands I will reply very briefly to his comments. It is not surprising that he rose to make some comment on the Public Accounts Committee. He seems to have a bit of a "thing" about the committee, and anyhow that is his business. I leave it to the chairman of the committee to justify the action of that committee, and not of himself.

If the member for Maylands feels strongly that there are matters to which the Public Accounts Committee should give specific attention I suggest that it is quite within his rights, as it is within the rights of every member of this Chamber, to make representations to the chairman of the committee.

Mr Harman: You gave me an undertaking last year that you would confer with the Deputy Premier to see whether we

could overcome the problem confronting committees not set up legally, when Parliament was prorogued.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I do recall the undertaking, and we have looked at the hiatus that occurs, but the problem is not as easy of solution as appears on the surface. We have taken action in respect of one matter that was raised. There was the problem relating to the Constitutional Convention and the problem over the salaries of members, on which we took action to correct.

Mr Harman: Just because Parliament was prorogued in February, that committee should not become moribund.

Mr O'Neill: The Standing Orders cover that situation.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I remind the member for Maylands that we are dealing with sessional committees when the House is, in fact, prorogued. I am prepared to look at this matter again. I can see a great deal of objection being taken by some members who are pedantic about sessional committees meeting at a time when Parliament is not in session.

Mr T. D. Evans: Was Parliament, in fact, prorogued in February this year?

Sir CHARLES COURT: The honourable member should know that Parliament has to be prorogued before it can be reconvened. I suggest that the honourable member, with his experience in Government, should know the procedure that takes place each year on the reconvening of Parliament.

In my view the items raised by the member for Maylands were fairly petty, bearing in mind the matter he raised. He should have been vigilant on it when he was talking on the Estimates last session.

The Auditor-General's report was tabled on the 14th October last year, and that was followed by the introduction of the General Loan Estimates and the General Revenue Estimates. I would have thought that if the honourable member had any particular concern he would deal with it on those occasions. I am sorry he has seen fit to take the Ord item out of context, and criticise the assistance to farmers, bearing in mind that his own Government was a champion of the scheme.

In respect of the particular incident of a so-called breakfast, if that is all the member has to worry about with regard to this State, he has not very much to worry about at all. He must be very pleased with the actions of the present Government if all he has to complain about is a breakfast for those attending the opening of an important multi-million dollar project. I suggest to the honourable member that if he reflects he will realise that had it been a midday function it would have been normal to

provide the guests with lunch. The same would apply to an evening meal for an evening function. His own Government would have done the same thing, so I do not know what he is bleating about.

On the question of the use of a Government vehicle, did the honourable member pass on to the department the number of the vehicle concerned so that inquiries could be made? Some members follow that course. In fact, I have observed a situation where a vehicle carrying official Government plates was used on a Sunday. The last such vehicle I saw was carrying a family. I felt it my duty to find out what was going on in the interests of the officer concerned because sooner or later someone would "dob" him in. I must admit that on that occasion I felt it might have been necessary for some disciplinary action. However, I found the driver had an emergency on his hands and I quickly withdrew my objection. I firmly believe the person concerned did not make a practice of using the car and carrying passengers on a Sunday. He had to have the use of a vehicle because he could be called out at any time.

So, I do not think the honourable member is acting fairly when he makes a statement but is not prepared to pass on the details to the Premier's Department in order to find out the true situation. I would react very angrily, as did the honourable member, if I saw a person, with a family and including the family dog, travelling in a Government vehicle on a Sunday. I condemn the honourable member for not doing something about his complaint.

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: SECOND DAY

Motion

Debate resumed, from the 25th March, on the following motion by Mr Tubby—

That the following Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech be agreed to—

May it please Your Excellency:

We, the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

MR J. T. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [5.47 p.m.]: I propose to take up a little time of the House on this motion, and I ask the indulgence of the House because as you, Mr Speaker, can appreciate I have quite a few matters to talk about.

Mr Thompson: Complimentary matters!

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Before I comment on the Speech which His Excellency was pleased to deliver to us, I want to clear

up a couple of little matters, one which was raised in 1974 by the Minister for Labour and Industry, and one raised more recently by the Minister for Local Government which involved myself.

An article was published in *The West Australian* on Friday, the 9th August, 1974, under the very big heading "Grayden hits at 'slandorous' attack on firm". The firm was Landalls Pty. Ltd., and the person who made the attack was the member for Rockingham. What the Minister said, and what got under his skin, was that the member for Rockingham asked whether the Minister agreed that a company would appear to be in severe financial straits when its shares were sold at a low price. That was a perfectly reasonable question in the circumstances then obtaining.

Mr Grayden: You cannot take that in isolation. Other members were trying to put the skids under the company, and they succeeded.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The Minister went in boots and all. Referring to the article again, the member for Rockingham said it would appear there was a strong possibility that Landalls, which had a responsibility to the migrants to whom it had sold houses, was close to collapse.

The member for Rockingham wanted to know whether the Minister was prepared to investigate the activities of the company, and its association with the Government. The Minister came in and said the allegations were completely false. It is now a matter of history that the company concerned went into liquidation.

Mr Grayden: As a direct result of the question.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: I have heard of members of Parliament having tremendous power, but this is the first time I have known of a question asked by a member being responsible for a company going into liquidation.

Mr Grayden: That is not the whole of the question, and you know it.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The point I want to make clear is that the claim was not completely false at all, and the member for Rockingham was entitled to be apprehensive about the signs he saw at the time.

Now I come to the statement which involves me, and this refers to land which was purchased with Commonwealth money from the Bond Corporation. The Minister made a statement—which was given wide publicity—that when he was speaking to the then Federal Minister (Mr Uren), Mr Uren had indicated to him that I was uninformed about the situation. I denied at the time that Mr Uren had ever said to me, or I had ever said to him, what the Minister for Local Government stated publicly had been said.

Mr Rushton: He told me he sent a report over to you to tell you the circumstances.

Mr Taylor: And you are repeating it.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: I also made the statement that I would refer the statement by the Minister for Local Government to Mr Uren and ask him for his comments.

Mr Rushton: I will tell you of the circumstances in which it happened.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: I sent the newspaper cutting to Mr Uren so there could be no misunderstanding about the circumstances about which I was complaining.

I have received a reply from Mr Uren which I propose to read, as follows—

Dear John, in reply to your letter of the 12th March regarding the published statement of the remarks I am supposed to have made to Rushton about you I confirm that I have had no discussions with Rushton or you on land matters as alleged in the article. Stop. I would also like to point out that I do not discuss at any time conversations I have had with my colleagues with those who are on the opposite side of politics. Stop. I will write to Rushton and also to the newspaper and will send you a copy. Regards.

Mr Rushton: I have not had the letter yet.

Mr Taylor: What a weak comment.

Mr Rushton: I will tell you the circumstances.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The important point is that I received from the ex-Minister himself a statement that he had no discussions with the Minister for Local Government in this State, nor did he have any discussions with me about the land in question. So, obviously it was a complete fabrication on the part of the Minister.

Mr Rushton: That is where you are wrong.

Mr H. D. Evans: Shame.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: One wonders how much of this one has to put up with. Surely to goodness if a Minister wants to make out a case he should stick to the facts. I do not say that individuals, being human, cannot make mistakes but they are not entitled deliberately to fabricate a story in order to score a point.

As Mr Uren has undertaken to supply me later with copies of what he sent to the Minister, it will be further confirmed—I have no doubt—that what I have now outlined to the House is true.

Mr Rushton: I will tell you how it happened.

Mr H. D. Evans: What would happen in the House of Commons in such circumstances?

Mr Bertram: The Minister would have to resign.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: With regard to the Governor's Speech, compared with the Speeches made on the two previous occasions it was a very tame affair. As a matter of fact, *The West Australian*—which is on the side of the Government—said it was very low key. That is praising it. It certainly was low key; it was very flat.

Mr Taylor: It was so flat it was almost out of sight.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: It was very flat. One of the reasons obviously is that there is no longer a Whitlam Government in office for this Government to blame, as was the case on the occasion of the two previous Speeches.

Sir Charles Court: Thank goodness.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The previous Speeches placed the blame on the Whitlam Government.

Mr Thompson: Obviously, well founded.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: That is what the member opposite might think; it is a matter of opinion.

Mr Taylor: What has changed since the Whitlam Government went out?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The point is that the Whitlam Government is no longer the excuse of the present Government. Not being able to blame the Whitlam Government, this Government had very little to say of any real consequence.

One part of the Speech—an early part—which gained my support is the reference by His Excellency to his appreciation of the warm reaction his appointment has generated amongst Western Australians, and for the most friendly welcome to his wife and himself. Without the slightest hesitation I say that His Excellency and Lady Kyle have fitted in wonderfully well with the Western Australian community, and they are discharging their duties and responsibilities admirably. I am pleased that the people of Western Australia have made it clear that they are anxious to extend a warm welcome to His Excellency and his wife so that they will be able to discharge their duties as they are required to do in the circumstances.

Strangely enough, the Governor included a paragraph or two about electoral boundaries. I would have thought the Government would keep quiet about electoral boundaries because if ever there was a shocking state of affairs it is the malapportionment of boundaries in this State. The situation is sufficiently bad to cause *The West Australian* to devote a leading article to it, and draw attention to the need for some improvement in the situation.

We all know that a situation, where people facing one another across a road are in different categories, is ridiculous. Some of them are in a metropolitan seat, and those on the other side are in a rural seat. How, in a democracy, one can justify

that situation I just do not know. However, this situation has existed for years because it enables the Liberal and Country Parties to keep a reasonably secure hold upon the Parliament as a result of the extra voting strength which is available in those electorates which normally support the Government.

So the Government will continue to hold onto these boundaries as long as it can, until public opinion forces a change, and happily enough, the signs are that the people generally are beginning to be interested in this situation.

Mr Blaikie: Do you think the people actually want a change, as of now?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: There is no argument against an immediate alteration to the existing set-up where we can have thousands of people in one remote seat represented by one member, and alongside a mere handful of people with much greater voting power also represented by one member.

Mr Blaikie: That is your opinion, but do you think the public want change?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: What we need is a large scale adjustment of the situation in order to ensure that we have a democratic institution instead of one in name only. It is that situation which obtains in Western Australia at the present time. If one looks at the boundaries which are the result of this latest enactment, one cannot come to any other conclusion than that the guidelines which were set down for the commission were deliberately set in order to give the Government parties an advantage. How long is that situation to be tolerated?

Sir Charles Court: It looks as though our system produces a better balance in the Parliament than the one-vote-one-value system did in the Federal elections, when the Government finished up with roughly nine out of 10.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Peculiar circumstances were operating then. I have never before in my existence known all the media to be so combined in the one objective. One of the papers had its leading article on the front page in which it told the people that the election was their last chance to get rid of the Whitlam Government.

Sir Charles Court: What about 1972?

Mr Clarko: Do you not remember 1972, when it was the other way around?

Mr Bryce: That was one newspaper.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Vested interests made up their mind that the Government had to go. However, some people may be sorry before very long.

Mr Clarko: Not many.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Already there are indications that many people are not satisfied.

Mr Thompson: That was not evident in Victoria.

Mr Blaikie: It was certainly not evident in the Brisbane local government elections.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Do not tell me that the Whitlam Government was responsible for the failure of the Labor Party in Victoria because the ALP actually won more seats following the defeat of the Whitlam Government than it had held over many years.

Mr Blaikie: What about the situation in Queensland?

Mr Jamieson: The Labor Party is still in control of local government in Queensland.

Mr Bryce: What has this to do with one-vote-one-value?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: There is a reference in the Governor's Speech to State finances. Frankly, from what I read from day to day, I just do not know what our finances are like.

Mr Thompson: Very sound.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: One day we are told it is necessary to cut back on capital works—

Sir Charles Court: That is right.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: —and that some services will have to be discontinued, and then within a few days we are told that the Government will implement all its promises. I cannot add that up. Why is it necessary to cut back on capital works such as schools and hospitals and to warn the people that there will be a curtailment of existing services, and then to talk about spending millions in implementing policies not already implemented. However, more about that anon.

Instead of coming forward to say, "Although we promised that inflation could be dealt with on a State basis and we failed to do it", we have this platitude in the Governor's Speech—

The State Government will co-operate with the Commonwealth Government—

Mr Carr: A change after last time.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: To continue—
—in its efforts to abate and control inflation—

Sir Charles Court: We tried hard to co-operate with Whitlam, but he would not let us.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Let us compare the situation after the Court Government has been in office for two years with the very definite undertaking given before the election.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: He said, "State by State we will beat inflation."

Mr Bryce: And also, "We will appoint an expediter, and he will do the job."

Mr J. T. TONKIN: A very definite undertaking was given to control inflation.

Mr Thompson: Ask the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—he knows that one backwards.

Mr Taylor: He has reminded you of it over and over again, and still you have not come up with an answer.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Members will recall that the present Premier—the then Leader of the Opposition—was quite certain of his ability to deal with inflation.

Mr T. H. Jones: Superman!

Mr J. T. TONKIN: It is no good the Premier's saying now that he did not know it existed. He was fully aware of the extent of inflation at the time and he said that some people thought inflation could not be dealt with on a State basis, but that was not true at all. He had entirely different ideas, and all that was necessary was to change the Government.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: He said he would beat inflation State by State.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The then Leader of the Opposition said that we could not deal with it, but if the Government was changed the new Government could. What has happened? Prices have continued to rise month after month while this Government has been in office. On one occasion the Premier said that inflation was due to the price of meat. We analysed the figures, but found the increase was not due to meat at all. All we have now from the Government is this offer to co-operate with the Commonwealth Government, so apparently the Premier has abandoned his idea that it can be dealt with State by State.

Mr Bertram: He did not mean that then.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Now he is going to turn to the Commonwealth Government to see whether it can help.

Mr Sodeman: The Premier offered to co-operate with the previous Commonwealth Government and that offer has not changed.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The Governor's Speech continues—

—as the key to re-building investor and consumer confidence, and ultimately, improved employment prospects for the people of Western Australia.

You will remember, Mr Speaker, that the Premier's idea was to overcome the shortages which were driving up prices and so a special officer was appointed to provide these materials which were in short supply.

Mr Bryce: The expediter.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: I do not know whether the expediter is still in the employ of the Government, but I read the other day that all sorts of materials are in short supply in this State. As a matter of fact, if one does a little shopping, one

finds out that even some of the most common articles are in short supply and have been for months.

Mr Thompson: Just imagine what it would be like without the expediter!

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The situation is becoming worse—there has been no improvement at all. I say most definitely that the supply of materials in this State today is far worse than it was when the Court Government took over.

Sir Charles Court: I doubt it.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: So there is no validity in the argument used by the honourable member about this matter. All we can expect from the Government in dealing with inflation is that it is prepared to co-operate with the Commonwealth Government. I ask the Premier: Is this one of the promises that has been fulfilled, as mentioned in this morning's Press?

Sir Charles Court: We set out to co-operate with the Commonwealth Government, as a matter of policy.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The present Government set out to cure inflation.

Sir Charles Court: Yes, I know. We set out to do all these things as a total package, and we had a lot more success than you ever bargained on, despite the Whitlam Government's efforts to frustrate us.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The Premier mentioned a total package, but inflation is still with us.

Sir Charles Court: You cannot deny that we have had less adverse effects from the downturn in Australia than any other State.

Mr Bryce: What has that to do with your promise on inflation?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The next statement in the Governor's Speech will be altered very considerably in a while if my reasoning is correct. Under the heading "Federal-State relations" it says—

The State Government supports Federal Government tax-sharing proposals embodied in the "New Federalism".

What surprises me is that no-one except Malcolm Fraser knows what the proposals are.

Sir Charles Court: They were made public—dozens of them.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Oh no they were not.

Sir Charles Court: Yes they were.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: They were not, and the Premier does not know what the proposals are or what they involve.

Sir Charles Court: Why do you think we have been meeting with the Prime Minister? What do you think the officers have been working on for weeks?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: They have been trying to devise a formula that will work.

Sir Charles Court: What do you think we will do on the 9th April?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The officers are trying to devise a formula that will work.

Sir Charles Court: Was not this calculated on the normal formula system when you had to endeavour to work out the final sum based on principles?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Oh yes.

Sir Charles Court: That is what is being done now.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Did the Premier read what Sir Gordon Chalk had to say on this?

Sir Charles Court: Of course I did, and I also know what his Premier said.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: I know what he said, and I saw recently that he said something in Parliament that was completely without foundation.

Mr Jamieson: A special sitting, too!

Mr J. T. TONKIN: So one cannot take very much notice of what he has said.

Mr Sodeman: In the past you have apologised for mistakes too.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: I also ask the Premier whether he read that the Premier of New South Wales said that he was asking for an increase in the amount of the allowance given to that State by the Commonwealth Government.

Sir Charles Court: Always is—no matter who is the Premier of New South Wales.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: New South Wales is a very powerful State, and if its Premier gets extra assistance, it is at the expense of the less populous States.

Sir Charles Court: That is not so. I know from my own experience that on occasion some States have received more without disadvantaging other States.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: I say very definitely that if Malcolm Fraser agrees to increase the proportion of money made available to New South Wales and Victoria, it can only be at the expense of Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania.

Sir Charles Court: No.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Before the suspension I was dealing with the proposed tax sharing scheme which the Premier embraced and which he thought was going to be wonderful. I made the statement that that surprised me because nobody seemed to know very much about it. The reason for that statement was an article I read in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on the 13th February. The heading is "Tax sharing still a Fraser enigma". The article continues—

There are still too many imponderables in Mr Fraser's tax-sharing proposals to say how much benefit it will be to the States. . . .

At first sight Mr Fraser appears to be offering the States free shares in a goldmine: a fixed proportion of the ultimate growth tax—which is income tax.

Then it goes on to deal with the fact that income tax has risen substantially over the years because of inflation and that that has meant an increase in payments to the States. The article comments further—

There are several reasons why simply plugging into the income-tax growth will not automatically solve the States' financial problems.

The first is that Mr Fraser is committed to taking the disproportionate growth out of income tax by indexing the scales to the rate of inflation.

Further on the article continues—

Mr Fraser will not be anxious to see payments to the States skyrocket next year, and, on the other, he will need to use much of the increase in income-tax revenue to solve his own problems rather than those of the States.

The magic percentage that finally will be fixed as the States' share of income tax revenue is likely to bear only an indirect relationship to the percentage that the general purpose payments to the States currently make up of income tax receipts.

The real figure is not likely to be announced until Budget night. It is likely to be fixed by the Commonwealth at a level which ensures that the States get no more than their fair share of the growth left in income tax before full indexation is attained.

So from one who sets about to analyse the situation the answer comes that it is still an enigma.

Mr Davies: What was the date of that article?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The date is the 13th February, 1976. Despite that matter the Premier of Western Australia thinks it will be a wonderful thing for Western Australia.

I mentioned earlier that Sir Gordon Chalk, the Treasurer of Queensland, had a different idea. I wish to quote from an article in the *Courier-Mail* of the 15th January of this year. It is headed "Chalk on income tax idea". The article reads—

Queensland's Treasurer (Sir Gordon Chalk) last night criticised the new Federal-States finance proposals of the Prime Minister (Mr Fraser).

Sir Gordon also clashed with the Liberal New South Wales Premier (Mr Lewis).

Sir Gordon said the Federal Government's tax-sharing scheme could lead to higher taxation on incomes.

"Mr Fraser has talked to the two big States—the Victorian Premier (Mr Hamer) and Mr Lewis," Sir Gordon said.

"But the Queensland Treasury has not been kept informed."

Sir Gordon said the present system of uniform taxation had proved beneficial to all States.

All that was required was a better understanding between the Commonwealth and the States for a more equitable division of the taxation purse. . . .

Sir Gordon said, "I'm against the States having their own income tax and each State having separate taxes".

He said it would mean a return to the "dark days" with each State out-bidding each other by way of taxation to try to get industries established in one State rather than in another.

Mr Speaker, I share Sir Gordon Chalk's fears with regard to this matter.

Sir Charles Court: Except that that is not proposed in the proposition.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: How do you know when it has not been worked out yet?

Sir Charles Court: We have been to the Premiers' Conference.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The Premiers' Conference was told nothing except that the Premiers could not expect very much money.

Sir Charles Court: It was told plenty.

Mr Davies: If it had been you would have been talking about it.

Sir Charles Court: We have been talking about it publicly.

Mr Davies: You should have asked me.

Sir Charles Court: If you had been with me on the weekend you would have heard more about it.

Mr Davies: You should have asked me and I would have been delighted to join you.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: In *The West Australian* of the 5th February the heading was, "States agree to radical tax plan". They did not know what it was. They are still working out the formula. The Premier said tonight that his officers have been engaged for some time in working out the formula.

Sir Charles Court: Of course they have. With the old formula that was fixed they spent weeks working it out before we went to the Premiers' Conference.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The fact is that the Premier has not the slightest idea what the formula will be and neither has anybody else.

Sir Charles Court: I will tell you in time. Of course we know what is in it. We have agreed the basic principles. Otherwise we would not have let the officers work on it. One does not let them formulate policy.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: As for what Mr Fraser said by way of encouragement, I ask members to listen to this. The article in *The West Australian* said—

Mr Fraser said that because of the need for austerity, the States could not expect to get richer under the first phase of the tax sharing plan.

I did not say that. Mr Fraser said that to the Premiers. The article continues—

A formula will be worked out in the next few weeks to decide what proportion of this percentage will be given to each State and what proportion of that will go to local government. . . .

At the start of the new scheme—next financial year—the relativities between the States under the existing flat-money grants system will be maintained.

If in any year a State stands to get less than the year before—because of changes in tax rates or economic downturn—the Commonwealth guarantees extra money to lift the amount paid to the State up to the previous year's level.

A lot of good that will do. I had a return taken out to show the revenue the State has received, taking into consideration the grants from the Commonwealth and the results of its own revenue raising capacity. Mr Speaker, I ask you to listen to these figures. While my figures go from 1966 to 1976 I shall not weary the House by citing the lot. I shall start with 1971 when my Government came into office. Our estimated total revenue in 1971 was \$359.886 million. Our estimated expenditure was \$359.886 million. In 1972 the estimated revenue was \$424.402 million, and the estimated expenditure was \$427.927 million. In 1973 the estimated total revenue was \$469.444 million and the estimated expenditure was \$474.521 million. In 1974 the estimated revenue jumped by almost \$100 million and the estimated expenditure went up from \$474.521 million to \$553.375 million. In 1975 the estimated total revenue went up to \$716.937 million or an increase of \$170 million in one year. The estimated expenditure was \$725.683 million. For 1976 the figure is astronomical. It went up to \$980.673 million—up \$270 million. The estimated expenditure was up likewise because the Premier estimated a balanced Budget.

This is the point I wish to make. The increase in revenue from 1975-76 was \$274 million. If the Prime Minister is to ensure

that the revenue received by the State in the next financial year is not less than that received last year, what a mess the Government will be in. But this is a proposal which the Premier welcomes. He is quite satisfied with it and he has great belief in it; and he believes he can get away without imposing severe State taxation upon the people of Western Australia. We will not have long to wait because this is one of those matters where the proof is soon forthcoming.

The West Australian is not so easily taken in. In its leading article on Friday, the 6th February, under the heading "The new deal", it talks about the debit side and the credit side and then it makes this reference—

However, the Premiers could be a little too starry-eyed about the scheme as it stands. Perhaps their enthusiasm stems from the massive growth of income tax revenue in recent years, but that trend can hardly continue—indeed, it needs to be put into reverse. Even if the new scheme could be introduced for the coming financial year the immediate prospect for the States is that they will not receive more Federal money than they would get under the existing arrangements.

Then further down it states—

From WA's point of view the biggest unknown is the method by which equalisation grants will be made to compensate the less populous States for their lower taxing capacities. A return to pleading before the Grants Commission would put back the clock eight years for this State and would offset much of the financial independence that has been promised.

For all that, some progress has been made towards a new federalism. Sir Charles Court—who has belatedly confessed to having had reservations about the scheme—now has more ground for optimism. But he should save his hosannas till he sees the fine print.

And that is what I say; and to have come out so enthusiastically initially about this scheme in my view shows an irresponsibility which one would not expect to find in the Premier of a State like Western Australia. Now if we are not to get from the Commonwealth the increase which has been the order of the day in recent years, and the income will be kept up only to the level of the previous year, it is no wonder the Premier was obliged to warn the people that his capital works programme was lagging and that he would have to curtail some of the services which are already being given to the general public.

This afternoon I sought to gain some information which would provide a justification for the statement the Premier made, so I asked him when it first became apparent to him that it was inevitable there

would be a lag in the State's capital works programme and that there would be a necessary cutback in services. My reason for asking that question was that it was only a few weeks ago the Premier went to Laverton, spread himself like a peacock, and said that the time had arrived when the State would have to assume the responsibility for infrastructure for mining companies in remote areas—

Sir Charles Court: That's right.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: —giving the impression that he was in a position to do that; and he is no more in a position to do that than he is to fly.

Sir Charles Court: You are if you get the special loan approval through.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The Government has been promised no more money from the Commonwealth than it received last year. Now if that limitation had previously operated the Government would have been millions down the drain.

Sir Charles Court: You are taking text out of context. We were talking about a special thing available to all States if they had the approval of the Commonwealth Government, the Treasury, the Reserve Bank, and the Loan Council.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: If this and if that! That reminds me of the statement a man made one morning when he was down on the beach. He said, "If we had a frying pan and some fat we could fry some fish, if we had some".

Sir Charles Court: What is wrong with that?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: To show how much information the Premier had when he made this statement, and how woolly his thinking was about the necessity to cut-back, just listen to all these words and see if it is possible to extract from them anything which means something. This is the answer to the question as to when it first became apparent. I would have expected the answer to be in November last year, December last year, or January this year; but, oh no! Here is the answer as to when it became apparent—

As the year has progressed it has become apparent that continued high cost inflation in the building and construction industry would prevent the Government from achieving the whole of the physical work programme planned in the capital works budget.

It is equally apparent, as it is to all employers, that continued large increases in award wages, unrelated to the required productivity, must erode our capacity to provide services to the public from the funds available.

Well now. I would ask any member if he can deduce from all those words just when it became apparent to the Premier that he would have to have a

cutback on his capital works. The statement that he would have to do it was made last week. Now, a reasonable assumption would be that he made the statement as soon as it became apparent; but, oh no! The fact of the matter is that he does not know when it became apparent. He has only just woken up to the fact.

Sir Charles Court: Having been Premier and Treasurer you know as well as all of us that during the year the loan funds progress is reviewed all the time. The dollars do not change unfortunately, but the pressures of the costs do.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: I will tell the Premier that he has known from the time he introduced his Budget that he would be in difficulty with his capital works programme so far as the provision of schools is concerned. It was perfectly obvious. One wonders why it has been left until now, following the statement about providing money for infrastructure for mining companies in remote areas, to make this announcement that the capital works programme is lagging and that a number of services already being provided will in future be curtailed. This is the way to put things right! Put the Liberal Party into office and put things right—

Mr May: Right up.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: —and have the capital works programme curtailed and services already being provided curtailed as well.

In December, 1974, the Premier went abroad and he had to give some indication to the people as to the reason for his doing so. I do not object to his going abroad if he intends to do something worth while for the State in going; but I do object to extravagant statements as to what is likely to happen. Listen to this, which was in *The West Australian* of the 25th December, 1974—

Court: Trip important

The Premier, Sir Charles Court, said yesterday that hopes of a recovery for the economy would depend a great deal on his coming trip abroad.

Now just imagine! The Premier is going on a trip to Britain and he has the hide to tell the people that hopes of a recovery of the economy rest upon his trip. The article continues—

Sir Charles said he hoped that next year would see the economy return to the condition of good health that West Australians had been accustomed to regard as normal.

A lot of other people hoped that too. Continuing—

He said: "All we need to cure our economic troubles is action at the State level and a return to sanity at the Commonwealth level, and I promise that I will let no opportunity go by for achieving both."

Mr Bertram: Another promise.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Yes, and he will claim he has fulfilled that one, make no mistake about that.

Sir Charles Court: We happen to have the best record of all the States, you know.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: As to the promises that the Liberals are prepared to make without the slightest compunction, let me say that on the night of the Federal election I was on a panel with Mr Viner on one of the radio stations, and I stated that Mr Fraser had promised a quick reversal of the economy if the coalition won the election, and Mr Viner jumped in and contradicted me immediately. A couple of days later I sent to Mr Viner an article from the paper and he did not have the courtesy to acknowledge having received it. I have the article in my hand and members can see that plastered right across it is the heading—

Fraser predicts quick reversal of economy if coalition wins

The article reads—

THE caretaker Prime Minister, Mr. Fraser, last night forecast a speedy turnaround in the economy if the Liberal-NCP coalition wins Saturday's election.

"We've got a number of policies that will start working immediately from Sunday."

One wonders what has happened to those policies. The article continues—

—he said in a Liberal Party interview televised by ABC-TV.

In the interview he stressed the coalition's plans for easier home ownership, stimulation of the private sector, and plans for secret ballots for union elections. He denied that some immigrants might be deported, or that a coalition Government would face industrial strife.

On the economy, he said: "I believe we should be able to see the beginnings of the turnaround relatively soon after we get back into government next Sunday, but it's hard to put a date on it."

Of course it is, but that is similar to the promises with which I am about to deal, and made by this Government in 1974.

In order to prepare us in this State for anything which might happen, on the 10th June, 1975, there is a reported statement by the Premier about the Budget. This was only a few months before the Budget was introduced, and the article reads—

BIG BUDGET DEFICIT AHEAD

WA faced an \$80 million Budget deficit next year, the Premier, Sir Charles Court, said today.

The Federal Government must change the formula for annual State grants if the deficit was to be avoided.

The Federal Government did not change the formula, and the deficit was avoided. What was wrong with the Premier's calculation? A sum of \$80 million is quite a sizeable amount by which to be out in one's calculations. The article goes on to say that the Premier stated—

All States are faced with huge deficits next year and there is no hope of the gap being closed from the expected lift in the States' own meagre revenue resources.

Yet within a few months the Premier brought here a balanced Budget. There was no increase in the payments under the formula. What happened? I think it is up to the Premier to tell us in due course.

You are aware, Mr Speaker, that for a time last year there was somewhat of a bubble in the Government when three Country Party Ministers walked out and one walked back in again later on. In such circumstances, those who feel aggrieved naturally speak the truth. Subsequently they are not so careful because they are trying to patch things up. So I think we can take it that what was said at the time of the break represented the real feelings of those concerned. This quotation comes from an article in the Press under the heading "CP chief hits at Premier", and it reads—

The Premier, Sir Charles Court, was criticised by the new leader of the Country Party, Mr Old, over a statement on policy differences.

I remind members that this is very important because the man who said this subsequently went into the Government with the man he criticised. The article continues—

Sir Charles said today that policy differences between the former coalition partners had not been defined. Mr Old said: "I do not intend to engage Sir Charles in a long running debate on areas in which there are differences.

"His often-repeated assertion that there are no differences won't hold water."

That is from a man who ought to know. He said the Premier's statement that there were no differences just would not hold water. The article continued to quote Mr Old as saying—

"My party"—

Not "I, Mr Old", but "My party". He goes on to say—

"—stands firmly for grower-controlled orderly marketing, for grower decisions on how their products should be handled."

Strangely enough, that is what the Labor Party stands for, too.

Mr Bryce: He caved in on that one, too.

Mr Blaikie: You have to be joking.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The quotation from Mr Old continues—

"This is the very point on which the coalition foundered."

But according to Sir Charles there were no differences in policy. The article goes on to say—

Mr Old said that though both the Liberal and Country Parties were free enterprise, anti-socialist parties, they had quite divergent views on education, traffic control and the method of marketing primary products.

"If Sir Charles had been prepared to concede the right of primary industry to make its own determinations the coalition split would never have occurred," Mr Old said.

Yet the Premier quite blatantly says, "There are no differences between our parties." Whom do we believe? The *West Australian* wanted to establish that the Country Party's troubles were internal. I do not know how that conclusion was arrived at but a case was built up on that basis.

I think it is as well to have confirmation from another prominent NCP man, and I quote from the *Sunday Independent* of the 18th May, 1975. The headline reads "Coalition split a set-up", and the article goes on to say—

The Premier, Sir Charles Court, on gaining the State Treasury benches had set about to split the coalition with the ultimate aim of governing in his own right, the State President of the Country Party, Mr David Reid said last night.

Recent developments would confirm that. The decision to field Liberal Party candidates against Country Party Ministers will upset an arrangement that there should not be competition, which has previously been preserved. It suggests that Mr Reid knew what he was talking about. The article continues —

"I think Sir Charles is making the biggest political blunder of his career in doing this and he is also helping the socialist cause by creating a rift in a coalition Government in WA which has a very fine history of their working closely together for a long time—now what's gone wrong?" said Mr Reid.

In a bitter attack on the Premier, Mr Reid claimed the Country Party had bent over backwards to co-operate and "has not been able to secure even a minor concession from the Premier."

Fancy being in a coalition under those circumstances, with no power whatever, being completely subservient, and doing

what the Liberal Party or Sir Charles Court tells them they will do! The article continues to quote Mr Reid as follows—

"I know just how totally bloody-minded he can be—so much so that he will cut the nose off the State and endanger its vital industries to win a personal point.

"We are not trying to be the school captain, but we have a right to have our say for those people we represent. The present attitude completely precluded our supporters having their voices heard at all in a coalition Government."

According to the Premier, there are no differences between the parties. Mr Reid goes on to say—

"Country people are in a serious jam and what's happened to our rate of inflation?"

He did not know that the Premier had decided to co-operate with the Commonwealth. He continues—

"Where's the magic formula which worked so well in the previous Government?—it's not there . . . the situation would never have happened if we had Sir David Brand as Premier," he said.

Mr Reid claimed Sir Charles had left the party with no option but to "pull out".

"Why does he have to win every eighth of an inch?" he asked.

Mr Reid said the party had been threatened with a reduction of status as a "final insult".

"We wanted to continue as long as certain guidelines could be established—these were rejected," he said.

"We were told the Party had no right to speak on any policy matter, including agriculture, because if the Country Party's policy was so close to the Liberal's policy there was no need for the C.P. to make any statement."

What supineness to remain in a coalition under those conditions. What power did the Country Party Ministers have? What power have they got now? Has the situation altered? No wonder the Liberal Party is out now to field candidates against the Country Party Ministers in the Government, because they are ciphers only at present and they might just as well go.

Mr Skidmore: The quicker the better!

Mr J. T. TONKIN: That is the purpose. After a great deal more, the article concludes—

"It will no doubt take him—

That is Sir Charles Court—

—time to appreciate the value of our contribution to good government and the people of W.A."

Need one be in any doubt as to the real situation that brought about the split and what the situation still is in regard to this supposed coalition? The Premier says there are no differences in their policies, and the Country Party members, who should know, say that Sir Charles Court will not give an inch and his policy is the one that must be implemented. Is it any wonder that two Country Party Ministers walked out?

Mr Skidmore: What makes me wonder is why they walked back.

A Government member: They didn't.

Mr Skidmore: I know they did not, but their counterparts did.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: As an indication of the friction which still exists, I propose to quote an article from the *Busselton-Margaret Times* of the 22nd January. The heading is, "Beef price scheme dispute: Union man blames Liberals". No difference in their policy, according to the Premier! The article reads—

POLITICAL agitation by Liberal Party members is threatening to seriously damage the beef industry, WA Farmers' Union spokesman, Mr John Gardiner, said last week.

Mr Gardiner president of the beef section of the Farmers' Union, said that some politicians were trying to have the Beef Industry Committee disbanded and the reserve price scheme scrapped.

The scheme—which controlled the number of cattle farmers could put on market and the prices they could charge—has been suspended for six weeks.

The reason given for the suspension was unseasonal rain which ruined some summer pastures and encouraged farmers to try to lower their stock numbers.

What a dreadful thing! To continue—

But the State Government, faced with a protest petition organised by Dardanup farmer Mr Frank Craig, is considering making the suspension permanent.

Mr Gardiner accused the Liberal Party of adopting a policy which was 20 years out of date.

"If agitation by people like John Sibson (Bunbury's Liberal M.L.A.) succeeds in having the committee disbanded, that will be a very sad thing," he said.

"We're getting political interference going against the advice of people who have a deep knowledge of the industry.

"Mr Sibson said that the industry was too complex for the scheme—that was an ignorant thing to say.

"The Liberals have stuck to their old policy of allowing the prices to be decided by supply and demand.

"That was alright when there was a good export market

"But now many countries we have been exporting to are nearly self sufficient.

"We must look at the industry as a whole and see what it needs to become viable."

Mr Gardiner said that it was politically undesirable to boost prices for producers because it would mean higher meat prices in the shops.

Items like meat were usually highlighted as being the main factors in the cost of living.

He said that the suspension of the reserve price scheme had already led to a slump in some prices. It also meant that more poor quality meat was going on to the market.

I would expect that gentleman to know what he was talking about, and he has the courage to state publicly his opinion for the producers to read.

Mr Sibson: There were not too many who came out in support of him.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Once again it emphasises there is no difference between Liberal Party policy and National Country Party policy—not much!

I have here an utterance made by the Premier which caught my eye, and I believe it should be kept as imperishable.

Mr Skidmore: Let us hope the Premier is not imperishable!

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The Premier wrote a letter to *The West Australian* on the 2nd February of this year, on the subject of the use of Federal research funds. In the course of the article the Premier said—

... I believe in everyone, including myself, saying exactly what they mean ...

Mr T. J. Burke: Hear, hear!

Mr T. H. Jones: Who said that?

Sir Charles Court: I said that.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: When the Premier said that there was no difference between Liberal Party policy and Country Party policy, did he mean it?

Sir Charles Court: When did I say that?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: I read it out a few minutes ago.

Sir Charles Court: Basically the two parties have a common policy. There may be differences in detail, but we have basic things in common. We are opposed to your party and we are anti-socialist.

Mr H. D. Evans: And anti-farmer.

Sir Charles Court: We have got the farmers. See where the members come from? Who elects them?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: This is what the Minister sitting next to the Premier said—
Mr May: Which side?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The Minister was referring to the Premier when he said—

His often repeated assertions that there are no differences won't hold water.

Sir Charles Court: When did he say it?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Does the Premier want to know when the Minister said it?

Sir Charles Court: Yes, that is rather pertinent.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: At the time of this split.

Sir Charles Court: That is right.

Mr T. H. Jones: It is quiet over there now.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: So we should always speak the truth.

Mr Old: Hear, hear!

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The Premier believes that applies to him, too.

Sir Charles Court: That is quite correct.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: We will see how it applies in regard to his policies as we go on.

Mr T. J. Burke: He is the only one who believes it.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: I quote from *The West Australian* of the 4th July, 1974, under the heading, "Court denies Tonkin claim on promises". What I said was this, and it is not a quotation—

Mr Tonkin also questioned the future of the promises of an expertly staffed inquiry office in central Perth—

It has not yet been established.

Sir Charles Court: It will be.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: When?

Sir Charles Court: During the life of this Government. That is fair enough, isn't it?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Where will the Premier get the money from? He will have to curtail services.

Sir Charles Court: You don't have to do these things on a levy scale. Good heavens!

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The article continues—

—the proposed regional centres, the home ownership advisory bureau, the heritage commission, the small claims tribunal and the studies on conversion of waste.

Sir Charles Court: All going.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: It continues—

He said: "The clear extravagance of these promises can now be clearly seen."

Now we have the Premier's comment—

However the State's budgetary problems might force the Government to slow the implementation of some pledges.

Do not forget, Mr Speaker—and you would know—that a definite undertaking was given that this policy would be implemented within the three-year period 1974-1977. Now the square-off—

However the State's budgetary problems might force the Government to slow the implementation of some pledges.

Listen to the next paragraph—

No starting times would be postponed...

Not much! Remember that the Premier said, "All will speak the truth." Here he is saying that no starting times would be postponed. What about the services that will be curtailed? What about this cut-back in the capital works? Are not they going to be postponed?

Sir Charles Court: Like every programme, it moves around. Some go more quickly and others go slower.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The article continues—

No starting times would be postponed, but implementation might be spread over longer periods than originally planned.

You see, Mr Speaker, it is the old dodge: the circumstances are different. When the promises were made the financial situation was well known because the Premier said all that was needed was to get back to a Liberal Government, which would put things right. He said he had a policy that was designed to be implemented within three years, but having got into Government he tries to justify the postponement of a number of these promises. Some promises will never be carried out; it is already known that the education policy has been abandoned.

Sir Charles Court: In the course of your Government didn't you say that you wanted time on a number of occasions when people said, "What about your promises?"

Mr J. T. TONKIN: We implemented our promises.

Sir Charles Court: Not all of them.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Tell me one that we did not implement.

Sir Charles Court: What did you do about farmers' incomes?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: What did we do?

Sir Charles Court: You were going to give all farmers a guaranteed income.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: We helped farmers—

Sir Charles Court: Oh, no; that is not what you said. You said you would give them a guaranteed income.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: I will give the Premier a few of the promises he is claiming to have implemented. One of the promises he claims to have implemented is that he was going to use his imagination.

Mr May: He did that all right.

Sir Charles Court: I have done that.

Mr Laurance: He is lucky that he has imagination. What about road maintenance tax? When you took office the first thing you were going to do was to abolish road maintenance tax.

Mr McIver: You were going to have an independent traffic authority, weren't you?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: I will come to that in due course, and I will read it out. This is a wonderful promise that has been implemented: "We are going to use our imagination, and we are going to invite local authorities to confer with us."

Sir Charles Court: As they do.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: What is that worth?

Sir Charles Court: It is worth a lot. We have a very effective liaison committee that works all the time.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: With what result?

Sir Charles Court: Plenty. You talk to the local authorities; they have never had such a close liaison as they have with the present Minister for Local Government.

Mr Taylor: They run the Minister.

Mr Skidmore: It is in the pipeline.

Mr Rushton: It is not in the pipeline; it is being implemented.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: In case we have forgotten the statement made by the Premier about telling the truth, I must read it again because I want to give another instance. He said: "I believe in everyone, including myself, saying exactly what they mean." Is there any doubt about his being included in that?

Sir Charles Court: That is fair enough.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Now then, we have a heading, "We will stick to our guns, says Sir Charles"—

Sir Charles Court: Sounds good.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: —which appeared in the *Coastal Districts Times* on the 20th September, 1974. The article states—

PREMIER Sir Charles Court said that the State Government would pursue its plan to decentralise government departments, despite the economic downturn.

"If you make the test purely on dollars and cents and purely on the economics of the thing, in terms of dollars and cents, you would not undertake the programme we are taking."

But there were social considerations and he said that in the long run the programme would prove to be an economic saving.

The present state of the economy made the programme more difficult in terms of dollars and cents than it would have been, but he was not prepared to surrender on that basis.

Sir Charles was in Bunbury to officially open the Telehelp appeal.

In an interview with the Times he re-affirmed that the plan would be ready to be set in operation 12 months from the time his Government, the Liberal-Country Party coalition took office—April this year.

That was in 1974.

Sir Charles Court: That is right.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: It continues—

Sir Charles said that the decentralisation policy was a break with tradition as far as the public service was concerned.

He was determined that the first of the regional offices would be set up within 12 months of the election, as promised. He declined to specify where the first regional offices would be placed.

The Government had yet to determine priorities of installation. Some areas lent themselves to the scheme more than others. The scheme would be introduced progressively, depending on the personnel and the local situations.

The plan involved choosing the right personnel to man the offices.

There were senior men working on the matter including the chairman of the Public Service Board, the Under Treasurer and the Co-ordinator of Development.

What had to be realised was that no two regions were alike. Special local characteristics had to be taken into account.

Last week Housing Minister Des O'Neil officially opened a \$126,000 regional headquarters for the State Housing Commission at Albany.

But contrary to Sir Charles' stated intention to decentralise decision making, Mr O'Neil said that the regional office would gradually take over SHC functions. The head office would retain land acquisition and development, architectural design, conveyancing, policy-making and the fixing of budgetary and physical programmes.

Sir Charles Court: What is wrong with that?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Everything is wrong with that; it is the very antithesis of decentralisation.

Sir Charles Court: They have put a regional office there.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The regional office, according to the announcement the Premier made, was to be autonomous. It was to

enable the policy making to be carried out in the district. It is no good the Deputy Premier shaking his head because I have it here in print.

Mr O'Neil: Well read it out then. I challenge you to read out where I said that the regional offices would be autonomous.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: It is highly disorderly to chew in Government.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: I did not say that the Deputy Premier stated that. The Premier announced the policy.

Sir Charles Court: Tell us what I said about regional offices and regional administration, which is being introduced progressively at the moment. Start with the hardest one first.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Mr Speaker, if you will bear with me I will find the relevant section in the booklet entitled, "Liberal Policy 1974-77". There is so much reference in this booklet to the Commonwealth that it will take me a little time to find it. Under the heading, "A new style of State Government" the booklet states as follows—

The Liberal Party is deeply concerned at the historic trends of Government in Australia.

Power has progressively accumulated at the centres of Government—first at the State level, then at the national level.

The democratic process has been damaged by this trend, as Government has grown more distant from the people.

We believe the time has come to reverse this trend.

Just as we want a proper balance restored between Canberra and the States, so we want it between Perth and the regions.

We will achieve this objective in Western Australia by moving Government closer to the people in three ways:

- (1) We will decentralise State Government administration and decision making into the main regional centres—

Sir Charles Court: That is right; it has already started.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The Premier thought I could not find it, did he not?

Mr O'Neil: You said that we were going to make them autonomous in the field of policy-making, and the lot.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The policy document continues—

—so that people can talk to Government on the spot,

What about—acquisition of land?

Sir Charles Court: We will talk about anything.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Will the Government talk to the people on the spot about such matters as land acquisition and development, architectural design, conveyancing, policy-making, and the fixing of budgetary and fiscal programmes?

Mr O'Neill: It is the responsibility of head office to do all those things in any organisation.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: But the policy booklet states that it will be done in the regional centres.

Mr O'Neill: No, it does not; it implies that would be the case. You talked about it being autonomous, and you have not found the word yet.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: No wonder the promises are not implemented, when the Government does not know it has given them. Paragraph (2) states—

We will decentralise administration—

Mr Speaker, this might sound a little pedantic, but you will appreciate the point and the Deputy Premier will appreciate it. When one uses the auxiliary verb "will" in the first person, it shows determination, not future tense. If the policy had stated, "We shall decentralise" that would indicate an intention to do something in the future. However, they said, "We will decentralise", showing complete determination to do it.

Sir Charles Court: Have you not heard about what we have done for education in the Pilbara?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The policy document goes on to state—

- (2) We will decentralise administration and decision making still further by substantially increasing the responsibility of local authorities throughout the State—giving them funds to match their wider powers.
- (3) We will establish an open line to the Government in Perth—setting up an expertly staffed inquiry office in the centre of the city, where citizens can seek guidance or raise any issue and be assured of immediate response.

After two years, there has been no attempt at implementation.

Sir Charles Court: Of what—decentralisation? Have you not seen the things that have been done—the very thing about which you criticised the former Minister for Housing?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Where is this "open line"?

Sir Charles Court: People find they can communicate better with us than they could with your Government!

Mr Jamieson: That is not what they tell us!

Mr J. T. TONKIN: This is so good, I think we should have the rest of it. It goes on to state—

We see the historic trend towards bureaucratic centralism as being substantially due to the use of modern transport and communication to achieve a commuter style of administration, centred in Perth.

Through the process of time, administrative centralism has deprived the regions of their full initiative, and has created in Perth a bureaucracy conditioned to city life and less able to be aware of the realities of regional living. . . .

Here is this determination again—

. . . We will overcome this trend by setting up a substantial Government centre in each region. Each centre—

will be headed by an officer with a high status in the public service;

will be staffed by public servants selected for their dedication to the regional concept of administration and decision making;

will be representative of all departments with a substantial concern in the region;

Mr Bateman: Where are they?

Sir Charles Court: They are there.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The policy booklet continues—

will have clearly defined delegated responsibilities for on-the-spot decision making concerning local matters.

Mr Jamieson: If that is not autonomy, nothing is.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The policy statement continues—

The target dates are to have the 1st Centre opened within a year and the whole system operating within the life of the new Parliament.

Sir Charles Court: That is right, and it will be.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Why is the Premier threatening to curtail existing services if he has the money to do this?

Sir Charles Court: You are getting confused between loan funds and the operating revenue of a Government, and you should know better.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Does the Government use loan funds to pay for services?

Sir Charles Court: Of course we do not—not for the day-to-day services. But when we are paying into capital works to provide a facility, that is a different thing altogether.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: That is something new—using loan funds to pay for services.

Sir Charles Court: No-one said we did; we are trying to explain it to you in view of the fact that you are trying to distort what was said.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The Premier cannot explain that unless he now agrees to something he previously criticised.

Sir Charles Court: The capital works of a hospital is the hospital itself.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The Premier has a deficit on revenue, he can make it up by using loan funds.

Sir Charles Court: You know I do not like that system.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: What has whether or not the Premier likes it to do with it?

Sir Charles Court: This is a policy you advocated and tried to talk us into at the last Budget, but we would not have a bar of it, and we balanced the Budget.

Mr McIver: What does the Country Party say about that?

Mr Bryce: Baaa!

Mr J. T. TONKIN: What about the implementation of this promise within three years—

There would be a comprehensive plan to improve the urban environment, including putting power lines underground in both new and existing housing areas.

Sir Charles Court: Is not that happening in many places?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: To continue—

A Liberal Government would set up a home ownership advisory bureau to give prospective buyers information on housing and other matters. Building regulations would be standardised to keep costs down.

When is this going to happen?

Sir Charles Court: The Minister for Housing and the Minister for Local Government have made more progress in those two fields than any men I have known.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: That is dodging the question.

Sir Charles Court: It is not dodging. I am giving you the answer.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: That is dodging the question. When are the building regulations to be standardised?

Sir Charles Court: I am just telling you. The two Ministers most directly concerned have made more progress in getting co-operation with industry and streamlining things than any two men previously.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: What progress has been made?

Sir Charles Court: Plenty.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: That is a very unsatisfactory answer. That is on a par with what you said about me.

Sir Charles Court: There is a combined committee of the private sector and the public sector working on it at this very moment.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: To bring up the question of land, did the Premier see what was paid for land at Balcatta last weekend?

Sir Charles Court: Yes.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: It was up by about \$3 000.

Mr Rushton: That is not so.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: You had better have an argument with the newspaper that printed it.

Mr Rushton: What happens next week if they go down? Do they say that it goes down again? Just be patient.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: There is an example of another statement of the Minister. He said that it was not so when it was so.

Sir Charles Court: You have to compare like with like.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The Minister is talking about what will happen next week. It is a wonderful thing to have a newspaper in your corner. I suppose the Premier can read the headline which states, "Court's battle to hold down rises. Tough talks go on today".

The article continues—

The Premier, Sir Charles Court, is working through the weekend trying to find ways to keep down increasing charges for water and power and avoid fare rises.

Sir Charles Court: Which he did.

Mr Rushton: What is abnormal about that?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: What a wasted weekend.

Sir Charles Court: We did not have any fare rises so it could not be all that wasted.

Mr May: W-e-a-k.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The article continues—

Charges for electricity and metropolitan water supplies were bound to rise, but the Government was hopeful that increases could be kept to a minimum.

Mr May: Sixty-two per cent.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The article continues—

Rail freight charges to country centres were also bound to rise.

Sir Charles said the extent of the increases had not been decided before the premiers' conference.

The Government had prepared several contingencies.

"We knew that if the Commonwealth went so far we would have to bring in increases at a certain level."

The number of times the price of electricity has increased and the increase that has taken place with regard to the price of water are a matter of history.

I have a letter which is rather interesting. I know the Premier has a copy of it. At least I am entitled to assume that he received a copy because it states at the bottom of the letter that a copy was sent to him. The letter was signed by a number of people. A number of members of Parliament received a copy of the letter. The Leader of the Country Party (Mr Old) and the Minister for Works were also recipients of the letter. It is dated the 26th May and comes from the electors of Meekatharra. The letter reads—

Dear Sir,

Recent increases of up to 700% in country water supply rates will increase hardships for people in isolated areas. People will be forced to maintain smaller areas of garden which will lead to a decline in appearance of townships in this already harsh area. This will in turn affect the social palatability of living in isolated areas, making it more difficult to entice workers to the towns of the North West. Surely this is contrary to the stated decentralization policy of the present Government.

Towns in the North West affected by the increased rates are generally in areas where water supplies are plentiful and easy to obtain whilst city consumers, where supplies are difficult and costly to obtain, are relatively unaffected.

On a quarter acre block in Meekatharra with approximately one tenth of an acre of lawn and gardens it would cost in excess of \$250 per annum just to overcome evaporation. Rates of evaporation of 110"/year or more are common in North West towns, assuming an average rainfall of 10"/annum this means that approximately 324 000 gallons (1472 KI) is required to overcome evaporation if watering methods are 100% effective. This does not include domestic useage for cleaning, washing and septic which is undoubtedly higher than in more temperate areas.

Mr Speaker, another instance where the Government has failed to put things right—

Mr O'Neill: That letter is dated May and you know very well that the maximum rate paid by any country consumer is \$20. That is the rate. You also should know, if you have done your homework, that a consumer of 200 000 gallons of water in the country pays less for it than he does in the city.

Sir Charles Court: For the first time in history.

Mr O'Neill: For the first time in history. You do your homework.

Mr Coyne: The average consumption in Meekatharra is 900 000 gallons.

Mr Sodemam: It is 240 000 at Port Hedland.

Mr O'Neill: If a man is going to pour water on a red hot road in the middle of the day in Meekatharra, he is mad.

Mr Barnett: Sir Charles could fix it up.

Mr O'Neill: The fact is that he gets his water cheaper in the country if he averages 200 000 gallons.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: With regard to the Premier's undertaking that the rest—

Mr Laurance: Have you any valid points to make?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: —of these problems will be implemented by the end of the present term, I wish to know what is going to happen to the railways. I have an article here which says that the upgrading of the line would cost \$35 million over four or five years. It continues—

The Railways Commissioner, Mr R. J. Pascoe, said in the annual report of Westral, tabled in the Legislative Assembly yesterday, that consistent increases in freight traffic have caused track maintenance problems particularly on the standard gauge line. Restrictions on speed and load have been imposed so that there would be no compromise on safety . . .

It was becoming increasingly clear that the railways would have to lift standards to meet the demands being made on the tracks.

Mr Speaker, is this situation to be allowed to continue? Is it the Government's intention to do something about it?

Mr O'Connor: We have already endeavoured.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: You have already done what?

Mr O'Connor: Endeavoured to do that. A member: That is a legacy you left.

Mr Bertram: Fraser rejected your proposition.

Mr O'Connor: No, he did not. Whitlam rejected us and Charlie Jones.

Mr Bertram: Did you approach Fraser?

Mr O'Connor: Yes, we did.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Having regard to the fact that the Premier always speaks the truth, there is another promise. I wish to quote from *The Sunday Times* of the 21st July, 1974. It is headed, "Education promise given to Pilbara". It states—

A new university or technological institute will be built in the Pilbara within three years—

Mr Bryce: It is hardly out of character for him to make extravagant promises.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Two of them have gone. Members should bear in mind that existing capital works are slowing down because of lack of money. What hope is there for the building of this university or technological institute in the Pilbara? The article continues—

He was speaking at the annual dinner of the Newman Chapters of the Institute of Mining and Metallurgy and Institute of Engineers.

He said: "In these days, education is the key to success and satisfaction in living.

More than ever, tertiary education is the aim of ambitious young people".

That was in July, 1974. To continue—

"We are planning now, so that we will be able to confront the need with the means at exactly the appropriate time," Sir Charles said.

Confirmation of that undertaking is given in the other newspaper as follows—

Tertiary education for the Pilbara. That will make good reading for the people of the north. To continue—

The State Government plans to provide the Pilbara region with tertiary education on an advanced scale by 1977, the Premier, Sir Charles Court, said last night.

"We will continue the policy we initiated in the 60s of progressively reducing all charges for power in the North, until they conform with the standard rates of the State Electricity Commission," he said.

I have one or two comparatively minor matters which I wish to mention before I conclude. Firstly, I have had a complaint from a new manufacturer in Western Australia who has gone into business manufacturing a detergent. He assures me that this is such a good product and is sold at such a satisfactory price that it is being used in certain Government establishments.

This does not suit the moneyed interests in the Eastern States, so they have endeavoured to put this man out of business. To this end—I am assured by sound legal opinion that there is no justification for it—they have issued a writ which I am informed prevents the Government from doing anything. So, all they have to do is to leave the writ in force, and eventually this man will be put out of business.

Sir Charles Court: Is this a restraint on trade or an argument about a trade name?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: It is an argument about a trade name, but there is no basis for it. I have had a talk with Mr Fletcher from the Consumer Affairs Bureau. I have found him to be most helpful. After examining the situation he had to admit to me that there is no power existing which will enable him to overcome the problem. I think it is time

the Government took a hand in this matter. Here is an industry trying to establish itself in Western Australia. Apparently the product is a first class one, but it does not suit the big vested interest in the Eastern States, so they are out to crush this person.

Are we to stand by idly and see this attempt made, or should we try to do something to control the situation? I think the Government knows all about this matter, and I think the Minister for Consumer Affairs is aware of it also; therefore I would expect some action to be taken to try to find a solution to the problem. I sincerely hope a solution will be found.

The other matter is in connection with the question of inflation. An advertisement was inserted in a Saturday newspaper about three weeks ago in which a firm was advertising certain home units in Alexandra Road, East Fremantle, for \$36 000. A resident of East Fremantle was interested in acquiring one. He went to have a look and was giving some thought to buying one of these units. To his amazement on the following Saturday another advertisement appeared offering the same units, but the price had gone up by \$2 000 in the week; yet the units are not completed.

If that sort of thing is allowed to go on unchecked what hope has any Government of controlling inflation? The Consumer Affairs Bureau knows all about this case. Mr Fletcher told me he had been in touch with the company but was told off for his impertinence in questioning the company about what it was doing. There is no power existing which can control the company at all.

Apparently the company is not satisfied with a reasonable profit. It wants to charge as much as the trade will bear. It is likely that next week those same units will be advertised for \$40 000. It seems that the company is receiving sufficient inquiries to induce it to put the price up. I think the Government should look seriously at the introduction of some type of legislation which will control this sort of practice.

If we have a prices justification tribunal with regard to products, surely it will not take much to extend its operations to control a situation like this which will bring about a serious problem to us if it is allowed to go unchecked.

Finally, I want to deal with a statement made by the Premier in this morning's newspaper about the number of his promises that have been implemented. If one wants to mislead, it is an easy matter to include things which are not promises at all. That will bolster up the number, and then as it costs nothing to implement some of these things, the percentage which the Government can claim as having been done is thereby increased.

Let us look at the promises with regard to disaster relief. In the Liberal policy speech the Premier said—

We now propose a permanent solution:

We will allocate each year contributions from the Treasury towards a permanent disaster relief fund.

I am waiting for that to be done. In view of the fact that the Government has to curtail services next year, there does not seem to be much likelihood of any worth-while contribution to that fund.

Sir Charles Court: There will be.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: To continue with the Liberal policy speech—

As the contributions grow, year by year, they will be invested to yield their own income which could be added to the fund.

While the basic fund was being built up to an adequate level, we would deal with relief direct from the Treasury.

Thus, the central fund would become an increasing pool of "living money", gaining momentum in its earning power and its ability to meet large commitments, independently of normal Treasury resources.

We will guard the fund with special legislation to ensure that it cannot be raided or manipulated to cover temporary Treasury needs.

We propose that the special disaster fund will be administered by a committee selected from rural, local government and other interests likely to be involved in the handling of unexpected problems, and who have practical experience to guide them.

Primarily the fund is intended for non-insurable risks unless there are special circumstances.

There are seven promises on which no commencement has been made. Under the heading "Assisting pensioners and the elderly" is the following—

We will recognise, also, that retired people have other needs besides money: notably, a need for something meaningful to do. We will support and, if necessary, initiate schemes to provide them with satisfying opportunities for work of value to themselves and the community.

Nothing has been done with that. Now here is a promise in connection with which, we are told, implementation has been commenced and I have to conclude from that claim that the Government has started to show interest, because the policy speech says—

We are interested in the possibility of better use of our waterways for transport.

The Government claims that implementation of that has commenced.

Mr B. T. Burke: Is that a promise?

Sir Charles Court: Our MTT buses are better than they have ever been before and are attracting more patronage.

Mr Jamieson: Who bought those for you?

Mr May: I will show you a letter I received from the general manager today which has said they are not.

Sir Charles Court: You might get one isolated one.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Here is a portion of the Liberal policy which will interest the Country Party. It reads—

Farmers and pastoralists are in continual need of effective research to cut their costs, increase their output, and improve the marketability of their products. We will overhaul the entire approach to rural and pastoral research, and secure the best available advice—either in Australia or abroad—in undertaking this vital review.

Another extract reads—

We will seek special permission to borrow outside the Loan Council to pay for the inclusion of these services in projects, and recoup the money with profit over a period by levying charges.

In this way, we will more than halve the cost of many projects, enabling many more Australians to come in with a meaningful share.

Dealing with inflation is the following—

The Liberal answer to this problem is an imaginative new scheme to overcome the shortage by providing sufficient services, and thereby creating vigorous competition to hold prices down.

If we go through this policy we will find that in the total of promises which the Government claims to have implemented we have a number of statements which did not involve the Government in doing anything at all other than to think or to imagine. Therefore we believe it is not right that the public should be misled in this way and so we propose to move an amendment to the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

Amendment to Motion

I therefore move an amendment—

That the following words be added to the motion—

However, we deplore the fact that the Government has signally failed to implement most of its promises of substance and has sought by the use of dubious and devious methods, to deceive the electors into believing that it has.

succeeded in accomplishing far more than it actually has and by so doing is depriving the people of benefits that they have a right to expect.

The **SPEAKER**: Is there a seconder to the amendment?

Mr **JAMIESON**: Yes. I second it.

Time Limit on Speeches: Speaker's Ruling

The **SPEAKER**: At this juncture I would like to make a brief statement concerning the application of time limits on speeches which will codify what has been fairly rough general practice in recent years regarding amendments to the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

Standing Order 164 sets out the various limits applying to speeches in this House. Members may not be aware, however, that there is no mention in that Standing Order of speeches made debating an amendment which has been moved to the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

In the absence of a specific rule it has been the practice of presiding officers to treat such an amendment as though it were a motion of want of confidence. This, broadly, allows 45 minutes to each speaker.

The alternative to this procedure would be to treat the debate as one "not otherwise provided for" and allow only 20 minutes to each speaker. More recently this has been regarded by presiding officers as being too harsh an application of the Standing Orders; and it is my intention to continue to apply the more lenient rule unless the House otherwise determines.

I must point out that this practice does not alter the fact that an amendment moved to the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply is not a direct motion of want of confidence and the mover of such an amendment does not have either unrestricted time or the right of reply.

I now put the question which is that the amendment be agreed to.

Debate (on amendment to motion) Resumed

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [9.08 p.m.]: One would have been almost disappointed if, on his last opportunity to speak to the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply in this Chamber, the Leader of the Opposition had not moved some sort of amendment. It was predictable and, I suppose, it was very appropriate, too, for him to use this occasion to make some utterances of this kind.

We have heard it all before. We have not heard it once or twice, but dozens of times, and the best the Opposition can muster after two years of studying the

Government is to keep on bleating the same old story with the same old phrases and words about our 1974 policy book.

I just want to remind members opposite that when we look at the work of a Government we look at it in total. We look at it over the life of a Government and we were reminded of this many, many times by the Leader of the Opposition when he was Premier. We then make an assessment of whether that Government is doing the housekeeping of the State and is pressing on with policies for the State which will keep it stable at the present time and lead it to greater things.

It seems to irk members opposite that we have achieved so much in less than two years of our term of office, because it will not be until the 8th April that we will have concluded our second year.

Several members interjected.

Sir CHARLES COURT: If members will listen, they will hear. I do not expect them to listen very silently, but perhaps they will listen occasionally.

Mr Skidmore: I will interrupt you only about every five minutes.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I want to remind members again that we must look at the work of the Government in total.

We made many promises. We laid down a policy which was imaginative and which I think surprised most people because we did endeavour to lay down fully—more fully than normally—exactly what we would try to do.

There will be some things that will not be completed by the end of our term, for a number of reasons, but they will be faithfully represented to the people as I have undertaken to do as of yesterday. By the 30th June we will make a comprehensive statement of what has been done, and what has yet to be done, and what will happen to those particular items. However, we do not have a great number of items left. Our statement will cause panic and confusion, and frustration and disappointment in the ranks of those sitting opposite.

Mr Bryce: Are you quoting Country Party policy?

Sir CHARLES COURT: The present Government came into office at a time when Australia was heading for the greatest decline since the depression.

Mr Jamieson: Nonsense!

Sir CHARLES COURT: We had a Government in Canberra committed to the annihilation of the States, yet in spite of that we have managed to help ourselves and we have managed to achieve a state of economic prosperity which is better than any other State, whether or not members opposite like to accept it. Anyone coming here from the Eastern States—after he has been here for a few days—will tell members opposite that this State has more

prosperity in its economy than any other State. We have also managed to hold down our unemployment. We have not just equalled the other States, but we have been better than the national average and better than the other States. In point of fact, the very worst judgment that could be passed is that for the last eight or nine months we have been at least equal best with one other State.

These are matters which really interest the people. They are not interested in playing around with words, as did the member for Rockingham with his questions today, and as the Leader of the Opposition has done tonight. People are interested in the total picture and they understand better than most members on the other side just what has happened in Australia during the last three years.

Mr Barnett: What about the land prices?

Sir CHARLES COURT: The people of this State understand that this Government is living up to its proposals. This Government is setting out—and has set out—to implement progressive policies. With a renewed mandate from the people at the next election our programme will be stepped up further.

Mr Barnett: What about land prices?

Sir CHARLES COURT: If members opposite want to deal with land prices, in isolation, I would remind them that when we came into office we found that the previous Government, because of its policy—and although it was in office during a period when the Australian economy was much less severe than it has been since we have been in office—depleted the stockpile of building blocks by something over 9 000.

Mr Davies: That is a lie.

Withdrawal of Remark

Sir CHARLES COURT: Mr Speaker, I ask that that remark be withdrawn.

Mr Davies: I withdraw my remark.

The SPEAKER: The member has withdrawn his remark.

Debate (on amendment to motion)

Resumed

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Minister responsible for the provision of building blocks has done a wonderful job in trying to reverse the situation at a time when money has not only been extremely dear, but also extremely scarce. It has also been very hard to get people to undertake development. The Minister has reversed that situation and we promise that from now on there will be an even greater flow of land coming onto the market in a sensible way and in a balanced way. It will not be released in just one or two areas.

If members opposite were fair enough to equate the prices of land with the inflationary factors which have taken place, with the prices in other States—

Mr Bryce: Is Adelaide included?

Mr Bertram: Let us do our own thinking.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Sir CHARLES COURT:—they would find that Western Australia has performed remarkably well. I would much rather be trying to buy a block of land and build a house in Western Australia than in any other State, including South Australia.

Mr Skidmore: Are you saying that the price of land in this State is lower than the price in other States?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Sir CHARLES COURT: It seems that members opposite do not want me to develop the total theme of the amendment and have seized on land as a topic. However, Labor Party policy with regard to land was very weak whereas the Liberal-Country Party policy is strong because we have set about doing what we promised to do. In the final analysis, there is only one answer and that is plenty of land properly serviced and in the right places.

Mr B. T. Burke: Prices have increased during the last two years.

Sir CHARLES COURT: An examination of the Government agencies connected with land, and the private sector, will show that the development is taking shape.

The Leader of the Opposition conveniently picks out different items, and I suppose that is fair enough. However, it is very interesting to read his own statements made in 1971. On that occasion the Leader of the Opposition said—

I pledge my Party to face up to all farmers' problems, especially debt problems.

We propose to endeavour to institute a form of payment from the Treasury to the farmer—

Payment from the Treasury to the farmer!
To continue—

—to bring his nett income to a stated minimum.

Mr H. D. Evans: And we did.

Sir CHARLES COURT: To continue—

In this way, farmers with no real alternatives would not be forced to leave their farms or endure income-shrinking poverty.

And what did they do about it?

Mr J. T. Tonkin: Were they forced to leave their farms?

Sir CHARLES COURT: Farmers left their farms then, as they do at most times. Another interesting statement reads—

It is clear that uniform charges for electricity can be adopted throughout the Commission's supply system without having to raise charges in the metropolitan area and we propose to have uniform charges adopted.

Mr May: I bet you do not touch them.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Let us get on to the road maintenance tax.

Mr B. T. Burke: That should take about two minutes.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Leader of the Opposition said that his party would abolish the road maintenance tax.

Mr Jamieson: And we would have done that too.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Do not let us go too far into that. Labor had a sorry record.

Mr Jamieson: That was a legislative block which you applied.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Sir CHARLES COURT: I undertook yesterday to make a complete statement to the electors, at the proper time. The electors are those we have to satisfy, not members opposite. We will make a statement on the performance of every department of the Government, what is outstanding, and what will be done about the outstanding items. An explanation will be given for items which will not be completed.

Mr May: Is there to be an early election?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I want to make the point for the benefit of members opposite that I do not intend to go through the list item by item tonight. I intend to deal with some of the items on which the Leader of the Opposition has made great play. He made a lot of play about our financial policies in relation to our promises. It was the Leader of the Opposition, not I, who said, when we introduced the balanced Budget last year, that it was too good to be true. The Budget will be balanced at the end of this year unless something catastrophic occurs in the industrial sector. That is true performance.

The Leader of the Opposition made a lot of fuss about a recent statement by me in connection with our loan funds situation. Well, the statement I made is the type of statement any responsible Premier would make to tell the people and warn the people that because of wage demands, and because of unrelated productivity—the lack of productivity—the same number of dollars are not producing the physical performance we proposed in our Loan Estimates. We allowed for a certain escalation of costs but I have to add,

categorically—as I said in my statement—that cost increases in particular items in the programme have been such that we just cannot complete the total programme.

That could have happened to any Government, and it happened to the previous Government. There are always items which a Government cannot complete when costs catch up to production. We are examining different methods of contracting and supervision to see whether we can defeat some of the restrictions imposed on construction.

If members opposite wanted to do something to improve the State they would be talking to the people they profess to love and control—or the people who control them; I am not sure which is the situation. Members opposite should be talking to the more militant sections of the unions and telling them that they are crippling this State by not allowing people to get on with the job and do a day's work.

That, simply, is the situation. If we have a union darg, transport strikes, and tug men holding up operations, what will happen to costs? Of course they must go up sky high; and of course our overall performance within our actual programme must deteriorate compared with the dollars put into it.

I want to emphasise to members opposite that we have been responsible house-keepers and I would have been irresponsible had I not told the public things were not going well with our works programme because the cost factors are catching up with us and we will not be able to complete all the works we set out to do. There is nothing extraordinary about that.

Mr Bertram interjected.

Sir CHARLES COURT: That is all the honourable member understands about finance. We are now talking about capital works.

It is not an extraordinary situation for a Government to find in the course of its term that because of changes in the cost structure it cannot complete its physical programme when it is absolutely bound up with the dollars programme.

Mr Bryce: Your own education funding programme is highly suspect.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Leader of the Opposition chided us on the electoral boundaries. I repeat that under the so-called one-vote-one-value system, on the 13th December the people in this State left the Labor Party with one seat out of 10. Our system cannot be so bad—

Mr Bryce: You are still afraid. The Premier's mind is not broad enough. He has to find vested interests.

Sir CHARLES COURT: In his attack on the Government, leading up to this amendment which surrounds our alleged failure to meet our promises when in fact we are so far ahead that it must be a great source

of irritation and frustration to members opposite, the Leader of the Opposition referred to the efforts being made at Federal and State levels to institute a new system of income tax sharing which is basic to the policy I enunciated to the people of this State in 1974.

We wanted to break the control and power of Canberra, and in turn we accept the fact that we have to break some of the power of the capital in this State; and we are setting out to do just that. I want to tell the Leader of the Opposition that when the Premiers met in February—and he can discuss this with his colleagues in Tasmania and South Australia, if he so desires, and will find it to be correct—there was an amazing amount of agreement between the States and between the States and the Commonwealth on the framework of the new Federal policies. I will mention some of the points.

We said, "We cannot afford to be worse off than we are now." That is not a bad starting point. We must have a growth factor. We cannot accept a situation where we are caught up with a percentage of something shared between Commonwealth, State, and local government which is a deteriorating factor, because we are receiving a percentage of a diminishing factor.

It has been accepted as one of the principles that if the Commonwealth Government moves away from income tax—which is a trend throughout the world—into other forms of taxation such as value added tax, we will have to move with it. If there are changes in taxing techniques, we have made a condition that we must move with them. We also made a provision that we must be protected against downturns. We could have an economic situation whereby, through a collapse in mining or another industry, there is an economic downturn in which, when the assessments go out, the income tax of the nation will also plummet. It has been said we must be protected against that because most of the more serious results could be the product of a Commonwealth Government policy decision.

Mr J. T. Tonkin: What guarantee have you that you will be protected?

Sir CHARLES COURT: We are not stupid, nor are our officers. When we go along on the 9th April to discuss the next phase of the work that has been done, we will make our own assessment, and if we do not get something we can live with we will reject it. When he was Premier, the Leader of the Opposition went time after time to Canberra and had arguments, and he would settle on the best he could get out of the Commonwealth and something he could live with. He came back and brought in his own Budget accordingly. There will be more wrangling than usual on this occasion because we are starting something new.

The Leader of the Opposition made much mention of Sir Gordon Chalk. If he said we did want to go back to the dark ages when we had separate State taxes, assessments, and so on, I would be amazed because he was at the meeting and one of the basic points was that there would be only one return and assessment. There will not be a lot of cumbersome returns and assessments and different deduction formulas for different States. It will be possible for a State to impose a surcharge, and some States might want to do so.

Mr J. T. Tonkin: They might have to.

Sir CHARLES COURT: They might want to because it might be good politics and it might be anti-inflationary if some States decided that instead of continuing to collect pay-roll tax and some of the very vicious inflationary taxes we have at State level, they would make a charge on income tax; and the people might prefer it because they would be rid of many vicious taxes. That will be up to the States concerned.

My guess is the States will be very cautious. New South Wales is the State showing the greatest desire to talk about this kind of thing, for a reason the Leader of the Opposition should understand; namely, New South Wales always chafes under the yoke of receiving such a small amount *per capita* in annual payments from the income tax reimbursements compared with States like Western Australia, and there is a good reason for it. The Leader of the Opposition also knows of the great wrangles which take place, especially when a new formula is established, with Victoria and New South Wales wanting to edge up their *per capita* amount.

We have made it very clear—and it has been accepted—that this State must be protected if there is to be a new approach to a Federal system. Local government wants to try to get away from the uncertainty of the Grants Commission—which was foisted onto it by the previous Labor Government in Canberra—so that it can obtain some income as of right which it can budget for with some certainty to relieve some of the pressure brought about by inflation and increases in costs together with the fact that the ratepayers demand more sophisticated services. Local government must have some relief, and the best way is by a sharing of the personal income tax.

It will not be easy to settle finally on the amount. We will be ultra-cautious. The Commonwealth will also be cautious because it could very easily be hoisted with a formula which is impossible for it to live with. I believe the good sense of both parties and the best brains in both Treasuries will arrive at something which will be a great improvement and which will help us to do what we set out to do at the start—to break some of the centralist

control that has developed in Australia, not only in Canberra but also at the State level.

No matter what criticism the Opposition makes of our policies, the fact is we have moved positively into an area where even the senior public servants did not think we would be game to move, in order to try to get some people out into the country and to get a bit of decision making and action, particularly in respect of local matters in remote areas such as the Kimberley and the Pilbara. We picked deliberately the Kimberley and the Pilbara—

Mr Bryce: What powers have you given them?

Sir CHARLES COURT: —because they are the toughest of the six or seven regions that will be established before March of next year. These people are feeling their way, and this was to be expected. We must give people time to find their feet and to find out how far we can go in giving them jurisdiction and in regard to making decisions. I have been very impressed with the way some of the departments have operated in the Pilbara and the Kimberley. For example, they have appointed education officers at a much higher status than many matters that would have been irritants for months can now be decided in a matter of days when there is a man of sufficient seniority to go in and clean up a local problem. Most members of this Chamber know how awkward it can be when there is, say, an education or special problem in one of these areas; and all members will realise how expedient it would be to have someone on the spot with sufficient seniority to clean up such a problem.

We have moved in a sensible way, and we are now preparing to move into other areas in connection with community affairs. We will have completely different set-ups for the south-west, the great southern, and the eastern goldfields than we have in the Kimberley and the Pilbara. However, this will be done, and it is being done now in spite of what was said by the Leader of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition also got back onto his hobby horse of disaster relief funds. Last session I explained that the Government intends to proceed with this fund. The Treasury pointed out that some anomalies and dangers could arise because of the possible loss of money from the Commonwealth if we proceeded by one route instead of another. So we gave the Treasury the task of finding out the best way to set up this fund so that when the next Budget is introduced we will be able to initiate it in a way we hope will not leave us exposed to the loss of any moneys from the Commonwealth Government. I do not think members opposite would want us to set up a fund prematurely which may stop us receiving moneys we could

otherwise obtain from the Commonwealth Government in respect of reimbursement for disaster relief.

We have met every situation to date. I do not think the public realise that the loss from cyclone Joan which struck Port Hedland ran into millions of dollars. The last summary I received showed a total loss at over \$6.5 million. This money, of course, is now the subject of negotiation with the Commonwealth about the proportion it will bear. The State bears approximately the first \$1.5 million, and there is then a formula for sharing the remainder with the Commonwealth. Other States such as New South Wales and Queensland have received much more benefit from Commonwealth assistance than we have over the years because they seem to have had a series of disasters—floods and droughts—and the costs have run into tens of millions of dollars. Therefore, strangely enough, those States qualify much more easily than we do for reimbursement. However, one must be fair and admit that their losses have been greater.

As I stand here I could not say what the reimbursement from the Commonwealth will be, but we are hoping it will be generous in view of the fact that we responded promptly and did what we believed was our job, to meet the disaster and to give amelioration to the people who needed help right there and then. These people could not wait while we worked out something with Canberra and we did not want a repetition of the frustration experienced by the people of Darwin. I think the citizens of Port Hedland would tell members not only that we moved in quickly, but also that we moved in effectively. Our assistance extended to pastoralists and not only to the townspeople. Of course, the mining companies looked after their own losses in that area and they did this magnificently and quickly, at no cost to the State. When I gave the figure of \$6.5 million, I did not give the total cost but just the part that falls within the State's responsibilities, both in respect of general relief and State instrumentalities in connection with which we have to negotiate some reimbursement from the Commonwealth.

So I make no apology for the fact that we have not yet set up the disaster relief fund, but it will be set up. I will not set it up just for the heck of getting it done, to satisfy the Opposition, in a way that could imperil any reimbursement we can obtain from the Commonwealth.

Yet another point about which the Leader of the Opposition made great play was the transport system, including the railways. I remind him that with all the difficulties we have, we are shifting the wheat and we are coping with the transport problems. Of course we want to bring the railways up to a higher standard, just as the previous Government tried to do. We have to

keep plugging away, and we will eventually obtain the funds to bring them up to a higher standard. We hope we succeed.

Mr May: From where will you get the funds?

Sir CHARLES COURT: They will have to come from the Commonwealth. The honourable member must remember we are speaking about a \$40 million project in one area.

Mr May: You say the funds will have to come from the Commonwealth, but what happens if they do not? Do the railways run down further?

Sir CHARLES COURT: The main funds will come from the Commonwealth because at the moment we do not have a Government in Canberra that wants to take over the railways. We do not now have a Government over there that wants the railways to become so decrepit and to have such a huge deficit that we would have to hand the system over to the Commonwealth. The then Prime Minister made no bones about it; he made a prediction that eventually we would have to hand over the railways because we would not be able to handle the deficit, and that was what he intended.

Mr Hartrey: The worst railway in Australia is the Ghan, and that is a Commonwealth railway.

Sir CHARLES COURT: We are very concerned about the trans-line itself, and members are all aware of what happened as a result of a flash flood during the life of this Government. It was only through the dedicated effort of a railway gang from Western Australia which went in and put the bridge across while the argument was still going on that the railway line was opened again so promptly. We are mighty concerned about the trans-line itself, and worried about the whole east-west transport system because now we do not have the sea link. This gives one great cause for worry in view of the fact that if the trains stop for industrial reasons or—

Mr May: Derailments.

Sir CHARLES COURT: —because of an unexpected flood such as the last "50-year flood" we experienced, then we are subjected to a very difficult situation. We had an example of this over the last few days when Western Australia was isolated completely for all practical purposes for transport and communication from the Eastern States, apart from the railway, and it was a very unhappy picture. It cannot please the Opposition any more than it pleases the Government to be held to ransom like that. We had a similar situation with the recent tug masters' strike when all the steel-making ports of Australia—Port Hedland, Port Kembla, and Newcastle—were tied up at the one time. I just remind the Opposition about this.

Mr May: And if we have an SEC strike, it is not the fault of the Government?

Sir CHARLES COURT: It would not be the fault of the Government.

Mr May: What rot!

Sir CHARLES COURT: Unless the member for Clontarf wants to tear up the industrial arbitration law—

Mr May: That is exactly what you have done.

Sir CHARLES COURT: No, we have not.

Mr May: You agreed to go to arbitration and then you would not accept the decision.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Members opposite never cease to amaze me.

Mr May: That is a very popular phrase of yours.

Sir CHARLES COURT: What would happen if the boot were on the other foot? Probably the appeal conditions would not have been used—we would just have had a strike: industrial confrontation by the union.

Mr May: Double standards!

Sir CHARLES COURT: There is no double standard.

Mr May: Of course there is.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The member for Clontarf professes, or at least the people who support him profess, to support indexation. It was a Minister in the Whitlam Government who was always screaming to people to please help the Government implement and honour indexation. I remember some of the very effective and highly emotionally charged speeches of Senator Jim McClelland. In fact, when he came to the Premiers' Conference he asked us to stick with indexation and to bring down the necessary Statutes to make it work and to do away with "sweetheart" agreements.

I thought at the time what a magnificent Minister he would be if he were a Liberal.

Mr Davies: Do not insult him.

Sir CHARLES COURT: He made no bones about it, but since then there have been a few changes. My colleague, the Minister for Labour and Industry, as a result of Senator McClelland's pleas, got busy with the job. However, when something was brought to this Chamber, he was told that there had been changes and that the Labor policy on "sweetheart" agreements was to be abandoned.

Let me tell the honourable member that Senator McClelland gave a magnificent oration at the Premiers' Conference. He convinced us that we should go home as quickly as we could and alter our legislation; and above all, come hell or high water, come strikes or confrontation, we should stick with indexation. Now members opposite criticise us for using,

in the interests of the public, the appeal machinery in the industrial arbitration legislation to try to pressure indexation.

I want to tell members opposite that with all their bleating about this Government and its promises, in the final analysis it will come back to the performance of the Government. I know this will hurt members opposite, but there are people coming to talk to us about investment and projects; they are coming to us from the eastern side of Australia, from this State, and from overseas, and they are anxious to join with us to get this State moving again.

Mr Jamieson: Are you filling up the pipeline again?

Sir CHARLES COURT: What worries me are statements such as those of Mr Halfpenny, and especially the latest statement he recorded today.

Mr Skidmore: Does he live in this State?

Sir CHARLES COURT: No, but he is very powerful so far as the unions in this State are concerned. He said there can be no consensus; there has to be confrontation. He was speaking to a group today and it was not a trade union group; he was simply laying down the policy adopted by him and his movement: there can be no consensus; there has to be confrontation. He said this at a time when we are trying to get investor confidence back. The only way to lick inflation and unemployment—

Mr May: Don't make another promise.

Mr Davies: Let us hear it.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The only way to beat inflation and unemployment is to restore investor confidence, and that is what my party and the Country Party stand for: to try to get investor confidence back. Who would have believed that between 1972 and 1975 we would have a Government in Canberra that would set out to destroy the very factor that can enable the whole of Australia, and particularly Western Australia, to be economically stable and prosperous and to have career opportunities for all the young folk? This is the policy of the present State Government—to build up confidence, and to make the State economically stable and prosperous. It is a policy that is succeeding. In spite of the Whitlam Government, we were able to go abroad last year; and in spite of all the sneering from members opposite, we were able to get people to stay with us so that when the change took place on the 13th December these people pressed on with negotiations. I will be very surprised and disappointed if we do not have decisions in respect of such things as, for instance, the north-west shelf gas, by the end of this year.

Mr May: Big deal.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It is a big deal, and the member for Clontarf should not sneer at it because he got the brush-off from his colleague in Canberra (Mr Rex Connor) like no other State Minister has ever been brushed off by a Federal Minister.

Mr Bryce: You should stake your reputation on this.

Sir CHARLES COURT: So this Government has managed to restore confidence in the State; and from this we will start to get investment. We are already seeing it in the development of land, which is a very heavy user of capital. We are getting land onto the market for young folk.

Mr Skidmore: At about five times its true value.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The member for Swan should talk! Look at what happened in the life of the Tonkin Government, when inflation had hardly started, and see what happened to the land stockpile. If the honourable member wants to receive an interesting lesson he should talk to my colleague who is responsible for getting land back onto the market, and my colleague will tell him what has happened.

Mr Skidmore: Yes, and see what all the shires said about his great scheme. It wasn't his scheme; it was their scheme.

Mr T. H. Jones: What can pensioners expect?

Sir CHARLES COURT: If members wish me to take it point by point, I will gladly deal with the items one at a time. We had a committee of inquiry dealing with pensioners—and a very good one.

The SPEAKER: The Premier has five minutes more.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I sent the submission to Mr Whitlam.

Mr T. H. Jones: You were going to do it.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Wait a minute! We did; we have even implemented some of this without waiting for the Federal sphere to function. We sent this submission to Mr Whitlam, and he said he had a review of income stabilisation coming up and that it was not appropriate to deal with the two together. We left the matter at that, and with the change of Government I again put it to the new Prime Minister in an endeavour to have it discussed at the Premier level so that we could do something positive on a nation-wide basis. Mr Fraser has now written back saying that he intends to proceed with the review—which I announced earlier today—and he has also agreed that whilst he believes, as Mr Whitlam did, that the two issues should be separate, the officers of his Government and my Government, as well as the Ministers, can talk about the details of the

report without awaiting the final document of the special review which will not be ready for some months and which, of course, is beyond my control.

Mr T. H. Jones: You were going to do it at State level initially.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The member for Collie distorts the facts. We said we would appoint the committee to look at the total picture, and that is what we have done.

I reject totally and absolutely this amendment. It is just another diatribe and another example of an Opposition that has not a single original thought. God only knows what would happen to members opposite if we went to an election tomorrow.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren) [9.46 p.m.]: Firstly, I would like to join with my leader in congratulating the Governor in his personal role. He has acquitted himself remarkably well in the short time he has been in this State. However, as far as the content of his Speech is concerned, I am afraid my praise must stop there. I must admit I was appalled at the paucity of the announced rural policy intention. I notice in 1974 the Governor said the rural economy was basically sound, but when we come to 1976 I am afraid it is rather different in all respects. It is hoped 1976 will bring a recovery to the agricultural industries which have suffered economic hardship. Hope is about the only thing the Governor's Speech—which indicates the intention of the Government during the remainder of its term of office—has to offer.

In the period between those two Speeches there was a change of Federal Government, and probably the only action the new Federal Government could take which would give cause for members on this side to contemplate would be if it recommended the elevation of the Premier to a higher and more appropriate order. Instead of "Sir Charles Court" perhaps "Barren Court" would be more apt, fitting, and descriptive. Certainly it would be more appropriate to his style of Government and the policies he has enunciated. I think "the Barren Court Government" is a far more fitting term.

Sir Charles Court: That is not even funny; you can do better than that.

Mr Blaikie: Your chameleon style doesn't do you any justice at all.

Mr H. D. EVANS: It is rather interesting that the Country Party has not merited one single comment in all this debate. As the Premier made reference to road maintenance tax and twitted the Leader of the Opposition in this respect—there were several interjections in that vein—it might be just as well for me to refer to the intentions of the Country Party.

Mr Mensaros: Are you speaking to the amendment?

Mr H. D. EVANS: In its policy speech the Country Party stated that it would introduce a more equitable form of raising revenue than the present road maintenance tax. There are a number of other aspects involved in transport which merit our taking a closer look at this. If this is to be a coalition Government, just what effect will the policies of little brother have? We might be able to see them in their true perspective. In his reply the Premier did not blame the Federal Government as he was wont to do in the previous two years when the Labor Government was in office in Canberra. During those years we became accustomed to hearing that Government berated in almost every speech made in this Chamber by Government members.

But now the tune has changed; there is no scapegoat anymore. This Government is obliged to stand on its own feet, and cannot do so. So, now it has turned to blaming the unions. This has become apparent since the resumption of Parliament, and it will become more apparent from here on. If this Government can provoke the unions, it will do just that.

Mr Clarko: How do you provoke Cowles—put a photograph on his wall?

Mr H. D. EVANS: The whole history of this Government has been blatantly crystal clear. When the Brand-Nalder Government replaced the Hawke Government, one of its first actions was to rewrite the industrial legislation. Next, we find that things sought by the Trades and Labor Council—such as the concept of a basic wage with a margin for skill and union involvement at management level—were immediately revoked and penal clauses were introduced. These very things struck at the base of union policy. The union's request to be represented on the Midland Junction Abattoir Board was brushed aside as being of no consequence.

The whole history of the coalition parties opposite has been one of complete disregard for industrial relations; members opposite have made no real effort to introduce harmonious and acceptable industrial legislation. This will be the tack they will follow. The fuel and energy legislation was a very good demonstration of their style of government, and with an election in the offing, this Government will try hard to provoke the trade union movement in order to draw attention from its own shortcomings. I am afraid that is the ploy we are going to see in this House from now on, but it is so blatant that I hope the people of Western Australia recognise it for what it is.

Mr Blaikie: On the question of management relations, do you or your colleagues support imposing a blockade at the Midland Junction Abattoir?

Mr H. D. EVANS: I fail to see that has anything to do with the speech I am making.

Sir Charles Court: Your speech has nothing to do with the amendment at all.

Mr Blaikie: It does not suit your argument.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I turn now to the Liberal Party policy document. As I know my colleagues will want to detail other aspects of this document, I will constrain myself and restrict my remarks to this particular area. I am sure such matters as education will be outlined with great clarity. Of the 12 items listed in the policy document, it is interesting to see how many have been implemented, and how much substantial legislation has been brought down to assist the rural community. In the whole history of rural legislation in this State, not one worthwhile piece of rural legislation can be attributed to the parties opposite. That is their record, and they are showing themselves to be form horses at this time. The policy booklet states—

What farmers need now far more than the distress loans proposed by Labor is a positive policy to improve their real earning power:

They need a complete overhaul of marketing systems to ensure better market penetration, better returns, and bigger outlets. We will join with them in an immediate inquiry into the multiplicity of Boards and Authorities to strengthen those that are effective, weed out those that are ineffective, and find the best alternatives.

During the period of the Tonkin Government the potato industry underwent a thorough examination; we saw the presentation of that commendable document, the Lissiman report; in addition, there was an examination of the industry by Professor Garner of Iowa, who spent some time in this State and produced a comprehensive and detailed report.

Mr Blaikie: Do not forget the Select Committee appointed by this Parliament to investigate the potato industry.

Mr H. D. EVANS: What a fizzog that was! That is why the Lissiman study was commissioned. That is about the level of operation we can expect from this Government.

During the term of the Tonkin Government, two years' solid research went into the apple industry which embraced an examination of every stage of the industry. The Department of Agriculture examined the situation at the orchard, and a firm was commissioned to examine what happened at the other end, and all stages in between.

Investigations into the milk industry culminated in legislation setting up the Dairy Industry Authority. It is true that grain marketing legislation was introduced by the present Government, but this was underway before it came into office. We saw an examination of the live sheep industry, and the investigations by officers of the Department of Agriculture.

It is significant that the only project of moment undertaken by the Court-McPharlin Government was a very close examination of the Lamb Marketing Board; but this was not carried out with the interests of the grower at heart but rather to satisfy the vested interests. Had not the Lamb Marketing Board been in a position to demonstrate its capacity and efficiency, it would have gone.

Mr Blaikie: Your colleague, the Minister for Consumer Protection initiated that inquiry in 1973. Let us be fair.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The Liberal Party policy booklet continues—

They need a scheme, ready to operate without delay, when seasonal disaster strikes them down for reasons beyond their control. We will draw up a special scheme, backed by legislation, to enable funds to flow immediately and to bring into being a co-ordinating body to handle the problem with utmost human concern. (See more details under "Disaster Relief").

Even though my leader dealt with this matter, I am afraid I must refer to it again. This is a high sounding approach that must give hope to all who read it. However, the facts of the situation as they affect new land settlers certainly give the lie to that policy statement. I will contain myself by making reference to only several of the many documents available to illustrate my point. I refer firstly to the second part of the editorial contained in *The West Australian* of the 3rd March, 1976. Under the heading, "Aiding Farmers" it has this to say—

The plight of WA's new-land farmers makes sorry reading.

It certainly does, when one considers the social problems that go hand in hand with the economic disaster which has occurred in this area; however, apparently it is not a disaster as defined in the Liberal Party policy document. The editorial continues—

For a scheme that began with a flourish in the early 1960s in a period of buoyant markets for rural production, the outlook for many farmers now is bleak indeed.

Of an estimated 3000 farmers, at least 1000 are said to be facing severe liquidity problems.

That is a classic understatement! The editorial continues—

More than 300 families are reported to be housed inadequately, and many others have left the land.

The situation calls for urgent action by the Federal and WA governments.

At this point, it is fitting to look at the report brought down by the Industries Assistance Commission, and the recommendations it contained.

Page 33 of the IAC report states—

The Commission considers it is desirable that re-establishment assistance be provided to those new land farmers who will have no option but to leave their farms.

Still nothing is done. To continue—

Many of the present problems and hardships facing new land farmers, in particular those who cannot remain on their properties, could have been avoided had sufficient care been exercised when blocks were allocated. New land releases were widely advertised but little attention appears to have been given to the prospects for success of applicants; . . .

What an indictment that is, particularly in the context at the time.

Mr Blaikie: What sort of impact did wheat quotas have on that report too?

Mr H. D. EVANS: The report says—

. . . the Commission has no evidence that the State Government planned comprehensively for the financial needs of settlers; and land was released in some areas where development and farming alternatives were unproven.

In some places there were not even reliable and extensive rainfall records.

Mr Grewar: Where from?

Mr Blaikie: Where are they? Name the areas. You have made a statement. Name the areas.

Mr Skidmore: Who is making the speech?

Mr H. D. EVANS: The advice that was tendered by the Light Lands Commission and the information that was conveyed by the Light Lands Commission was to indicate that there should be no further land released without extensive examination. If members would like a copy of the file number I can provide it for them.

Mr Blaikie: What impact did wheat quotas have?

Mr H. D. EVANS: We are talking about areas along the south coast.

Mr Blaikie: What impact did wheat quotas have?

Mr H. D. EVANS: In addition to that, the advice which was given by the reliable committee that was set up was disregarded because the release of land went on and on at almost the same level as in previous years.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: For political purposes.

Mr H. D. EVANS: For political purposes. The officers of the Department of Agriculture advised and expressed concern that settlers were being placed on farms with inadequate capital to establish a viable operation. It is because of those actions, as pointed out in the IAC report, that many of those farmers would not have been today undergoing the suffering that they are experiencing. So in addition to the responsibility that normally would go with government when a section of the community or a segment of the community is in desperate straits there is a far greater obligation on this Government because a large percentage of the blame for this situation must necessarily be laid at its doorstep.

Mr McPharlin: You must admit that there is a tremendous demand for land.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The land was also released at a below cost figure. An article in the *Nation Review* of the 5th to the 11th March, 1976, makes this very point, as does the IAC report. The figures at which this land was released were below cost. Not only that, but also the advertising and promotion encouraged people. There was a demand but there was also a push from behind in many ways. So the moral obligation goes with the Government's responsibility in this manner, and not a thing has been done about it.

Sir Charles Court: And also tremendous public pressure to have the land released.

Mr H. D. EVANS: There was tremendous Government pressure to get the community into it.

Sir Charles Court: The pressure was the other way.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: Playing politics.

Sir Charles Court: What has this to do with your amendment?

Mr H. D. EVANS: There were advertising campaigns in the Eastern States. The concession of price alone was an inducement to bring people and to create that pressure. Of course it would create pressure when people can get land at below cost and it looks to be a good thing. In areas which are dubious and against the advice of the officers of the day the responsibility of this Government is large indeed. It has abrogated that responsibility completely as it has in so many other areas. That is the record of this Government.

I proceed to my next point. The Liberal Party Policy continues—

Farmers and pastoralists are in continual need of effective research to cut their costs, increase their output, and improve the marketability of their

product. We will overhaul the entire approach to rural and pastoral research, and secure the best available advice—either in Australia or abroad—in undertaking this vital review.

I should like to ask just what has been done in this regard because I have no evidence of anything taking place. The next point reads—

We will fight for the restoration of the superphosphate bounty.

I must admit that I put in the submission for the new land farmers myself and I assisted in compiling another submission for an area further south. So I will not dally with that point.

The next point is—

We will keep the wheat quota system under review with the industry to determine its long-term role.

In other words, on advice the Government left the wheat quota committee in storage, as it were, in the same way as we had done. We have not disbanded the records. We have left them there in case there is further need. So I do not see that any credit is due there.

The next point states—

We will reorganise the Department of Agriculture to strengthen its capacity to forewarn farmers of economic opportunity and economic problems. In this way, future shortages and surpluses can be foreshadowed with reasonable accuracy to guide farmers in planning the most effective management policies for their properties.

I do not know whether the Department of Agriculture has been turned upside down but I recall from the last report and from the Estimates as they were presented to the House at the end of last session that there was not a great change in the Department of Agriculture. Indeed its expansion has been curtailed. The levels of personnel were just about maintained. That does not seem consistent with the flowing words in the policy which state—

We will reorganise the Department of Agriculture to strengthen its capacity to forewarn farmers.

Mr Old: There is a very good information centre for conservation, as you well know. It is currently being restructured.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Its morale is not too happy at this time.

Mr Old: But the morale is good.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Do not give me that. The Minister should go out and around a bit and find out for himself.

Mr Old: I go out and around.

Mr H. D. EVANS: If I could make perhaps a rather trite observation, it was within only a few months of this Government taking office that the beef prices plummeted to an all-time low and yet in its policy the Liberal Party was saying

that it would forewarn farmers of economic problems. It missed out on that one rather badly because there was not a farmer in Western Australia who had any inclination of the problem.

The next point in the policy reads—

We will support the Federal Liberal Party proposal that the Trading Banks and other lenders in the rural sector combine to provide rural credit on a basis that permits sound financing of long-term farm development.

There has been no evidence of this—not a bit. All that has happened is that the Rural Reconstruction Authority which was set up by the Tonkin Government has kept on administering the loans that were made available from the then Commonwealth Government and remains in operation. We will have more to say about the beef loans at a later time after the answers to some questions have been obtained. There has been no endeavour to set up this sort of finance. The next point states—

We will press in conjunction with the Federal Liberal Party, for an investigation of the possibility of establishing a feed-wheat pool that would supply feed grains for Australia as well as international markets. We see feed grains dominating the grain markets of the world for the next decade because of the global shortage of protein.

I do not think it would be fair to make a comment on that. The overseas price of wheat and the disparity between export and home prices would probably make comment on that matter unfair. Had the situation been reversed we may well have been able to justify making some comment.

The next point reads—

We will discuss with producers the establishment of a farm income reserve fund, subject entirely to their agreement. The fund would be the basis of a self-help scheme to moderate the problem, inseparable from rural production, of widely fluctuating incomes.

I noticed the green paper made reference to this problem as being the most outstanding problem facing rural producers, and as being rather unique to the particular industry.

The SPEAKER: Will the member for Avon sit down?

Mr H. D. EVANS: I would like to ask a question and elicit some sort of answer as to what has been done in this area, because the Liberal policy speech states—

We will hold special discussions with the wool industry in Western Australia on future marketing. We regard effective marketing as crucial to the future of the wool industry.

So did the Whitlam Government regard effective marketing as crucial to the future of the wool industry, and that was why it

made \$200 million, being the biggest single amount of funds since the war, available. This enabled the underwriting of the price of 250c per kilogram.

Mr Old: The Whitlam Government had to have its tail twisted to underwrite the 250c. It made that available after a lot of procrastination.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The present Federal Government did not underwrite a price of 300c, and it has not backdated the super-phosphate bounty to the 1st January, 1975, as indicated by Mr Anthony.

Let us look at these matters honestly. I have given a factual summation of the situation, but when it comes to wool marketing the State Government has done nothing and it does not intend to do anything. It should give the Whitlam Government credit where credit is due. The Whitlam Government did provide the largest single sum since the war, and it provided it at risk. Let us make that point factually and fairly. To continue with the Liberal policy speech—

We will join with the Commonwealth on a dollar-for-dollar basis to underwrite our apple export marketing in Europe. This will be a \$600 000 commitment which we expect will pay off if handled properly.

The announcement of it was made on the eve of the last State election. So there was not much option left to the Government to get around it.

Since that time the apple industry has deteriorated until this season which will be a moment of revelation. What will happen this year, and will it be maintained on the basis announced in the policy speech? That remains to be seen. There has been a certain muteness and silence on the part of the Ministers opposite as to what is expected to transpire.

Mr Blaikie: What sums did this Government pour into the Manjimup canning factory in your area, and into the Midland Junction Abattoir?

Mr H. D. EVANS: To continue with the Liberal policy speech—

We will pledge ourselves to assure the long-term security of the fruit canning industry pioneering large-scale operation at Manjimup. We recognise the need for long-term security when trees must be planted on the basis of economic returns many years in the future.

That has been implemented.

Mr Blaikie: To what extent?

Mr H. D. EVANS: That has been done, but how many of the other 10 points to which I have made reference have been implemented? The Government's effort is not a very good one. To continue with the Liberal policy speech—

We will pledge ourselves to pursue an imaginative policy of water development as a vital thing in rural security.

There has been development in water supplies, but whether it can be described in the Premier's term as being an imaginative policy I do not know. The next part of the Liberal policy speech is—

We will seek a greater amount of the processing of our natural fibres in Western Australia, and alternative uses and processing of grain (including encouragement of grain alcohol production).

If it comes about the suggested wool-tops industry can answer that.

There are several other aspects of the policy speech which bear considerable comment. As the Premier has made reference to costs, inflation, and escalation of prices, let me put this in the context of the rural industries. The figures in a report of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics point to a fast-approaching crisis in certain rural sectors. I assume this refers to the beef industry and to the new land farmers. The report states that Western Australian farm inputs costs rose by 37 per cent to December, 1974, compared with the 11 per cent in the two previous years. That is in the 12 months up to December, 1974. It is a pity the Tonkin Government had not continued in office.

I want to take up a few minutes to make reference to the performance of the National Country Party in all this. When we talk about the policy of the Government, it seems that the policy of the National Country Party disappears. It is not referred to, and it cannot be found anywhere.

It is not until we delve back into the dusty, musty covers of the policy speech of the National Alliance, as the present National Country Party was then named, which was announced on the 13th March, 1974, that we find comments on the transport policy which is vital to country people and should be a priority concern of the National Country Party.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member will resume his seat. Is he tying this part of his speech to the amendment that has been moved?

Mr H. D. EVANS: I certainly am. I am referring to the ineptness and the bungling of this Government, as outlined in my leader's speech. This is a coalition Government, and it should have a conjoint policy of the two partners. What I am pointing out is that this is a policy speech which the people of Western Australia could reasonably expect to be implemented if the party that made it has any credence at all. This aspect of the National Country Party policy, like the Liberal Party policy has not been implemented. Of course, this is part and parcel of the whole amendment. This Government comprises the two parties opposite. There is Big Brother as well as Little Puppy Dog partner! The

transport question is one which should be handled by the coalition Government, but it has not been.

The policy of the National Alliance on transport is as follows—

With nearly one million square miles of area in Western Australia, our transportation problems must assume a priority greater than for other States.

That is set down in writing. To continue—

The National Alliance proposes the reorganisation of the Transport Commission with a view to bringing about the efficiency and co-ordination of all forms of transportation in the State.

It has not.

Mr Old: Apparently a survey on transport is going on all over the State.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The National Alliance policy speech continues—

We believe that the State should re-negotiate with the Commonwealth on the heavy financial commitment for the railways with a view to easing the crushing interest rates.

How is this going? The policy also contains the following—

There is also much attention to be devoted to port operations and the provision of dry-dock facilities. Cockburn Sound should be dredged to at least 55 feet, to cope with modern shipping requirements and all outports upgraded.

A co-ordinator of all State port authorities should be appointed to promote uniformity of action and to provide a continuity of policy.

The National Alliance would introduce a more equitable form of revenue raising than the present Road Maintenance Tax.

Not only did members of that party block the move of the Tonkin Government in another place, but also they have not been in touch with the problem themselves and are even more devoid of credibility than members of the coalition parties.

The Leader of the Opposition has moved to the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply an amendment which is thoroughly merited. If the work and performance of the Government is examined on an objective basis it will be readily seen that the amendment, which I support, is thoroughly justified.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park) [10.21 p.m.]: In replying to the amendment the Premier was not quite his usual confident self.

Sir Charles Court: You have said that for the last three sessions.

Mr DAVIES: That is exactly what I said to the Premier. I want to maintain the record that has been established. If I did not make that remark, the Premier would be a little disappointed.

However, the fact remains that the Premier did not give a coherent reply. When he did have an idea he would speak about it for a moment, dash onto something else, and then come back to it. He asked members to give him ideas one by one and he would deal with them and it was one of those items with which I was waiting for him to deal but with which he did not deal which has moved me to speak to the amendment. I have no desire to speak at length but I do want to mention a couple of items in regard to which I was waiting to hear the Premier's excuses, but he did not deal with them as I had anticipated he might.

The reason he did not deal with them is obvious. There was no excuse for the Government's masterly inactivity on the several matters in which I was interested.

Apart from those two matters which I will mention in a minute, I was rather surprised that he dealt with the land question. We will have more to say on that later in the session.

Sir Charles Court: I hope you do.

Mr DAVIES: I was surprised at the insensitivity displayed by the Premier but it reflects the insensitivity displayed by the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning in not realising the reaction he has created among shires and councils which have got town planning schemes off the ground as a result of their own initiative. They have been working on these schemes for years, long before this Government came to office and probably when the Brand-Nalder Government was in office. That was when many of these schemes commenced and the shires are somewhat incensed about the fact that the Government is taking credit for putting land on the market when really it had no direct responsibility in this regard. I am rather surprised that the Government is taking credit for putting the Lake Carine land on the market because that project was started when I was Minister some time ago.

I want to say a word in defence of those organisations which are trying to get land onto the market and have been doing a good job in this regard. They must feel very unhappy about the fact that the Government is taking the credit for this because in many cases what the Government has done has been practically negligible.

I would like also to support the member for Warren, who has just resumed his seat, in the remarks he made regarding the policy of the National Country Party. One matter in particular about which I am concerned because of my interest as shadow Minister for Health and Community Welfare is that the Government said it would regularly update welfare payments. Rather than regularly update them, the Government seems to be doing what it can to limit them or it indicates

that it does not have to make certain payments now because the Australian Government has taken over the responsibility for them. There does not seem to have been much activity in that regard at all. However, I do not intend to speak to those two matters as plenty of opportunity will be given during this session to indicate that the Government still has a lot to do to complete its programme of public promises made during the last election campaign.

What I do wish to discuss is a matter about which I have been speaking in this House since 1974, and it relates to the disgraceful display by the Government concerning the report of the special committee it established to deal with pensioners' concessions and conditions. The committee was established in 1974 and it is very true indeed that it was established without much undue delay. The only aspect was that the largest organisation in the State was not represented on it; that is, the Australian Pensioners' League. I believe the Government thought it did have a representative of that league on the committee and was rather shocked to find out later that it did not have one.

The inquiry proceeded and many people, including representatives of the ALP and the State Parliamentary Labor Party, gave evidence and the committee made its report in May of last year, almost a year ago. Since the report has been to hand many members on this side of the House, and not a few on the other side, have asked, in a series of questions, when the report would be made public and we were fobbed off with excuses that it was being examined, sent to the Prime Minister, and sent to the Premiers in other States. It was stated that there was no point in making it public until their replies were received, and some concrete thoughts on the report were collated.

I asked half a dozen questions along these lines and received the same reply. The Premier must have been embarrassed because towards the end of, I think, October he answered a question by saying he hoped to table the report before the end of the session and at least give some indication of the Government's thinking on the various recommendations contained in it.

On the last day of the session I asked him where the report was that he had hoped to table and where were the Government's recommendations. Nothing happened and once again he said he had not been able to give the report the attention it deserved and we would have to wait a little longer. When a protest was made by the Australian Pensioners' League, the Minister for Health was quoted in the paper as saying that the pensioners just had to wait. They had been inordinately patient up to that time. Two years had elapsed during which they had been hoping

for some benefit, but the only benefit granted was the free air fare for pensioners from the north-west, and I applaud the Government for its action in that regard. That proposal had been on our books when we were in Government and I would have thought the Government could do something before it did. However, at the Australian Pensioners' League annual conference the Premier made the announcement and it was a very nice one to make, but it could have been made earlier and applied earlier than the 1st January.

However, to get back to the report. We were still under the impression we would hear something about it, but when the session ended we knew then that it would be some time before it would be made public. Then what happened?

On the 13th December, 1974, an article in *The West Australian* indicated that the report had been released and detailed many of the recommendations it contained. The public could well be excused for believing that those recommendations were the ones the Government would actually implement. As I have said, the release of the report was a masterful piece of timing because, of course, the 13th December was the day of the Federal election.

So, having had the report for some eight months and having, on various excuses on a number of occasions, refused to table it, the Government then thought that that was the appropriate time to release it. The Government was playing with pensioners—once again making pawns out of the pensioners; and it is not the first time this Government has done that. It should be ashamed of itself for this action.

The announcement having been made on that propitious day, as far as the Government was concerned, that some of the recommendations in the report would be implemented, we would be excused for believing that by now some activity should have occurred. However, what has happened?—not a thing.

I know that some Governments have replied to the Premier because I have made inquiries. I do not believe the Premier has any knowledge whatever of the present position.

I do not believe the Premier knows which Governments have replied, and I do not think he cares. I am quite certain the pensioners will receive nothing beneficial from the report before the end of this year and that will reflect only the continuing attitude of the Government towards pensioners.

If the Government were genuine it could at least deal with those matters which involve the State wholly and solely. It does not matter if the Government lifts the concessions for rates and taxes in this State, and those concessions are not lifted in any other State. A concession which could reasonably be required to be standard is that for travelling. When pensioners do travel interstate they worry

because they do not know which concessions apply.

Sir Charles Court: We have the best concessions. If you are only bothered about travelling concessions it seems we do not have to touch the others.

Mr DAVIES: The Premier has not been listening.

Sir Charles Court: I have been listening.

Mr DAVIES: I have been saying that the only concession which could reasonably be required to be standard is that related to travelling. That is the only concession which is interchangeable. Usually pensioners do not have properties in different States and, in any case, usually they are allowed a concession on one property only. The recommendations of the committee regarding rates and taxes can be implemented immediately. They can be included in the next Budget, but they could have been introduced in the last Budget, had the Government really been concerned.

The Government can at least go ahead with the various matters which wholly and solely affect State taxes; that is, if it intends to do anything about the pensioners at all. At the last election the Government dangled a carrot in front of the pensioners when it released the report which had been in the hands of the Government for eight months, and the pensioners were led to believe that the Liberal Party would do what was proposed, but nothing further has been done since. I do not think the Premier cares.

There is another aspect of assistance for aged people which is causing me concern. I do not intend to deal with this matter chapter and verse, and I did not with the last item. However, if necessary I could quote questions, answers, dates, and times. I have a great feeling for aged people.

It was stated in the last policy speech of the Liberal Party that that party would make a separate and sympathetic study of the leisure needs of elderly people. It was to be a separate, sympathetic study. I gave the Government 12 months to do something about the study before I started to badger it. In March, 1975, I asked what had been done and I was provided with an amazing answer. The answer was full of words but it meant nothing. The reply was to the effect that a number of surveys were made by the Community Recreation Council regarding the leisure needs of pensioners. However, everyone is aware that surveys by the Community Recreation Council are a continuing thing. It is not something which the council has been directed to do, and it would not be doing its job properly if it did not continue to carry out surveys. The reply to my question, in part, was as follows—

A pilot scheme based on a survey conducted by Dr Lefroy of the Public Health Extended Care Department is

presently being organised by a Community Recreation Council officer working in the Claremont area.

This will provide leisure services for the elderly and will supplement existing Extended Care Services.

The scheme, which will involve community groups, Government departments, and local government, will be launched in June this year.

A house-by-house survey will also be conducted as part of the pilot scheme.

A survey to assess the need for a library book delivery service for the elderly has been initiated by a Community Recreation Council officer in the Nedlands/Claremont area.

I was delighted to note that the survey was in the Nedlands-Claremont area! I think those who listened to the Liberal Party policy speech could reasonably be entitled to expect that the policy would apply to the whole of the State, and not just to the Nedlands-Claremont area. Indeed, that is the only survey which has been carried out in a period of two years. The matter has been taken no further.

When I asked for some details I was told there was to be a separate study to provide for elderly people. More humbug and more playing around with the elderly people!

Another similar matter, dealing with elderly people, was covered in the Liberal Party policy speech. The Liberal Party was to study the plight of all people on fixed incomes so that their lifetime's work and savings were not destroyed by the falling value of money. It should have been evident to those who read the speech that the value of money would continue to fall despite the promises regarding money, unemployment, and prosperity which were made by the Liberal Party at that time and which, incidentally, have not been fulfilled.

It was to be a purely State matter. Do not forget those words, "Give me six months and I will show you how we will do it". We have allowed four periods of six months and the position is no better.

On Tuesday, the 11th November, 1975, I asked a question concerning the plight of all people on fixed incomes who were affected by the falling value of money. The answer to that question was as follows—

Terms of reference and the arrangements for the study have been agreed with Professor Alex Kerr, Professor of Economics at the School of Social Enquiry, Murdoch University.

The study is expected to commence this month.

On the following Thursday I asked the Premier whether he would table a copy of the terms of reference and a copy of the arrangements made for the study which was to be carried out. I was not satisfied that firm arrangements had been

made. I could well imagine that when my question was received the Government said, "Goodness, it has been two years and we have not done much about the matter. We have not done anything. Perhaps Professor Alex Kerr will help out."

Probably the Government then rang Professor Kerr and probably he replied that he would do something along the lines set out.

Sir Charles Court: You are unfair to Professor Kerr.

Mr DAVIES: I am not unfair. The Premier did not have the terms of the study worked out.

Sir Charles Court: You are also unfair to the Minister concerned. It is your twisted mind.

Mr DAVIES: I should imagine the Premier rang Professor Kerr and said that an answer had to be provided and asked what could be done.

My second question asked what were the terms for the study, and the Premier replied as follows—

The terms of reference are:—

To inquire into and report upon what effect the falling value of money in Australia in the last two years has had upon:—

That is almost word for word with what was contained in the policy speech. To continue the reply—

1. the real purchasing power of the income of persons on superannuation or other forms of private retirement income which have remained fixed during the period of study;
2. the purchasing power of incomes derived from investments in government bonds and other gilt-edged securities.

Those are other words for what was initially announced in the Liberal Party policy; that is, fixed incomes were falling with the falling value of money.

The Premier stated that Professor Alex Kerr had been asked to have a look at the plight of the superannuated and people on fixed incomes from investments. He went on to say—

The other details of the arrangement will be made available to the Member when a clearer indication of the time likely to be taken for the study and some other study details are available.

I appreciate that. I thought that although nothing had been done as yet, the Government had involved Professor Kerr—a good chap. I thought that on the 13th November I would be told what was to happen. The reply stated that the details of the arrangement would be made available to me. That was the 13th November. So, being a fair-minded man, I waited until the 15th January—a period of two months and two days—and then I wrote

to the Premier and referred him to the question I had asked.

I supplied the number of the question, and the date on which it was asked, and inquired whether he could, having regard to his promise, enlighten me with the details. I wrote the letter on the 15th January, and two days ago I wrote to him again and asked whether he could reply to my letter of the 15th January!

The Premier says I am being unfair. The Government has been in office for two years.

Sir Charles Court: I said you were being unfair to Professor Kerr.

Mr DAVIES: I am not. He is an all right guy. He might be orientated towards the Liberal Party—many people are and we forgive them for it—but basically he is a good guy. I am not being unfair to him. I am saying the Premier is unfair to him. The Premier has named him and put him on the spot. He cannot give me the terms of reference. I waited two months for a reply to my question; on the 15th January I wrote a letter asking for a reply; another two months have passed and still I have not had a reply. Who is being unfair? We might look in the Superannuation Building to find out who is being unfair. Surely it does not take from November until now to give the information promised in answer to a question.

I got to my feet only to raise these matters—the way the Premier is playing with pensioners, the way he dangles something in front of them by way of a promise and does not fulfil it except for a concession to a few people in the north-west, the lack of satisfactory explanations for having done nothing with that report, and, after every ounce of political advantage has been made out of it, the pensioners have been left dangling.

The Premier was going to do something for the elderly, generally, and he has confined his action to some obscure inquiry in the Claremont-Nedlands area. That is where it seems to have finished. On top of that, he was going to deal with those whom we could expect to be Liberal Party supporters—those on fixed incomes and superannuation who are worried about the falling value of money. Despite the fact that the Premier said on the 13th November he would let me know about the report, and despite the fact that I wrote about it on the 15th January, having not received a reply, and despite the fact that I asked another question about it in this House five days ago, we still do not know what has happened about the report. I support the amendment.

Sir Charles Court: Is that all you can find to rant about?

MR BRYCE (Ascot) [10.42 p.m.]: I rise to support the amendment for two very good reasons. The first reason is that it is

a statement of fact to say the Government has failed to implement most of its promises of substance.

Sir Charles Court: That is not so.

Mr BRYCE: It is also an accurate statement of fact to say the Government has sought, by the use of dubious and devious methods, to deceive the electors into believing it has succeeded in accomplishing far more than it actually has accomplished. My leader has very ably illustrated that with a very long list of empty promises which have not been kept, thus demonstrating quite clearly the truth contained in the amendment.

Sir Charles Court: What a pathetic parade it was!

Mr BRYCE: I propose to draw the Premier's attention to the area of his policy which does in fact comprise the greatest disgrace and the singularly most important source of embarrassment to him; that is, of course, his education promises and policy. He will rue the day he agreed to include in his policy speech this fistful of recommendations which he has not a hope of implementing.

Before I proceed any further, I believe it is very relevant to my argument to quote for the interest and information of the House the Premier's humble estimation of his own performance. In *The West Australian* of the 30th March, in an article headed "Clash looms over poll promises", we see this priceless little paragraph which is so typical of the Premier's impression of himself—

Sir Charles said he believed that most people would consider that the Government had given a creditable performance in getting so far in its first two years in office and in achieving so much of what was considered to be the most imaginative and far-reaching policy put forward by a WA government.

In the Premier's humble opinion, his own policy speech, delivered on the hustings in 1974, was the most impressive, imaginative, and far-reaching effort ever made in Western Australian political history. That is the suggestion.

At the outset, I suggest that type of language illustrates the overstatement and the extravagant descriptions we have come to expect from the Premier when he is describing his own performance or the performance of his Government.

This interesting little document with yellow markings was tabled in this House on the 17th April, 1975, as Paper No. 156. At that particular time the Premier had made a statement that an absurd number of political undertakings had been implemented. When we asked him to indicate which they were, he took a month to find a public servant to go through this little booklet and underline in three different

ways the promises which allegedly were being implemented, had been implemented, or had not quite been implemented. The document provides the basis of the undertakings.

I could make three fairly simple, straightforward judgments of the document. In the first instance, it could be seen as nothing but an extravaganza. On the front of the document we see the heading "Liberal Policy 1974-77". There was no suggestion at the time the document was produced or at the time the Premier made undertakings to the people from this document that there would be excuses a mile long explaining why so many of these promises could not be implemented between 1974 and 1977. So it is an extravaganza produced by the finest exponent of exaggeration and overstatement that Western Australian politics has seen.

Secondly, many of the promises contained in the book comprise meaningless jargon and worthless phrases. The member for Warren and other colleagues of mine have clearly illustrated to members on the other side of the House how many of these alleged promises and undertakings to the people constitute meaningless phraseology and waffling jargon.

Thirdly, in terms of a political programme presented to the people, this document is a prescription for political disaster. The Premier knows if he did in fact attempt to implement the promises contained in the booklet with every human, physical, and financial resource at his disposal, they would result in economic disaster for Western Australia. Some of the undertakings in the document are simply unreal and not capable of implementation; others are certainly not capable of implementation before the end of 1977.

At the time of the last election the Premier gave the people of this State three principal undertakings which in my personal view constituted the reason that so many people in Western Australia decided to place their trust in Sir Charles Court so that he would have the opportunity to form a Government. Those three promises related to very serious situations which confronted every citizen of Western Australia at that time. The first one, which was referred to in some detail by the Leader of the Opposition, related to inflation.

The Premier will not be allowed to forget that he made the most absurd statement imaginable when he promised, as the Leader of the Opposition in a State Parliament—and I might add one of the least consequential State Parliaments in terms of financial resources—that he could cure inflation State by State. We scoffed at the statement at the time, but the people were taken in. They believed that Sir Charles Court, as Leader of the Liberal Party, would be their means of salvation in solving this problem of inflation.

Shortly after the election, when we quizzed him on the proposed steps he would take to fulfil his promise, he told us that he would solve the problem of inflation essentially through the appointment of an expediter. His rather imaginative economic theory was based on the assumption that as far as Western Australia was concerned, our problems with inflation revolved around the bottlenecks in the supply of important materials and goods. So the Court Government decided to appoint an expediter who could be sent to the Eastern States, and if necessary overseas to any important point as far as our economy was concerned, to expedite the supply of goods to this State on the assumption that this action would have some effect on inflation. Of course, this theory was complete hogwash and it is typical of the economic theories that have been expounded by the Premier, and typical of the empty promises he has made to the people which he has not been able to fulfil.

His second important promise was in regard to unemployment. On numerous occasions in this Chamber the Premier stated that he would stake his reputation on being able to solve the problem of unemployment in Western Australia within six months—

Sir Charles Court: That was in August, 1972—

Mr BRYCE: —of gaining office.

Sir Charles Court: —when there was a Federal Liberal Government in Canberra.

Mr BRYCE: There was no qualification on the statement at that time.

Sir Charles Court: This was before the Whitlam Government set out to wreck the economy.

Mr BRYCE: There was no lengthy qualification to his statement.

Sir Charles Court: There did not need to be.

Mr BRYCE: The Premier staked his reputation on that promise and no special extenuating circumstances were spelt out. He staked his reputation on the belief that if he had the opportunity—and he was dying for the opportunity—to get back into Government—

Sir Charles Court: So I was, in August, 1972, with a co-operative Government in Canberra.

Mr BRYCE: —he would solve unemployment within six months. Of course, we have seen how realistic that statement was. We have seen the unemployment percentage in Western Australia grow—

Sir Charles Court: Are we not the best in Australia?

Mr BRYCE: —to a point where it is higher than it has been—

Mr Grayden: The lowest figures of any State.

Sir Charles Court: Do we not have the best figures in Australia?

Mr BRYCE. —since the Second World War.

Mr Grayden: The best of all the States.

Mr BRYCE: The Premier is seeking to crawl out from underneath.

Sir Charles Court: But do we not have the best figures?

Mr BRYCE: The Premier made this promise—

Sir Charles Court: In August, 1972—I made that very clear.

Mr BRYCE: No undertaking was given at the time of the election in 1974 that the Premier would require a Liberal Government in Canberra to keep his promise.

Sir Charles Court: I never made that claim in 1974.

Mr BRYCE: With his typical bravado, the Premier—

Sir Charles Court: I never made that promise in 1974, because we then had the Whitlam Government in power.

Mr BRYCE: —again promised that he would solve unemployment.

Sir Charles Court: I never said that in 1974.

Mr BRYCE: The Premier made that statement to the media; he made it frequently in this place, and at every meeting he attended. He promised that the good old days of the early 1960s would return and that the problem of unemployment would be solved if only the people of Western Australia would—in his eyes—make the right decision and put him back into the chair he now occupies.

Sir Charles Court: Are you not pleased we are here? We have the lowest unemployment figures in Australia.

Mr BRYCE: The Premier has let us down badly because the fact is that Western Australia now has the highest level of unemployment since the war.

Sir Charles Court: The lowest figures in Australia.

Mr BRYCE: Irrespective of what has happened in the other States, the Premier made this claim for Western Australia. He is the god of State rights and an avid supporter of independence for the States.

Sir Charles Court: That is right.

Mr BRYCE: So he should not now use the example of the other States to justify the position in Western Australia.

Sir Charles Court: I do not need to.

Mr BRYCE: Western Australia is isolated from the rest of the country in his view, and I ask the Premier to concentrate his attention on the promises he made to the people of this State. He said he would solve unemployment, and in the two years

his party has been in office we have seen unemployment reach a record level. That is a fact that he cannot deny, and the Premier finds it hard to swallow.

Mr Sodeman: Are you against positive thinking?

Mr BRYCE: I am against blatant deception, whether it is political deception or any other sort.

Sir Charles Court: What about those files of yours?

Mr BRYCE: The Premier promised the people that he would solve the problem of unemployment knowing very well that it was beyond his control.

Mr Sodeman: Why don't you tell us how you would have solved it?

Mr BRYCE: The honourable member should pipe down and make his own speech.

Mr Bateman: You were in Government, and it was a promise made by the Premier.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRYCE: The three major promises made by the Liberal Party constitute the principal area of disaster for the Government. Believe it or not, at the back of this document there is a whole section devoted to the details of the ways in which a Liberal Government would curb State taxes and charges, with the implication spelt out in almost every sentence that the Government would hold inquiries with a view to bringing these down.

I do not have a detailed list of the percentage increases with me tonight, but I certainly propose to put these figures on record. Once again it is quite clear that two years ago the then Leader of the Opposition—the present Premier—promised that he would curb increases in State taxes and charges. Quite simply, that has not happened. In fact, the reverse has occurred and we have seen a record level of escalation in freight rates for shipping, in rail charges, and in many other forms of taxation, including licence fees. That is the third significant area in which the Premier has failed miserably.

On that basis alone the first part of the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition referring to the failure of the Government to implement most of its promises of substance is certainly very true. Certainly these were three of the most substantial promises made by the Liberal Party when it was on the hustings in 1974. Interestingly enough, having made all those extravagant promises, the Premier has had to find excuses for not keeping them. He had to find a crutch to lean on, and for at least 18 months of his time in office he did find it—the Whitlam Government. No matter what went wrong, he blamed the Whitlam Government; that was a good avenue for escape. No matter what happened in Western Australia, he used his friends in the media with all the

co-operation which he receives so readily to lambaste and denigrate the Whitlam Government, forgetting entirely that he had presented this picture of himself as a brave hero who was going to solve the economic ills of Western Australia.

Despite all those promises and undertakings, he decided right from the word go that he would blame his own inadequacies on the Whitlam Government. This is despite all the analogies that he drew with the period of the great economic recession in the early 1960s. He argued that he did it then, and that he would do it again in the 1970s. Of course, he failed miserably, and he set out to blame all his failures on the Whitlam Government.

The next source of excuse for the Premier raised its ugly head in the Chamber again tonight and was referred to by my colleague, the member for Warren. It is a typical strategy which we see employed by the Premier in particular and by some of his more extremist friends in the form of Bjelke-Petersen and others. I refer to union baiting and union bashing. As far as our conservative Premier and his ilk are concerned, when all else fails and one is in a tight corner all one need do is drag out the red can, the union bogey, and provoke and bash the unions into action—and direct action if possible; that is desirable in his eyes—and then start that good old campaign in respect of law and order. He would start to beat the drum on law and order, despite the fact that he and his colleagues on the front bench who are staunchly behind him so often provoke union action.

Mr Grayden: It is about time, after what has happened in the last few days.

Mr BRYCE: I include my good friend the Minister for Labour and Industry as one of the colleagues of the Premier who supported the most lawless decision this country has ever seen, when their Federal colleagues decided to destroy a fundamental democratic convention in our national Parliament and thereby brought effective democratic government in this country to the brink—

Sir Charles Court: There is no question of that.

Mr Grayden: Of a general election?

Mr BRYCE: Members opposite will sit there and interject, and on occasions they will rise to their feet and start to talk about law and order. They should be the last people in this State ever to talk about the need for law and order, having constantly and deliberately—

Mr Grayden: Law and order at its best.

Mr BRYCE: —encouraged the Fraser Liberal Party in Canberra to take the action it took last November. That was an act which in my opinion is many, many times worse than the act of any trade

union in deciding to go on strike, to withdraw its labour, or to demonstrate in the streets of Perth—which it should be thoroughly entitled to do in any democratic country.

Sir Charles Court: What is undemocratic about a general election?

Mr BRYCE: There is nothing undemocratic about a general election. Since the Premier is concerned with the same sort of proprieties as the Prime Minister, what is proper about an Upper House doing what the Senate did in Canberra in October-November last?

Sir Charles Court: What is the Constitution for?

Mr BRYCE: If the Premier believes it is a correct and proper thing for the Upper House in a bicameral system which is based on the British system of government to exercise that prerogative, then let him stand up and say so and be prepared to go on record as being one of the people who laid the foundation for the collapse of our system of government.

Sir Charles Court: What is wrong with following the Constitution? Who wants to tear up the Constitution?

Mr BRYCE: I have no intention of being sidetracked into an area of debate that the Premier would prefer to an examination of his performance.

Sir Charles Court: What is undemocratic about following the Constitution?

Mr Jamieson: He didn't follow the Constitution, and you know it.

Sir Charles Court: He did.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRYCE: The area of greatest deception and disaster has been the Government's policies in respect of education. There is no question that so many of these promises were so poorly thought out that they now pile up as a list of useless political undertakings which the Government simply will not be able to fulfil. There are six undertakings in particular to which I refer. Nobody can deny that at the time of the last election, when the Premier was looking for votes, an important education issue that was being debated in the public mind was the Premier's promise to lower the age of admission to primary schools to the year in which children turned five. What an expensive and deliberate political hoax that has been; that the Government would lower the age of admission to primary schools to the year in which children turned five. I propose to say a little more about that in a minute.

The second one is the clear cut promise that if members opposite were elected to Government they would transfer children from primary to secondary school at the end of the year in which the children attain the age of 11 years. That promise has been pigeon-holed, buried, forgotten,

torn up, or burnt; wherever it is, we find that the Government runs away from it. The Government knows it is hopeless; but it was an important part of its election promises in respect of education which it is now running away from.

The third undertaking is the promise of the Premier to extend the free textbook scheme. This is the very same textbook scheme which the Premier, when he was Leader of the Opposition and sitting on this side of the Chamber, denigrated at great length so frequently from beginning to end. He was ably supported in that by so many of his colleagues who were on this side of the Chamber at that time. Yet he made an election promise that he would extend the free textbook scheme.

I have made some very thorough inquiries from the Education Department and I find in fact no extension of the free textbook scheme has occurred; and, what is more, from what I have been able to discover there is no intention on the part of the Government to extend it. At the same time, however, it is becoming patently obvious day by day that the people of this State are very keen on the idea and see the real need for a free textbook scheme in secondary schools.

There is not a member of this Chamber who has not been made aware of the alarm that is felt by parents of children attending secondary schools in respect of the level of costs involved in supplying learning materials for their children.

The fourth promise is one that we have heard absolutely nothing about. The Premier, in very plain English, promised to extend secondary education from five years to six years. He was going to add a whole year of tuition to the secondary level of education. What has happened? Where is it? All the questions that we on this side of the House have asked, using the proper channels, to discover the Government's intentions have resulted in our being informed that a committee has been appointed to inquire into this matter, and that we will be told in due course. Of course, that is another promise in respect of education that has been buried, burnt, torn up, or forgotten; that the Government is running away from.

The fifth one is the promise of the Government to limit the number of students in high schools to a maximum of 1 000. We have asked questions in an endeavour to ascertain what progress the Government may or may not have made in respect of that election undertaking. The Government would like to forget the fact that the promise was ever made. It is simply not possible for the Government of Western Australia—certainly not between 1974 and 1977—to find the capital funds to provide the buildings that are necessary to do that. That was an act of political deception. Nobody as experienced as the then Leader of the Opposition—the present Premier—would

make such a promise without making some estimate of the cost of the promise. Perhaps he thought that the Whitlam Government, which he was daily condemning, would save his bacon and join him around the fire and say, "Here is all the money you need"; because it was well known that the Whitlam Government was providing money for the things that needed to be done in education. Perhaps he thought the money would come from there.

When we challenged him at the time, the Premier in reply to our criticism put forward one of the most incredible schemes imaginable. He actually came out in reply to our criticism that his scheme for education was financially crazy and said that he would not let the Federal Government stand in the way of the implementation of his election promises in respect of education; and he said he was quite prepared to go to private enterprise and encourage it to build great blocks of buildings and classrooms for lease to the Education Department.

That was another promise and undertaking he gave of which we have seen absolutely nothing. This is another example of the promises the Premier would like to forget.

I should like to make a few comments on the aspect of education where I believe the political dishonesty has been at its worst. I refer to the area of pre-school education. I do not intend to speak for very long on this matter, but I would like to suggest to members of this House that although the Premier promised to encourage the development of kindergartens and to work with local governing bodies to provide the sites for pre-school centres and to work with local authorities to help to establish kindergartens—well-intentioned as the promises may have been at the time—the Premier gave no indication that it was his intention for the Education Department to take over or to seek to confiscate the actual pre-school centres, or the kindergartens, as we know them, throughout Western Australia.

If, of course, the Premier had been honest in that respect with the people with whom he was dealing, and had he dared to mention at election time that he was proposing to take over community kindergartens throughout Western Australia he would have had a veritable political bloodbath on his hands and would have lost seats all over the place.

Mr Sibson: Rot!

Mr BRYCE: The member for Bunbury knows full well there are kindergartens in his town that are not the slightest bit enthused by the idea of being taken over by the Education Department.

Mr Sibson: They will not be taken over if they do not want to be, so let us get off that point.

Mr BRYCE: I suggest that the member for Bunbury attends some of the meetings attended by his colleague, the Minister or, on some occasions, by his representatives and witnesses the forms of political blackmail offered at those meetings. It is similar to the offers made to people by the godfathers of the Mafia. It is a gun at the heads of the people, and is an offer they cannot refuse.

Mr Sibson: Quote specific instances.

Mr BRYCE: I refer the member for Bunbury to my speech on this subject towards the end of last year, where we went into some detail about what was happening at Rockingham at the time. It was an outrageous example of how the Education Department was putting the gun to the head of this community-owned and built kindergarten. Of course, they are attractive propositions because the Government had a political promise on its hands to take five-year-olds into the schools, and it realised it could not afford to implement that promise; but there, scattered throughout the State in the form of 350 community-owned and built kindergartens was \$17.5 million worth of capital buildings and equipment, and the best way to get its hands on these buildings and to short-cut the implementation of its promise was to use these heavy-handed methods.

The Minister for Education introduced a Bill to amend the Pre-School Education Act so he could gain control of these kindergartens and then sent an instruction to the Pre-School Board to hand over kindergartens and equipment to the Education Department. The Minister for Education fell flat on his face when he realised the Pre-School Board did not own those kindergartens; in fact, they were owned by community groups.

Mr Watt: Many of them have handed over voluntarily, and are happy about it.

Mr B. T. Burke: Only three out of 30 in the City of Stirling and none in the Shire of Wanneroo is the record in my area.

Mr McIver: It is a very detrimental step, and you know it.

Mr Watt: I do not know it.

Mr Sibson: You talk to Greenbushes.

Mr BRYCE: Like the member for Warren, it concerns me greatly that we have sitting opposite a coalition Government, composed of two political parties, both of which made very extensive promises to the electorate in 1974 and both of which failed to implement so many of those promises of great substance. In fact this amendment to the motion draws attention to that situation.

My colleague, the member for Warren, drew attention to the promises and undertakings of the Country Party. Of course, the Country Party is a constituent member of the coalition Government sitting

opposite, but I think we on this side may be forgiven for forgetting that the Country Party even exists because we never hear anything about the Country Party's policy promises any more.

Mr Cowan: You seem to spend a lot of time talking about the Country Party.

Mr BRYCE: I would be happy for the member for Merredin-Yilgarn to stand in his place and say something about his party's promises, policies, undertakings and achievements.

Mr Sodeman: He will, at the right time.

Mr BRYCE: What I have to say does not constitute a very impressive record as far as the Country Party is concerned. I should like to draw the attention of members to 10 of the most important Country Party promises about which we have heard nothing at all. I stress that these are not the only 10; there are many more, but these are the most important.

We are not permitted by virtue of the Standing Orders of the House to gain direct access to the Country Party by way of questions. We cannot expect members of the Country Party to answer questions; we can only do it by way of a motion such as this. I understand that the Leader of the Country Party rejected a question directed to him by a member on this side today because he felt it was not within his province, even though it was part and parcel of his own leader's political undertaking at that time.

Mr Old: When was this?

Mr BRYCE: Today; the question had to do with industrial relations.

Mr Old: I did not reject any question.

Mr BRYCE: I will be happy to apologise later, if I am wrong.

Mr Grayden: No question was rejected today.

Mr Old: That is right; get your facts straight.

Mr O'Neil: Were you not here at question time?

Mr Sodeman: I gather you are apologising for that remark, are you?

Mr BRYCE: The Leader of the Country Party might like to get his facts straight in respect of some of these election promises. On page 4 of the document which constitutes the Country Party's policy speech there is a very brave and courageous undertaking to encourage decentralisation which reads as follows—

The National Alliance proposes the establishment of industries in already existing country towns and the creation of new towns through incentives for the transfer of business enterprises to those areas.

We have seen nothing of that promise, but one can scarcely describe it as an insignificant promise, bearing in mind the

urgent importance of decentralisation to the Country Party. On page 7 we have the following priceless education promise—

As a general principle, the National Alliance will aim to promote in Western Australia, a system of education which will provide equal opportunity for every child whether attending State or non-State schools.

Then the Country Party sits meekly by while the Liberal Party proceeds to fund the independent schools system with a system of flat rate *per capita* grants, across the board. Despite the fact that its members gave a promise and made an undertaking that they would do their utmost to provide equal opportunity, the Country Party raised no voice of protest. No consideration has been given to a proper consideration of needs in education.

The third point is found on page 7 of this document and relates to the labour relations committee. I can understand the Leader of the Country Party looking quite amazed at some of the things I am saying. I suggest he reads this policy document. On page 7, the then Leader of the Country Party promised to establish a labour relations committee, headed by a Government-appointed chairman and two commissioners, one from the trade union movement and the other from employer organisations, to assume responsibility for registration of organisations, rule changes, uniform ballots and demarcation disputes. Of course, that has not happened either.

On page 8, the Country Party promised to create a department of solar energy at the Murdoch University. In the middle of that promise the following statement is made—

This could prove to be our most prolific source of power . . .

Mr Old: It could be, too.

Mr BRYCE: That is right, but we are still waiting for the creation of this special department of solar energy at the Murdoch University.

Mr Sibson: You have the best proposition for solar energy on the top of your head.

Mr BRYCE: You have the makings of a genius. Go back to sleep. That is about the level of debate we can expect from the other side of the House. The honourable member's leader indulges in personal abuse at the first opportunity so we can scarcely expect his back-bencher to do anything else.

Mr Sodeman: Have a look at some of your own remarks in *Hansard*.

Mr BRYCE: In respect of local government the Country Party states—

Local government autonomy should be maintained and extended. No further erosion of local government

will be countenanced by the National Alliance. They promise to extend the autonomy and the powers of local government.

We are still waiting for amendments to the Local Government Act to give life to that particular promise.

The Country Party has given an undertaking under the heading of, "Probate". It says—

Both State and Commonwealth death duties are operating to the disadvantages of the family unit and we are pledged to the removal of this pernicious form of revenue raising.

We are still waiting for the Country Party within the coalition to exercise pressure on the Liberal Party to implement that promise.

Under the heading of "Housing" the Country Party has given a promise that it proposes long-term housing loans with manageable interest rates for the purchase of a first home. I do not know where the coalition Government is finding the money or what has happened in respect of the implementation of that promise, but it certainly is not happening.

Mr P. V. Jones: What about its long-term interest rates that came in last year? What about them?

Mr BRYCE: The Government promised to provide them.

Mr P. V. Jones: What about the income-g geared loans that came in last year?

Mr BRYCE: The Government promised to provide them.

Mr P. V. Jones: We have done so.

Mr BRYCE: The Minister should read the details. In respect of its meat marketing scheme and the negotiability of milk quotas, when the crunch really came in its confrontation with the Liberal Party on the basis of some fairly fundamental Country Party policy, the Country Party collapsed and caved in. We saw a change of leadership and the appointment of leaders who were prepared to cop a position of subservience to the major party in the coalition.

Mr Old: What rot! Absolute rubbish.

Mr O'Neil: Rubbish.

Mr BRYCE: The Country Party backed down on such a vitally important part of its programme and on the sort of clear undertaking that it had given in its election promises to people in rural areas.

I indicated at the outset of my remarks that I believe the sentiments contained in the amendment are a true statement of fact in respect of the Government's nonperformance. This Government will go down in history as one of the Governments of greatest nonperformance; and as a Government of nonperformance its time is rapidly running out.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [11.22 p.m.]: Earlier this evening the Premier indicated to us that he had heard all our remarks previously, and I am sure he has heard many of them. However, they do not seem to sink in very easily and it is necessary often to repeat things for people who are slow to learn as a result of their mistakes. Surely his mistake was the production of the Liberal Party policy booklet in which he set out so clearly so many aims and objectives so that we would be able to indicate to him when he did not live up to his proposals.

The Premier is always complaining that the Whitlam Government did all the harm and could not function with the State Governments. I think he said that it designed and was motivated by the concept of the annihilation of the States. I must repeat to him *ad nauseum* that I have read and reread the Liberal Party Federal platform and it does not even refer to the States. On the other side of the coin the Federal Labor Party platform refers repeatedly to the States. The Liberal Party Federal policy does not even acknowledge that they exist. Any student reading the Liberal Party Federal platform who did not know otherwise would be entitled to think that there were no such things as States in Australia. Let us get that matter clear to start with and let us put the Liberal Party's own house in order before it starts to worry about the States. The fundamental organisation of the Australian Labor Party at the Federal level is made up of States' delegations which are very clearly in control of all situations which might occur from time to time.

Let us look at the promises that were made in the Liberal Party policy. Some of them are quite funny. They are the sorts of promises that have already been achieved. The policy states—

We will bring imagination to bear on every region whose advantages are less obvious but latent.

I suppose anybody could say that that has been achieved because nobody really knows what it means.

The five urgent tasks that are listed in the Liberal policy booklet are probably the main features of the amendment that was moved by my leader tonight and are probably more vital than the other features of policy matters. They are: fight inflation, stop the housing crisis, stop land price inflation, improve the urban environment and deal with industrial unrest. Let us look at those matters for a start. The Premier knows that the policy statement was prepared to say that it will be argued that a State Government can do nothing to offset the damage of Federal mismanagement of the economy. He has said that that is r so and that inflation can be beaten to a

substantial degree State by State. In recent times the Premier has moved away from that statement. He used to say that it was all Whitlam's fault and that the Whitlam Government did this, that and several other things. It also paid for a large amount of the education policy that has been implemented by the present Government. This is obvious in answers to questions from some of my colleagues today. So let us have a few credits for the Whitlam Federal Government as well as debits.

I go back beyond the most recent Governments in the Federal sphere. I will remember that in the days of the Menzies Government the present Premier could not get on with the Federal Administration. So it is nothing new for him to find fault with a Federal Administration. He found constant fault with the Federal Administration in the days of Menzies and was carpingly critical of it. He is not critical just because it was a Labor Government, as he would have us believe now. He has gone quiet, as my colleague from Victoria Park pointed out, since the Fraser Government has come into office because he probably thinks that he must turn off the heat a little. However, he very clearly stated that it did not matter what sort of Government was in power in Canberra—he was able to do something in the State sphere to control inflation.

The Premier has always taken the view that Western Australia is some kind of island and that Australia itself is a secluded island in the financial morasses of the world. Of course it is not. We are so much associated with a policy of exporting iron ore and other primary products from this country that we are subject to the variations of the political and economic likes and dislikes of many other parts of the world. While we are subject to those conditions we cannot do things in isolation to overcome the world crisis. It is high time the Premier started to realise that. For years the Treasury has tried to convince him of it and Treasury officials nearly beat their brains out trying to convince him that this is the situation.

He would not be convinced. It does not seem as though he is convinced now. Despite all the advice that has come his way he said that inflation can be beaten to a substantial degree State by State. That is just too silly because if there is a recession in the other five States and there is a boom in Western Australia we just would not be able to contain the influx of people and, therefore, we would not be able to beat the problem that existed in the Eastern States.

Likewise, any other Eastern State individually would not be able to overcome the problem of inflation when there is an influx of people from other States, and specially when there is unlimited access. o we cannot singly sort out the problems

of finance in Australia by taking unilateral action in a particular State. That is impossible to achieve. This needs repeating often until the Premier is prepared to acknowledge the fact that it cannot be done. In his policy speech the Premier said—

On return to Government—

We will smash this plan to undermine home ownership.

I think he is doing that with the regulation that was tabled today by the State Housing Commission to charge an excessive management fee against home owners. How much encouragement is there for people to endeavour to find the extra amount to acquire a home rather than to rent one from the State Housing Commission? They have been completely discouraged by the action of the Government in taking this unexpected step.

Mr P. V. Jones: How will this discourage the people?

Mr JAMIESON: Of course it will discourage them, because they enter into a contract on the basis that they know what they are obliged to pay. Virtually with the stroke of a pen they find that the Minister of the day voids the contracts, and inserts other costs which they will have to meet. No doubt this matter will be the subject of considerable debate.

Mr P. V. Jones: How will that discourage them from buying homes from now on?

Mr JAMIESON: Of course it will discourage them.

Mr P. V. Jones: How?

Mr JAMIESON: Because of the hidden costs that do not now exist.

Mr P. V. Jones: Not one contract from the 1st January, 1974, has any application to this charge.

Mr JAMIESON: Now there is a regulation which will enable the State Housing Commission to include other costs. The people who bought houses in the past thought they were completely covered, and then by a trick like this they face other costs. The general public know about the overall effect, but not the niceties of contracts. They have seen what has happened to people who bought homes in the past and they are not likely to be encouraged to buy homes under these circumstances. Rather than do that they would remain on a rental lease basis.

Mr P. V. Jones: You say the general public do not understand?

Mr JAMIESON: They do not.

Mr P. V. Jones: But you do.

Mr JAMIESON: I understand more than the general public do. Another plank of the Liberal policy is—

We will move immediately to upgrade the quality of design and the function of State Housing Commission homes.

I suppose the Government can always do this, because it is part of the general scheme of things. If modern materials come onto the market and if modern practices are introduced, surely the Government would not indulge in the more expensive methods of construction of the past. That is the sort of promise we find in the Liberal policy, and it does not make very much sense. The commission is always doing that.

Mr P. V. Jones: That part of the policy speech gives a specific indication.

Mr JAMIESON: It does not give a specific indication at all. It is a move that is going on all the time, because of the need to adapt to the improved mechanics of building.

Mr Sodeman: The housing policy is going along with renewed impetus.

Mr JAMIESON: I cannot hear two members interjecting together.

Mr Watt: This is a change in the method of building homes.

Mr JAMIESON: Not necessarily. The method is changing all the time. When the present Deputy Premier was Minister for Housing he caused an excessive number of flats to be built in one area. At that time it was the modern trend. However, the next Government adopted a different policy and introduced a housing programme which included the building of town houses. The present Government has adopted another policy. It is the normal chain of events for new practices to be adopted. To put this forward as an argument is ludicrous.

Mr Sodeman: The previous Minister for Housing in your Government agreed there should be a change of pace in developing new designs in the north. He was one of those who promulgated this policy.

Mr JAMIESON: In our term of Government we inherited the results of the Radburn system. It was initiated by the present Deputy Premier when he was Minister for Housing, and the method of development was applied in the Withers Estate. It spread to other areas, but did not prove to be very satisfactory. It was necessary to change the concept, just as the Moroccan type of houses up north has been changed. They were given a trial but proved to be unsatisfactory. It is a progressive step going on all the time in the State Housing Commission, and I would want it to go on all the time. I do not suggest this should be decided by the whims and desires of political parties.

Mr Sodeman: You agree it was not a particular study group doing it then, as is being done now?

Mr JAMIESON: There is always a study group in the architectural division of the State Housing Commission.

Mr Sodeman: But not running at the pace it is now running.

Mr JAMIESON: It has always been going on.

Mr Sodeman: Why are you being negative?

Mr JAMIESON: I am not being negative. I cannot merely sit under a hurricane lamp. If these aims are put in as policy items to be tested at a later stage, they should be clear, and not obscure as they are in the Liberal policy.

There are many other items in the Liberal policy speech, and some of them make amusing reading. We have ticked off some of the items which the Government claims it has achieved. Among them are the following—

We will recognise artistic ability, for this purpose, irrespective of age or academic qualifications.

We will investigate the acquisition of a city property such as Her Majesty's Theatre for use (in a suitably reconditioned form) by Ballet, Opera, Gilbert & Sullivan, theatrical and cultural organisations.

The Government could encourage the arts and provide some facilities. Maybe it would provide some financial support, but all these are rather negative and minor achievements.

The Premier talked about achieving 82 per cent of the 310 policy promises, but I have already referred to some of those which he has ticked off as having achieved. One wonders how sincere and how important are those policy statements. If we look at the Press release, and at the 82 per cent of the 310 promises that are claimed to have been achieved, it looks as though we have a mighty Government, and members opposite might throw their chests out. However, when we start to read about what this Government has achieved we question whether we have got anywhere, and whether we are dealing with problems we have set out to solve.

I think we are quite justified in criticising the Government of the day for its attempt to cash in on claims which do not mean anything, and which in many ways are negative. Some people believe it would be better for the Government not to claim them as achievements.

It seems that anything goes with this Government, and that it is clutching at straws to boost its standing. It wants to go ahead by indicating to people that it has achieved things which, in fact, it has not achieved. There are major undertakings which we would have expected the Government to achieve, to have costed and to have looked into very clearly, like the question of the admission of 11-year-olds into high schools and five-year-olds into primary schools which was raised by the member for Ascot.

We complained that that proposal had not been properly investigated in the first place and undoubtedly when the final

reckoning is made we will find that it has had to be eliminated from the programme because it was just not feasible when included in the first place.

By contrast, when the Tonkin Government went out of office not many of the promises it made on the hustings in 1971 had not been carried out. The only ones which had not been carried out were those which had been rejected legislatively. The present Government cannot claim that as a reason for its not having implemented any of its policies. Any promises unfulfilled by the present Government are a result of its having made promises which could not be carried out. It certainly has not had any rejected legislatively.

Tonight the Premier made much of the fact that we had promised to abolish the road maintenance tax, but on several occasions we endeavoured to do just that. However, the Legislature would not accept our proposals and therefore we were not able to implement them, but it was not for the want of trying.

Mr Thompson: It was a hoax.

Mr JAMIESON: It was not.

Mr Thompson: Of course it was.

Mr JAMIESON: The member for Kalamunda is stating that both proposals we made were hoaxes. Members opposite just would not allow a direct new charge on vehicles.

Mr Thompson: You said you would get rid of the road maintenance tax without making any other impost.

Mr JAMIESON: First of all we would have done just that.

Mr Thompson: Oh rot!

Mr JAMIESON: We had no other proposition before Parliament and if we had been left with the proposal we had placed before Parliament we would have had to find our way out of the position; but members opposite were not prepared to go along with that.

On the second occasion we provided an alternative because members opposite had stated that if our first proposal had been accepted we would then be without road funds and all the rest of it. Therefore we provided a second alternative, but that, too, was rejected in another place. We did at least attempt to implement our policy promises and it was not our fault we did not do so.

Mr O'Connor: But you said you would implement it only if you could get a tax to replace it.

Mr JAMIESON: We did not. I have just explained the position to the Minister's colleague, but apparently the Minister was not listening.

Mr O'Connor: I was.

Mr JAMIESON: We submitted two proposals. The first proposal was that the tax be abolished altogether, but that proposal was rejected in another place. The following year we submitted an alternative scheme to obtain funds, but that proposal, too, was rejected in another place. Members opposite cannot have it both ways.

There has been much justification for the debate which has ensued tonight, deploing the fact that the Government has failed signally to implement most of its promises of substance. That is our complaint. We are referring to the promises of substance, not the finicky promises which do not mean anything. Anyone can write those into a policy knowing that they will be agreed to. All the Government promised was that it would communicate with someone, talk to a local council, and so on. Such promises do not cost a cent and when they are implemented not very much is achieved anyway. The Government certainly cannot claim them as being promises which have been implemented. It is rather strange that the Premier has made such a claim.

I imagine that when the time comes and his three-year period of office has expired, he will find that the promises to which we are referring and which have not been implemented are those on which the people will judge the Government, and not on the finicky promises which may or may not have been implemented in some way. I support the amendment.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes—18

Mr Barnett	Mr T. D. Evans
Mr Bateman	Mr Harman
Mr Bertram	Mr Hartrey
Mr Bryce	Mr Jamieson
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr May
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr Skidmore
Mr Carr	Mr Taylor
Mr Davies	Mr J. T. Tonkin
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr McIver

(Teller)

Noes—24

Mr Blaikie	Mr Old
Sir Charles Court	Mr O'Neill
Mr Cowan	Mr Ridge
Mr Crane	Mr Rushton
Mr Grayden	Mr Shalders
Mr Grewar	Mr Sibson
Mr F. V. Jones	Mr Sodeman
Mr Laurence	Mr Stephens
Mr McPharlin	Mr Thompson
Mr Mensaros	Mr Tubby
Mr Nanovich	Mr Watt
Mr O'Connor	Mr Clarko

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr Moller	Mr Coyne
Mr T. H. Jones	Mr Young
Mr A. R. Tonkin	Dr Dadour
Mr Fletcher	Mrs Craig

Amendment thus negatived.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Clarko.

House adjourned at 11.49 p.m.