

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 20 November 1990

THE SPEAKER (Mr Michael Barnett) took the Chair at 2.00 pm, and read prayers.

PETITION - EAST THOMSONS LAKE URBAN DEVELOPMENT*Development Prevention*

MR KIERATH (Riverton) [2.04 pm]: I present the following petition -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned are concerned that the proposed East Thomsons Lake Urban Development, being over the Jandakot Mound, will cause pollution of our water supply, and degradation of parts of the Beeliar Regional Park, so we hereby request that you take action under the provisions pertaining to the Underground Water Pollution Control Areas to prevent development until a full Environmental Impact Statement has been prepared and publicly reviewed. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 72 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

[See petition No 162.]

PETITION - YORK DISTRICT HOSPITAL*Closure or Service Reduction Concern*

MR TRENORDEN (Avon) [2.05 pm]: I have a petition which reads as follows -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned residents of York, Western Australia, wish to express our extreme concern regarding proposals to either close down or substantially reduce the service offered by the York District Hospital.

To entertain such a proposal is to demonstrate a callous disregard for the well being of rural electors and the economics of a small town.

The Shire of York is one of the few rural communities in Western Australia which is exhibiting positive growth patterns, such growth being based on the fertile agricultural land and the ever growing tourist trade.

The York District Hospital serves the community professionally and efficiently, being recognised as an accredited hospital and recently being awarded the Commissioner's Annual Award for excellence and innovation in health care.

To reduce an essential service at a time of growth and development would appear to be an action designed to undermine such development which has been built up through hard work and diligence. To require residents and visitors to travel to larger country centres or to the Perth metropolitan area is to deny these people an existing service and would compromise their health care.

We believe the York Hospital must not be closed or have its level of service reduced and require assurances from the Government that the York Hospital will not have its services reduced or be closed.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 156 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.
[See petition No 163.]

PETITION - DUCK SHOOTING

Prohibition Legislation Support

MR McNEE (Moore) [2.06 pm]: I have a petition couched in the following terms -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned petitioners, urge you to legislate for the prohibition of duck shooting in the Nature Reserves and Game Reserves, including the Wannamal Lakes region and Yurine Swamp in the Gingin Shire and Wannamal because of the cruelty inflicted on our wildlife; the killing of protected species; the inability of the Department of Conservation and Land Management to adequately police duck shooting; the incompleteness of ecological data upon which the decision to allow duck shooting is based; the contamination of the wetlands through accumulation of lead pellets and the encouragement of vandalism in the Shire by shooters e.g. devastation of children's road crossing signs, roadside information signs and injury to stock.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition contains 9 922 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.
[See petition No 164.]

PETITION - BALCATT A SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Parking Review

MR CATANIA (Balcatta) [2.07 pm]: I present the following petition -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned citizens, request that the Minister of Education urgently review the availability of parking at the front of Balcatta Senior High School. During the peak periods of pre-school morning and after school hours, it is very dangerous for parents and children avoiding vehicles and buses. We urge that some of the ample lawn area be devoted to parking so as to avoid the dangers and not inconvenience residents in the area.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 106 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.
[See petition No 165.]

PETITION - SUNDAY TRADING, CHRISTMAS PERIOD

Approval Annulment

MR FRED TUBBY (Roleystone) [2.08 pm]: I have a petition couched in the following terms -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned, humbly request that the decision to let retailers trade on the Sunday before Christmas be annulled.

To allow this would not be in the interest of many small businesses. But over and above all, trading and working on the Sunday is a direct violation of God's Command and hence against our beliefs.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 333 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

[See petition No 166.]

PETITION - DUCK SHOOTING

Prohibition Legislation Support

DR ALEXANDER (Perth) [2.09 pm]: I present the following petition -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned petitioners of Western Australia and residents, urge you not to declare a Duck Shooting Season for 1991 and to legislate for the prohibition of any future Duck Shooting in this State because of the cruelty inflicted on our wildlife; the loss of significant waterbird breeding habitat; the pollution of the wetlands from lead pellets, cartridges and other rubbish, and community disapproval of recreational shooting of wildlife.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 2 082 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

[See petition No 167.]

PETITION - RAILWAYS

South West Corridor Suburban Passenger Rail Service - Support

MR THOMAS (Cockburn) [2.10 pm]: I have a petition expressed in the following terms -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned support the extension of the suburban passenger rail service to the suburbs of the south west corridor.

This part of the metropolitan area is growing and is widely recognised as one of the most desirable options for the long term expansion of the City of Perth.

Moreover, as recent international events have shown, it is prudent to minimise dependence on oil and environmental considerations support the extension and enhancement of our public transport system.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

The petition bears 129 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

[See petition No 168.]

PETITION - WONGAN HILLS HOSPITAL

Holiday Closure Proposal Protest

MR McNEE (Moore) [2.11 pm]: I have a petition couched in the following terms -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned, wish to protest at the proposed closure during the holiday period of the Wongan Hills Hospital.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitions, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 560 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

[See petition No 169.]

BILLS (3) - ASSENT

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

1. Financial Institutions Duty Amendment Bill
2. Acts Amendment (Parliamentary Secretaries) Bill
3. Goldfields-Esperance Development Authority Bill

STATE EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BILL

Council's Message

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it did not insist on its amendments to which the Assembly had disagreed, and that it had agreed to the further amendments made by the Assembly.

LEGAL PRACTITIONERS AMENDMENT BILL

Council's Message

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Legislative Assembly.

BILLS (4) - RETURNED

1. Fisheries Adjustments Scheme Amendment Bill
2. Fisheries Amendment Bill
3. Geraldton Foreshore and Marina Development Bill
4. Door to Door Trading Amendment Bill

Bills returned from the Council without amendment.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION - ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

Motion

On motion by Mr Pearce (Leader of the House), resolved -

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Premier to move a motion in relation to the Government's announcement of a Royal Commission of Inquiry.

MOTION - ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY APPOINTMENT

Select Committee on State Investments Wind-up

DR LAWRENCE (Glendalough - Premier) [2.23 pm]: I move -

That this House expresses its support for the Government announcement of a Royal Commission of Inquiry with wide-ranging powers.

Further, that this House:

Calls on the Legislative Council Select Committee on State Investments relating to PIGL, WAGH and Rothwells to wind up its activities and to forward any material in its possession to the Royal Commission announced yesterday by the Premier.

Calls on the Legislative Council not to proceed with moves to establish the Foss Select Committee into Stirling City Council bribery allegations because of -

- (a) The view of the Commissioner of Police that such an inquiry could completely jeopardise current police investigations and was likely to pervert the course of justice.
- (b) The gross impropriety of Liberal members of Parliament investigating matters which touch on possible illegality by their party colleagues.
- (c) The Government's commitment to empower the Royal Commission to investigate any outstanding matters arising from the Smith-Martin trial following the completion of the police inquiry.

I have moved this motion because it provides an opportunity in this House, I hope for the final time, to debate some of the matters that have been the preoccupation of this Parliament for the past two years. The Government, as has been announced publicly, has made a decision to hold a Royal Commission of Inquiry into matters surrounding a range of issues. Those matters have always been of concern to me and to the Government.

The allegations made by members opposite and in the Press and the speculation about whether illegal conduct has been engaged in has been with us from the day after Parliament sat following the 1989 election. Within a week of the commencement of that sitting the former member for Cottesloe was on his feet claiming that these matters needed to be investigated. I had not been convinced until this week that that was the correct way to proceed. As I was reported as saying in the media yesterday, it is absolutely essential that public confidence and trust in this Parliament, in Government, members of Parliament and members of city councils be restored; without that, I do not believe this State will recover economically and politically - and I am not talking party politically here - from the problems created by those allegations and innuendos.

The fact that we have chosen to hold a Royal Commission should not be seen by members opposite as some kind of pyrrhic victory. Members opposite can take some credit, but Caucus, Cabinet and I have agreed that matters are so serious following the allegations of bribery and corruption made last week that there is no way in which public credibility can be restored apart from using this process. I reiterate my concerns. When I spoke in this Parliament and to the media and informed my party colleagues of the difficulty of holding a Royal Commission I was not merely mouthing platitudes. As members opposite may have hoped, I was not trying to cover up some nasty set of events that members opposite wanted to believe had happened. I was acting in what I believed to be the best interests of the people of Western Australia.

Royal Commissions by their very nature are often inconclusive and can cut across legal proceedings, trials and hearings, and are expensive. I am now receiving calls from concerned members of the media asking how many millions of dollars it will cost. It will cost a lot to investigate these matters some of which clearly are matters of speculation and innuendo rather than fact. It will not only be costly but also will parade before the people of Western Australia the things they really want to forget; the allegations, innuendo, bribery, and the corruption scandals, if those matters are not solved satisfactorily by the investigation of the Commissioner of Police.

Calling a Royal Commission is not done lightly. The Leader of the Opposition regards Royal Commissions as something one can snap one's fingers for. He has called for Royal Commissions on so many occasions that we have forgotten the matters on which he has called for them. We regard a Royal Commission as an instrument of Government and the Parliament which is used only in serious circumstances on matters that cannot otherwise be addressed. The Government and I have taken the view that this matter should be addressed in other ways. We waited for the McCusker inquiry to report and indicated a substantial

allocation of resources would be made to enable Mr McCusker's task force to proceed. We also indicated our willingness to cooperate fully in that process and to ensure that justice was done.

I recognise now that the community's concern and that loss of confidence cannot be satisfied in any other way. I want it clearly on the public record that I do not regard Royal Commissions as a panacea. I do not necessarily believe that some of the concerns expressed will be addressed by it. I do not believe that some of the allegations made in this House will be addressed by it; not because the commissioner will not do his or her duty and not because we will not commit the full resources of Government to ensure that occurs but because it is in the nature of events that speculation and allegation are different from fact. Some members opposite will be vastly disappointed. I know that some members opposite and some members of the community believe the worst of members or former members of this Government as it is politically convenient for them to do so. It has been the case that members in this House and in the other House -

Mr Kierath interjected.

Dr LAWRENCE: The member has been told not to interject. His leader will have his day and quite properly is allowing me to have mine, so mind your manners! Members in this House have raised serious matters on many occasions. They have gone to the most extraordinary lengths to insinuate, indeed to directly state without proof, that members and former members of this Government, members of the public, and senior public servants, have engaged in the most nefarious activities. What we require is a fair and impartial arena for those allegations to be tested.

I was mightily amazed last night to hear the Leader of the Opposition when challenged on the "7.30 Report" to provide evidence to the Royal Commission which might be relevant to these matters admit that he had none. What have we been listening to in this Parliament for the past two years? I find that proposition extraordinary. I recommend to the members opposite that if they are prepared to appear before the Royal Commission to provide evidence that turns on the allegations they have made in this place they should do so because they well know that if they stand before a Royal Commission and make statements that are wrong they will pay a high price for doing so.

Mr Clarko interjected.

Dr LAWRENCE: The member for Marmion should mind his manners; his leader says so. The Opposition can make innuendo and allege that certain things have occurred. Standing before a Royal Commission is a very different matter. I am not surprised that the Leader of the Opposition says he has no evidence which he can present as fact before a Royal Commission. That is a most revealing observation. I understand the community's concern. We are all committed to getting to the bottom of these matters. Reputations in Government, in business, in councils - including some members opposite whose faces I see before me - have, by insinuation, been besmirched. The Government wants to get to the truth of the matter and it will place the full resources of the Government at the disposal of the commission. The Government also wants it to conclude with reasonable speed. The resources may, therefore, need to be greater in the short term than they would otherwise be. It is important that the community of Western Australia returns to an even footing; that Parliament can, with relief, debate the economy this week and debate the matters that will face us today, tomorrow, next year and in the next decade. I will be delighted if one of the outcomes of the decision to hold this Royal Commission is that this Parliament can act as a Parliament; that it can debate matters of importance to the people of Western Australia; and that it can address the concerns of our young people and seek solutions to assist those young people in the very difficult future they face. We must not have our backs turned to the future in favour of political advantage.

The Government will ensure that access to the resources of Government material as required by the Royal Commissioner is provided. It will make certain that the commissioner is provided with the best possible resources to ensure that questions are answered. Members opposite have wanted to believe that the Government was trying to cover up matters; they have tried to believe that I was standing in front of some gross and terrible mess; they have wanted to believe that the Government's statement that it has made mistakes referred to more serious matters; and they have always wanted the public to believe that there was something

sinister in the Government's decision not to hold a Royal Commission. That is not the case and members will see from our actions and in the legislation which must be brought before the Parliament to amend the Royal Commissions Act that that is not the case.

Having made the decision that a Royal Commission is a way - not a perfect way, and perhaps not even a conclusive way - to get to the truth of these matters, nothing will stand in front of the Government's attempting to reach the truth. I will be amazed if members opposite continue to be preoccupied with this matter and I challenge them, once the commission is established, to use the offices of the commission to provide evidence, if they have it, and to use that commission and that alone.

Mr House: What amendments will be made to the Royal Commissions Act?

Dr LAWRENCE: The member for Stirling will see that in time. The Government is committed to providing the Royal Commission with wide ranging terms of reference and powers sufficient to the task. I have indicated that the Government will give full cooperation. There is no suggestion that I will be denying the Royal Commission access to this paper or that paper or that the Government is protecting it in some way. The Government wants to get to the bottom of this matter more than does the Opposition. The Opposition's assumption that the Government had something to hide was a convenient political fiction and a political embarrassment for the Government, but not the truth. It was not the truth then and it is not the truth now. Why would I make a difficult decision to establish a Royal Commission - which I am not fully convinced will solve the problem - and say that the terms of reference would be very narrow and circumscribe the powers of the commissioner and prevent that person from reporting before 1996. I give a commitment that none of those things will occur. When the Bill is introduced members can debate whether its powers are sufficient to the task. That is also the time to debate the terms of reference, and the name of the commissioner. I do not intend those to be subjects for agreement between the parties. The Government will decide who will be appointed and it will decide the terms of reference. We want to ensure that the person appointed as commissioner is a person of the highest calibre, who has the necessary legal expertise and the necessary support to give effect to that person's role - a person who is beyond reproach. The suggestion that such a person can come only from outside the State is an insult to the people of Western Australia.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Dr LAWRENCE: The Government will consider a person with the appropriate qualities, not a person whose address is outside the State. That would acknowledge what the Opposition has tried to convince the people of Western Australia for the last two years - that Western Australia is a murky State, a dirty State, and that Parliament and business are rotten. All of those implications are wrong and members opposite have done the State a grave disservice in insisting week after week and day after day that we either inhabit a State of that character or that we deserve to. I have acknowledged many times that mistakes have been made. I admit that corporate cowboys are in this town, but they are now before the courts, and so they should be. If anyone on either side of this House does anything to prevent those people coming properly to justice, that person will stand condemned by me.

Members can be assured that they will see the Bill, the terms of reference and the appointment of a commissioner, and that the Government will do everything it can to reach the truth and to restore public confidence. There would be no point in my changing my position after very careful consideration if I were to throw it to the wind and say that the Government will do what is least likely to achieve the outcome we desire.

I was also appalled to hear today, after I had framed this motion, that apparently the Select Committee on State Investments relating to Rothwells, PICL and WAGH chaired by Hon R.G. Pike - I will stand corrected if it is not true - proposes that it should report to the upper House before handing over its material and its evidence, if it has any, to the Royal Commission. It gives me confidence that members opposite, particularly members of the upper House, are not sincere about this matter. After all, week after week and month after month they have called for a Royal Commission; the Government is establishing one and has given an assurance that members will see the specifics of it. The upper House committee has been designed for the sole purpose of being a repository for allegations. The first so-called interim report of that committee was a disgrace. It was released against the advice of the Crown Solicitor and Mr McCusker who was conducting his inquiry. It simply described

evidence from some witnesses who might be said, particularly given recent events, to have a vested interest in presenting a point of view to that committee. No attempt was made by that committee to obtain information from those accused or from those whose reputations were besmirched. I have no faith in that committee. Indeed, I am convinced that the members of that committee, except for the ones on the Government side who have attempted to be reasonable in assisting it to conduct its investigation, have had no other purpose but to cause political damage and intrigue and to, perhaps, protect those people who have no other means of protecting themselves from the proper course of the law. I therefore call upon members opposite to close that committee, if they have not done so already - they should have done that this morning in their party room - and to return its resources to the Treasury in order that the Government can put some of those resources towards the Royal Commission, and to ensure that the farce that calls itself an upper House committee no longer continues. More importantly, if the Leader of the Opposition cannot control the members of the upper House, he should insist publicly that they not proceed to establish the Foss Select Committee on Stirling City Council bribery allegations. It is an extraordinary proposition that members opposite would judge whether members of their party have taken bribes and engaged in corrupt practices. It is made no better, and is made a good deal worse by the fact that the Ombudsman and the Police Commissioner called upon that committee to be cautious and to pay heed to the fact that the police were conducting an investigation and that it be allowed to continue unimpeded. The Opposition ignored that. What is its interest in continuing with that committee?

Mr Shave: Justice.

Dr LAWRENCE: Justice! No serious minded member of the community could believe that is the purpose of that committee; it was not its purpose when it was established and it is not its purpose now. Given that the Commissioner of Police and the Ombudsman have asked that the inquiry be allowed to proceed unimpeded to conclusion or to report by the Ombudsman, there is a double responsibility on that committee to ensure that it conforms -

Mr Cowan: How could the public have faith in the commissioner's actions when he sat on the file for two years and did nothing?

Several Government members interjected.

Dr LAWRENCE: We should let the Leader of the National Party condemn himself out of his own mouth. The Leader of the National Party's comments represent the precise problem with which we are dealing. One of the things that concerned me most in establishing this Royal Commission was that we would get the same reaction either to the hearings or to the findings of the Royal Commission that we received to the McCusker report. What the Leader of the National Party is saying now suggests that will always be so if he does not like the decisions made by key people in the State. In this case, the Ombudsman informed himself some 12 months ago of the content of the file and of the nature and progress of the investigation, and concluded that the investigation had proceeded as it should have, while acknowledging that there was need for further inquiry, so I do not understand why members opposite would push for any kind of -

Mr House: The Leader of the National Party has never criticised the McCusker report. You know that, and you should not suggest that he has.

Dr LAWRENCE: I am pleased to hear that, but on this occasion we are seeing an example of what we have seen in other places, perhaps from another party, where the findings were initially accepted but were later disputed because that was more politically expedient. Were we to reach agreement on the terms of reference and the powers of the Royal Commission - although I doubt that we will, because some of what the Leader of the Opposition appears to want in his Bill is totally unreasonable - I would bet my bottom dollar that if those findings did not suit members opposite politically, they would find reason to dispute them. I am not convinced that a Royal Commission will solve the Leader of the Opposition's political problem because members opposite will not be satisfied unless they hear the story they have been trying to tell for the last two years, and if they do not hear that story, they will disbelieve the story teller. Members opposite will not believe the Commissioner of Police, the Ombudsman, or Mr McCusker because that does not suit them.

The motives of the members of the upper House committees are transparent and disgusting.

Members of Parliament want to investigate allegations of bribery and corruption made about their own members. I call on the Leader of the Opposition to make the courageous decision to pull his members into line. I have made the tough decision to appoint a Royal Commission, and I ask the Leader of the Opposition to make the tiny decision to influence his upper House members to behave responsibly. Were the upper House motion to succeed, as it probably will, and were the Foss committee to be established, no member of the Government would sit on that committee. Members opposite can investigate anybody they like, they can investigate members of our party and members of their party, but we will take no part in that farce. I recommend to all members of this House that they support the establishment of a Royal Commission, and that they insist that the upper House committees already formed or about to be formed be relegated to the rubbish bin in which they belong.

Government members: Hear, hear!

MR TAYLOR (Kalgoorlie - Deputy Premier) [2.44 pm]: It is difficult to follow the brilliant speech made by the Premier of this State because in 20 minutes she has summed up exactly the position of this Government in relation to a Royal Commission and to the actions of the proposed Foss committee and the existing Pike committee in the upper House. All members of the Labor Party, Cabinet and Caucus have given the Premier unanimous support for the actions that she announced yesterday and also for the motion before the House. The Premier has made it very clear why that action was necessary.

Last week, when I saw the Opposition's response to the matters associated with the City of Stirling, when the Premier took the advice of the Commissioner of Police and said the proper thing to do was to await his report and then decide whether a further inquiry would take place, and when I saw the response from the public and the Press, I realised that there was no alternative but to have a Royal Commission into that and other matters. The Premier has taken the proper approach to this issue, but no heed was paid to that approach. That approach was turned back on the Government and it was made to appear that the Government was in the business of covering up the matter. That is how dastardly the situation now is in Western Australia. There was no doubt in my mind from that time on that the only way to deal with this issue was to have a full, proper and open inquiry.

That inquiry will be a wide ranging inquiry, which will go back at least 10 years, and the commissioner will have the necessary power to examine what he or she wants to examine. We will soon find out who will roll out from the other side and repeat the sorts of allegations that have been made for the past three years in this coward's castle of Parliament. We will soon find out whether those allegations will be put to the test of fire by a Royal Commission. The Opposition must have the courage to say to its members in the upper House that this matter should be handled outside the body politic in Western Australia. The Pike committee handed down its report when it had not given people the right of reply to the allegations that were made, and when the Crown Solicitor and Mr McCusker advised it against reporting on certain matters. That committee reported for blatant political purposes, with no regard for the truth, not for providing a balance of justice. The members of that committee should pack up and go home straight away.

The extraordinary committee which Mr Foss suggests should be set up in the upper House will focus not on the issues in relation to the City of Stirling but on how the information was obtained.

Mr Catania: Absolutely disgraceful!

Mr TAYLOR: Yes. That committee should pack up before it starts.

It is time that members opposite recognise that we in the Labor Party will not be part of that type of political behaviour. Members opposite can do what they like because they have the numbers in the upper House but we will not be part of their funny political games. If members opposite have something to say, they should say it to the Royal Commission in 1991, and let members in this place and in the upper House get on with the business of governing Western Australia, and debating the future of Western Australia - issues associated with employment, development, the creation of jobs and proper budgeting. Those are the issues for a Parliament which wants to do its job properly and for a Government which wants to get on with the job.

My position on this issue was very much coloured by some of the feedback I received when

on overseas trips and from talking to business people in Western Australia. There is concern in the business community that a Royal Commission might really be a little too difficult for this State to handle. In fact a Royal Commission, carrying on for a year or two years, may lead to a stalemate in Western Australia. People might be prepared to avoid the real issues rather than deal with them. There is no doubt there is good cause for that sort of concern. However, after talking to a number of business people last week, I concluded that we had to deal with the issue in the way the Premier explained yesterday.

Other countries have had the same sorts of problems. In Japan the same sorts of scandals have been associated with the Japanese business community and with politics over the last two or three years. The Japanese have faced up to those issues and dealt with them in the proper way. The same can be said about the United States and the issues there, particularly those associated with the savings and loans institutions. The United States is endeavouring to face up to those issues in that area at a political level, at a legislative level, and at an economic level. The United Kingdom has had the same sorts of problems in the business community there. In the United Kingdom those sorts of issues have been faced up to in the courts and elsewhere. The same can be said about Hong Kong, where the same sorts of problems with the business community were dealt with. It was decided that there was only one way to approach the issue, and that was to go through the difficulties resulting from an inquiry, do it, get it out of the way, and then get on with the job.

That is exactly the approach we should adopt in Western Australia. That is the sort of approach which was reinforced last week when the Government made a couple of dramatic moves in this State in relation to the issue of mining in national parks, and also access to Hamersley Range National Park and the development of the Marandoo iron ore deposit. That development will be worth perhaps \$1.5 billion or more to Western Australia, but it would seem that because this issue has been associated with what has become known as WA Inc, which has so dominated the Western Australian media and our political processes, nothing which could be said or done in relation to the future of this State could overshadow that inquiry. Whatever right and proper decisions we made as a Government would not be treated as they should be treated because the issue of WA Inc would continue to overwhelm those positive decisions. As a result it was most appropriate that the Government made the decision which the Premier announced yesterday. Let us deal with it; let us face up to it. There is no other way to tackle this matter than to face up to it, and that is exactly what the Government intends to do.

I throw down this challenge to the Liberal Party and to the National Party: When this Royal Commission gets under way in 1991, members opposite have a responsibility not to continue to parade in this coward's castle of Parliament all sorts of allegations and comments against members of Parliament, senior business figures or public figures such as the Commissioner of Police and others; members opposite have a responsibility to take them to the Royal Commissioner if they have concerns about them. Members opposite have a wider community responsibility, and that is to debate the issues which the people of Western Australia want to see resolved in the wider marketplace. That issue is the future of this State in the 1990s and beyond. That is the challenge which we as members of Parliament must face, and it is the challenge which we in Government will face. It remains to be seen whether the National Party and the Liberal Party will take up the challenge. I would be surprised if they do, because over the last three years or so they have paid no attention and no heed to the development of the issues of the day; they have paid no attention and no heed to the development of proper policies for the future of Western Australia, because they believe that their path to the Treasury benches in this State lies not in the development of good and sound policies but only in accusation and smear so that they can find a grubby trail to the Treasury benches rather than a right and proper trail. That is the challenge of Opposition members. Whether they can match that challenge is entirely in their hands.

I conclude by saying that this Premier and the leadership that she has shown in the past 10 months and the leadership that she has shown in relation to this issue stand out above all others. There is no doubt about that. She has shown, in the face of very difficult circumstances, the sort of courage which one could expect only of great leaders of this State and this nation over the past decades. I congratulate her on that and I assure her that her decision was the right one, and it was a decision which has the unanimous support of her Cabinet and of her Caucus.

MR MacKINNON (Jandakot - Leader of the Opposition) [2.55 pm]: At the outset I place on record my support for the Premier's announcement of the setting up of the Royal Commission. Since the day I rejected the approach of the former Premier, Brian Burke, and Alan Bond to support the Rothwells' rescue, until my approach last week to the Ombudsman, whose response was arguably the straw which broke the camel's back, I have not stopped seeking the pursuit of the truth. Unlike the Premier and the Deputy Premier, I do not apologise for pursuing the question of a Royal Commission, or for the fact that we now have one. It is the proper course of action, and I have said so for a long time. As I have been saying for some time, it was inevitable that this action would be taken sooner or later. We cannot defend the indefensible, as the Premier has tried to do for so long.

As I have sat here for the last three years pressing this Government day after day to appoint a Royal Commission, I have found it difficult today to understand the speeches made by the Premier and Deputy Premier. They claim that the decision was a difficult one; a tough decision. I do not see it as being very difficult to make a decision which should have been made three years ago and one which we have been urging the Government to make for so long. If it is the right decision, as is supposedly the case, what is so tough about making it? Some people have said to me that it must have been tough to reject Burke and Bond. It was not very tough to make that decision; it was difficult to withstand a lot of the pressure at that time, but not tough. It was difficult then to put up with the media criticism, and criticism from people in the business community and others. There was criticism also from some people in the Liberal Party about that decision, but it was the right decision, and I have never regretted it. I do not believe the Government will regret the decision it has made today - at least those people from the Government who have nothing to hide.

Without detracting from the announcement, and without pre-empting any of the comments of the Leader of the National Party, I still have some concerns about the announcement and the comment made today. The Premier was right yesterday and today when she said that people had lost faith. They have no confidence in the Government of Western Australia, nor in the institution of Parliament which this Government has traditionally treated with disdain. It will be a tragedy if the Premier now allows politics to cloud the issue. The issue has always been the pursuit of the truth; to ensure that we get to the bottom of these matters.

All the gusto of the Premier, most uncharacteristically today, and of the Deputy Premier, most characteristically, and the threats which have been made not to participate in one committee or another, not to consult, not to do this or that, will not hide the essential, fundamental fact that people are looking for a Government and a Premier committed to finding out the truth, not a Government which is playing politics, trading names across the Chamber, and making threats. The Government has said for the last three years that it will resist the irresistible; the people now want to know that members opposite are not just claiming to have some real commitment to this, but really are sincere deep down that they have turned over a new leaf. We all want those responsible brought to account, and we sincerely want to promote the Parliament to look to its future.

The most difficult aspect of all to listen to today was the Premier and her deputy saying, "We now want to get on with the job of debating the real issues of importance for the future." What is it that I have been saying for the past 12 months? I have been saying over and over again: "Premier, have a Royal Commission so that we can push these issues to one side and get on with the job of debating the important issues that are causing concern to the people across the length and breadth of Western Australia today." Eventually the Premier called a Royal Commission, through force of public opinion - a public opinion shaped and moulded predominantly by the leadership shown by the Liberal Party and the National Party in this State, the Opposition, who began the fight on this issue, continued it and concluded it to the extent that we have heard the announcement today.

I have some advice for the Premier with respect to this Royal Commission and I would urge her to listen to it very carefully, because when former Premier Burke retired I said that history would be the judge of Brian Burke and it would not judge him kindly. Neither it has, and neither it will. I also predicted in this Parliament that inevitably we would get the Royal Commission - one cannot defend the indefensible - and we have. However, the Government will be judged severely and harshly indeed if the Royal Commission does not include fundamental principles that will allow it to conclude its job and allow the public, the people of this State, to have their faith restored.

Those principles are these: Firstly, a proper, independent Royal Commissioner must be appointed. The Premier can criticise me and say it is a criticism of everybody in Western Australia to suggest that the Royal Commissioner should come from outside Western Australia, but I remind her again that her own brother - who, like the Opposition, has been pursuing the Royal Commission issue - agrees with me in that regard. How else could that judgment be made? Who could have lived in Western Australia - a relatively small community of one and a half million people or thereabouts - in the last two years and not have formed an opinion about the Royal Commission issue, about WA Inc? No-one could have. What we want is somebody who is totally objective. We want the Royal Commission to be judged properly by the people, not clouded by people who criticise the Royal Commissioner. We want people to respect that individual and let him or her get on with the job. That is not to say there might not be those people in Western Australia; it is just to say that it must be fair and must be seen to be fair if its result is to be judged properly and to have the outcome that I hope the Premier really wishes it will have.

Secondly, the terms of reference of the inquiry must be broad, and I will talk about this more in a moment. In fact, it is the central issue to this motion. The terms of reference must address the question of impropriety and not just the question of illegality. They must enable us to talk about all of the issues - Rothwells, the SGIC, Fremantle Gas and Coke Co Ltd, the Midland abattoirs, phone tapping -

Dr Lawrence: Bunbury Foods.

Mr MacKINNON: It can look at Bunbury Foods if the Government wants it to do so.

Mr Pearce: Observation City.

Mr MacKINNON: It can look at Observation City if the Government wants it to do so.

Dr Lawrence: All of them.

Mr MacKINNON: Would members opposite like to name a few more, such as the petrochemical plant? Let it look at all of them, but let us remember that, unlike the Premier said, there are many facts on the record that require investigation, that may not have been illegal but were highly improper. For example, I will be looking closely at the terms of reference to ensure that the not illegal activity of Terry Burke in taping a conversation - it was not illegal but it was highly improper -

Dr Lawrence: What about the illegal activity of taking bribes?

Mr MacKINNON: Who took the bribe, Premier?

Dr Lawrence: Do you want to investigate that, too?

Mr MacKINNON: Who took the bribe?

Mr Pearce: I do not know. You tell us.

Several members interjected.

Mr MacKINNON: That leads me to the second point, which the Premier, by interjection, has now demonstrated needs inquiry. Why, in May 1987, was that information passed on - and we know from the Channel 9 report - to members of the Cabinet, who discussed it? Did the Premier discuss it?

Dr Lawrence: The key question is, there are allegations about bribery against members of your party.

Mr MacKINNON: I wonder how the Premier knows it is members of our party, because I understand that is supposed to be in the hands of the Commissioner of Police.

Mr Carr: How did Mr Lightfoot get it?

Mr Pearce: You are ducking for cover already and there has only been a Royal Commission for a day.

Mr Cowan: No, it has not been appointed yet.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MacKINNON: I did not deliberately interject on the Premier and I expect the same sort of treatment.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call for order from members on both sides. The Leader of the Opposition is trying to be heard.

Mr MacKINNON: The point at issue with respect to that matter, as much as the Government might wriggle around, is that it was not illegal but it was highly improper for that information to be gained, then passed on to members of the Cabinet. It seems that the Premier knows the information. Perhaps she knew about it in May 1987. Why did she not pass on that information to the Commissioner of Police? She seems to know it is Liberals who allegedly have been bribing people. Why did not the Premier tell the Commissioner of Police? Why did not the Cabinet pass on that information? This is central to the whole question of this Royal Commission. Its terms of reference must enable propriety to be examined as well as illegality. The Government can try to shout me down all it likes.

Thirdly, the question of indemnity is fundamental. As former Queensland Premier Mike Ahern is reported in today's newspaper as having said, without the proper extension of a power of indemnity to the Royal Commissioner we will not find the truth. He lost his job seeking the truth and I admire and respect him greatly for it. The Premier must give a commitment that the Royal Commissioner will have such a power of indemnity.

Fourthly, I believe we should allow the Legislative Council Select Committees to make their own decisions and come to their own conclusions promptly, be that as it may. They should, as soon as practical, come to that conclusion, but it is not for this Parliament to direct them what to do. Quite clearly those committees should do that after they have seen the terms of reference of the Royal Commission: Why would a Select Committee established by the Legislative Council designed to look at two very important issues wind itself up when we have not even seen the terms of reference of the Royal Commission? They may do themselves out of a job only to find that those matters the committee was set up to inquire into were not included in the terms of reference. Therefore I think it is a lot of nonsense for the Premier and the Deputy Premier to try today to espouse some shock and horror about these Select Committees, which are pursuing those activities, ahead of the terms of reference being announced to the Parliament.

Finally, I hope that today we will get commitments from the Government to a prompt announcement of the inquiry - any further delay cannot be tolerated; to have the terms of reference brought forward promptly; and all in time for this Parliament to be able to debate those issues before the end of the session. That is three weeks away, so what we are looking for from the Government - and I will repeat my advice to the Premier - is that the Royal Commissioner must be independent, and the terms of reference must be broad enough to look at impropriety as well as illegality, and at all of those issues which involve predominantly the Government. If they involve any member of my party I want those people exposed. I have said that more than once and I say it again. Nobody in Western Australia has pressed harder for this Royal Commission than have I, and I want it to include an investigation of anybody who may have traversed either legal matters or matters of propriety. As well, the Legislative Council Select Committees should in due course make their own decisions; we can give them some advice, but only after the terms of reference have been announced. Finally, there should be a commitment on the question of indemnity and also to start up the inquiry promptly.

I have said time and time again in this Parliament that the Government can come in here and play its political games as much as it likes, but at the end of the day the truth of the matter will come out. If the Premier tries to play games now with the establishment of the Royal Commission she will lose even more support than that which she and her Government have lost over the last 12 months, and she knows full well that she has lost an enormous amount of support and personal respect in the community because of it. The Premier has no chance of regaining that at all. If she now tries to fiddle around with the terms of reference and the appointment she will only be playing politics in the establishment of the Royal Commission.

Let us see the colour of the Government's money by its commitment to appoint a commissioner and set proper terms of reference. Once the Royal Commission is established properly the House will be able to start debating issues of real importance to the people of Western Australia and I agree with the Premier and the Deputy Premier on that. I have been saying for the past 12 months that until a Royal Commission is established we will not be able to do that. We should now be discussing such things as unemployment, the shambles

that the Minister for Education is presiding over, a health care system that cannot service the people of Western Australia properly and a law and order system which does not have the commitment it deserves and which has resulted in the people of Western Australia being terrorised day after day. I do not support the motion in its present form. The leader of the National Party will be moving some amendments and I will fully support the proposals which will be outlined in his comments.

MR PEARCE (Armadale - Leader of the House) [3.11 pm]: The Leader of the Opposition had a chance to be statesman-like in responding to this motion but he has failed abysmally to take that opportunity. One area he did not mention when discussing all of the areas in which there has been public concern and lack of public confidence was the upper House. The Leader of the Opposition cannot blame the Government for the poor regard in which the upper House is held in this State because the citizens of this State - bemused as they have been about many things - have been bemused about the politicking carried out by upper House committees. It would have been reasonable for the Leader of the Opposition to have responded positively to the Premier's invitation to scrap the existing upper House committee, for it to pass all the information it has to the Royal Commission and to abandon the proposal to set up a sidetracking committee which will attempt to divert suspicion away from Liberal Party members who are the subject of allegations regarding the Stirling City Council. It would have been reasonable for the Leader of the Opposition to have said, "If a Royal Commission is to be set up we will take all of those matters and dump them in the commissioner's lap." However, that has not been done and the reason for that relates to the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition last night on "The 7.30 Report".

I have sat in this House day after day, year in and year out, while the Leader of the Opposition has pounded the table and claimed that he and his colleagues know about the dirty deals that have been done. Now the Royal Commission has been established the first thing the Leader of the Opposition says, within hours of its being announced, is that he does not have any evidence to give to it.

Mr Lewis: We know about your franking machine.

Mr PEARCE: I have no worries about that. I have been investigated for those things and have been given a clean bill of health.

Points of Order

Mr BLAIKIE: Mr Speaker, I draw attention to the time allocated. While there has been no time arrangement made -

Mr PEARCE: Yes, there has. I am keeping a record. It is an hour for each side.

Mr BLAIKIE: I believe that Government members have taken more than 29 minutes on the debate today.

The SPEAKER: As far as I am concerned, Government members can take as long as they like with this debate and so can the members of the Opposition. If there is some agreement made behind the Chair that is left up to the members.

Mr PEARCE: An arrangement has been made between the member for Marmion, the deputy leader of the National Party and me. If that has the member for Vasse's approval I will continue debating the motion.

Mr BLAIKIE: The record is now straight.

Debate Resumed

Mr PEARCE: I am relieved that the member for Vasse now understands the agreement made between the three organisers of the respective parties and which was well understood by all members who are involved in this debate.

I would have thought that it would have been a token of the Leader of the Opposition's concern to see the status of the Royal Commission enhanced and its findings accepted by all people. However, he is trying to squeeze the last inch of political expediency from this issue by rejecting the proposal made by the Premier to have the Pike committee present another report.

Mr Kierath: What are you so worried about?

Mr PEARCE: We are not worried about anything because there is to be a Royal Commission. If the Pike committee had any evidence it would pass it over to the Royal Commission where an independent person could assess it. Why is that committee afraid to hand over the information it has? The answer is because it does not have any information.

Why is not the Opposition crowing over the establishment of a Royal Commission because it has been calling for one for years? The member for Riverton has been sitting there like a stunned mullet and the member next to him has been asleep and no great joy has been expressed by the Opposition over the establishment of the Royal Commission. The awful realisation has struck home that it is put up or shut up time.

Mr Lewis: We are being gracious about it.

Mr PEARCE: The whole paraphernalia of the Royal Commission is about to be set in train and those members who have made allegations in this Parliament, in the Press or in the public will be called before that Royal Commission to tell all they know. Those people have claimed that they have information which can only be given under privilege. Those people will have that privilege and will be given the opportunity to provide that information. People have claimed to know witnesses who would be prepared to come forward as long as they can provide that information under privilege. The commissioner will be asking for those witnesses. He will not only be examining some of the matters that have been raised in this House but he will also have other questions to ask about matters which have occurred. The Leader of the Opposition has talked so much about corruption in this House and in the last week an actual claim of corruption was brought forward; that is, a claim that \$30 000 changed hands.

Mr MacKinnon: By whom was that claim made?

Mr PEARCE: Apparently, the claim was made by one of the Leader of the Opposition's predecessors.

Mr MacKinnon: By whom was the claim made?

Mr PEARCE: I will not name the people in this House, but I could easily do so.

Mr MacKinnon: When did you find out?

Mr PEARCE: I am quite happy to go before the Royal Commission and explain everything I know with regard to that matter. However, those matters are now matters for the Royal Commission and not for the Parliament. Given that a claim of corruption has been made which related to \$30 000 changing hands in order to rezone land which greatly advantaged the person or persons for whom the rezoning was made, the Leader of the Opposition is concerned about who made the tape. I now ask the Leader of the Opposition: Why is he not concerned about who is corrupt?

Mr MacKinnon: Because it was probably the Government who paid for the tape to be made.

Mr PEARCE: Why is the Leader of the Opposition not concerned about the claim of corruption?

Mr MacKinnon: I am. You cannot have it both ways. You are grizzling about the affair and now you say we are not concerned.

Mr PEARCE: The Leader of the Opposition is a joke with regard to that. When the so-called Foss committee was set up did it show any interest in that question of corruption? Not at all, it wanted to know about the tape. If ever I have seen an effort to divert attention away from something that was of great interest to the people of Western Australia that was it. The business about the upper House committee leads to the question of indemnity which occupied an important part of the Leader of the Opposition's speech. It is the Government's view that the question of indemnity is one for the commissioner to decide. The simple reason for that is that there are people - some of those who have been mentioned in the paper who have welcomed the Royal Commission - who are dying to have an indemnity provision laid down so they can claim indemnity and avoid any criminal action being taken against them for activities in which they may have engaged.

It seems strange that the Leader of the Opposition who was so keen to say that the wrongdoers must be punished is immediately raising the question of an indemnity and letting off some of the wrongdoers. An indemnity means that people who have committed crimes

can appear before the Royal Commission and say, "I have committed crimes, but if you let me off I will do in other people." That is what indemnity means in those circumstances. It means that people who have committed crimes can avoid charges themselves by dobbing in other people. It may happen that some person who has committed a minor infringement knows much of what went on and will be given an indemnity by the commissioner in order that more information be released. That is a matter not for the Government or the Parliament to decide, it is a matter on which the commissioner must decide.

Mr C.J. Barnett: How can the commissioner decide on that, if he is not given the power?

Mr PEARCE: No-one said that he will not be given power. The Government's view is that is a matter for the commissioner to decide.

Mr MacKinnon: That is exactly what I said.

Mr PEARCE: No, it is not. The Leader of the Opposition was very keen to have indemnities placed on the table very quickly. What is his reason for that?

Mr MacKinnon: I want the commissioner to be able to make up his mind.

Several members interjected.

Mr PEARCE: That is not what the Leader of the Opposition said. Now he is given the hint by a member of his backbench.

Mr MacKinnon: The Bill which we introduced spells that out.

Mr PEARCE: My speech has indicated clearly that the Government will give an opportunity for the Royal Commissioner to grant indemnities. However, that is a matter for him. In my view, many other questions that members of the Opposition -

Mr MacKinnon: When did I say that about the indemnities?

Mr PEARCE: The Leader of the Opposition did not say. But he is very keen to have -

Mr MacKinnon: I was talking about the terms of reference, and that the Royal Commissioner should extend indemnities -

Mr PEARCE: I would be a little careful were I the Leader of the Opposition in trying to allow ways in which people may be able to escape justice; the only allegations I have heard of direct criminal activity in recent times relate to his colleagues.

Mr Fred Tubby: A chap in Armadale wants to go before the Royal Commission.

Mr PEARCE: I am sure he does. He will be as welcome as anyone to put forward his claims. People are welcome to do that. However, no-one will receive an indemnity unless the Royal Commissioner decides good reasons exist to do that.

Mr Clarko: You sound like a modern day St Paul on his way to Damascus.

Mr PEARCE: Except that what I am pointing to is the reverse of that conversion -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I need to hear the member speaking.

Mr PEARCE: - that the Leader of the Opposition is so keen to investigate these matters, suddenly becomes less keen when it is clear that some of his members will be asked questions. The participation of some members of the Opposition, in some of the cases, might be interesting as well.

The former member for Murchison-Eyre has surfaced in recent times making a range of claims and sending notes to the member for Applecross. One point which struck me when reading the claims of the former member for Murchison-Eyre was: What was he doing having lunch with Crown witnesses when cases are under way?

Mr MacKinnon: Refer it to the Royal Commission!

Mr PEARCE: I suggest that the former member for Murchison-Eyre will be asked about these matters.

Mr MacKinnon: If you have a problem, refer it to the Royal Commission.

Mr PEARCE: We will be. However, I am wondering why the Leader of the Opposition is

suddenly a bit jumpy about many of these matters - when suddenly it is his members who have questions to answer. What kind of participation have some Opposition members had - and I mean party members in the wider sense - in some cases coming before the courts? In recent times, we have witnessed an admission by a Federal Liberal Party member of Parliament that he was personally involved shortly before becoming a candidate for Federal Parliament in investigations of Mr Len Brush and Mr Martin. What was the connection between Mr Filing and Mr Lightfoot? The Royal Commission will be interested in finding out about these matters.

A lot will be discovered by the Royal Commission but not necessarily the sorts of matters that members opposite have been talking about so far. The view of the Opposition was that if it kept up the call for a Royal Commission, and did not get one, it would be of maximum political advantage to it and no real capacity for any Opposition member to find himself having to put forward information. Now, it is put up or shut up time. That hard realisation is just hitting home.

MR COWAN (Merredin - Leader of the National Party) [3.23 pm]: I am very pleased indeed that the Government has finally responded to public demand for a Royal Commission into what are now known as the Western Australian Government's failed business dealings.

The majority of the time spent by the Government in debate so far has been a reflection upon another place, or more accurately a reflection on the committees that the other place has either established or proposed to establish. Debate so far has not dealt with the issues around which the call for a Royal Commission was first initiated. It has not referred to the Rothwells' rescue where the Parliament received advice that proved to be totally incorrect, yet the Government acted upon that advice and lost a substantial amount of taxpayers' money. It has not referred to the debt for equity transfer scheme, the Petrochemical Industries Co Ltd project where the Government attempted to get out of the \$150 million guarantee to the National Australia Bank, and lost even more money.

Debate so far has not dealt with any of those matters. However, those issues were the reasons for the demands by members on this side of the House for a Royal Commission of inquiry, and why the public supported that demand. It was taxpayers' money which was lost by the Government. We should never forget that in the course of debate. One matter which has emerged from the McCusker inquiry is that it has become apparent that Mr McCusker was responsible for an investigation by the National Companies and Securities Commission about breaches of the Companies Code. Mr McCusker was not required to deal with all those other issues - ministerial involvement, the involvement of certain people in the Public Service and the intertwining with all the deals that have become known as WA Inc.

Many people have said that while Mr McCusker did his job in inquiring into breaches of the Companies Code for and on behalf of the NCSC, it cannot be said that Mr McCusker was capable of, given his terms of reference, inquiring into some other aspects of ministerial and Government involvement or the involvement of senior officers of the public sector. For that reason, the Royal Commission has always been called for. No doubt, recent allegations of bribery and corruption within the Stirling City Council have added to the call for a Royal Commission. Nevertheless, let us not forget the first reason for the calling of a Royal Commission, and let us not forget that this Government resisted that call until such time as it became impossible for it to continue that resistance.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Mr COWAN: I am very pleased that the Government has accepted that a Royal Commission with wide ranging powers must be set up. I congratulate the Premier, the Cabinet, and those members of the Australian Labor Party who support the Government, for finally deciding to give such approval.

It will make a change for us in future to come to this place to debate matters other than a call for a Royal Commission. It will be a very pleasant change to debate the terms of reference, to satisfy ourselves that the terms of reference will be wide-ranging and that the Royal Commission will do what everybody wants it to do: It will get to the bottom of the whole issue of WA Inc, find out where the money went, who has the money and whether we can get it back, and ensure that the people who lost the money - whether those people are in Parliament, members of the Government, or on this side of the House - are punished. That is what this matter is all about.

It will be very pleasing, instead of calling for a Royal Commission, to at last begin the process of identifying and putting to the Government adequate terms of reference. I hope that we are offered some input to that issue because it appears to me that the public expectations of a Royal Commission will never be satisfied unless the public are perfectly satisfied with the terms of reference. They must also be satisfied with the person who is appointed as Royal Commissioner. I realise that the Government will not satisfy everybody with the terms of reference or the appointment of the Royal Commissioner. However, it is the responsibility of the Government to canvass the terms of reference very broadly so that input from outside Government circles is received. The same thing cannot be said about the appointment of a Royal Commissioner. That is a matter for the Government; however, once again, I would expect the Government in its attempt to gain tripartite support to at least consult with the Leader of the Opposition and perhaps with myself about the person whom it wishes to appoint.

Certain factors will have to be addressed by the Royal Commission if it is to get to the bottom of the issues which have concerned us for such a long time. Irrespective of whether Government members deny it, for a long time allegations have been made that certain Ministers were involved in giving directions to statutory authorities as Cabinet dealt with certain matters. When the terms of reference are drawn up, it is important that powers are given to the Royal Commissioner to have access to Government records. This should include Cabinet minutes on matters which have been the subject of debate, and parliamentary and Executive privilege should not be claimed by any Minister who goes before the Royal Commission as a reason not to give evidence. It is important that we refute the attack by the Government on members of another place. I am sure that the Pike committee would be prepared, if requested, to do precisely as the Government has asked.

Mr Pearce: That is all we are asking.

Mr COWAN: The point is that the terms of reference have not been provided. If I were a member of the Pike committee, I would be most reluctant to agree to hand over all of the evidence collected until I knew that the Royal Commission was a genuine inquiry with wide-ranging powers, and that this commission made the Pike committee redundant. Undoubtedly, once the Pike committee is satisfied of this, it will immediately hand over any evidence it has collected. However, to ask it to do so before the terms of reference have been provided is a nonsense.

The same case could be argued about the establishment of the Foss committee. Similarly, if the terms of reference are capable of dealing with the questions which that committee, if established, would investigate, I am sure that the upper House committee would not be formed. Let us do things in their proper sequence. Let us see the terms of reference in place before the committees are asked to wind up their activities. I am sure that the other place would indicate that it is not prepared to wind up the Pike committee nor defer the appointment of the Foss committee until such time as it has seen the terms of reference. Clearly, while we are supporters of the appointment of a Royal Commission, we do not want to be supporters of a motion which appears to indicate support of the Government's move to do nothing but criticise committee members in another place.

Amendment to Motion

Mr COWAN: I move -

To delete all words after "House" with a view to inserting the following -

Expresses its support for the Government announcement of a Royal Commission of inquiry with wide ranging powers and further this House -

- (1) Requires the Government to ensure that the Royal Commission has unfettered access to all Government records, including all the minutes of all Cabinet meetings and other papers during the period under inquiry;

I refer members to a cartoon which appeared in yesterday morning's newspaper in relation to this point. My amendment continues -

- (2) Is of the view that neither parliamentary privilege nor Executive privilege are grounds for withholding information from the Royal Commission;

- (3) Requires the Premier to consult with the leaders of the National and Liberal Parties before appointing a Royal Commissioner; and
- (4) Requires the Premier to consult with the leaders of the National and Liberal Parties regarding the terms of reference of the Royal Commission.

MR LEWIS (Applecross) [3.37 pm]: I second the amendment. This is a bittersweet experience today for me and for all members of the Opposition. I came to this Parliament today with good will thinking that the Government had finally seen the error of its ways, and that it was prepared to proceed with a Royal Commission. However, what happened? The Premier got to her feet and admonished the Opposition for doing its job. She gave the impression that she was of the opinion that she was forced into making this decision against her will and against the will of the public of Western Australia. Rather than the Premier having the grace, and perhaps being honest enough, to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition and the Opposition for its determination and grit in the longstanding campaign on behalf of the public of Western Australia to ensure that a comprehensive Royal Commission was established, she came into the Chamber and did nothing but complain about, and admonish, the Opposition in what it has succeeded in doing.

Also, the Government tried to debunk, and place in disrepute, the Opposition in the Legislative Council. That was absolutely disgraceful! It is certainly against the Standing Orders of this House to reflect badly on Legislative Council committees which are doing their jobs properly. For the Premier to come into the Chamber and move a motion which states that before the terms of reference of the Royal Commission are announced the Opposition should automatically agree that the Legislative Council Select Committees will be withdrawn, and for the Government to do what it so desires in framing Royal Commission's terms of reference, is a nonsense - that is something which should not be expected of the Opposition.

The Leader of the National Party, through this amendment, has placed squarely on the record what the Opposition expects the Government to do. It expects the Government to confer with the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party in framing the terms of reference and in choosing the Royal Commissioner; it is also imperative that parliamentary and Executive privilege are not used by any witness who goes before the Royal Commission as an excuse for not giving evidence. The point made by the Leader of the House to the effect that we may be afraid of what may arise or be determined if the Select Committees in the Legislative Council continue is nonsense. Unfortunately, the Leader of the House has some sort of a hang-up with the Legislative Council and he has tried to divert attention from this House to what is supposed to be wrongdoings of the other place. The fact is that this Government cannot accept, after eight years in Government, that the Opposition parties in the Legislative Council have the numbers, just as the Government has the numbers in this place. It will necessarily follow that the Opposition will use those numbers for the proper government of this State.

I commend to the House the amendment moved by the Leader of the National Party.

MR THOMPSON (Darling Range) [3.41 pm]: At the outset I advise the House that I am delighted I am being allocated four minutes. It is an equitable thing that I should have two minutes from this side of the House and two minutes from the other side of the House. I do not want to detract from the thrust of the Opposition's comments, but I am entitled to have a few words to say.

I support the first part of the Premier's motion; that is, that the House expresses its support for the Government's announcement of a Royal Commission with wide ranging powers. I do not support the balance of the Premier's motion because it is a bit of jiggery pokery and, therefore, I find myself in accord with the sentiments expressed in the Leader of the National Party's amendment in which he is clearly targeting the principal issue which should be addressed with the Government's moving to establish a Royal Commission.

Frankly, the Premier missed a golden opportunity the day on which she became the Premier to ensure that her status in this community rose dramatically by not coming out and saying there would be a Royal Commission. The previous Premier had found himself on a hook and he could do nothing but try to tough it out. The incoming Premier was not confronted by that

situation and she made a grave error of judgment by endeavouring to tough it out. To me, it was inevitable that there would be a Royal Commission into the matters which the commission will now set about pursuing. That inevitably should have been recognised by members who sit opposite and I think the Premier made a mistake. I suppose she was under pressure from some of the same people who were advising the former Premier and she would have found it difficult to hold out. However, it was inevitable that there would be a Royal Commission and it is the only way in which the reputation of several institutions in this town can be restored.

Mrs Beggs: And several individuals.

Mr THOMPSON: I agree with the Minister and if she recognised that, why did she not use her good office to persuade her colleagues that there should be a Royal Commission?

I also take this opportunity to inform the House that there are people around this institution who are galloping around my electorate saying that I am not in favour of a Royal Commission and they are using that politically against me. I advise them that if they continue to do that I will retaliate in a very vigorous way. On a number of occasions within this House I have expressed the view that there should be a Royal Commission and I have said it publicly at Rotary meetings and at a range of other meetings. For people who are associated with a particular party in this Parliament to represent otherwise is a gross misrepresentation and I resent it and will react very vigorously against those who perpetrate it.

DR LAWRENCE (Glendalough - Premier) [3.45 pm]: I thought it worth reiterating what I said in my opening remarks. The amendment, of which I was aware, basically seeks a commitment from Government as to the terms of reference and the powers to be given to a Royal Commission. I have already outlined my view of that and we will debate the amendments to the Bill when they come to this House. Parenthetically one of the things which worries me about the Opposition's position - I did not hear the Leader of the National Party say it, but I heard the Leader of the Opposition say it - is the question of indemnities which might be given to people to appear before a Royal Commission to give evidence. That is not in my view a decision I can or should make or that the Government might make, nor should it make such a decision before a commission is established. It is critical that people's evidence be tested to the full; people should be challenged to tell their story and if the only way they will do that is by seeking to avoid a just process and an appropriate trial, that is very much a last resort of any commission. For Mr Ahern or anyone else to be saying in advance that people would be offered that sort of indemnity is a most extraordinary proposition; that is a decision a commissioner might make in order to examine the matters which he or she is asked to examine.

It is important that that not be seen in advance as something which is being offered. There are people in this town, as all of us know, who would like nothing better than not to have to stand before the courts and take the consequences of their actions. That is the sort of thing which must be considered extremely carefully and very much as a last resort and not as the first offer on day one. It alarms me to hear that coming so quickly from the Opposition, and again it raises my suspicions.

I am concerned that we should appoint a person of calibre, a person of legal experience of the highest order and a person in whom we can all have confidence, and that includes members opposite. I will take account of the views of Opposition members and perhaps they can suggest a few people to me. We are looking to appoint someone who will have the capacity and understanding to undertake what will be an extremely difficult exercise and no-one is suggesting that it will be otherwise. Part of the problem will be getting someone - and we should not confine ourselves only to Western Australia, but should look throughout Australia for the appropriate person - who will be prepared to take it on. One of the sad things that followed from Mr McCusker's inquiry is that he was vilified - not by the National Party, but by other members opposite in this House and on television to the point where Mr McCusker took the extraordinary step of issuing a Press statement which, in its inevitable fashion, got buried in *The West Australian* but which was the most extraordinary rebuff of many of the allegations which members opposite made in this House. Basically, they were accusing him, not the Government, of being less than competent and diligent in his duties.

It will be a difficult task to obtain a Royal Commissioner who meets those criteria of high

standing agreed to by all of us in this place, who is willing to take on a task of enormous magnitude and to accept the risk of vilification, if not from the National Party, certainly from the Liberal Party if it is not satisfied with the way he or she proceeds. It will not be an easy process, and anyone opposite who thinks it will be done by the snap of the fingers tomorrow and be a person who the Government thinks will toe the line which the Government wants to move along is mistaken. Any suggestion to the contrary is frankly offensive.

I do not intend to formally consult with members opposite, either on the terms of reference of the Royal Commission or the appointment of the commissioner, but I am well aware of their views and if they want to put them to me in a formal way I will, of course, consider them. It is not a formal consultation, I am simply offering Opposition members an opportunity to tell me what they think is reasonable, apart from this debate. It is the Government's decision and it will make it.

My concern in the motion was to affirm the need for a Royal Commission - a full, proper, comprehensive and wide ranging commission - and also to indicate my serious concern about the behaviour of members in the other place. For that reason I am not prepared, on behalf of the Government, to indicate any support for the amendment moved by the Leader of the National Party.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (22)

Mr C.J. Barnett	Mr Kierath	Mr Omodei	Dr Turnbull
Mr Bradshaw	Mr Lewis	Mr Shave	Mr Watt
Mr Clarko	Mr MacKinnon	Mr Strickland	Mr Wiese
Mr Cowan	Mr McNee	Mr Thompson	Mr Blaikie (<i>Teller</i>)
Mrs Edwardes	Mr Mensaros	Mr Trenorden	
Mr House	Mr Minson	Mr Fred Tubby	

Noes (26)

Mrs Beggs	Dr Gallop	Mr Marlborough	Mr Taylor
Mr Bridge	Mr Graham	Mr McGinty	Mr Troy
Mrs Buchanan	Mr Grill	Mr Pearce	Dr Watson
Mr Carr	Mrs Henderson	Mr Read	Mr Wilson
Mr Catania	Mr Gordon Hill	Mr Ripper	Mrs Watkins (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr Cunningham	Mr Kobelke	Mr D.L. Smith	
Dr Edwards	Dr Lawrence	Mr P.J. Smith	

Pairs

Mr Nicholls	Mr Donovan
Mr Grayden	Mr Thomas
Mr Court	Mr Leahy

Amendment thus negatived.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

MR LEWIS (Applecross) [3.53 pm]: I am disappointed that the Premier did not have the grace to come into this House today and succinctly inform it of the Government's decision to appoint the Royal Commission which more than 80 per cent of Western Australians want. Instead she came into the House and admonished the Opposition for doing its duty and like a stubborn, arrogant schoolgirl who had been bettered she tried to rub into the Opposition that its members were the people doing this terrible thing to the State of Western Australia. She did not mention the fact that she and her Government had defended the indefensible against all odds for nearly three years, had covered up, told untruths and misled this House while digging themselves into an intolerable position. The Premier has the arrogance to blame the Opposition and ridicule it for doing its duty, which the public of Western Australia expected it to do. That is the nub of the matter.

This House should recognise the great job the Leader of the Opposition has done for the public of Western Australia in discharging his duty. Rather than coming into this place and

criticising him the Premier should have said, "Reluctantly, I admit that you have been right since mid October 1987. Three years on we realise that you are right. We should never have got into this mess from day one. We should never have defended these happenings or tried to work our way out of things." The Government did that in what I consider to be an immoral way. The Premier should have continued, "We should not have hidden the truth from the public of Western Australia. We should have cut the strings earlier." Many Government members would agree with that statement. They have been against the Premier and Cabinet for defending the indefensible for the many months and their branches and supporters have been telling the Government that its position was untenable. That is what it has taken for the Premier to at last reluctantly come before this House to announce what had to happen at some time or other.

The Leader of the House has made certain accusations against members of the Legislative Council because they have put in place under the bicameral system of Parliament in Western Australia proper Select Committees to investigate matters which the Government was afraid to investigate. The due democratic process of Western Australia has been pursued by a duly elected upper House of this State. Perhaps that is what finally forced this reluctant Government to be dragged to the chopping block.

Mr Kobelke: Is your name Alice? Are you living in fairy land?

Mr LEWIS: The Opposition has been right from day one. The member for Nollamara knows that the Government has been wrong. His inane interjection goes nowhere. Members on the Government side should be sitting with their heads hanging, looking at their navels, because it has taken all this time for the dummies opposite to face the truth!

The other thing that reflects badly on the Leader of the House is that he has accused the Opposition of wanting a Royal Commission so that some people could gain Crown immunity and therefore not be prosecuted. That could not be further from the truth. There is no proof, not the slightest hint, that at any time any members of the Opposition benches have even considered that. For the Leader of the House to accuse the Opposition of trying to facilitate that shows the level to which he has stooped. Three weeks ago the Deputy Premier went to the Press and tried to debunk a report which reflected on the honesty and conscientiousness of members in the other place. It was a report presented in the upper House of this Parliament, which he has called a coward's castle.

Why did the Minister for Finance and Economic Development table the McCusker report in this coward's castle? Is it because the report had to have privilege? What the Government did not know was that the Opposition had the capability of putting forward a credible report. I challenge the Minister for Finance and Economic Development, and I challenge the "mouth", the Leader of the House, to show where there is any inaccuracy in our report.

Amendment to Motion

Mr LEWIS: My time is limited, and I want to move further amendments. I move -

Line 6 - To add after the word "activities" the following -
as soon as possible

Line 7 - To add after the word "possession" the following -
and relevant to the Royal Commission

Line 9 - To add after the word "Premier" the following -
when it is appointed and its terms of reference announced

Line 12 - To delete all words after the word "allegations" with a view to inserting the following -

subject to the terms of reference of the Royal Commission adequately addressing the matter of inquiry proposed to be pursued by these Select Committees.

The motion would then read as follows -

That this House expresses its support for the Government announcement of a Royal Commission of Inquiry with wide-ranging powers.

Further, that this House -

Calls on the Legislative Council Select Committee on State Investments relating to PICL, WAGH and Rothwells to wind up its activities as soon as possible and to forward any material in its possession and relevant to the Royal Commission announced yesterday by the Premier when it is appointed and its terms of reference announced.

Calls on the Legislative Council not to proceed with moves to establish the Foss Select Committee into Stirling City Council bribery allegations subject to the terms of reference of the Royal Commission adequately addressing the matter of inquiry proposed to be pursued by these Select Committees.

MR HOUSE (Stirling) [4.04 pm]: I am pleased to second these amendments to the Government's motion. I support the establishment of this Royal Commission, and I am very pleased that the Government, after many months of procrastination, has seen fit to put a Royal Commission in place. I for one hope that every person in this State who has abused or broken the law, or abused his or her privilege as a member of this Parliament, will be brought to his just reward and be prosecuted by the courts of this land. I hope that that Royal Commission will act speedily in that regard.

There would have been no need for the establishment of a Select Committee in another place had the Government moved more quickly to establish a wide ranging Royal Commission. It would not have been necessary for the Pike committee to be established. It would not be necessary to establish the proposed Foss committee had this Government established a Royal Commission 12 or 18 months ago when it should have done so. It is therefore right and proper that these committees should be permitted to continue until such time as a Royal Commission is appointed and the terms of reference are known, and at that time the committee should hand over any evidence and material it has to be examined by the Royal Commission.

The Premier said in her opening remarks when moving this motion that the Royal Commissions Act would have to be amended. She has not given any details to the Parliament of what those amendments would comprise. It is important that those details be made known soon, and that we are made aware of them. I accept her word that this Royal Commission will be wide ranging and that it will have no restrictions. If the Premier intends to amend the Royal Commissions Act she should make it clear to the Parliament when she intends to do that and what amendments the Government intends to make. I would also be interested to know whether the amending Bill will be introduced in this session of Parliament, because the Premier does not seem to have made that very clear.

Mr Pearce: Yes, it will.

Mr HOUSE: Will the Bill be debated during this session? Will it go through the whole process?

Mr Pearce: The intention of the Government is to set up the Royal Commission as soon as possible. It is anxious to have the process under way, not dragging on for months. We want the legislation dealt with during this session of Parliament.

Mr HOUSE: We hope the Royal Commission will be appointed before Christmas.

Mr Pearce: Yes, that is our intention.

Mr HOUSE: I am pleased to hear the Leader of the House say that; I am glad that he has made that commitment.

I was a little disappointed when the Premier alluded to the fact that we may prejudge the findings of the Royal Commission. I for one - and I am sure I speak also for my colleagues - will not be making pre-judgments on the Royal Commissioner's decision, nor will I be adopting an attitude that, if he does not find as I expect him to, he is wrong. I for one am happy to accept the findings of the Royal Commissioner and I sincerely believe my colleagues will do the same.

The establishment of this Royal Commission gives us the opportunity, as members of Parliament, to get on with the business of governing this State. It is time for the attention of this House, which for the last two years has been so heavily devoted to debating the issue of

WA Inc, to be turned to other matters. We must get on with the business of governing this State and helping and assisting the people of this State to keep their jobs. We will be faced in a few weeks' time with young people leaving school, and their prospects of employment are not very good. It is time that we, as members of Parliament, made a conscious resolution to turn around the debates which have been going on in this Parliament, albeit rightly at times, and get on with the business of governing this State. We should be doing the right and proper things which are expected of us as members of Parliament; that is, to enhance the prospects of this State.

MR PEARCE (Armadale - Leader of the House) [4.10 pm]: The Government does not support these amendments. However, they are more reasonable than the last group on which we were asked to adjudicate. The Royal Commission is the avenue through which all inquiries and evidence should be addressed. Everyone in the State knows that the upper House committees have been frauds and shams from day one. The Select Committee on State Investments relating to Rothwells, PICL and WAGH took assorted allegations from five people; it sought no rebuttal of those points, it did not ascertain the truth of those points and presented that information as a report of an upper House committee, designed to be politically embarrassing, at the beginning of a parliamentary session. The main witness - or "allegator" to use Joh Bjelke-Petersen's words - is now before the courts on some very serious charges. It is nonsense to suggest that that Select Committee is conducting anything like a reasonable or proper inquiry. It is nonsense for members opposite to try to pretend that the upper House committee needs to be hung onto as some kind of lever to make certain they are happy with the terms of reference. Why cannot members opposite be statesmanlike about the matter and say that they accept that the upper House committees are a device, used perhaps with some success in order to obtain a Royal Commission, and now that that has happened those committees will provide their evidence to the commission.

Mr Omodei: What are you afraid of?

Mr PEARCE: I am not afraid of anything, for heaven's sake. How can the member ask that question when I am suggesting the Opposition should gather all relevant material and place it in the lap of the Royal Commission?

Mr Omodei: Why don't you do the job that this House is supposed to do and let the other House do its job?

Mr PEARCE: The Opposition is afraid to do that; that is why it is dodging and ducking the issue; and that is why it is trying to give itself excuses for not disbanding the committee. As I said before, the upper House committee has no evidence that will stand up before a Royal Commission. The Rothwells committee is not game to present its evidence to an independent person for judgment. That is why it is trying to find reasons for not passing on the information allegedly being gleaned by that upper House committee and that is why the Opposition will not make the commitment to pass on any information. That is consistent with the words of the Leader of the Opposition who told "The 7.30 Report" that he had no evidence to give to a Royal Commission. His upper House committee has no evidence either and that fact will become clear -

Mr Omodei: You are worried.

Mr PEARCE: The Government is not worried.

Mr Omodei: You are.

Mr PEARCE: That will become clear over the next few weeks. I am pointing out -

Mr Minson: That committee has got the Government really worried, hasn't it? It has really got the Government frightened.

Mr PEARCE: How can it have the Government worried or frightened?

Mr Lewis interjected.

Mr PEARCE: The member for Applecross normally sits screwed up like a dried out prune while claiming to be an expert on body language in this House. How can someone be fearful of evidence being presented to a committee when that person is urging the committee to make that evidence public by presenting it to the Royal Commissioner?

Mr MacKinnon: Sometimes you do well but today you are not doing well.

Mr PEARCE: That may be the case. At least sometimes I do well which puts me a little ahead of the Leader of the Opposition who never does well and who did particularly poorly today on what should have been a red letter day for him. The upper House committee has no evidence and it is afraid to present its material to a Royal Commission because it knows perfectly well that that fact will be revealed.

Mr Strickland interjected.

Mr PEARCE: The Royal Commission will be wanting to talk to the member for Scarborough. Did the Leader of the Opposition unequivocally accept the guarantees which the member for Scarborough and the Leader of the Opposition in the upper House gave him concerning the Stirling City Council matters?

Mr MacKinnon: I have their assurances and, as I indicated before, if any of my colleagues were found to be illegally or improperly involved in matters I would ask for their resignation. The matter is as simple as that.

Mr PEARCE: The Leader of the Opposition's acceptance of that is very interesting. The Government will not accept this amendment. This is the first opportunity the Opposition has had, since the announcement was made to establish a Royal Commission -

Mr Lewis: Were you against the Royal Commission?

Mr PEARCE: The Cabinet unanimously supported it.

Mr Lewis: You were against it, were you?

Mr PEARCE: I have already said publicly -

Mr MacKinnon: After the Premier tabled her resignation in writing.

Mr PEARCE: That is untrue.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PEARCE: The Premier put the decision to Cabinet and it was unanimously agreed to. There is no truth in the claim made by the Leader of the Opposition. This is the first opportunity for the Opposition to put-up or shut-up on matters concerning the Royal Commission; it flunked the test and the people of Western Australia are entitled to know why.

MR MacKINNON (Jandakot - Leader of the Opposition) [4.16 pm]: Firstly, the matter is not a question of the Opposition's putting-up or shutting-up in Parliament. It is about the Royal Commission being established and the commissioner determining the truth about issues. It is something for which we have been calling consistently for about three years. Secondly, the Premier and the Leader of the House have somehow tried to muddy the waters surrounding the indemnity issue. The Government and I agree that nobody else should have the power to extend indemnity except the Royal Commissioner. That is not new, it is in the Royal Commission Bill tabled in Parliament by the Opposition; we have said it all along.

Thirdly, the amendments to the Premier's motion have been moved because her motion does not reflect the facts. The motion which proposed the establishment of the Select Committee in the Council to be headed by Hon Peter Foss considers issues about whether the file which, during the course of the trial of Robert Smith, was referred to variously as the "blue file" or the "Govt file", the diary of Robert Smith or any other paper or evidence, indicate or refer to private inquiry work done for the Government. The proposed Foss committee's suggested inquiries are predominantly concerned with the Government. No wonder the Government is desperate to see that committee disbanded. It is paranoid about a committee in the Legislative Council because that committee addresses the central issues which have been of concern to the Opposition; namely, what has the Government's role been in these affairs; why has it been involved and what Government funds have been used to pursue their dirty little political activities? The comments about the upper House committees are nothing more than balderdash.

Fourthly, in relation to the terms of reference of the committees in the Legislative Council, as the member for Applecross has asked, why was it necessary for those committees to be appointed in the first place? The reason is that "Stonewall Jackson the second" in the form of the Premier, preceded by "Stonewall Jackson the first", Peter Dowding, repeatedly defended

issues. They did not want a Royal Commission; they did not want the truth to come out, but a Royal Commission has been proposed. The only reason those committees were established was to obtain the truth. I do not want to agree to a motion that does not include the following words -

... subject to the terms of reference of the Royal Commission adequately addressing the matter of inquiry proposed to be pursued by these Select Committees.

I would bet that the Government would like the Opposition to disband those committees tomorrow in order that the Government could propose any terms of reference it liked which did not address those issues. The Opposition does not trust the Government. The Deputy Premier signed a piece of paper with Hon Joe Berinson, the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council and it was not worth the paper it was written on because that commitment was not honoured in writing. Why should the Opposition take this Government at its word? I will not take it at its word. Unless the terms of reference are clearly spelt out I will not make any commitment as Leader of the Opposition which may prevent a proper inquiry taking place and the truth being revealed.

The Leader of the House talked about our being statesmanlike. I was hoping we would see a statesperson come into the House today in a humble and contrite manner announcing that a Royal Commission would be established and admitting that the Opposition had been right. We saw nothing more nor less than the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Leader of the House trying to heap abuse on the Opposition as though it had tried to cover up the truth, as though it had tried to stop a Royal Commission for the past three years. The people of Western Australia know what the truth is; they have forced the Government's hand, and I for one am pleased about that. I urge the Government to look very carefully at the amendment proposed by the member for Applecross because, for the reasons I have outlined, the Opposition is not happy with the motion as originally framed.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (22)			
Mr Ainsworth	Mr House	Mr Minson	Dr Turnbull
Mr C.J. Barnett	Mr Kierath	Mr Omodei	Mr Watt
Mr Bradshaw	Mr Lewis	Mr Shave	Mr Wiese
Mr Clarke	Mr MacKinnon	Mr Strickland	Mr Blaikie (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr Cowan	Mr McNee	Mr Thompson	
Mrs Edwardes	Mr Mensaros	Mr Fred Tubby	
Noes (26)			
Mrs Beggs	Dr Gallop	Mr Marlborough	Mr Taylor
Mr Bridge	Mr Graham	Mr McGinty	Mr Troy
Mrs Buchanan	Mr Grill	Mr Pearce	Dr Watson
Mr Carr	Mrs Henderson	Mr Read	Mr Wilson
Mr Catania	Mr Gordon Hill	Mr Ripper	Mrs Watkins (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr Cunningham	Mr Kobelke	Mr D.L. Smith	
Dr Edwards	Dr Lawrence	Mr P.J. Smith	
Pairs			
Mr Nicholls		Mr Donovan	
Mr Grayden		Mr Thomas	
Mr Court		Mr Leahy	

Amendment thus negatived.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

MR STRICKLAND (Scarborough) [4.24 pm]: I agree entirely with what the Leader of the Opposition has indicated the Government is likely to do with the Royal Commission. I support the move to set up a Royal Commission because of the great need to preserve the integrity, not only of the State Government, but also of local government. I am in a unique situation in this House in that I am a former Stirling City councillor. I am proud of my service which extended from 1981 to 1990. I have been extremely concerned over the past

two weeks - just after the Parliament rose - to see what has been happening in the media and the allegations that have been made. Two things must happen; firstly, the investigation must be thorough with the terms of reference sufficient to allow a proper investigation. Secondly, it must be undertaken in a way which will encourage people to come forward.

In my time at the City of Stirling I avoided attacking people and personalities. I have always attacked an issue, and that is what it is supposed to be about. I will not drop any bombshells this afternoon in the Parliament because I am taking the Premier at her word: There will be a Royal Commission with proper terms of reference, which I hope will encourage people to step forward. What concerns me greatly is that the whole Press coverage has emanated from a tape - which I have never heard - which contains allegations of improper conduct, corruption and bribery at the City of Stirling. As a councillor one hears of rumours of the existence of tapes, and I have heard of the existence of three. One of them was written up in *The West Australian* last week, one was the subject of a court case, and the other we have all heard about through the Smith trial. The media have said there are four tapes so they have heard of one more than I have.

It is terribly important in seeking to restore integrity to local and State Government that we have an impartial umpire or Royal Commissioner. Concern has been expressed to me about the apparent inactivity of the Police Department and I have been asked why the allegations were not followed up promptly. I had my first interview ever with the police on a matter of inquiry last Wednesday. One can also raise the question of why allegations were not investigated in the time frame that people are talking about. At the time of the adoption of the City of Stirling's motion with regard to Observation City, I heard of no allegations, and no whiff of scandal or bribery. I am quite astounded that this matter has suddenly erupted and gone like a bushfire. I am very concerned that people who are very proud of their local government service, have had to sit back and say "I am innocent", but in some way have to try to show people that they are not guilty.

I will be proud to go before a Royal Commission. However, I will not refer to rumours that have been told to me. I will relate only the things that councillors have said to me and the things in which I have participated.

I was astounded when the Leader of the House referred to rezoning. I am not sure what was his drift or what is his knowledge of that matter. The only rezoning I can remember was that of the Chinese restaurant and it will be interesting to listen to the discussions about that. There is a little humour in the whole affair. Somebody from the Press rang me and asked me whether I knew Jack Walsh. I said I did. We chatted for a while until I realised that the Jack Walsh we were talking about was not the Jack Walsh who was the personnel officer at the Stirling City Council chambers but the Jack Walsh who was involved behind the scenes and who was referred to in the newspapers the other day. I never met him nor talked to him.

I have spoken to one councillor who is concerned about the small extract of the diary which is referred to in the newspaper. That councillor is concerned that it has been either fiddled with or has originated in a way that has not been explained because it is not factual. I guess all of these things will come out in the Royal Commission.

In conclusion, I believe that we have to encourage people to go before the inquiry. A way of doing that is through establishing the Legislative Council's Select Committee. We believe that the Select Committee was a major reason for the Government agreeing to this Royal Commission. I am disappointed that the City of Stirling has become the vehicle for the complete change of direction by the Premier. However, I support that change of direction.

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (27)

Dr Alexander	Dr Edwards	Dr Lawrence	Mr P.J. Smith
Mrs Beggs	Dr Gallop	Mr Marlborough	Mr Taylor
Mr Bridge	Mr Graham	Mr McGinty	Mr Troy
Mrs Buchanan	Mr Grill	Mr Pearce	Dr Watson
Mr Carr	Mrs Henderson	Mr Read	Mr Wilson
Mr Catania	Mr Gordon Hill	Mr Ripper	Mrs Watkins (Teller)
Mr Cunningham	Mr Kobelke	Mr D.L. Smith	

Noes (23)

Mr Ainsworth
Mr C.J. Barnett
Mr Bradshaw
Mr Clarko
Mr Court
Mr Cowan

Mrs Edwardes
Mr House
Mr Kierath
Mr Lewis
Mr MacKinnon
Mr Mensaros

Mr Minson
Mr Omodei
Mr Shave
Mr Strickland
Mr Thompson
Mr Trenorden

Mr Fred Tubby
Dr Turnbull
Mr Watt
Mr Wiese
Mr Blaikie (*Teller*)

Pairs

Mr Donovan
Mr Thomas
Mr Leahy

Mr Nicholls
Mr Grayden
Mr McNee

Question thus passed.

On motion by Mr Pearce (Leader of the House), resolved -

That the Legislative Council be acquainted accordingly.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON RIGHT TO FARM LEGISLATION

Interim Report

MR HOUSE (Stirling) [4.36 pm] - by leave: I present the interim report of the Select Committee on the right to farm and move -

That the report do lie upon the Table and be printed.

The right to farm concept is not well understood. Farmers in Australia have always considered themselves to be the backbone of the nation's welfare, giving them an inherent, inbuilt and permanent right to continue to do what they have always done. Farming traditions are often passed from generation to generation, with little thought or regard for the outside community. This traditional approach is at the heart of a growing debate, which has seen legislation put in place in most States of the United States of America and in a number of the Canadian Provinces. This legislation, in various forms, seeks to enable a primary producer to continue to follow practices adopted before the introduction of planning and zoning laws, despite the prohibition on such practices contained in the later laws. In only some instances is this protection subject to environmental laws.

Such a scenario is unheard of in Australia, where problems at the rural-urban interface have been largely ignored by State instrumentalities and local government councils that have responsibility for planning matters. This has not been a deliberate process. Even the administrations of the larger cities of the State of Western Australia have not sufficiently considered these matters in the past. Furthermore, they are not paying significant attention to adequate resolution of future conflict between those involved in existing rural pursuits and those who would be embroiled in argument as a result of a population that inevitably needs space to grow. In the current environment, there is dominating pressure on farmers to minimise costs of production. Coupled with this is a need to conserve the State's natural resources, which imposes restrictions on what may or may not be done by farmers.

In this context many see right to farm legislation as one tool in the fight to maintain a farming way of life. Is this a reasonable expectation or are there better ways to deal with what some see as the creeping scourge of urbanisation? The fact that the Legislative Assembly in Western Australia saw fit to establish this committee is evidence enough of the community concern that present statutory provisions and liaison techniques are not sufficient to deal with general and individual problems, particularly in the short term.

This interim report has been prepared to acquaint Parliament with the findings of the committee to date and to invite further comment from the populace at large. It is not a final document and it does not contain full reference to all the evidence taken or otherwise obtained.

Members of the committee have grown with the topic as it has been researched and examined. What seemed at first to be a simple investigation has turned into a much wider review, with the realisation that community planning is a complex, multidimensional

activity. If it is to be successful it requires a mandatory recognition by each agency of the role of a number of others. The committee is still formulating its ideas but has a view that the coordination of the various Government and semi-Government agencies involved in community planning needs to be reviewed. It is not convinced that a classic right to farm Statute is the only or necessarily the correct route for the future, although it has not abandoned this concept. It needs further evidence regarding the current position in North America before concluding its deliberations.

The success of this inquiry has depended on the contributions of many people. Most important are the many people who represent all sectors of the rural community, Government departments, private industry and public interest groups who have prepared submissions for consideration. The committee also expresses its sincere thanks to the many farmers and people representing various interested communities who gave their valuable time to inform the committee of their concerns, and to others who provided every assistance to the committee with inspections and advice.

I particularly wish to thank my fellow members of the committee for their cooperation and support, and for the individual skills and knowledge that they brought to it. The committee also wishes to acknowledge the work of the Clerk and the technical consultant who together played a major role in putting its views into print in a preliminary report, and in this interim report.

I take this opportunity to invite further comment from people interested in the right to farm concept. The committee welcomes further submissions, which should be addressed to reach the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly by 15 February 1991.

In conclusion, I thank John Paterson who was seconded from the Department of Agriculture to help this Select Committee. He has done a magnificent job and without his expertise the committee's work would not have advanced to its present stage. He has brought to the committee a very concise and clear mind that has enabled him to precis the evidence we have heard, and has assisted the committee to better understand the concepts put before it. There are many different concepts and thoughts about right to farm legislation, and it is indeed interesting that all the other States in Australia are now looking to the lead taken by the Legislative Assembly in this State and are considering where we are taking the right to farm concept. In fact, in farming circles and in urban areas on the edge of farming areas, there is a great deal of discussion about the rights of farmers and urban people and about the type of legislation that may be enacted by Parliament to correct the existing problems.

It is very clear that this Parliament cannot put aside the issue of right to farm legislation. It cannot duck the issue or leave it until later. It has become a very important topic among the people of this State. This issue must be addressed and addressed properly. So far the committee has put a great deal of time and effort into establishing a basis upon which the community in Western Australia can comment further. Although this report does not contain all the evidence and ideas put before the committee, it is a precis of the general thoughts and ideas of those who gave evidence to the committee. By and large it provides the basis of a very good document for establishing the next step in the right to farm concept in Western Australia.

Once again I thank all members of the committee who, almost without exception, have not missed a meeting and who have put a great deal of time and effort into the deliberations of the committee. It has been a great pleasure to work not only with other members of Parliament but also with the staff provided to the committee by the parliamentary process. I sincerely thank them.

MR CATANIA (Balcatta) [4.45 pm]: I support the motion moved by the deputy leader of the National Party. In so doing, I support the continuing examination of the possible introduction of legislation into this Parliament covering the right to farm concept. That view has been formed not only by the many submissions made in the course of the committee's investigation, but also by the many constituents who have brought the problem to my notice.

I am sure members are aware that the Balcatta electorate covers the Osborne Park and Stirling areas which were once the market garden and horticulture centres of the northern suburbs. Because of the pressure created by the need for residential land the people in those market garden areas were moved to the Wanneroo and Gnangara basins. The pressure put on

those people by residential developments forced them to move further north and to shift their homes, market gardens, reticulation systems and all the other implements associated with these industries. Some remained in their homes and simply established new market gardens but others moved their entire families. However, the Wanneroo area is now being claimed for residential development and once again these people are faced with the same problem of shifting further north, and with the high cost involved in buying new land, re-establishing their gardens and starting their businesses afresh. This imposes a great financial burden on them and I believe they have the right to ask just how far this will go. They have a right to ask people, such as the members of this committee, what will be the next move and where will the next development take place.

The market garden and horticultural industries involve a seven day working week. In the past families were involved in these businesses and as the sons grew up they took over and carried on the business. However, that structure no longer exists and these businesses today are forced to hire labour. That involves a further cost and is central to this examination of the right to farm. It is very expensive for the people in this industry to hire labour and to cope with the cost of shifting their gardens and re-establishing their businesses in new areas. In fact, many people involved in this industry will not start another business if they are forced to move again. If others in the northern suburbs are forced to move again they will go out of business. They will sell their land to developers and in the end they will probably receive more money in that way than if they continued as market gardeners. Many do not want to do that but they have no option. Were that to occur, those industries would decline, which would lead to a loss of produce and a loss of employment opportunities, and work would not be readily available to those young people who intend to follow in their parents' footsteps.

A concept has developed in other parts of the world where green areas have been set aside solely for market gardening and horticultural purposes. A buffer zone has been placed around those green areas so that the people in neighbouring residential areas will not be affected by the fertiliser, pesticides and odour that may be associated with those industries. We need to set aside green areas in the outer suburbs of the metropolitan area where people involved in the agricultural and horticultural industries will be able to continue their activities, without the encroachment upon them of residential development.

I promote the concept of the right to farm on the basis of my experience in my constituency and in the constituency north of mine. This report has been well researched, and is very timely. If we do not take action quickly, these profitable industries will be lost or their operations will be watered down. The removal of the metropolitan markets has placed further imposts upon the people involved in these industries. Transport costs are a significant consideration; those costs will increase as these industries are moved further north, and that will affect the financial viability of these industries.

I took part in this Select Committee as a metropolitan member, and I did not know what would be the extent of its investigations, but I was surprised and gratified to read some of the submissions and to take part in the investigations. Those investigations should continue as a matter of urgency, and should involve the Department of Planning and Urban Development, the local community and local government in an examination of where these industries should be established. These industries are important not only for their produce but also for tourism. Many people from South East Asia who come to Western Australia are attracted to the fresh fruit and vegetables of our State. Agricultural and horticultural industries could be used for tourism quite profitably if we do not shift them further north.

This matter requires close scrutiny and examination. We should also consider legislation which has been set in place over the last 15 years to protect these industries in other countries, particularly in North America and Europe. I urge anyone who is interested in this area to make appropriate submissions to help the committee to continue with its investigations and, hopefully, to introduce in the near future the concept of green areas.

MR OMODEI (Warren) [4.55 pm]: I support the motion and the comments made by the member for Stirling and the member for Balcatta. It was very interesting for me, as a first timer on a Select Committee, to investigate the right to farm. I am a farmer, and I was of course biased towards protecting farmers' rights. However, I set out on my task as a member of this committee with an open mind. I am not yet convinced that we should have right to

farm legislation per se. I say that deliberately because if we have right to farm legislation today, tomorrow we may have right to mine legislation, or the right to do a number of other things, and in 10 years we may find that the genuine right to farm has been diminished because of other rights which have been introduced.

Mr Graham: You cannot stand people having rights. That is not on. That is outrageous.

Mr OMODEI: That is not true. People should be allowed to pursue their lifestyle in the way they see fit, provided that is done in accordance with the laws of the land.

The member for Balcatta referred to the conflicts that exist on the urban-farmland interface. Those problems exist not only in Perth but also in every country town in Western Australia. The committee's primary term of reference was to establish whether Western Australia should introduce right to farm legislation, and were it to conclude that we need that legislation, we should proceed to introduce it. However, I believe that we may need some type of coordinating legislation to ensure that the Department of Planning and Urban Development, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Local Government, the Environmental Protection Authority and local government authorities and Government departments consult each other when they make planning decisions. The decisions made by local government authorities all around Western Australia to approve development proposals under their town planning schemes for either special rural zoning or for special residential or high density residential areas affect thousands of people in this State.

Over the next five or six years the extension of the City of Perth will take up about 2 500 hectares, and much of the land that is now being used productively in the pursuit of agriculture and horticulture in this State will be taken up. The Department of Agriculture is heavily involved in land capability studies. The Department of Planning and Urban Development ensures that residential subdivisions and projects are undertaken in an orderly manner. However, a number of developments are taking place on good agricultural or horticultural land. Planning is undertaken by the Department of Land Administration, with its satellite database, and by the Department of Planning and Urban Development and the Department of Agriculture, and it may well be that we will require some form of coordinating legislation which will protect horticultural and agricultural land.

Tied to all of this is the use of water. We know the pressures that have been placed on the Gngangara mound north of Perth, and the Jandakot mound has also been the subject of some debate, with a couple of Government Ministers differing in their opinions. Certainly the use of water in Western Australia will be of paramount importance in the future. Large areas of Western Australia are barren and require water in order that things can be grown. If we build out areas of substantial underground water supplies we will face the burden of doing so in the future. In other parts of the world at present wars are being fought over oil, and I feel certain that later on wars will be fought over water, particularly in the Middle East and other places where there is a shortage of water.

Therefore, while we are considering this interim report of the Select Committee on Right to Farm Legislation and the discussions that revolve around rights to farm, it becomes a very complex issue when we put into the pot all of these ingredients, which include the areas of land that are being encroached upon by urban expansion. The use or availability of water for either farmland or urban expansion is of paramount importance.

The Select Committee is also investigating the question of nuisance and what is known as the "coming to" clause under Californian legislation, whereby if a farm practice has existed for quite some time and urbanisation encroaches on that land the farmer is given the right to continue his pursuits provided he adheres to all the environmental laws of that State. This is one issue the Select Committee has addressed in depth and it really opened my eyes, as a member of the committee, when we moved into those areas adjacent to Perth where there are market gardens which create vegetable smells or odours due to the chemicals used in that industry. The poultry industry and the feed lot beef industry also cause concern to people residing nearby. The committee should investigate these matters in depth, and the interim report gives an idea of the work done to date. We have consulted widely in Western Australia and are seeking further input. It is very important that the urban-farmland interface issue be addressed, not only from the point of view of urban encroachment but also in relation to noxious odours, noises, and the use of chemicals that offend so many people nowadays. There should be a way in which this Parliament can introduce some legislation to

protect those people involved in farming pursuits and also to make way for proper planning, including a facility which provides for a green belt around cities to protect farmers and farming pursuits.

I cannot impress upon the House too strongly the importance of agriculture to this State. Over the next 12 to 18 months whole communities will come to realise how important agriculture is, because in harsh economic times agriculture is the first industry to face pressure and it takes time for that pressure to drift to the cities. At the moment agriculture is under siege. There is a case for protecting agricultural rights across the spectrum, whether in the broad acre area - where some chemical and noise problems occur -

Mr Shave: It is no different from the hotel industry.

Mr OMODEI: Is the member suggesting we should have a right to have a hotel industry?

Mr Shave: No, we should regulate it a bit.

Mr OMODEI: That is probably one area where we need some Environmental Protection Authority legislation to make sure the noise problem, apart from others, is regulated.

Members should consider a farmer who has been ploughing his land every year for 50 or 60 years, when all of a sudden somebody moves in alongside him on a smallholding and takes out an injunction to stop the farmer from making a noise with his machinery in carrying on the pursuit he has undertaken for such a long time. Under today's laws merely the delay in having that question heard in the courts would be enough to send that farmer bankrupt.

They are some of the issues the Select Committee addressed. It is important that those farmers be protected. Whether we actually have a right to farm Bill will be ascertained by the Select Committee in the coming months. I urge all members to read and digest the Select Committee's interim report and to report back to the committee. As the member for Stirling said, the issue is being examined by all States in Australia. Our research officer has prepared papers for farm meetings and meetings of high ranking Government officials in other States, and it is important that we lead the way in ensuring that the Select Committee on Right to Farm Legislation establishes the right direction for the future of Western Australia.

MR P.J. SMITH (Bunbury) [5.06 pm]: I support the printing of the interim report. It has been my privilege to be a part of this Select Committee and I have found it very interesting. I do not think anybody could deny that primary production is very important to the State, and I hope the majority of farmers will never run into the sorts of problems the Select Committee has been addressing. However, I should also say that I feel that those engaging in primary production have a right, under normal circumstances and provided they do not breach the law or the environmental Acts, to continue their farming activities without unfair pressure to have them removed or have their normal activities stopped.

However, there is the problem of encroaching urbanisation - of the nuisance value of activities such as unusual sounds, smells, dust, sprays, and so on that are used - and as urbanisation encroaches I am afraid many people believe that once they have established their house or smallholding they are the ones who should stay and that the farmer should shift; that is, they have rights but primary producers do not. People might wonder why someone from Bunbury has an interest in this matter. I have had wide experience in the south west. My recent experience extends to Albany but my most intensive experience relates to Bunbury. In the past, Bunbury had many market gardens. In the centre of Bunbury, people had small holdings for cattle, goats and sheep. Presently, such small holdings include rabbit, poultry, emu and nursery farms.

One concern relates to Brunswick and the shortage of housing land. In that area, the only way to provide housing land is to encroach on valuable irrigation land. These problems do not strictly relate to either rural or metropolitan areas; the problem occurs everywhere. Many people have said that we should not worry about the farmers because there is plenty of rural land available; that with the increased utilisation of land, and better fertilisers and techniques, a high degree of production is attained. As well, people say that as urbanisation encroaches on farming land the value of that land will increase. That is, people think that farmers can sell at a handsome profit and get out. That is not always the case.

We received many submissions from people who are involved in intensive production, particularly poultry farms and intensive piggeries. It would be very expensive for those

people to relocate after receiving a reasonable return for the land. The infrastructure involved in setting up again would be very costly, and the return from the sale of the land would not help. They would face many difficulties in the shift. Those people should be protected and should have a right to stay on the land, provided they are not breaking the law. The people who settled in the area first to establish market gardens should also be allowed to stay as long as they wish. They should not be forced out by encroaching urbanisation.

How we face these issues is a problem. It is a complex matter and there is no simple solution. We received many submissions and I had hoped that we would find a simple solution, that we would bring it to the attention of the House, and it would allow us to go ahead with legislation or with some planning amendment. We have not reached a simple conclusion. Therefore, we have submitted our interim report for consideration. Members can contribute ideas to it.

Both the member for Warren and the member for Stirling stated that other States of Australia are looking to us and are interested in the conclusions of the Select Committee and the action we take. Furthermore, other countries, such as the United States of America and Canada, have similar legislation. We are not aware how that legislation operates. Some reports state that it is successful; others that it is not. The need now is for the Select Committee on Right to Farm Legislation to travel to those countries, ask questions and work out whether such legislation would be relevant in Western Australia. We can then decide whether we need to go elsewhere for information or whether we can reach a conclusion.

I urge all members, and anybody involved in primary production, planning, or local government to read the interim report and submit their ideas. One good idea put forward by Dr John Paterson, who was of great assistance to the Select Committee, was the pro forma at the end of the report on which people may place their names and make a submission by just ticking the boxes. I support the motion.

MR CUNNINGHAM (Marangaroo) [5.12 pm]: I support the motion. As a member of the Select Committee on Right to Farm Legislation, I found the whole exercise a fascinating venture into rural affairs. Some members might ask what the member for Marangaroo would know about rural life, or what does rural life have to do with Koondoola, Girrawheen or Alexander Heights. However, part of my electorate includes Landsdale. The member for Balcatta touched upon events in Stirling some years ago when people were moved from an area of Stirling to Landsdale. The people had believed they would stay in the area until retirement. Some of those people had lived in the area of Landsdale for only eight to 12 years, so that situation was extremely unfair.

The report touches on the scourge of urbanisation. People should have the right to stay on a property that they have spent so much capital on developing. Yet those people have been told they must move further out. How much further must people move from the metropolitan area? Perhaps some people will finish up in Lancelin.

The **SPEAKER**: Order! The background conversation is far too loud.

Mr CUNNINGHAM: The Select Committee was pleased to hear a lengthy report by Mrs Barbara Bruce, Mr Sandro Danti and Mr Petro Nosow of the Landsdale Landowners Association. They presented a vivid description of problems in their area. The association informed the Select Committee of its concern that people can no longer farm in urban areas.

The Select Committee has touched on the North American legislation. It will be extremely difficult to obtain a complete grasp of that situation if the Select Committee should sit for another five to six months without visiting those countries where that legislation has been enacted. The committee will be wasting its time, because the United States and Canadian legislation have much to offer. We should have the opportunity to study the legislation of other countries.

I commend the work of the Select Committee. I look forward to the continuation of its activities. The interim report should be read and considered intensively. This matter should not be treated lightly.

MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [5.16 pm]: I wish to comment on the interim report of the Select Committee on Right to Farm Legislation and the formation of that committee. I hope that the matters I raise will be considered and properly investigated. The Select Committee was formed in an attempt to discover whether a degree of protection should be available for

farming land and farming rights. In its initial endeavours, the Select Committee has collated some useful information. The committee is planning to travel extensively to the American continent at considerable cost to the taxpayers. However, that funding will be well spent when one considers the experience to be gained by the committee in its travels if it is able to acquire measures to assist people on the land.

A matter of concern to me which has come to light in the last two weeks is the decision by the Government and the mining industry to transport mineral sands from the Scott River area of the south coast of Western Australia to Bunbury. Some time ago the decision was made that road transport was preferred. Of grave concern to farming property owners is that since that decision it has transpired that the preferred route will be through the centre of existing farming properties. That route will cause serious concern generally, but property owners are particularly affected. Farmers who are not affected directly do not have such a personal concern.

I am pleased that my colleague, the member for Warren, as a member of the Select Committee will ensure this matter is fully investigated. Why should farming land be resumed when some 800 or 900 metres away a road exists for the use of mining companies? If the mining companies proceed via land resumption legislation, the farmers concerned will lose their land and compensation will be paid. In essence, any right to farm legislation should ensure that people stay on the farms. If land is resumed and the property value for resumption purposes is \$2 000 to \$5 000 per acre, does that mean that the Valuer General will value the surrounding land in the same manner? I believe the Valuer General will do that, and that local government rates will increase significantly as a result. That is what will happen.

I challenge the Select Committee on Right to Farm Legislation to look at what happens in relation to changes in valuations. While it is ideal for Government which has a vested interest in valuations being increased upwards, it has a significant deleterious effect on those farmers who wish to continue farming. Significant increases in rates and taxes will accrue and farmers ultimately will be priced out of the business. In addition, does it mean that once the properties have been resumed and the necessary subdivision has taken place, the properties will be subject to capital gains tax? The information I have received indicates that they will. What can we do to protect people from that? My understanding is that they do not have any opportunity for redress or recompense. The Right to Farm committee is very important and the matters it has investigated to date have been important, as are the matters it will be looking into on its trip to the American continent. But it is more important that the members come back home and look at what is happening within the State. The member for Swan Hills when he was the member for Mundaring headed the Grape Growing Industry Select Committee which looked into the grape growing and wine making industry.

Mr Troy: Some members only had an interest in the former.

Mr BLAIKIE: That is right, but both are important. One of the recommendations to come out of that committee was the need to protect the Swan Valley viticulture areas in perpetuity rather than their being hived off for building development or excavated to provide clay for brick and tile making. It was recognised that the viticulture industry in the Swan Valley provided a special and unique quality of grape that was not available in any other part of Australia.

Mr Troy: The Minister of the day recognised that and encouraged the rezoning by the shire.

Mr BLAIKIE: Yes; and that was quite a significant recommendation which recognised the importance of that agricultural pursuit within that area. I have little doubt that in time the benefits of that recommendation will be well and truly valued by the community.

Mr Troy: They are already emerging.

Mr BLAIKIE: Yes, and I believe that is important. People at the time may not have understood the significance of the committee's recommendations, but with the passing of time the benefits of that recommendation will be more important than if the area had been carved up into building blocks or sold for clay pits. The Right to Farm committee needs to fully understand that.

The Government has decided that the mineral sands will be transported by road, and although I do not accept that decision, the Government should ensure that it will not impinge

on the agricultural pursuits of the area. Currently it is not only impinging on agriculture, but also it is interfering with individuals in a most significant way. Worse than that, if anyone else wanted to get a subdivision in the shires of Augusta, Margaret River, Busselton, Capel or Nannup they could not get one until the Department of Agriculture made a survey and reported to the Department of Planning and Urban Development. In this case not only will the Government not talk to the Department of Agriculture, but also it does not want to know about the problem. The Government has decided it will go through the centre of farm land with no regard to farmers or town planners.

Mr D.L. Smith: The member for Vasse should clarify that a consultant made the recommendation to the Main Roads Department and there has been no Government decision - otherwise the member's speech is quite worthwhile.

Mr BLAIKIE: I understand that the Government has not opposed whatever recommendation was made by the consultant.

Mr D.L. Smith: The recommendations have not been presented to the Government. The consultant is consulting the community, as he is paid to do. I hope the member will raise this with the consultant rather than ask some committee to look at it some time in the future.

Mr BLAIKIE: I am asking the committee to look at it because it is a classic example of "might being right", irrespective of the rights of farmers which are being completely eroded. The consultant has not asked for a report on agriculture or sought the advice of town planners, but has indicated that, if farmers do not agree, the land will be resumed under provisions of the relevant Acts. The last comment I will make - I hope that the Right to Farm Committee will take note - is that had these constituents been members of the Aboriginal community they would not have been treated in the way they were, because far greater regard would have been given to them and their proprietary rights.

Mr D.L. Smith: They would have been treated in exactly the same way.

Mr BLAIKIE: This has not been the case. When I said that had they been Aborigines they would have been treated far better, I want to add that they should have been treated far better. I am citing an example of where they have not been treated equally, but in a shoddy way. I hope the Right to Farm Committee takes on board the example I have given, and I plead with that committee to take the trouble to talk with landowners who have been advised that they will be affected by the route, and to discuss the circumstances under which the landowners found out they would be affected and - if this is the final route - to understand how it will impinge on their farming practices not only today, but also in the next 50 or 100 years to significantly change the whole area. The Government has indicated that it wants transportation to be by road. If that is the decision, so be it; however, existing road reserves in the area could be utilised, which will not impinge on farming land. I commend the committee for its interim report and I look forward with great interest to its final report.

[See paper No 715.]

[Questions without notice taken.]

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 pm

GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS AMENDMENT BILL

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Pearce (Leader of the House), and transmitted to the Council.

PETROLEUM (DRILLING RESERVATIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR CARR (Geraldton - Minister for Mines) [7.33 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill seeks to amend the Petroleum Act so as to introduce drilling reservations, a new exploration title to complement the existing five year exploration permit and special prospecting authorities. By way of background, Western Australian petroleum exploration drilling is carried out by the holder of an exploration permit, a title which obligates the

permittee to carry out a specific program of work over a five year period. Historically, however, only two wells on average are ever drilled during the five year period of an onshore exploration permit. This drilling rate is inadequate to enable Western Australia to promptly assess and develop its petroleum potential, particularly at a time when national reserves are being depleted at a significant rate and the desirability of petroleum self-sufficiency is well understood.

The concept of a drilling reservation, adapted from Canadian legislation, has the potential to significantly increase drilling activity. A drilling reservation would allow exploratory drilling with a limited tenure intended to cover only the drilling period. The authority would give the explorer the right to drill a well or wells for petroleum, and facilitate the right to receive a production licence should a commercial discovery result, or a retention lease if a discovery is not currently viable. The ability to drill wells without the current encumbrance of a five year financial commitment, together with an assurance of a production licence or retention lease, would represent a significant incentive to explorers. A clear advantage would be provided to smaller companies lacking the capital that would enable them to apply for a five year petroleum permit. Rather than showing a capacity to carry on an exploration program over a period of years, the applicant for the drilling reservation needs to establish only the capacity to drill a well.

The award of a drilling reservation will stand primarily on its geological merit. To ensure, as far as is practicable, that drilling is technically justified, the Department of Mines will scrutinise applications to verify that each drill hole represents a valid test of a target. Drilling reservations are intended to coexist with exploration permits and the amendments provide for areas to be made available for exploration by way of either title, the award of which will depend primarily upon the geological merit of the proposals. It is further envisaged that drilling reservations will more fully complement the recently announced strategy of basin-wide releases by allowing explorers to tailor their exploration strategies to their own financial capacity and their priorities and to the circumstances of the geology of the area.

The Department of Mines, in evolving this proposal for the drilling reservations, has taken into consideration views and comments made by the petroleum exploration community. The Australian Petroleum Exploration Association supports the concept in principle, as do the majority of petroleum exploration companies in Western Australia.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Blaikie.

EMPLOYERS INDEMNITY POLICIES (PREMIUM RATES) BILL

Report

Report of Committee adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Pearce (Leader of the House), and transmitted to the Council.

ROAD TRAFFIC AMENDMENT BILL (No 3)

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Council; and, on motion by Mr Pearce (Leader of the House), read a first time.

Second Reading

MR PEARCE (Armadale - Leader of the House) [7.41 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

[Leave granted for the following text to be incorporated.]

This Bill provides for a crucial element of the greatest ever offensive on road trauma in Western Australia. It complements the 0.05 per cent blood alcohol level and graduated drivers' licence legislation currently under consideration by the Standing Committee on Legislation. The Bill provides for the establishment by legislation of a road trauma trust fund for the purpose of meeting a recommendation of the Traffic Board that there be a

"properly funded and well designed and targeted public education campaign on road safety". The fund also meets the calls from various Opposition members who from time to time have called for higher profile public education and awareness programs. The trust will also be used to fund additional school crossing traffic attendants and other road safety initiatives, for example, bicycle helmet subsidies. The funds for this innovative program of public education and awareness will be made available by traffic offenders.

It is proposed that 30 per cent of revenue generated from camera detected offences be paid into the trust. While the establishment of the trust is new, that part of the legislation relating to camera detected offences is not. The Bill establishes a means to improve efficiency in the handling of infringement notices under the proposed legislation. Where a traffic offence is detected by a camera, the driver is not stopped immediately and issued with an infringement notice; instead an infringement notice is served on the registered owner of the vehicle involved. Where the owner admits to being the driver at the time of the offence he may pay the infringement penalty or he may have the matter dealt with by a court. Where the owner disputes that he was the driver at the time of the offence, the owner will have a 28 day period in which to advise the police and deny responsibility for the offence. Once the owner has made the notification, the infringement notice will be withdrawn and an inquiry conducted in the normal way to establish the identity of the driver at the time of the offence.

I want to emphasise that should proceedings reach the court under this proposal, there is absolutely no change to the traditional principle that the prosecution bears the burden of proving each element of the offence beyond reasonable doubt. There is no reversal of the onus of proof and in a dispute the police will have to prove their case. The simple procedural changes in this Bill are estimated by police to have the potential to improve efficiency by saving up to 80 000 hours per month by simply giving those motorists who acknowledge having committed a speeding offence an early opportunity to pay their penalty and thereby substantially reduce police inquiry work. The police will retain records for a period in excess of three years, to enable any disputed allocation of demerit points to be resolved in cases where a person, not being the owner of the vehicle, intercepts the infringement notice and pays it, resulting in an allocation of demerit points against the vehicle owner.

The Bill establishes an effective method of policing speeding offences on medium to high density roads by reforming procedures to permit more efficient use of the Multanova speed camera. It also diverts 30 per cent of revenue raised by camera detected offences to a trust fund administered by the Traffic Board to finance traffic safety initiatives.

Finally, the Bill allows for a review of the operation and effectiveness of the fund within five years of the commencement of this amendment. The review will be carried out by the Traffic Board and it will then be tabled before each House of Parliament as soon as practicable after it has been compiled.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Blaikie.

EVIDENCE AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Council; and, on motion by Mr D.L. Smith (Minister for Justice), read a first time.

Second Reading

MR D.L. SMITH (Mitchell - Minister for Justice) [7.43 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is to remedy a weakness in the law of evidence in respect of certain criminal trials in Western Australia. The Bill seeks to amend sections 11 and 13 of the Evidence Act so as to bring them into line with a provision modelled on section 57 of the Australian Capital Territory Evidence Ordinance of 1971.

Section 11 of the Evidence Act allows a court to compel answers to questions where a witness objects that the answers will incriminate them. Upon answering "to the satisfaction of the court" a certificate must be furnished to a witness. Section 13 then provides that the

witness is freed from all criminal prosecutions except perjury in respect of the matters on which the witness was questioned. Separate trials of joint offenders are now quite commonly ordered and where objections of self-incrimination are raised, courts are inclined to compel answers under section 11. There have been cases where a co-accused, appearing as a defence witness at a committal or trial, has been compelled to give evidence after protesting self-incrimination and then claimed sole responsibility for the commission of the offence.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is impossible to hear the Minister delivering the second reading speech.

Mr D.L. SMITH: The accused is consequently acquitted and the witness is entitled to a section 11 certificate which precludes him or her from being tried for the offence. This makes a mockery of justice.

The Bill before the House was prepared following an urgent approach from the Crown Prosecutor and the Solicitor General. It was referred to the Law Society of WA for consideration and although initially controversial the society is now in complete agreement with it.

The Bill replaces the existing scheme with one which still compels a witness to answer a question if the interests of justice dictate such a course. When the answer is given, the witness receives a certificate which renders the answer itself inadmissible as evidence against that witness except in relation to perjury. This is in contrast to the present scheme where the witness is indemnified against prosecution in relation to the subject matter of the answer. Under the proposed scheme, the witness could still be prosecuted on evidence other than answers to questions in relation to which certificates have been issued. This measure therefore removes the incentive to confess to a crime on behalf of a friend, although it must be said that it may also reduce the incentive for witnesses to come forward at all. However, there can really be no doubt that this slight negative potential is far outweighed by the potential injustice that the proposed amendment will prevent.

Proposed section 11A is designed to give a court express power to prohibit the publication of the evidence given under privilege primarily in order to protect the position of the witness in the event that the witness subsequently stands trial. It is a sensible provision, as the privilege against self-incrimination may lose its effect if it is published at some time prior to the prosecution of the witness. Such publication may well in some cases prejudice that further trial. Section 11A will meet this situation. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Blaikie.

STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATES AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Council; and, on motion by Mr D.L. Smith (Minister for Community Services), read a first time.

Second Reading

MR D.L. SMITH (Mitchell - Minister for Community Services) [7.46 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

[Leave granted for the following text to be incorporated.]

The purpose of the Bill is to clarify the entitlement of stipendiary magistrates to retire if they so wish, after attaining 55 years of age.

The Act currently provides for retirement on attaining 60 years of age, and the proposed amendment will bring magistrates in line with the other contributors to the Government Employees Superannuation Fund who are able to elect early retirement.

The Bill also includes a provision for the creation of a position of Deputy Chief Stipendiary Magistrate. This position is considered necessary because the administrative burden on the Chief Stipendiary Magistrate has grown significantly in recent times with the expansion of the jurisdiction of magistrates and the increase in their number.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Blaikie.

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Council; and, on motion by Mr D.L. Smith (Minister for Community Services), read a first time.

Second Reading

MR D.L. SMITH (Mitchell - Minister for Community Services) [7.48 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

[Leave granted for the following text to be incorporated.]

The purpose of this Bill is to introduce a home detention program. It amends the Bail Act to provide an option of home detention as a condition of bail when a person would otherwise be remanded in custody. It also amends the Offenders Probation and Parole Act to allow the release to home detention of certain offenders who are subject to prison sentences of less than 12 months. Home detention provides a stringent alternative to imprisonment for offenders who do not pose a major risk to the community. Participants in the program would be subject to a home curfew at all times, except for authorised absences at approved times, to work, seek employment, attend a community corrections program, seek urgent medical treatment, or for other purposes as directed or permitted by a community corrections officer.

Random monitoring of compliance is an essential feature of the program and may occur at any time. In addition to surveillance by personal contact through home visiting or by telephone, the Bill provides for the use of other monitoring methods, which may include the wearing of a wristlet or other device which can confirm the offender's presence at home. Home detention programs are operating successfully in South Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory, as well as in more than 30 American States. Similar legislation is pending in New South Wales, and a pilot program has been drawn up in Victoria. Home detention has proved to be an effective method of diverting appropriate offenders from prison. It allows them to maintain family support and employment, while protecting the community and imposing punishment by rigorously enforced supervision.

The home detention management regime will be similar in most respects for defendants remanded on bail and for prisoners released on a home detention order. However, there are two major differences: Firstly, persons placed under home detention as a condition of bail will not be required to participate in a community corrections centre program. By contrast, prisoners released on home detention will be required to spend eight hours per week on community work or personal development activities if in full time employment, and 12 hours per week if not in full time employment. Secondly, it will be open to defendants on bail to apply to a court for the lifting of a home detention condition after a period of one month or more since the case for bail was last considered. This is consistent with existing provisions of the Bail Act which set down circumstances under which a judicial officer may vary the terms or conditions of bail upon application by the defendant.

I proceed to outline the provisions for home detention as a condition of bail: The Bill provides that a court which is considering such a condition must obtain a report from a community corrections officer as to the defendant's suitability. The report will also address the availability and suitability of the nominated place of residence. The informed agreement of other occupants of the proposed home detention address to cooperate with the program will be an important element, given its very intensive nature. The court must also be satisfied that unless a home detention condition is imposed, the defendant would be remanded in custody. This is to avoid the risk of so-called "net widening" by preventing the release of defendants to bail under home detention, where the court would otherwise have released the defendant to bail on less stringent bail conditions. To be eligible for home detention as a condition of bail, a defendant must also be 17 years or older.

A defendant released on home detention as a condition of bail may leave the place specified in the bail undertaking only in the following circumstances -

To work in gainful employment approved by a community corrections officer (CCO).

With the approval of a CCO to seek gainful employment.

To obtain urgent medical or dental treatment.

To avert or minimise a serious risk of death or injury to the defendant or to another person.

To obey an order issued under a written law - such as a summons - requiring the defendant's presence elsewhere.

For the purpose approved by a CCO.

On the direction of a CCO.

In addition, the defendant must not leave the State, and must comply with every reasonable direction of a CCO, and with any conditions imposed by the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Corrective Services. For the purposes of checking whether a defendant is complying with a home detention condition, a community corrections officer may at any time enter or telephone the defendant's place of residence, employment or any other place where the defendant is permitted or required to attend. A community corrections officer may give directions to a defendant pertaining to the following matters -

When the defendant may leave the place where he is required to remain.

The period of any authorised absence.

The method of travel to be used by the defendant.

The manner in which the defendant shall report his whereabouts.

Any member of the Police Force is empowered to require the defendant to produce a copy of his bail undertaking for inspection and to require a defendant to explain why he is absent from the place where he is required by the home detention condition to remain. The chief executive officer may, in his absolute discretion, revoke bail and issue a warrant directed to all members of the Police Force to have the defendant arrested and brought before the appropriate court. The court before which the defendant appears may then remand the defendant in custody to appear at the time and place specified, or grant fresh bail in accordance with the Bail Act.

Consistent with existing provisions of the Bail Act, a surety may apply to a court for cancellation of his undertaking in respect of any defendant released to bail on a home detention condition. A police officer who has reasonable cause to believe that the defendant is not likely to comply with his bail undertaking or is, has been, or is likely to be in breach of any condition of his undertaking, may also cause the defendant to appear before an appropriate judicial officer. If the court is satisfied that a breach has occurred, or is likely to occur, or that the defendant is not likely to comply with a requirement of his undertaking, it may revoke bail and either remand the defendant in custody or grant fresh bail, subject to the Bail Act. These powers provide an additional safety net to ensure that any defendant whose behaviour on home detention is unacceptable or who is perceived to present a serious risk, is subject to prompt and appropriate action.

I turn to the next provisions of the home detention legislation as they apply to sentenced prisoners. The eligibility criteria for home detention require that -

The prisoner is serving a term of imprisonment, or an aggregate of terms of imprisonment - without regard to remission - of less than one year.

The prisoner has served at least one month of the term, or aggregate, or one-third of the term, whichever is the longer.

The prisoner is neither entitled to be released nor eligible to be considered for release on parole.

Subject to these eligibility criteria, the chief executive officer may order in writing that a prisoner be released under a home detention order, and may impose conditions on that order. In determining whether to issue a home detention order in each case, the chief executive officer must have regard to the nature and circumstances of the offence or offences for which the prisoner is imprisoned, the risk to the security of the public that the prisoner's release would impose, and the views of other people residing at the place where the prisoner proposes to remain under the home detention order.

Prison staff and community corrections officers will scrutinise the prisoner's application, his community support, past offence record, response patterns to any previous community based

supervision orders, and any other matters likely to bear upon the likelihood of compliance. A prisoner may only be released on home detention after signing a declaration that he understands the obligations and conditions of the home detention order and undertakes to comply with them. A prisoner released on home detention will be subject to the same remission of sentence as applies to other prisoners under section 29 of the Prisons Act. In effect, this means that the maximum period for which a prisoner may be released on home detention will be four months.

Once released to home detention, prisoners will face the same restrictions on their movement away from the approved place of residence as will defendants on bail. The same powers as provided under the Bail Act will also be conferred upon community correction officers to ascertain whether the prisoner is complying with the home detention order, and to issue directions about the time, purpose, destination, and method of travel of any authorised absence from home. However, unlike defendants subject to a home detention condition under the Bail Act, prisoners on home detention will also be required to attend a community corrections centre program. As already indicated, this will entail eight hours per week of unpaid community work or personal development activities for offenders in full time employment, and 12 hours per week for offenders not in full time employment.

There is provision for the restriction of alcohol or other restrictions in a home detention order and for requiring an offender to undergo testing for alcohol or drug use. However, offenders under home detention will not be prohibited in all cases from consuming alcohol or from driving a motor vehicle if qualified to do so.

Where a prisoner has been released on a home detention order, the chief executive officer may at his absolute discretion, and by notice in writing to the prisoner, substitute a different place for the place where the prisoner is required by the home detention order to remain; he may also amend, revoke or impose further conditions on the order.

In his absolute discretion, the chief executive officer may cancel or suspend the order. The effect of such a decision would be to reactivate the original warrant of commitment or other authority for the prisoner's imprisonment. In the case of cancellation of the order, or suspension followed by subsequent cancellation, no credit would be extended to the prisoner for the time served on home detention prior to the cancellation. The prisoner would thus be liable to serve the full unexpired portion of his sentence as at the date of his release on home detention, less any remissions applicable under section 29 of the Prisons Act. This emphasises the intention that home detention will be a tough alternative to imprisonment, and will clearly signal to all participants the high standard of performance required.

Where a home detention order is suspended, but not subsequently cancelled, credit would be given for the period completed under the order. This provides a degree of flexibility, particularly in cases where the order is suspended for administrative rather than disciplinary reasons. Such an event could arise, for example, when for reasons beyond the offender's control the approved place of accommodation ceased to be available. There will be occasions when, pending the making of new arrangements, there is no alternative than to return the offender to custody. If a prisoner has been released on a home detention order, his sentence is deemed to be served if the order is not cancelled, and the offender satisfactorily completes the performance of its conditions and obligations.

The rules of natural justice will not apply to any act, omission or decision by the chief executive officer, either in respect of defendants released on home detention as a condition of bail, or to offenders released from prison on home detention. This provision reflects the status of home detention as a privilege, and is consistent with the provisions of the community based work release program.

Members will note that the Community Corrections Legislation Amendment Bill amalgamates the legislation covering all types of community based supervision orders by repealing the Community Corrections Centres Act. The provisions of that Act are now incorporated in the Offenders Probation and Parole Act. This amalgamated Act is to be retitled the Offenders Community Corrections Act. This will more accurately reflect the full range of community based supervision orders which are now administered by the Department of Corrective Services.

Members will be aware that the Community Corrections Centres Act, which this Bill repeals,

provides for the establishment of community corrections centres and for their management. It is intended that these management provisions will also apply to home detention orders. It is therefore appropriate to draw together the management of all forms of community corrections centre orders - home detention, community based work release and work and development orders - under the umbrella of one comprehensive piece of legislation. Parts 1A, 1B and 1C of the amalgamated legislation preserve all the essential features of the Community Corrections Centres Act.

Community corrections centres are the focal point for the organisation of activity and developmental programs for offenders. The chief executive officer is authorised to approve such programs which may include, but are not restricted, to the following: Community, voluntary or charitable work; programs for the treatment of alcoholics or drug dependent persons; educational, occupational and person-training course; counselling programs; or social and life skills courses.

Internal disciplinary procedures will control an offender's behaviour while at a centre or participating in a program and these procedures will apply to offenders subject to a home detention order. For an offender on home detention, the conditions governing performance of a community corrections centre program are additional to those which regulate curfew observance and the terms of any permit for absence from the approved place of residence.

Disciplinary action lies against any offender whose performance of the community corrections centre program is unsatisfactory, who commits any offence while subject to a community corrections centre order, or who fails to notify a community corrections officer if unable to attend where and when required to do so. All failures to attend, whether for medical or other reasons, require an officer's approval, and evidence to support the absence may be required to be produced.

This Bill achieves two other purposes not directly related to the operation of a home detention program, but consequential on the amalgamation of the Community Corrections Centres Act and Offenders Probation and Parole Act. Firstly, the Bill repeals part IIIA of the Offenders Probation and Parole Act which deals with probation orders made in another State or Territory. Part IIIA of the Offenders Probation and Parole Act was enacted in 1969. It was intended to overcome the problem that supervision orders imposed against offenders were not enforceable when they moved interstate. To be effective, part IIIA of the Act was dependent upon all States and Territories enacting complementary legislation, but only Western Australia enacted the provision. Accordingly, the provisions in this part have never been used. The transfer provisions in part IIIA relating to offenders on parole were repealed in 1987, having become redundant with the passage of the Parole Orders (Transfer) Act in 1984.

Secondly, the amalgamation has now grouped together the persons appointed under both the Community Corrections Centres Act and the Offenders Probation and Parole Act who supervise community based corrections orders. These include honorary community corrections officers, volunteers, and persons engaged on contract.

Members will also note that probation officers, parole officers and community corrections officers will all be referred to as community corrections officers. This follows from the amalgamation of the Community Corrections Centres Act and the Offenders Probation and Parole Act, because under the Community Corrections Centres Act probation and parole officers were included in the definition of community corrections officers.

The Community Corrections Legislation Amendment Bill represents a new landmark in the management of offenders. It should serve to reduce the high imprisonment rate in this State, with its attendant heavy economic and social costs. In the 1989-90 financial year, the annual cost of imprisonment per prisoner was \$46 600. The total cost to the community is in reality much higher, given the costs of welfare and other support for the dependants of prisoners. This is apart from the serious cost in non-financial terms of the effects of imprisonment on family stability and employment prospects.

By comparison, home detention is projected to cost less than \$6 000 per annum for each participant. At the same time, it takes a responsible approach to establishing criteria, powers and obligations for home detention management, which will preclude the participation of those who constitute a serious risk to the community. For those in the home detention

program, rigorous standards of surveillance will apply, and non-compliance will be dealt with swiftly and effectively.

It is intended that during its first 12 months of operation, home detention will be available only in the metropolitan area, but it will thereafter, subject to available resources, have Statewide application. This will ensure that during its initial stages, administrative and management systems can be adjusted in response to operational experience. On the basis of its success in other jurisdictions, there is little doubt that home detention will develop into a most important offender management program. It has scope to develop beyond the areas covered by this Bill, and there will be continuing attention to those possibilities.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Blaikie.

BILLS (3) - RETURNED

1. Soil and Land Conservation Amendment Bill
2. Financial Administration and Audit Amendment Bill
3. Pearling Bill

Bills returned from the Council with amendments.

BILLS (2) - RECEIPT AND FIRST READING

1. Misuse of Drugs Amendment Bill
2. Judges' Salaries and Pensions Amendment Bill

Bills received from the Council; and, on motions by Mr D.L. Smith (Minister for Justice), read a first time.

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND) BILL

Consideration of Report of Estimates Committee A

MR PEARCE (Armada - Leader of the House) [7.53 pm]: This is an historic moment in this House. I thank members of all parties for their cooperation in the Estimates Committees hearings last week. There were, as one would expect in a new system, a range of minor hiccups and things that had not been thought of. I was grateful for the cooperation of members from both sides, but I thank particularly the member for Marmion and the deputy leader of the National Party who worked hard to make sure there was a cooperative approach to the Estimates Committees hearings. It is my intention to have a meeting next week with those two members and, on behalf of the three parties, to go through the way the committees worked. I am having a separate meeting with the members who chaired the meetings and the Speaker and the Clerk to find out whether things can be improved. If members have an interest in this matter, they should communicate their concerns to their respective leaders so that we can formulate the proposed Standing Order in the next week or two.

Mr Thompson: My members have quite a list.

Mr PEARCE: The member's members are the most whingeing in the House so that does not surprise me. I am perfectly prepared to invite to those meetings the representative of the most whingeing party in this House.

Mr Thompson: That will be a first. You were going to explain the process to me before it came into effect.

Mr PEARCE: The member, like ancient Gaul, would have to be divided into three parts to properly participate in this process.

Mr Clarko: The Sessional Order states that one hour shall be allocated for debate on each committee. I understand there will be no time limits for each speaker and therefore it will be necessary to have the cooperation of members from both sides as to how they space out their comments.

Mr PEARCE: That is true. The intention of the motion to adopt the report of each

committee is to discuss corrections made in the committees to votes. Members should comment during the third reading on what occurred in the committees.

Mr Clarko: I thought that if members had a problem with the operation of a committee - that is, if a Minister was not present or they did not like the arrangement - it would be appropriate for them to comment at this time.

Mr PEARCE: I have no problem with that if that is the way members want to deal with it. This is as much a trial as was the previous section. It is my intention to try to finalise the proposed Standing Order if we agree to this process going on submission to the Standing Orders Committee for submission to the Parliament. The time to adopt the process with any amendments is now when the experience is fresh in our minds rather than in July or August next year.

The Government found the way the Budget was subjected to scrutiny a useful exercise. Most Ministers reported in a positive way and would like to see the process continue.

DR ALEXANDER (Perth) [7.56 pm]: I have signed a report which states that the committee has examined the Consolidated Revenue Fund Estimates for 1990-91 Divisions 2 to 29 and Divisions 67 to 72 and recommends the expenditure proposed therein.

[See paper No 720.]

Dr ALEXANDER: I move -

That the expenditures proposed in the Estimates be agreed to.

MR STRICKLAND (Scarborough) [7.57 pm]: I had the pleasure of attending each committee as I was cycled through the system day by day. There was definitely a positive side to the process and Opposition and Government members were able to ask more questions on most Divisions than under the system that existed previously. However, only two minutes was allowed to discuss Division 16, Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission. Two minutes is not sufficient to do that Division justice. I repeat to the Leader of the House a message that I tried to get across to him before this process began: Consideration has to be given to a minimum time limit for discussion of each Division. I know that members suggest that we need teamwork. However, as time is running out, everyone should try to consider the person who is on the end of the line and provide him with an opportunity to obtain information. We need to go further with that and I ask the Leader of the House to take that matter on board when this is discussed with the other committees. I also noticed that the committees were conducted on different lines. As the system is developed, there is a need to handle matters in a consistent way.

One of the problems I am sure the member for Darling Range will raise is that members who attended committee meetings and who were not formal members of the committee sat on the back bench waiting and wondering when their turn would come. This point was raised in one committee and it was decided that due recognition would be given to members attending committees either as deputies or as interested members of Parliament, in that they would be given an opportunity to ask questions reasonably early in the debate, rather than at the end, because otherwise they sat and sat and, given the desired flexibility under which the committees were to operate, they did not always get an opportunity to go from one committee to another to ask questions. It is necessary to consider that aspect.

Mr Pearce: I accept what you say with regard to the time available. We began the Estimates Committees system late in the process because it took some time to get agreement. In future we will schedule the Estimates Committees week as part of the overall planning for the Parliament so that people will know a long time in advance, and we will make a gap of a week or two between the committees and the third reading.

Mr STRICKLAND: It might be a good idea, for instance, when a Minister and his or her advisory staff are before a committee for there to be a quick discussion at the beginning to cross check so that those attending are given a rough estimate of the time available for questioning. If three or four minutes were spent at the beginning of each sitting to sort out that matter, it would improve the system for everyone even though, for example, someone who may wish to speak for 15 minutes may be allocated only 10 minutes.

Mr Pearce: That is a fair suggestion.

Mr STRICKLAND: I put it forward as a positive suggestion. The next problem we faced, and it was raised today, was the integrity of the process whereby the members asked questions on Budget details but it was necessary to provide supplementary information. It would be far better for the third reading stage to be delayed a week so that the supplementary information could be prepared and provided before that stage. That would allow members to make a more meaningful third reading speech. Perhaps the Leader of the House will consider in the design of the flow of parliamentary business next year holding the Estimates Committees a week before a recess which would provide extra time for the research work to be carried out and the information recorded. That would improve the integrity of the whole process.

Mr Pearce: If the parties agree to the continuation of this process at the meeting next week, with whatever amendments are sought, before the end of this session I will designate a week next year for the Estimates Committees. We will circulate that and aim to follow your suggestion of holding Estimates Committees a week before a recess. That is a very sensible suggestion.

Mr STRICKLAND: I do not wish to raise too many other details because most will be raised at the third reading stage. In the main I thought the system was good and it provided a better opportunity for parties to get background information on the programs being conducted, rather than the multimillion dollar projects. We were able to ask questions about what the Government is getting for its money. Budgets are about the delivery of services and programs, not just amounts of money. Next year I intend to take a good look at the performance indicators, where it appears most departments have a long way to go.

MR HOUSE (Stirling) [8.06 pm]: I take this opportunity to make a couple of comments on the Estimates Committees. I felt the week was a success and, with a few of the bugs ironed out, this system will be a great improvement on the previous system. I refer to a couple of amendments that should be incorporated to improve it. The first is time management by Ministers of the allocations to their areas. In one committee the Minister who was responsible for three portfolios decided to allocate the time available in a way that suited him, without consultation, and other members of the committee were not notified beforehand. It is fair enough for him to take that step as long as he advises the other members of the committee beforehand and preferably with a reasonable amount of notice. It would not be difficult to work out a time management plan. That would help the committee to deal satisfactorily with each portfolio area.

I raise also the issue of allocation of nominal amounts to statutory authorities, such as the Water Authority or the Western Australian Meat Marketing Corporation. That was the practice in Budgets some years ago.

Mr Pearce: I understand it was taken out during the time of the O'Connor Government. The member for Floreat raised this matter earlier. It is a fair request and I will look into it.

Mr HOUSE: Under the new system there is no opportunity to discuss in this Parliament these Government instrumentalities. Apparently the only way is by moving substantive motions, and that should not be necessary.

Mr Pearce: There should be a way. I recall that when I was Minister for Transport and all the background information was provided, I could find nothing for the Main Roads Department because it was not included in the Budget. It is strange that some of these authorities are not dealt with in the same way and certainly scrutiny of some off Budget agencies is more important than scrutiny of some on Budget agencies.

Mr HOUSE: The Estimates Committees would be a wonderful opportunity for members of Parliament to question officers of the Water Authority in their official capacity about various matters that members do not have other opportunities to raise.

It would also be appropriate to appoint two deputy chairmen to each committee in order to spread the workload among and take some pressure off the members in the Chair. I do not think it would be a great problem to appoint two deputies apart from the nominated chairman. A difficulty arose with the signing on and off of members for the committee. It could be done by the two members involved, the one going on and the one going off, rather than by an allocated party authority.

Mr Pearce: That caused problems everywhere and it must be looked at.

Mr HOUSE: My party was basically happy with the system, and as the Opposition and the Government learn to understand how it works, and given a couple of years to refine it, it will be of benefit to the operations of the Parliament.

MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [8.11 pm]: The comments I will make about Committee A will probably suffice for Committees B and C. It was anticipated that the committee system would have some flaws, but once it has been modified, and provided the Government takes heed of the requests of members to improve it, it will be a significant change for the better.

I submit to the Government that the committees should have commenced at 10.00 am instead of at 11.00 am, and should concluded at 10.00 pm instead of knocking off at 6.00 pm. One day should have been allowed for each Minister, and members should have been able to determine the finishing time of each committee. The member for Scarborough indicated that only two or three minutes was allowed for questions on the Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs budget. That was also the case with the Aboriginal Affairs budget. That is not adequate, although I must say that for the past three years no time has been provided for members to debate the Aboriginal Affairs budget, so we have had an improvement of two minutes. It is on the cards that some committees will not require an extension of time, but flexibility should at least be provided. That occurs in other Parliaments around Australia. We are the only Parliament to schedule two or three Ministers on the same day.

The success of the committees depends on the cooperation of the respective Ministers; if Ministers cooperate, the committees will be successful. I asked the Speaker and his officers a number of questions about the Parliament and the charges for and the expenses of Royal Commissions, and I give the Speaker and his officers full credit for the detailed response they were able to provide within a matter of days. I asked the same question of the Premier, but to this date I have received only a parsimonious reply. Only a fraction of the information has been forthcoming. As late as 4.00 pm today, one of the Premier's officers phoned me to find out what was the question I was asking. The question I was asking was incorporated in the committee debates and was recorded at the time by the Premier's officers, yet the Premier failed to provide the information. I also made a request of the Speaker in relation to the affairs of the Legislative Council. The Speaker sought out that information, and a reply has come back from the President, which indicates that we can seek information from the Legislative Council under reasonable terms and conditions. So on the one hand I received cooperation, but on the other hand I did not.

I asked the Deputy Premier what is the Government paying, and for what length of time is the contract, for the building in Bunbury which houses the South West Development Authority and other associated agencies. The Deputy Premier said, "I will see if I can find out." It is farcical that the Government has proceeded to the Committee stage of this debate while information is still forthcoming. I asked also whether any other buildings in the State have been leased under circumstances where there is unused floor space for which the taxpayers are paying. Mr Taylor said, "Not to my knowledge." I am still waiting for that information. I asked the Premier to detail the number of commissions of inquiry that have been initiated by the Government, what was the cost of those inquiries, and whether any credit cards had been provided for expenses in addition to the range of expenses that would normally be provided. I still have not received an answer. In Queensland, court cases are inquiring into allegations that members of Parliament have used parliamentary credit cards for their own personal expenses. I do not know whether that has happened in Western Australia. The proper function of the Parliament is to seek information. I am not even talking about members of Parliament but about the members of committees of inquiry. I wrote to the Premier a week before the Estimates Committees started, to give her some advance notice of my questions, but I have not received a reply. Is there any reason why the Premier does not want to reply?

The committees will succeed only if the Government is forthcoming with information. That information relates to public expenditure and should be public information. I plead with the Leader of the House to not proceed tonight with the third reading of this Bill but to allow the Government time to provide at least some of the information which has quite properly been requested.

MR BRADSHAW (Wellington) [8.18 pm]: The committee system appeared to work reasonably well but there were some shortcomings. First, the time restrictions which were imposed limited the number of questions and the time for debate.

Mr Pearce: How many of the committees that you were on ran out of time? There may be a balance. I had three hours for my committee and it finished in about two hours 25 minutes.

Mr BRADSHAW: The committee which I attended ran out of time.

Mr Pearce: We will look at which committees ran over time and which ran under time because we made a rough estimate of how long matters would take and we can juggle the program.

Mr BRADSHAW: The system could be speeded up. I was under the impression that we could question the heads of departments, but the Ministers on the committees which I attended would not allow their departmental heads to speak. On some occasions the Minister actually asked a couple of departmental heads for the answers, and all of this took extra time which could have been saved if the Minister had allowed the departmental heads to answer those questions. This should be examined. It is wrong for the Government to have worked under a system whereby the Minister was the only person who could answer the questions; at least, that happened in the committees I sat in on.

Mr Pearce: The Government is very strongly of the view that it is the Ministers who are accountable for those budgets and it is the Ministers who are to be questioned. In the past in the Parliament members could ask only the Ministers. It is the same as the Committee stage in the Parliament. When dealing with a complicated Bill a Minister may have an adviser with him in the Chamber, but the principle is that the Minister is accountable. That is why we carried that system through to the Estimates Committees. Clearly it is neater if members are able to question various people from the bureaucracy, but very often the departmental head will not know the answer to a question - it will be known by somebody who is actually responsible for the financial controls. That is why sometimes two or three advisers at a time accompanied the Minister during the Estimates Committees. However, if members ask a question about the financial controls, they may not know all the policy parameters of the question. So in our view - and we hold it very strongly, and it was much discussed during the setting up of the Estimates Committees - it is the Ministers who are accountable and who should answer the questions. However, they should have with them sufficient advisers to enable them on the spot to give members a full and complete answer.

Mr BRADSHAW: I appreciate that, but I do not appreciate the system as it worked. I appreciate that the Minister is the person responsible for the budget of his department; on the other hand, just about every time a Minister was asked a question he consulted the adviser sitting alongside him about the answer, and I cannot see why that person could not have answered the question. If the Minister thought the answer was wrong he could have corrected it and said that that was not Government policy or what the Government intended.

Mr Pearce: If you want to carry that a bit further, your advisers who advised you about what questions to ask could come, and the public servants could come, and they could have the meeting on their own.

Mr BRADSHAW: We are not quite like the Ministers, with all their advisers; we ask our own questions and do our own research.

Mr Pearce: That is not quite the truth, is it?

Mr BRADSHAW: It is true. It certainly is in my case; I cannot speak for others.

Mr Omodei: Where do you think we get the researchers from?

Mr Pearce: The Government pays for some of them. I was in Opposition and I know the extent of resources the Opposition has now compared with what we had when we were in Opposition.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Ripper): Order! Let us hear from the member for Wellington.

Mr BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I was under the impression that we could ask the departmental heads the questions if the Minister did not know the answers. That certainly would have saved a lot of time, and I object to the fact that in some cases we did not get to ask questions in some areas in the committees I sat in on. Therefore consideration must be given to the time factor and also to allowing departmental heads to answer questions.

MR COURT (Nedlands) [8.23 pm]: At various stages I was involved in all three Estimates

Committees. I have been in this place for eight years now, so I have been through seven Budgets under the old system as well as under the experiment we tried last week. I went into it with a completely open mind, and I want to make what I think are constructive criticisms of the new system.

I happen to be one who did not mind the old system, whereby it took some weeks to go through the Committee stage of the Budget. I know that system had some weaknesses, in that during the time allowed we did not reach some items to be debated. However, last week I found it very disconcerting that matters in which I have a great deal of interest were dealt with by all three committees and those matters often clashed, so I spent a lot of time rushing from one committee to the other. For example, Estimates Committee A was handling the Office of Government Accommodation; we got halfway through the debate and it was going to continue the next day, but the next day I was scheduled to appear at another committee in respect of another responsibility that I had. If this Estimates Committee system is to continue I suggest there should be two committees and that more time should be set aside for all of the areas to be covered.

I will give the Leader of the House an example. In Estimates Committee A we did not cover the Trade portfolio of the Deputy Premier; we ran out of time before we could cover that Division. When Miscellaneous Services was being dealt with we rushed through that. The key item I wanted to debate in Miscellaneous Services came under "W" - it was WA Government Holdings Ltd and it was at the end of Miscellaneous Services. We rushed through quite important items, trying to get to the end, but we ran out of time and did not debate an item which I believe was one of the most important items in the Budget. Some \$54.6 million was set aside by the Government for WAGH and I was very keen to find out more about it. I am now asking questions about that item to try to get that information, but I would have thought the Government's payments to the ill-fated Petrochemical Industries Co Ltd project should be debated at some length during the Estimates Committee's deliberations.

Therefore I suggest, firstly, that if we are to stick with the new system there be two committees. As to time, the Leader of the House could quite easily find out which committees ran out of time and were not able to cover certain areas. I can assure members that when we were dealing with items such as Miscellaneous Services, which contained many huge items of expenditure, we rushed through, trying to cover all of them. We should have adequate time to cover each area. I know it suits the Government to deal with the Committee stage of the Budget in one week, but if that is the case I would prefer the Estimates Committees sittings to start earlier and finish later. There is no reason why we could not sit on the Tuesday and Wednesday evenings if there was a need to do so. The Leader of the House said that in some cases there was adequate time; that is not a problem, but in other areas there was not. For example, with Resources Development we were restricted to a 30 minute debate.

Mr Pearce: I accept what you say, but that timetable was drawn up because your party asked me for an indication of what a timetable might look like. I made a rough punt and gave an example, which then became the timetable. In the light of that experience we will rejig it - those areas which ran out of time we will make longer, and those which had time to spare we will make shorter, and balance it out that way. However, the difficulty with having open ended times for the committees is that they do not jig with the others, because when one is finished members have to go to another one. It is like a jigsaw - you need to know where the end of your piece is so you can move on to your next interest. We cannot have things just run on in an open ended way, because in a couple of hours the whole timetable would be in chaos.

Mr COURT: I give the Leader of the House the example of Miscellaneous Services, which is an area where most members of Parliament want to talk about one item out of the 100 listed.

Dr Alexander: We spent two hours on it.

Mr Pearce: I took out Miscellaneous Services and made it a special, separate item from the other portfolios, with a two hour allocation.

Mr COURT: We spent two hours on it, but I happened to be involved in another committee

at that time, so when I left that committee - and I only half did my job there - because there were some important questions I wanted to ask about Miscellaneous Services, I came rushing in here and was told we had 30 minutes left to deal with about half of the items, so we rushed through those. The whole purpose of Parliament is not to have a competition about how fast we can go through the Budget, but rather to properly debate those areas. Some of us happened to have interests in the three committees and we had to juggle things between the various committees. The Leader of the House said he set aside two hours for Miscellaneous Services. In the eight years I have been here it has been quite common to spend a couple of days going through the various items in Miscellaneous Services.

Mr Pearce: That may have been the case in the last couple of years. The average time spent at the Committee stage until the last three years has been 20 hours. The rough amount of time spent by the Estimates Committees was over 50 hours; that is, two and one half times the average amount of time spent on the Budget, until the last couple of years.

Mr COURT: Perhaps the Opposition was more diligent.

Mr Pearce: More waffley. Less scrutiny took place in those 50 hours of discussions than in some of the others. We are anxious to get the time allocations right. We will work on this year's experience to do that.

Mr COURT: I accept what the Leader of the House says. I object to the attitude of the Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations when he refers to efficiency of time. These matters may not be important to the Minister but they are important to the taxpayers. A matter may relate to \$10 or \$10 million; it does not matter. We should have adequate time to debate those matters. If the name of the game is to have a competition to see how quickly we can push through the Budget, we may as well walk out now.

Mr Troy: Set times are referred to in Standing Orders. Why is it not appropriate to consider a matter of efficiency of the Budget?

Mr COURT: I do not know what the Minister has been doing for the last three years but in the past the system involved a couple of weeks for the Committee stage of the Budget.

Mr Troy: The situation of the last two or three years has been ridiculous.

Mr COURT: The Minister may think it is ridiculous to have a lengthy debate. I think it is correct. I like having a lengthy debate. It may seem boring to the Minister and to other people -

Mr Troy: It is not boring. My sections were not covered in the last Budget due to the extravagant use of time in other areas.

Mr COURT: That is not a good system.

Mr Troy: That is why we have changed to the present situation.

Mr COURT: No. It is the Government which has put such restrictive time limits on the Budget. I put a lot of time into the Committee stage of the Budget. Last week was a waste of time for me because I had to do everything in a half hearted way.

Dr Alexander: Perhaps the member should slow down and try to do less.

Mr COURT: That is the way the member would think. I think differently. I speed up and want to do more.

Dr Alexander: That is half your problem.

Mr COURT: If that is a problem, I do not mind having that problem. The mentality expressed by the member is the reason for the country's going backwards at 100 miles an hour.

Mr Troy: Let's have another 10 hours on this!

Mr COURT: I take the opportunity to say that from my point of view, last week was a half hearted exercise because I did not have the time to do my job properly during the Estimates stage of the Committee.

DR ALEXANDER (Perth) [8.33 pm]: Despite my flippancy remark, I wish to add a couple of comments on Estimates Committee A from the chairman's perspective. It is not my job to reply to the political side of matters but I wish to outline my observations from the Chair.

The member for Wagin and I shared the chairing of Estimates Committee A. He may not necessarily share all my conclusions; I am sure he will say so if he does not.

Mr Pearce: He will probably say so if he does.

Dr ALEXANDER: He will need no prompting either way.

On the question of time allocation, my observation after sitting in the Chair for just over half a week was that although we ran out of time on the Deputy Premier's and the Premier's sections of the Budget, time was not wasted. However, many questions were almost repetitions of previous questions, or were so detailed as to unnecessarily take up the time of the Committee. I am not necessarily putting this to one side of the House or the other, but by the time debate ended the inevitable result was that we were out of time.

To some extent, it is inevitable that once one person asks a question, somebody thinks of another question, and it follows that someone else asks another question, and so the process goes. The problem is that we run out of time whether we allocate one hour or 10 hours. To me, it is almost a case of Parkinson's law - debate will expand to fill the time available. I do not make that remark in any malicious sense; it is just that once people start talking they like to continue talking.

Mr Clarko: Is that what you are doing now?

Dr ALEXANDER: This is probably why the member is chipping in now. We will soon hear from someone else over there -

Mr Omodei: The member mentioned that once debate on a subject has opened up, that leads to further questions. What is wrong with that?

Dr ALEXANDER: There is nothing wrong necessarily, it is just that it inevitably leads to a situation where we run out of time. It follows that people say they do not have time, but the real problem is that the process has not been managed efficiently. That is where I agree with the Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations, to some extent. It is a collective problem; it is not an individual problem.

Mr Pearce: Perhaps we should have performance indicators for the Estimates Committees.

Dr ALEXANDER: That would make us all shudder! The member for Scarborough mentioned that we should have guaranteed times for each item.

Mr Strickland: A guaranteed minimum time.

Dr ALEXANDER: That is a good idea. I will refer that to the Government for consideration. Perhaps the Standing Orders Committee would consider the whole question. The problem with a guaranteed time limit is that we could not have a guaranteed timetable. If members chose not to use the minimum time available, what do we do with the intervening time? Do we move to the next item? Perhaps we cannot because the advisers or the Opposition spokesperson are not available.

Mr Strickland: I suggested that we allocated 15 minutes at the beginning of the session, when the Minister was present and members could ask questions relating to each area - depending on how many members wish to speak - and a rough idea of the time could be given. If no member wished to speak on a particular item, the time could be cut back. In that way, everyone would be aware before debate commenced of the time management of the system. As it happened, we did not know until the end that the time had run out.

Dr ALEXANDER: That is a maths teacher's answer. That is the Strickland model; it should be considered. That is one way around the problem, otherwise we will end up running out of time whatever time is allocated.

The member for Nedlands referred to Miscellaneous Services. Two hours were allocated to that area. My perception was that although some important items came towards the end - and I sat in the Chair for an hour and a half of the two hours available and I must have left because the member for Nedlands rushed in - we had good questions on all items raised. No-one seemed to have extra questions which they could not ask. Again, the last few areas were squeezed out. Perhaps if we took matters in reverse order next year, that might solve the problem.

Mr Wiese: Will we see another \$55 million for WADC next year?

Dr ALEXANDER: It is over five years actually.

The deputy Leader of the National Party spoke about no debate being allowed on items which had no vote. That caused a little aggravation in our committee because I was forced to rule after considering the matter for 10 or 15 minutes that there could be no debate, otherwise we would be in breach of Standing Orders. I referred to serious precedents and so on. I was sympathetic to the need to get around the Standing Orders but in the end there seemed no way to do that. I suggest that perhaps token expenditure is not a bad idea so that at least items such as the Water Authority and other off-Budget statutory authorities can be debated. In the case of the Water Authority, as the member for Floreat knows, we had the Minister sitting in this place surrounded by his advisers, but under Standing Orders we could not debate the item. That was a ridiculous situation.

Mr Mensaros: I was not present.

Dr ALEXANDER: I thought the member was present. Another matter which has been raised previously is the membership of the committee between the two Houses. I believe that the Houses should get together and explore the possibility of undertaking the exercise jointly. While all sorts of jealousies exist between the Council and the Assembly, it seems ridiculous that each Division is debated twice. Even if the process took twice as long we should allocate more time and have the two Houses sitting together. We would then have the one Minister questioned once, not twice. It is a more efficient process from the Minister's point of view. I would have thought in the end, from the individual member's point of view, provided sufficient extra time was allowed for the bigger membership of the committees, that might be a better way to proceed.

Mr Lewis: I think you should pursue that.

Dr ALEXANDER: I will put that up as a suggestion for the Government to look at over the coming 12 months.

A Government member interjected.

Dr ALEXANDER: That was the other problem that came up; we had lower House Ministers representing upper House Ministers and vice versa.

Mr Lewis: Who did not know what they were talking about.

Dr ALEXANDER: They knew it as well as could be expected in the circumstances.

Mr Pearce: We have made the offer over and over to have joint committees; the member for Applecross needs to convince his upper House colleagues of that, and if he can the whole process will go much better next year.

Dr ALEXANDER: So we hope the Opposition will look at this as well. The member for Vasse was a little bit critical of the Premier not supplying questions in 24 hours flat.

Mr Blaikie: Ministers generally - even the Leader of the House.

Dr ALEXANDER: All I wanted to point out was that under the rules by which the committees were operating, Ministers were given until 22 November to provide summary information.

Mr Blaikie: That is quite correct. I do not believe that the third reading should be taken until after 22 November when this information is available.

Dr ALEXANDER: It has not been taken yet; this is just consideration of the committee's report.

Mr Pearce: We will go straight on to it though.

Mr Blaikie: The Leader of the House will go on to that tonight.

Dr ALEXANDER: That is something I did not know. I notice that this week and last Hansard has been assiduous in circulating the transcripts; it has been tremendous from that point of view. However, it does make me wonder what we do with all the paper that is generated in this Chamber and in this building. The member for Bunbury and I were talking about this earlier. In our electorate offices - I do not know what happens in other people's offices - we now recycle our paper. Would the Joint House Committee look at recycling the paper which is generated in this Chamber? Every member of every committee has wads of

paper just from last week's Estimates Committees, which they might read through for the bits that they said or did not say, but after that we can be sure it will not be reused, except for notes.

Mr Pearce: Recycled paper would be appropriate because much of it contains recycled speeches.

Dr ALEXANDER: Quite apart from the speeches being recycled, it would be a good thing for the environment if this House could start looking at reusing some of the huge amounts of paper that it generates. That reminds me, and I know it is not strictly relevant here, that I raised the whole question of recycled paper last year with the stationery office. I am very disappointed that the stationery office has advised that recycled paper, which I use in my office, is more expensive so I am having to spend more of my allowance for less paper because I insist on using recycled paper.

Mr Lewis: Isn't that a contradiction? Because of Federal taxation you pay more for it.

Dr ALEXANDER: I am not sure it is because of Federal taxation - it may be - but I think it is also the demand. If more members demanded to use it that would help to bring the price down, given the huge amounts of paper that we use.

Mr Lewis interjected.

Dr ALEXANDER: It might help. Fair enough, the Federal Government should look at that tax disincentive as well.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Are members' stationery allowances covered in Estimates Committee A?

Dr ALEXANDER: Perhaps they are not and, therefore, I will move on to other matters. From my perspective in the Chair I thought that by and large the committees ran fairly well. At least the questions asked in Estimates Committee A were either answered directly or it was guaranteed that answers would be provided.

Mr Blaikie: There was a large degree of flexibility that enabled other members to participate within Committee A, which was to the benefit of the committee process.

Dr ALEXANDER: This Chamber facilitates that sort of interaction. I understand that the committees that sat upstairs had a bit of trouble with people coming and going and noise in the wings, so we were lucky in that respect.

Mr Blaikie: Of course it depended on the directions of the Chairman, and I give the member for Perth credit for the manner in which he conducted the general proceedings of Estimates Committee A, which was probably the best run of all the committees.

Dr ALEXANDER: I thank the member for Vasse, but I would not like that to be taken as a backhanded insult to the other committee chairmen who I am sure did equally as good a job.

Mr Clarko: Take the compliment the way it was given; it was a positive comment.

Dr ALEXANDER: I will say thank you, and no more. The member for Nedlands said that there was insufficient time to debate the issues. To my way of thinking as the Estimates Committees are set up now, it is not the function to debate - perhaps the member meant to say "question", but he did say "debate" twice. If there is to be debate it is in the second and third readings rather than at the Committee stage. Of course, once we get into a question and answer session it does tend to become a debate. Our committee tried to restrict it to questions in context rather than get into a debate with the Minister saying one thing and the questioner saying another, and going back and forward and not progressing. Somebody suggested there should be two committees rather than three and that committees might sit at night. For my part I was glad to have three nights at home last week for the first time in months. That is purely a personal observation, but I would not like to see the committees go out any further than they do. The time allowed should be sufficient for all questions to be covered, particularly when the sorts of points which members opposite and on our side have raised are taken into account in revising the timetable and the organisation for 1991.

MR CLARKO (Marmion) [8.46 pm]: It is not surprising, having had approximately 100 years of the old system, that after one year of the new system there is a need to look to some changes. The Government decided that we would have this new system, and my role

and that of my colleague, the deputy leader of the National Party, was to best represent our side of politics in those negotiations. In the matters we put forward we found a high degree of acquiescence by the Leader of the House, and I am in the midst of trying to get submissions from my colleagues to see how we can improve the system for next year. Naturally when the Opposition took its stand, which was to accept the inevitable and make the most of what had been decided by the Government in this new system, it realised this would take from Opposition members the opportunity to make the traditional types of speeches that went with the Budget, particularly at the Committee stage which was changed a few years ago. Those changes gave the lead speaker on each Division one hour to speak and other speakers 30 minutes, which meant that an inordinate amount of time was taken in the early parts of the Budget debate. The result was that there was almost no discussion on those items relating to Ministers who ranked less highly. I mentioned that Education was not debated at all one year, and the Minister for Health said that health was not debated either. That was totally unsatisfactory. I felt that the advantage of the new system was that we would be able to ask specific questions on what expenditure was allocated to items last year versus this year and things of that nature. That needs to be greatly improved. For example, I am not aware of the officer who was present for the Education Division, but I expected Margaret Nadebaum to be in attendance with her highest departmental officials so that when we moved to different sections of the Division those officers would answer the questions. On that day the Minister said that TAFE would be debated at 4.00 pm and I would have liked to have seen four or five key officers present assisting an officer who would have given information about dollars spent and the policy reason for that expenditure. I will be asking the Leader of the House to try to ascertain how we can do that. I went to some meetings of Committees B and C which were held in an inferior place to this Chamber and, because of the small rooms in which those committees were held, they were crowded with officers. In some instances Ministers had three advisers to deal with an item of the Division being debated and six officers would be waiting outside to deal with other items of the Division. With three officers present there is no doubt that informative answers were given and we need more of that. My colleague, the member for Vasse, was keen to develop questions. We must organise ourselves better to give prior notice of questions in order that the Ministers are forearmed with the answers to the questions.

I welcome what my colleague, the member for Scarborough, said. The member for Wagin, together with the deputy leader of the National Party, said we should give consideration to the time allotted to each item of a Division. If a Division is allocated three hours and a certain number of items are allocated to each hour, and the items allocated to the first hour are debated in half an hour, we will have what happened to the member for Nedlands. He was assiduous in trying to attend the debates on various items of Divisions and he found in many instances when he arrived at the committee that the item had already been debated.

Mr Pearce: When I drew up the original timetable I deliberately did not do that for that reason. We have maximum flexibility if we have a set amount of time per Minister instead of per Division. If members would prefer to do it the other way, I am happy to do that.

Mr CLARKO: There are weaknesses in both systems and the member for Wagin put forward a proposition which included flexibility. That is something we have to consider.

Many years ago I worked for the mighty Mobil Oil company - one of those dreadful major world capitalist organisations - and we had an American visitor who was an expert in marketing. He said, "Gentlemen, what we have to do is to have a system that is flexible and functional." That is quite true, and it is a good division of time. Obviously we need a system that is flexible and functional and we have to move to that position while we negotiate.

In the modified version of the third reading which will follow, that is, 20 minutes for cameo speeches, members will follow up those questions on which they had only one or two minutes to make an introduction when asking their questions at the Committee stage. They will now have the opportunity, having received an answer, to make a 20 minute speech on an area of interest and talk about the Government's failings, strengths or whatever. How we succeed in the third reading stage will determine how this system works for the Government and Opposition. Obviously we will be on this side for two years only and Government members will be in Opposition for 20 years.

I join with my colleague who spoke about advisers. Mr Deputy Speaker, your chairmanship

of Committee A was top class and, with respect, if I did not think it was excellent I would be polite and not say anything. I deliberately asked a Dorothy Dix question and said that the Minister could ask the executive officer to answer the question and you said that we all knew that - I knew that you knew it. From then on, that departmental officer answered the questions directly instead of passing the information to the Minister. Opposition members understand the situation, because they are pragmatists about politics, and they do not imagine that the Government will create a situation where the replies from executive officers will destroy the Government's position. However, many of the questions can be properly answered by the executive officers without the potential for political weakness. It is desirable that officers provide information which will offset members' standing in this House and giving speeches as was the case previously. If Ministers provide us with information which gives us the capacity to make a judgment about whether the Budget is good or bad, we will have a system which members will appreciate because it will provide a new window into the affairs of Government.

Question put and passed.

Report of Estimates Committee B

MR DONOVAN (Morley) [8.56 pm]: The Committee has examined the Consolidated Revenue Fund Estimates 1990-91, Divisions 30 to 41; 52 to 58; 78 to 83; and 88 to 97 and recommend the expenditure proposed therein.

[See paper No 721.]

Mr DONOVAN: I move -

That the expenditures proposed in the Estimates be agreed to.

MR MENSAROS (Floreat) [8.57 pm]: I agree with the Leader of the House that this debate is not only historical, but also it is very important. If the Leader of the House, the member for Marmion, and the deputy leader of the National Party take serious cognisance of members' comments we can and we should expect that the system will improve. It can then be justifiably said that it is a better system of dealing with the Budget than the previous system. Theoretically, it should be a better system, but there is a great deal of difference between theory and practice. There was nothing wrong with the old system, particularly when the Ministers were provided with detailed explanatory notes and had with them one or two officers as they often do during the debates on Committee stages of complicated Bills.

The trouble with the old system was that the Budget was invariably debated in the final days of the session and it was dealt with in a very short time. The areas that could be improved in the new system are invariably connected with time, and I will go through some of the complaints which have been raised.

The debate on the Budget is the most important debate of the Parliament. According to the Bill of Rights no public funds can be expended without Parliament's approval. However, probably because no spectacular or sensational statements were expected during the week in which the Committee debates were held, only a couple of Press articles appeared. The truth of that can be seen in that the Press Gallery is absolutely empty now. One of the most important things that this Parliament does has not received any sympathy from the point of view of reporting by the Press because it only goes after sensationalism.

I turn to the disadvantages of the system. One of the disadvantages mentioned by other members was that the time allotted related to the Minister's portfolio instead of to the Divisions of that portfolio and did not allow for many subjects to be dealt with in ample time. For that and other reasons, it did not allow individual members to participate in all the debates in which they wished to participate. The theory behind this probably was that members could not be interested in everything and should have their special fields. If a member happened to be here for a considerable time, as I was, and had various ministerial portfolios and shadow portfolios in which they were interested relating to different fields, that made matters more difficult.

I think it was the member for Scarborough who suggested that perhaps each Division should be allocated a time - I think a much longer time - instead of the portfolios. That is something which should be examined. The answer to the Minister's interjection on that point is that one can allocate, after a proper judgment is made, a certain time for each

Division, and if one of those Divisions does not take as long as anticipated, at the end of it one can go back to a Division which has already been passed but about which more questions were expected. One would utilise allotted time but instead of utilising it for the portfolio as a whole it would be subdivided into Divisions.

The disadvantage of members not being able to be everywhere at once was also created because of a gentlemen's agreement within a committee which would suddenly decide, "We will take this Division first," instead of the one set down. I was interested in the Department of Resources Development, and I looked at the program and saw that I could be in the committee in time comfortably to discuss the matter in which I was interested. I went to the committee to discuss that matter only to find to my surprise that it had been taken first instead of last within the portfolios: Say there were 10 Divisions within that portfolio, the last was taken first.

The other slight handicap is that only six members were allocated to each Estimates Committee and other members interested in asking questions were able to ask those questions only after committee members had exhausted the questions they wished to ask, which happened on only certain occasions. This prompts me to think that the system of running three committees in parallel should perhaps be revised and only two committees should sit in parallel. In that case the accommodation problem would be solved.

One of the important disadvantages of running three committees in parallel is something no other member has mentioned; that is, the reporting of those committees. The State Parliament's *Hansard* was able to report only one committee because the other House was sitting at the same time. Therefore, the other committees were given to subcontractors, I understand the Commonwealth Reporting Service. Those committees did not report. When one talks about *Hansard* reports one speaks correctly because *Hansard* reporters take in shorthand what members have said and edit it because the spoken language, when written down verbatim, is not good enough to read. I can vouch for that, because I have visited and studied a number of Parliaments. I can recall one Parliament in Winnipeg in the Province of Manitoba in Canada which uses this method and has no *Hansard* reporters. They use microphones to record what is said and the whole debate is taped, typed and printed. The same method was used here for Committees B and C. Those reports were unedited.

If one looks at the record of those committees one finds that some of them are almost unreadable because the colloquial conversation was taken down and transcribed. I had an even greater disadvantage because of my accent and the people transcribing those committees were not used to it. An interesting example which the Minister for Mines may appreciate is that when we were talking about a new advisory body for the SEC and I said, "This seems to go back full circle because there was an advisory body early in the 1970s instituted by Arthur Bickerton," the report stated, "Some picketing has been done." I admit that that was caused to some extent by my accent but the reporters - and I always maintain that this is to our advantage - almost without exception do not necessarily have to be the best shorthand writers; they must understand the subject because if they do not something very stupid comes out of it.

This is one more reason to support your comments, Mr Deputy Speaker, that perhaps a historical decision could be made that the two Houses deal with the Budget Bill in the committee system together. If that were the case it would solve the *Hansard* situation and the accommodation problem because one committee could sit in this Chamber and the other in the Legislative Council Chamber. With only two committees sitting at the same time one could liberalise the present rule that only a certain number of members of Parliament may be members of a committee and therefore participate in the questioning. I believe that more time will have to be allowed for those committees. If we combined with the Legislative Council we would virtually be doing two weeks' work much more deeply and could be much more involved in the detail while covering the same subjects. I suggest more time could be allowed, generally speaking, and I will not go into detail whether that should be mornings, or whatever, but the two Houses should deal with the committee stages of these Bills together. The rigidity of having six, eight or 10 members on a committee should be done away with and all members should be able to ask questions in those committees.

I fully appreciate the comments of the Leader of the House that Ministers and not public servants are responsible to the Parliament; however, a lot of time is wasted if a Minister

whispers a question to an adviser who whispers the answer back during which time the whole committee stage is stagnant. The Minister, in any case, if he does not know the answer to a question - for which I do not blame him or her as there were few Ministers able to do that - will listen to his adviser anyhow, so it is a technicality to say that the adviser is not responsible therefore his answer must be discounted.

My humble experience with the three committees was that the Minister who knew his subject best allowed the advisers to speak most. That seems to be a contradiction, but the Minister who obviously knew less of his subject wanted to prevail and say everything himself. I remember that when I was in the Executive and had to submit something to the Commonwealth I not only tried to learn the subject to such an extent that I was at least as good at it as the departmental head, but also I virtually made a sport of it, which was very useful; that is, I would go into a room in, say, Canberra to be confronted by the Federal Minister and about 10 advisers; I would leave all my advisers outside and enter the room alone. Members would not believe what an impression that makes, as long as one masters one's subject, of course. It is not only the impression that matters, but also the result that may be achieved through that action.

I recapitulate some of the suggestions which emerged from my observations. Time should be allocated according to Divisions. If one of the Divisions did not exhaust the time allocated to it, the aggregate time could be used for a Division on which further questions can be expected. Swaps should not be allowed to take place, even if they are agreed to by the committee members, because they could prevent other people who are engaged in a different committee from participating in that subject. All in all, the idea of holding Estimates Committees was a good one. After all, whichever method is used, probing questions by members of Parliament representing taxpayers should be answered. Whether that is done by not leaving debate on the Budget until the last weeks of Parliament and dealing with it during the Committee of the Whole or whether it is handled by the new committee system does not matter as long as questions are answered. Members should also be able to present complaints or suggestions of their own and of their constituents so that those questions and answers can be recorded.

The final matter about which I asked a question of the Premier today is one I have mentioned often - yet which, as long as the matter is not solved, must be raised again and again - and it concerns the worsening issue of not being able to debate, let alone vote for, a large proportion of public expenditure because that expenditure is handled by Government instrumentalities and not by Government departments. The situation has worsened because, during the Government's seven-plus-year term, it has created more and more agencies from departments. Previously, you, Mr Deputy Speaker, mentioned that funding for Water Resources could not be debated. I did not attend the committee session on that matter because I knew it could not be debated. Previously funding for country water could be debated because it was funded under the Public Works Department; now it is the responsibility of the Water Authority. The other area of public works which received the biggest expenditure allocation, particularly from the General Loans and Capital Works Budget, is the Building Management Authority. Debate on funding for expenditure in that area has also been taken away from Parliament. If, as the Premier has so often said, she wants Government to be open and accountable, that situation must be remedied. I suggested today by way of a question to the Premier that the easiest remedy would be - it would take procedure back full circle, because it was done 20-odd years ago despite the fact that at the time there were less instrumentalities - for the Government to allocate a nominal sum for appropriation by Parliament of say \$1 for each of the Water Authority, SECWA, Westrail, the port authorities, the Building Management Authority and so on. After all, every one of those instrumentalities spends taxpayers' money. How many people do not subscribe to SECWA? Perhaps some who live in remote areas of Western Australia may not use electricity, but all in the metropolitan area do. The same applies to the water utility. Those authorities are all funded either directly or indirectly by taxpayers' money. If someone were to take the legal argument to the Supreme Court that the 301 year old Bill of Rights said that no public expenditure can be made without parliamentary approval, they might well win the case because public expenditure is being made without parliamentary appropriation. I am not saying we should go as far as appropriating the total amount of funding, but that a nominal sum be mentioned in the appropriations, thereby allowing matters based on information in the annual reports or other publications to be debated.

Interestingly, more members listened to this debate than any other debate I can recall. During most debates, the speaker continues while members do not listen. Members listened to this speech; consequently, I hope my suggestions will be taken into consideration.

MR STRICKLAND (Scarborough) [9.16 pm]: Firstly, as I went from committee to committee on different days my perception was that the standard of recording information varied. In the Assembly, *Hansard* recorded the debates and in the other committees the information was recorded by tape recording. When I talk about *Hansard* I mean the debates recorded by reporters. When studying the record of Estimates Committees B and C, I noticed some errors. In one instance, my name is in place of the Chairman. Statements were attributed to the wrong people and the normal quality provided by *Hansard* is not evident in the information recorded on the tapes.

Mr Pearce: That is largely because the committees sat while the upper House sat. We are proposing to change that next year.

Mr STRICKLAND: If we took the member for Floreat's suggestion that the Parliament focused on the Estimates procedure at the one time the standard arrangement with *Hansard* recording the two Houses could apply. If one thought laterally, perhaps the number of committees could be restricted to two and the timing could be expanded in either of two ways. Would it be possible to consider debating the Estimates over two weeks? If weeks were at a premium perhaps Parliament would agree to the unusual procedure of sitting for more than three days of the week. Why can we not consider a five day week in which to examine the Estimates? There may be a reason for not doing that of which I am not aware. However, if the total time is a problem these matters should be looked at. On one occasion I wanted to look at the *Hansard* from the previous day and I did not think the speeches had been transcribed from the tape into the printed form. I was not in Parliament House on Friday and on Monday it was printed. I am not sure whether the fact that I did not correct any duplicates is my fault or the fault of the system. I have no wish to blame anyone. However, we need to look very carefully at that matter so that every member takes the opportunity to correct his information. When I did not receive the tape recorded copy on that day, I thought that the subsidiary information would be included later, so I did not worry unduly.

The first point is the quality of *Hansard*. Perhaps we can look at improving that by taking certain measures. Another matter is that of the area of the Department for Community Services. I raised the question of funding for capital works. I was not sure if certain Consolidated Revenue Fund or loan funding for projects which were not proceeded with was covered, and whether unspent moneys could be involved. I still want to find out what has happened to those projects.

Because we were dealing only with Consolidated Revenue Fund matters, we had a ruling from the Chair. I am not disputing the ruling that we should not discuss the capital side of the Budget, but unfortunately that meant that all the trouble we went to to get the Ministers and the chief executive officers into the Parliament so that the question could be better answered has gone, because when we get to the General Loan Fund debate we will have to hope that the Minister has that detail. If he has not, he will be put into the position of having to say, "I shall find out about that and let you know at some other time." It may be of value, while we have the CEOs with the Minister, to make some provision for questions on the capital works side of the Budget, because we on our side of the House want to pursue several items of under-expenditure. We want to find the nitty gritty of what is happening with those projects.

I do not have a lot more to add on this section other than to indicate to the Leader of the House that when I was on Estimates Committee B we kept our eyes on the clock and became aware that other people may want to ask questions. We became aware amongst ourselves that time was still needed for rear end Charlie in the order of Divisions as decreed by the agenda. As a result we were able to spend at least some time - I think the least amount of time was 10 minutes - on each item. That is the juggling process I referred to earlier. On the second day, in Estimates Committee B, perhaps we were a little wiser, and the system showed promise of working.

MR DONOVAN (Morley) [9.23 pm]: I appreciate the opportunity to add further comments to those made in respect of Estimates Committee A, and add to the contributions made by the

member for Floreat and the member for Scarborough. My co-Chairman, the member for Albany, and I both agreed that from a management point of view at least the Estimates' week was a vastly improved method of handling the Budget process in the Committee stage over that with which you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and I are both familiar from last year. There were some bugs which needed ironing out, not least of which was the public address system in the television room, which accounted for a considerable number of difficulties experienced by the reporting staff, as the member for Scarborough alleged when he spoke of the wrong ascription of speakers.

Another bug which nearly brought the two Houses into a head-on collision was the ringing of the bells for the other place. It is a pity the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform is not here. At 3.30 pm on Tuesday this unfortunate event occurred. By consensus it was agreed to abandon the process until the termination of the ringing of the bells and take advantage of afternoon tea at the same time. On the following day it was suggested that perhaps the bells in that area of the building could be switched off or adjusted, but that suggestion brought a prompt response from the President of the other place. He said that there would indeed be a crisis in the Parliament were that option to be considered. As the saying goes, we copped it sweet for the next two days rather than risk such an unfortunate occurrence.

The question of nominated committee members and non members occasionally provided some difficulties for members, but by and large the management of that process went very well. It is a pity the member for Roleystone is not here this evening because the only exception to that was the member for Roleystone, who wanted to be a part of the committee without having been nominated by his leader at that point. He declared for reporting staff and all to hear, "After all, were rules not there to be broken?" While one may have some sympathy with that point of view, it raises questions in regard to the member for Floreat's concern about the need to be very clear about time rules.

I think the member for Albany will agree with me when I say that flexibility worked both ways in the Estimates Committees. We were not used to that in the previous method of handling the Committee on the floor of the Chamber in the normal way. There was a freedom which allowed Ministers to put to the committee an alternative order of presenting Divisions on the one hand, and it also allowed, as the member for Marmion will recall, the capacity for an individual member to ask a Minister whether he or she would mind presenting a Division out of order to accommodate the need, in this case for the member for Marmion to get on to another committee. So that flexibility was exercised between members, Ministers and the Chair.

It was not the experience of Estimates Committee B that time was a major problem. Indeed it was never required on any of the three days at any point to exercise Sessional Order No 4, which you will recall, Sir, is the order which applies to a committee unable to produce a report. In fact a report was recommended at each segment in respect of each Division and part of the Budget Bill with which Estimates Committee B dealt. On the contrary, on two occasions we finished early, once, ironically, in respect of the 15 minutes I mentioned earlier that we agreed by consensus would have to be repaid to the committee as a result of postponing proceedings as a result of the ringing of the bells. The committee agreed to continue until 6.15 pm. In fact the member for Albany, who was chairing that later afternoon segment, assured me that the committee did not require that extra 15 minutes, so the time was not needed. In the education section, the Chair, namely myself, expressed some concern on a number of occasions that several Divisions remained to be dealt with, and I was assured by members of the committee that there was no problem as they saw it. I was told that we would get through. I am happy to report that the members were right, I was wrong, and we finished that section 15 minutes early.

Finally, the cooperation of all members of this House was appreciated by the committee. The cooperation and patience of the recording staff in difficult conditions at the different venues was appreciated, as was the helpful and constructive presence of ministerial staff. Several members have made comments about whether and to what extent ministerial staff should answer questions. That is a political question which it would not be appropriate for me to engage as a chairman but most members agreed it was helpful to have ministerial advisers present in a way they cannot be traditionally on the floor of this Chamber.

It would be wrong of us to complete this debate tonight without an expression of appreciation for the cooperative work undertaken by members of staff of the Legislative Assembly, some of whom are present tonight. The staff were extremely cooperative, patient and helpful. I doubt whether we would have worked through last week in such an expeditious and cooperative way without the help of the staff of this Chamber.

Question put and passed.

Consideration of Report of Estimates Committee C

MR MARLBOROUGH (Peel) [9.32 pm]: Estimates Committee C has examined the Consolidated Revenue Fund 1990-91, Divisions 42 to 51, 59 to 66, 73 to 77, and 84 to 87, and recommends the expenditure proposed therein.

[See paper No 722.]

Mr MARLBOROUGH: I move -

That the expenditures proposed in the Estimates be agreed to.

MR MINSON (Greenough - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [9.33 pm]: I wish to add my observations to those already expressed regarding the Estimates Committees. I found that the committees worked satisfactorily. In the interests of time the new system will be a very useful method to expedite proceedings. However, I share some of the observations of the member for Nedlands in that in the past, while Committee debate proceeded in the Chamber, members' input - even in the form of an interjection - led to a worthwhile exchange. I cannot see that situation occurring under the new committee system. However, if we work at refining the system it will probably become a useful way to handle the Budget. I accept that probably the Parliament in future will deal with the Budget in that way. However, I echo the sentiments of the member for Nedlands who suggested a two-committee system rather than three committees. That might allow more members an input, wherever they want. That suggestion has merit. I suggest that two committees could sit for extended hours. The time allowed would not be much longer and we could probably handle the Budget within one week. We could include an extra day in the same week or one sitting day from the following week. When a review of the committee system is undertaken perhaps that suggestion will be taken on board. I suggest also that if a member has a burning question to ask one committee but the time slots clash, there is nothing wrong with writing down the questions and giving them to another member to ask. That is a legitimate way to go.

In my opinion, the amount of time allocated to the committees for different areas of the Budget was sufficient. I chose to speak at the review of Estimates Committee C. However, Estimates Committee B met the time limit with about 10 seconds to spare because we decided to get a hurry on. We decided to adapt to the time slot allocated to us.

An enormous amount of personal variability is experienced in these situations. I can envisage a situation where certain members and certain Ministers use only half the time allocated. However, other members tend to ask long winded questions and are fairly exhaustive in their questioning. Similarly, some Ministers cannot give a succinct answer; that is, when a yes or a no or an amount of money will do. Several pages can be taken up answering one question.

Mr Carr: Ministers are not the only ones afflicted in that way.

Mr MINSON: The Minister has not been listening.

Mr Pearce: The member has given a balanced assessment of the situation.

Mr MINSON: That is right. I could see the Government Whip nodding her head. I thought I should throw in a comment about the Ministers' being succinct to balance my comments. We did witness a variation in personalities, and the way they approach these matters would alter the amount of time taken in asking or answering questions.

The suggestion regarding guaranteed minimum times for items is probably a good one although I would not like to see the situation where a timetable was so structured that we would find ourselves in a situation where people end up sitting around for a quarter of an hour before the next item is considered. That would be a most unsatisfactory situation.

I feel strongly about ministerial explanations. I refer to whether a Minister or a ministerial adviser answers questions raised during the Committee stage. My reading of the committee system is that the feeling was completely different from the atmosphere of Parliament. The committees on which I sat were not mischievous in asking questions. Much time would be saved if the Minister confined himself to answering matters of policy or questions he is able to answer. If a question is a straightforward technical one, and has nothing to do with policy, I cannot understand why a ministerial adviser cannot give an answer immediately. During the procedures of each committee I noticed interminable whispering. I was close enough to hear the whispering on a couple of occasions, and the Minister got the answer wrong. I do not know whether that incorrect answer remains on the record. That is a matter for consideration next year. I ask the Leader of the House to consider all these points. I do not think a Minister would be abdicating his responsibility by allowing an adviser to answer questions. Nobody expects Ministers to keep all those figures in their heads.

Finally, Estimates Committee A sat in this Chamber in a much better atmosphere. That committee worked better and in a more relaxed way. The accommodation in the Select Committee rooms was a little cramped. If better accommodation could be found it would be appreciated. I accept that we cannot redesign Parliament House simply for one week's sitting of committees. However, we have alternative venues close by which could be used. We may even consider having the Assembly Estimates Committees sit at a time when the Legislative Council is in recess, and vice versa, in which case we could use both Chambers.

Taking into account the fact that this was the first time we used this system, it operated fairly well. Members had to juggle between the time slots and in one case a subject considered by one of the committees finished three quarters of an hour earlier than scheduled and I thought that the subject in question would have taken a long time to consider. With a little discipline on both sides, and with a review and revamp of the time slots, the system could work quite well in the future.

MR WIESE (Wagin) [9.42 pm]: I take the opportunity in considering Estimates Committee C to speak about the general process undertaken because we ran out of time when discussing Estimates Committee A - that is as good a reason as any. I spent a little time with Committee C, so it is appropriate to participate in this debate. As you would be aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, I shared the chairmanship of Committee A with you, and I am pleased to refer to the functions of the committee.

The member for Vasse spent some time referring to the functioning of the committees - he was involved with all three - and he said that Committee A was conducted in the best manner of all the committees. There are a few reasons for that: Committee A was conducted in this Chamber which provided ample room and excellent facilities, and this would have contributed to the good running of the committee. The member for Vasse at the commencement of Committee A commented on the fact that all five of the committee members were seated together. He indicated that we should have been able to sit separately so that Government members sat apart from Opposition members. That was no reflection upon the Government members, but referred to the fact that we were better able to work together when the three Opposition members were not mixed intimately with Government members - as happened in Committees B and C - and this helped to expedite discussions.

Committee A was perhaps run more efficiently than the others because Committee A took up 140 pages of the Daily *Hansard*; Committee B took up 307 pages; and Committee C comprised 334 pages of transcript. It may be that the comparison is a little unfair as the print is a little larger with Committees B and C, but I am sure that Committee A worked very well!

Mr Pearce: The difference between the transcripts is that one is a Hansard transcript and the others are verbatim transcripts from tape.

Mr WIESE: That is right, and there is a message in that. Previous speakers referred to the different types of recording operations between the committees, and as Committee A worked extremely well we should look at using the reporting system which operated with Committee A for Committees B and C.

Comment was made by previous speakers about the fact that if a member happened to be interested in one of the latter Divisions in a session of the committee, one could be restricted for time. In some cases the discussions ran out of time, and very early in the proceedings I

held discussions with my party at which we drew up a rough guide to the division of times so that we could allocate a little time to each Division. In that way we ensured that each Division was discussed. We tried to introduce a little flexibility to the system, and to some degree that worked. I agree with other speakers that the Estimates Committees process should certainly not operate in an absolutely regimented way. We would not want to allocate 15 minutes to Division 1, 15 minutes to Division 2, and 30 minutes to Division 3; that would restrict the discussion far too much. We need guidelines within which members can work, along with a certain flexibility. Opposition members would certainly examine that point if we retain the system for next year.

More time needs to be allocated for the Estimates Committees process. It would be possible to sit at night more as we do in the normal functions in the House. One speaker suggested that we could sit for five days in a week while the Estimates Committees are operating. I cannot see any reason that that could not be done because this would operate only for a couple of weeks. When we return to the committee system next year - as I am sure we will - we must give serious consideration to reducing the number of committees from three to two. Three committees split our resources too far and this generated some conflict between areas in which members had specific interest because two Divisions of interest were being discussed at the same time at different locations. These members were cut out of the process because it is not possible to be in two places at once.

If the system is spread over a longer time span it will be possible to operate with two committees. In that way much of the conflict would be cut out and this would enable many more members to participate in the discussions on Divisions of specific interest. As the National Party does not have the numerical strength of the major parties, we felt this conflict much more. Nevertheless, I am aware of several members of other parties who have expressed exactly the same problem, in that they wished to partake in the discussions of two Divisions which were conducted at the same time.

The Program Statements comprised nearly 1 000 pages of information which endeavoured to give more information to members on the budgetary process. I congratulate the Government on endeavouring to provide more information in that way. There has been a lack of detailed information on the budgetary process in previous years. What worries me about the Program Statements is that while they give all members a great deal more insight into the modus operandi of the various departments, I am not sure that that information helps us to understand either the budgetary process or the specific financial arrangements within the departments. Members need more specific financial detail in addition to, or as part of, the Program Statements. In that way members can get a much better understanding of each department and how it allocates funds to the various sections of its operations, especially within regions. The Program Statements are a step in the right direction, but we could get more specific financial information which would probably be of more assistance to members than much of the information provided. I hope that we can persuade the Government to go along those lines.

Much mention has been made about ministerial advisers. I found, both as a member sitting in on committees and as a Chairman during part of the discussions which took place in Estimates Committee A, that it was very frustrating to go through the process of asking a question of the Minister, the Minister's consulting with his adviser, the adviser speaking to the Minister, and the Minister's passing the answer back. The whole process was slow and boring, and I am left asking myself whether the questions which were asked have in fact been answered. It was interesting to see Ministers consult with advisers for a couple of minutes, and the Ministers would then answer in 10 seconds. I do not know what happened to the other one minute 50 seconds of advice; either Ministers have the ability to compact information into a very short answer, or we did not get the answer given to the Minister by the adviser - it was sifted. I do not believe that that consultation process was as necessary in all cases as some of the Ministers believed. If the Ministers have faith in themselves and their own abilities and their advisers, I cannot see any reason why in a lot of cases - certainly not in all cases - the answer could not have been supplied directly by the advisers. It would have been more helpful, firstly, to committee members and members present at those meetings, and, secondly, by enabling us to get through more questions and answers of the various Ministers and departments. In several cases we wasted a lot of time going through that process.

I want to comment on the provision of supplementary answers to questions which Ministers were unable to answer during the committee sittings. In many cases we were promised that supplementary answers would be provided to the Clerk of the House, and one would presume they will appear in some form of daily *Hansard* or would be passed directly to members of the committee at which the questions were asked. I accept that the deadline for the handing in of those questions is 22 November. What worries me is that we will be moving into the third reading debate on the Estimates possibly tonight, and certainly over the next couple of days. We will be taking part in debate without having access to the information which was to have been provided to committee members by way of supplementary answers. I have grave reservations about whether that procedure is fair or proper, because once through the third reading we will not have an opportunity to question the answers which are given. I am sure the supplementary answers will be provided, but I am not sure whether we have a mechanism to ensure that answers are provided on time. I hope that if there are any instances where the answers have not been provided, the Speaker and the Clerk of the House will take the necessary steps to follow the process through and make sure we do at least get the answers. It is a great pity that we will not have those answers during the third reading debate. I made a tentative proposal to ensure that there was an opportunity to discuss each Division during the committee and I will not dwell on that any further; but as all members would be aware, some sections were not discussed at all. In future years, now that members have a much better understanding of how the process works and how to go about getting answers, the problems will get worse. That is part of the reason I am strongly of the feeling that we need extra time in coming years and that we need a better form of time management.

My final comment relates to the overall system of Estimates Committees. Under the old system of Budget debate in Committee each member had the opportunity to sit in the Chamber to participate in the Budget process, and to listen to the questions and the answers which were provided in every section. Under that system members had the opportunity to get a far better overall look at the Budget, the way it was put together, the expenditure in the various departments, and the financial running of the State of Western Australia. Under the new system, members are not able to do that. At the absolute best a member this year had the opportunity to be part of or to be an onlooker at only one-third of the overall Budget process. If this continues in the same manner over the next three or four years members of this place will not have the overall understanding of the financial affairs of the State and the way it is running because they will not have had an opportunity to be part of the Budget process and the questioning process on the Budget overall. They will have had a narrow perspective of one-third of that Budget.

I do not believe that in the long term that will benefit this State. That is why I reiterate what I said earlier - that we should have two Estimates Committees rather than three. With two committees members will have an opportunity to participate in at least half of the examination of the State's Budget and that has to be better than a third. I realise it is hard to ensure that members will have an opportunity to examine the complete Budget, but we should give serious consideration to having only two committees.

MR MARLBOROUGH (Peel) [10.01 pm]: I thank all of the staff who assisted the committees. I also thank the Leader of the House for his suggestion that he call together the chairpersons of each committee and others to consider how we will handle the committees in the future. If the member for Wagin and Opposition members are really serious about having a committee system for the consideration of the Estimates in which they can ask more appropriate questions to obtain more detail, they would be far better off moving for the upper House to abandon immediately its committee system for the examination of the Estimates. It is absolutely ludicrous for the member for Wagin or any other member of the Opposition to consider the Assembly committees in isolation and to argue how hard done by they were because they ran out of time in which to ask appropriate questions. We have had the farcical situation of the upper House National Party members spreading their thin resources across three committees and of asking questions of Ministers who do not administer the portfolios. The member for Wagin should be telling his colleagues to abandon the upper House process for next year and to support joint committees so that the National Party could have representatives at the three committees. That process would be manageable and it would make it possible for members of the National Party to come out of their telephone box and attend the three committees.

Mr Wiese: That is nonsense. We would still receive answers to only one-third of the Budget if we had three committees, whereas if we follow my suggestion we would have access to 50 per cent of the Budget.

Mr MARLBOROUGH: The member for Wagin has a penchant for detail and committees. If one wants to find him in his electorate, one forms a committee and he is there. Other members have many other things to do with their time.

Mr Wiese: Do you know how many committees I have served on in this place? One. What you have said is utter and complete nonsense, a figment of your vivid imagination.

Mr MARLBOROUGH: What is not a figment of my vivid imagination is the inadequate way the member for Wagin solves all of his problems. The Opposition parties need to consider a joint committee system at which they can talk to the appropriate Ministers, not to stand-in Ministers who are handling portfolios that they do not administer. If the Opposition is serious about the quality of the answers it receives and the questions it asks, the joint House approach is the way to go. Members opposite should attend the meetings that have been suggested by the Leader of the House and strongly support that view.

I thank all participants for their cooperation last week and for their support. I thank particularly my co-Deputy Chairman of Estimates Committee C, the member for Belmont.

MRS EDWARDES (Kingsley) [10.06 pm]: The Estimates Committee system worked extremely well. We were able to ask far more probing questions than we are normally given the opportunity to ask in the Committee stage. Other members have referred to the difficulty caused by the short time which we were given to ask those questions. It is important to reassess time limits for certain departments. A problem to which members have not referred is that, on many occasions, the responsible officers of the departments were not available to supply answers and, in some instances when the responsible officers were available, sufficient information was not available. Questions were asked on simple financial matters, the information for which was not available. I am not sure what questions the Ministers and their staff were expecting to be asked, but they certainly did not have the answers. A simple question that could not be answered was: What contingency fees exist and what is the breakdown of those fees? That basic information should be readily available at a briefing of this nature. Therefore, not only does the Opposition have to be ready to ask more probing questions in future, but also Ministers need to be more aware of their responsibilities and to provide the information that is required.

Question put and passed.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the remainder of the Bill be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

Third Reading

MR PEARCE (Armadale - Leader of the House) [10.09 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR CLARKO (Marmion) [10.10 pm]: One body within this Budget of \$5 billion that has suffered the sharp knife is the Keep Australia Beautiful Council. Last financial year and the previous financial year, it received \$184 000 from the State. No provision has been made for the council in this year's Budget and that is a dreadful shame. As a percentage of the Budget it is minuscule, but over a number of years the Council has been tremendously effective in not only beautifying but also basically cleaning Western Australia. When we return to Government, which everybody realises will be in approximately two years, I will certainly be urging my party to reintroduce funding of the Keep Australia Beautiful Council.

The latest report of the Keep Australia Beautiful Council, for the year 1988-89, was presented to this Parliament on 1 May 1990, and the statistics to which I will refer are associated with that report. The report indicates that in 1988-89 a sum of \$730 000 was provided by industry levies. It was a substantial increase on the previous year's figure - \$86 000, or approximately 12 per cent. It significantly outweighed the proportion of its funding provided by the Government and it was a system based on a voluntary arrangement. Both the previous Liberal Party and National Party Government and the current Labor Party Government supported the continuation of the principle that there not be a mandatory

imposition of a universal deposit system and that it be applied in part only. It is a different system from the extensively used deposit system which operates in other parts of Australia and the Western world which enables young people to add to their income by picking up not only cool drink bottles, but also aluminium cans. Members are aware that in this State we have a system in which individuals and charitable organisations are paid for aluminium cans according to weight. Charitable organisations raise a lot of money from this system. In 1970 a former Liberal Government, the Brand Government, began in a formal way the first organisation of this kind. Ten years later, in 1980, the Litter Act was proclaimed and we have worked with a system of voluntarism rather than compulsion.

In 1988-89 the Keep Australia Beautiful Council had a permanent staff of nine people and a committee of volunteers. It had four objectives: First was litter reduction, second was recycling, third was public pride and fourth was enforcement. It is a very good way to consider this subject. In our State there has been a significant reduction in the figures for collection of rubbish. We are able to take pride in the fact that less roadside rubbish is collected now than was collected previously. The statistic of positiveness in this regard is, in a sense, collecting less rubbish, which is strange. Under its litter reduction program the council works closely with the media and it uses a system similar to that which we use with the media; that is, encouraging people in the media to write stories. The council has a publicity officer and I am not sure whether that position will remain. I take it that if the council's budget of \$1 million is reduced by \$200 000, staff will have to be put off. In 1988-89 the publicity officer was able to be part of 661 separate stories which related to the Keep Australia Beautiful Council, to litter, recycling and tidy towns.

The annual report also states that the council spent money on advertising in the media and on a week on, week off basis for two to three month periods it used 30 second television messages. Those messages included the new penalty of \$40 which was increased from \$25. The council used the expression, "Don't be a pig" as a title for one of its advertisements and in a more positive way one of its advertisements said, "Thumbs up for picking up", which I find much better. It ran a month long, full page campaign in community newspapers which was aimed at encouraging recycling and which highlighted the new penalties for the various types of offences. Metropolitan radio stations carried 30 second messages to encourage motorists to use litter bags in their vehicles and country radio was used to encourage people living and travelling in the north of the State to use special travel litter bags.

The Keep Australia Beautiful Council ties its program in with many large functions which are held in the community. For example, in 1989 prior to the Australia Day celebrations it ran a week long radio campaign encouraging people to show pride in their country and to take their litter home. The council found that its campaign was successful because there was a reduction in the quantity of litter at most of the venues at which events were held that weekend. It chose a female Aboriginal artist, Sally Morgan, to design a poster which she titled "Honour The Land" and it had special significance for Aboriginal communities. The council displayed equipment at libraries at Cockburn, which is close to your electorate, Mr Speaker, at Thornlie, Maylands and Applecross, while a specific display with a recycling theme was exhibited at the Health Surveyors' Institute Conference. The council received sponsorship from various organisations.

I join with the council in its special tribute to one of its members, Mr Theo Hayward, who passed away in that year. I do not know whether members knew him, but if they are closely associated with the surf life saving movement, as I am, they will know that he was a remarkable man. He was the first paid officer of the surf life saving movement in Western Australia, but he could not be paid enough because he was working 24 hours a day for that association and for other community organisations.

Most people would not grasp the fact that the council produced and distributed approximately 3.25 million litter bags. It is an incredible number of bags to be distributed in a State which has a population of 1.5 million. The council set out to produce three million bags and it was able to produce 250 000 more and distribute them in Western Australia. Approximately 1.2 million bags were produced on a cost-shared basis with organisations which put their messages on the outside of the bags. That is another way in which the council was prudent in the expenditure of its money. That is the reason I find it difficult to understand why the Government has withdrawn the funding of \$200 000 from that organisation. It is involved in projects on a dollar for dollar basis in our community and it was receiving many dollars in return.

The Tidy Town competition, of which I am sure you, Mr Speaker, and members from country electorates are aware, is a marvellous competition. Country towns spend a tremendous amount of the year focusing on creating attractive and aesthetically pleasing towns and that highlights one of the worst aspects of the withdrawal of funds from this organisation. In 1987-88, \$20 000 was spent on the Tidy Town program; in 1988-89, \$37 000 was allocated to that program and this year no money has been allocated. The allocations in previous years indicated a significant increase in attention to this program. I hope this organisation will continue the program, but it will not be helped by the Government's withdrawal of financial support.

I have referred to projects supported by this group, such as the Australia Day program. Reference is also made in its report to a project at Mt Barnett Station - a lovely, expressive name for a station, Mr Speaker. It is a fine place situated midpoint between Wyndham and Derby. I visited Mt Barnett in July on my way to the plateau. It is an Aboriginal settlement on which some development recently took place. A large service station is situated on the settlement which provides not only fuel but also food for travellers and for the Aboriginal community settled on the opposite side of the road. Future visitors to the waterway that is part of the reserve must go through a very elaborate gate which will be operated by remote control, and when they have paid the required amount the gate will open and allow them to pass them through. I do not know how much money will be raised by that scheme but if it helps the people on that station to lead more productive lives, it will be worthwhile. They have created a "travelitter" disposal point which is maintained by payment to the local Aboriginal community. It ensures that outback travellers dispose of their litter and rubbish properly.

A program was also set up for boat men and women to be more tidy on the waterways. Obviously that is a very positive program.

A "Tidy Tourer" is available for school fetes; it collects rubbish and also allows the hirers to raise funds by charging children to ride on it. It is educating children in a soft way about the need for tidiness. Another school program it has set up is the "super grime-fighter". The organisation uses catchy names to attract attention, which is a good policy. The work of the Keep Australia Beautiful Council in schools today is an important addition to the curriculum; although it is an important program for young children and educates them to pick up their litter, this year it has also been extended to two tertiary institutions. Programs were undertaken to identify and eliminate litter black spots, in some areas an improvement was noted and in others there was no change.

I am surprised to note that this organisation produced a schools' security manual. I would not have expected the two to go together. The report states that -

KABC donated many hours to the preparation of the Ministry for Education's book on school security through the services of Mr Dent. The manual - an 18 month project - was finally published in February 1989 and gives school staff practical advice on improving their security as well as improving the school environment.

That is another very important part of its responsibilities. Its entry into a program called Litter Art indicated a very vivid imagination; in conjunction with Perth's sister city of Houston in Texas in the United States a competition was held among interested schools. The students in Western Australia used litter and rubbish to depict American native animals while students in Houston depicted Australian native animals. The best efforts were swapped between the two countries and that obviously captured more interest from the pupils in both countries in the role of this organisation.

With regard to its next major objective of recycling, not many local authorities have properly taken up recycling. Only one country town has house to house collections of recyclable materials and that is the Town of Albany. It is particularly commended for the work it has done. Local authorities, such as Stirling, will collect glass separately but that is the only recyclable material collected separately from the main litter stream.

It is interesting to note that 50 per cent of aluminium cans are now recycled and approximately 60 per cent of the glass we use is recycled; but it is regrettable that the percentage of paper recycled is much lower. However, the council continues to try to raise the rate of paper recycling.

Public pride is the third of its four objectives, and it deals with roadside litter. Every year since I have been shadow Minister for the Environment I have talked about the marvellous job it has done and the amount of rubbish it has collected from the roadsides. This year it collected rubbish from 1 722 kilometres of road and gave \$19 000 to the various charitable groups which collected that rubbish. The final area referred to is enforcement. The penalties for littering were increased in the financial year and the organisation broadcast these increased penalties in television messages. It worked closely with local government in this area.

My final comments relate to proposed legislative changes, and it is interesting that although the Government has deserted this group financially, it is still negotiating with it on legislative changes. Among those changes is the old hoary chestnut of the Government's proposal for owner onus liability. When the name of a person who is in charge of the owner's vehicle at the time of the alleged litter offence is not known, the person who is registered as the owner of the car is deemed to be responsible. I find that unacceptable, just as I did with regard to the Multanova equipment, and I do not believe it is a proper basis for legislation. Reference is also made to the intent to litter. It sounds very much like Orwellian legislation. I do not know how legislation of that type will be introduced.

In conclusion, some marvellous work has been done by the organisation. The present Government has given \$200 000 to it in the past and it has now taken away that funding. I greatly regret that.

MR MINSON (Greenough - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [10.30 pm]: I will use the time allotted to me to address a question that is causing considerable pain around Western Australia at the moment. I felt it had probably already been addressed enough, but I read a few days ago in a Geraldton newspaper about the regional hospital once again. I do not want to go into specifics of the Budget in respect of the hospital, but the continual harping about that hospital year after year is beginning to have an adverse effect on the region and its morale. I will come to that later. It is time a full and public local inquiry was held into the way in which that hospital is run, funded and used. The interminable wrangling which has gone on every year, and which goes on now virtually continuously, is doing nothing for the area, the hospital or staff morale; it is doing no good at all! I will read into the *Hansard* record sections of a lead article which appeared on Thursday, 15 November in the *Geraldton Guardian* as follows -

The Geraldton Regional Hospital has been accused of planning to stop elective surgery for four weeks over Christmas to save money.

And the hospital will close 31 beds from mid-December until January in another cost-cutting move.

Medical Advisory Committee Chairman Dr Doug McCarthy said on Tuesday he had been told by hospital administrator Steve Jones that elective surgery would be stopped from December 21 to January 18.

He said the city's surgeons were angered by the move which was the start of more "serious cut backs to patient health needs".

This sort of thing seems to be recurring year after year. I am becoming concerned about the effect it is having. The article continues -

But this has been denied by WA Health Department . . .

Mr Kelsey said elective surgery would be restricted, depending on seasonal fluctuations.

He said doctors would probably be given a daily quota system under which the doctors would need to decide who had operations.

This business of interfering in the administration and management of regional hospitals - and we are not talking about the Geraldton Hospital but about a regional hospital which serves a huge area of Western Australia - and in the availability of surgical beds will have serious implications down the line. If this area of Geraldton gains a reputation for having a hospital which from time to time decides it will restrict surgery, we will have a great deal of trouble keeping specialists in the area and, after they have left, in attracting new ones. The article continues -

"In the August-to-September peak period, elective surgery will be reduced because more beds are needed," Mr Kelsey said.

"But in the summer when admissions are lower more elective surgery can be done."

Dr McCarthy rejected Mr Kelsey's comments, saying they were "a publicity stunt".

"Mr Kelsey is playing games . . ."

It then goes on in a predictable fashion. The article continues later -

Dr McCarthy said waiting lists would get longer and patients could be waiting up to two years for operations.

I do not know whether that is truth or fiction. I think mentioning a period of two years is probably being a little unkind and more in the realm of fiction. That sort of talk will do the area, the hospital and the health staff a whole lot of damage. Something must be done in the next year or so in an attempt to put a stop to that sort of talk. The article continues -

Hospital beds will be reduced from 89 to 58 from mid-December to January and the same is expected to happen for a week at Easter time.

Mr Kelsey said it was pointless maintaining a full hospital during those times because few people were admitted.

I have made the point previously that the doctors may leave and we would have trouble getting people to replace them. This must be viewed as a regional hospital and not just as the Geraldton Hospital. It is inappropriate for a Government to allow regional hospitals to be used in this way - or abused!

I know considerable restraints have been applied to budgets for some time and that this year is no exception. However, we must acknowledge that the inflation rate in the health industry is considerably higher than one would expect to find in the consumer price index. We may see seven per cent or eight per cent in the CPI but in the health industry we are looking at a figure that is more like 15 per cent. To have real cuts of the magnitude we have suffered over the past few years is precipitating a virtually intolerable situation. We are not yet paying the price for that. We are paying the price in small terms, such as a cut in the number of beds available and the availability of elective surgery beds as outlined in this article, but the real problems will come in a couple of years if this sort of thing continues.

A matter arising from this is the morale at that hospital, which has been bad for a number of years and which appears to be totally unrelated to funding. The *Geraldton Guardian* of the previous day, 14 November, in an article headed "Surgeon calls for hospital review to be made public", which was an administrative review, I understand internally set up by the Health Department, appears to have raised more questions than it answered. The article states -

A Geraldton surgeon wants the Health Department to release findings of a review into nursing administration and administration at the Regional Hospital.

Dr Paul Flanagan has called for the results to be brought to the surface and made public.

Of course, there is the usual rebuttal by the Health Department and all the reasons are given why that cannot be done. The article continues later -

Regional Health Department Director Stephen Kelsey said once the findings had been finalised they would be distributed to those directly concerned.

Not necessarily, I understand from that, made public. The article continues later -

More than 20 Geraldton doctors attended the meeting with the health department's assistant commissioner for country operations Dr Andrew Penman, regional health director Stephen Kelsey and WA branch president of the Australian Medical Association Dr Warwick Ruse.

They attended a meeting of 20 Geraldton doctors all of whom were quite vociferous on the matter of management of the hospital in Geraldton. That meeting, according to this article, focused on problems experienced at the hospital over several years and possible solutions to those problems.

It is all very well to have these internal administrative reviews by the Health Department, but they will not solve the long term problem that keeps occurring in the regional hospital at Geraldton. It is time for a full and frank review to be set up locally in Geraldton to see what is going on. I understand that some doctors may end up a little embarrassed after such a review and there may also be some embarrassed Health Department officers and other people. However, I am not particularly concerned about that.

One could liken the situation in Geraldton to the one we have been discussing today in this Parliament regarding the calling of a Royal Commission into what has been going on in Western Australia in the past decade. Allegations have been made on both sides of the House about who is hiding behind what and who has what to be ashamed of. One could apply that situation to Geraldton where claims and counter claims have been made for many years that the morale at the hospital is in bad shape. In my training and practice I worked at several hospitals, used their operating theatres and had to use beds in their wards.

My practice involved a fair amount of surgery, and I have used a number of hospitals around this State. I have also visited a number of hospitals since I have been my party's spokesman on health. What shines out and the impression that one is left with is that most hospitals are happy places; despite the fact that people suffer and die, the staff have a high morale and cheer up the patients. However, my experience with the Geraldton Regional Hospital is that it is not a happy place. The problems which have been experienced over the last couple of years, and the articles which appear in the local newspapers with monotonous regularity - and I am not saying they are not true because there is always a foundation for them - have exacerbated that situation.

It is time to establish a full and public inquiry into the operations, administration, funding, and the provision of medical services at Geraldton Regional Hospital. We do not need a retired Supreme Court judge to chair that inquiry. A prominent local person could be asked to chair it, and local people could be asked to have an input to that hearing. The findings of that inquiry should be made public, and if some of those findings were acted upon it would go a long way towards alleviating the problems which are causing considerable concern in the region.

I am not convinced that the process of regionalisation is necessarily working in Western Australia to the best advantage of Western Australians. I know that as soon as I start to talk about regionalisation, someone will refer to the fact that the Liberal Government in New South Wales has opted for regionalisation, and that move has been applauded by the Commonwealth Minister. I have made some preliminary inquiries into what is happening in New South Wales, and I understand that there have probably been more disasters than successes, so regionalisation has been successful in only a limited way. I will be discussing regionalisation with the Minister for Health in New South Wales when Parliament rises in early December because even if that operation were successful in metropolitan Sydney, we must recognise that Perth is probably less than one third the size of Sydney and that regionalisation may not be appropriate to Perth at this stage of its development. I will be looking closely at that policy before it is endorsed by this party.

The crisis which appears likely to be precipitated by the closure or possible closure of country hospitals may be averted if we cooperate with the Commonwealth Government to designate a certain number of beds in country hospitals as nursing home beds. A number of people may be using a country hospital as a long stay hospital, and rather than the Commonwealth Government's building a nursing home facility down the road, it should designate a number of beds in that hospital as nursing home beds and fund them accordingly. That would allow the local town to have a number of designated nursing home beds so that its elderly people could stay in that town and not have to move out. It would also enable that town to keep open its hospital. I understand that some structural modifications to the building may be required but I am sure there will not be any problems. Were we to explore that avenue we would not have to close the hospitals and could keep open the accident and emergency sections. That would go a long way towards ensuring that local medical practitioners do not leave that town, because there is no greater incentive for them to leave than the closure of a small country hospital. They guard those hospitals quite jealously and use them extensively, and they would not want to remain in a town if the hospital were closed.

The issue of education is causing considerable concern. Last Friday I was alarmed to receive a deputation from parents of children at John Wilcock High School regarding the fact that their children will no longer be able study languages through to TEE level. Geraldton has two Government high schools, two Catholic high schools, each of which go through to TEE level, and a small junior high school that is run by a fundamentalist Christian group, which is making quite a contribution locally in education but does not go through to TEE level. Were students no longer able to study languages through to TEE level, people would have to leave the town or send their children outside the town to study, and the range of options available to students would diminish. That would have a detrimental effect on the morale of the staff in those schools and also on the town because the staff and residents guard those institutions quite jealously. The Government should spare no expense in ensuring that a good range of language courses is made available at its Geraldton high schools, right through to TEE level, even if that means there must be cooperation between the high schools.

DR TURNBULL (Collie) [10.50 pm]: As we have seen this afternoon and this evening, many aspects of the Budget involve expenditure. Expenditure is a very important aspect of this Budget, but it is just as important to discuss revenue. The Treasurer said she would be pruning the Budget in many areas as a result of the reduction in revenue. This reduction has been brought about as a result of many things, the most important being the economic rundown of Western Australia.

I am very concerned about two facets of expenditure; one is expenditure on services and the other is expenditure on capital buildings and capital works which belong to the people of Western Australia. The Treasurer said in her Budget speech that the number of employees in Western Australia would be reduced, but she also said that there would be no redundancies; the reduction would be achieved by natural attrition and by moving personnel from one department to another.

Last week I attended Estimates Committee B, where there was quite an extensive discussion with many Ministers in important areas. During that time I saw no evidence of realistic reduction in the number of full time equivalent employees. I do not think the reduction in expenditure in Western Australia will take place in the field of full time equivalent employees; it will take place in services, and one of those services will be hospital services. This will not involve country hospitals only; city hospitals will be included. The most serious reduction in expenditure in Western Australia will be in the maintenance area. No maintenance is being done in schools at the moment, except in health and safety problem areas. The position is the same in many other departments. Last week in Estimates Committee B we heard that maintenance in Homeswest will also be reduced by more than half. Nothing will be done on Homeswest properties except in health and safety matters. This will be very serious in all areas, particularly in the Collie electorate, where, in the town itself, many Homeswest houses are 40 years old and are just managing to hold together and provide greatly needed shelter. To deny maintenance merely encourages those houses to fall into disrepair. A cut in expenditure will be detrimental to the long term future of Western Australia.

As I said in my opening remarks, the most important part of this Budget is the revenue side. The Treasurer's Budget speech predicted an increase of 4.3 per cent in revenue, but in real terms, when inflation is taken into account, this will represent a decrease of 2.5 per cent. Revenue collections will double financial institutions duty by \$46 million to \$88 million; stamp duty will collect \$409 million; payroll tax, \$554 million; royalties on mining, \$357 million; total territorial taxes, which include mining, \$460 million; railways, \$300 million, and Treasury, \$300 million. All these items of revenue are related to the economic activity of Western Australia. The economic activity of Western Australia is declining very seriously, and this problem has come home to the Treasurer only since she returned from the Premiers' Conference. We know that the economic activity of Western Australia has slowed down even more than the Treasurer's predictions. Western Australia is in desperate need of economic development, new resources development, and secondary processing of those resources. Secondary processing in Western Australia is needed, particularly in the mining industry. For these reasons Western Australia needs a new base load power station.

Mr Read: Where?

Dr TURNBULL: That is the question! We do not have a base load power station with sufficient capacity to guarantee a secure supply of electricity at a world competitive price. As a result we need a new one. I have spoken on this subject on six major occasions. Each time I have covered a different area of base load power generation. I have covered the coal costs, and how in Collie in particular we can reduce the cost of coal by the economies of scale. The economies of scale are the new, open cut coal mine, or the new, long wall mining technology underground. I have spoken about the way in which productivity per man hour is improving in the Collie mines. A Bill was introduced and passed in this Parliament to increase the coal mining day from a seven hour shift to an eight hour shift so that a hot seat changeover could be instituted. I have debated the subject of coal royalties and how the State, in its grab for more money, or more revenue, has increased the royalties on coal used in power stations for energy generation from five cents a tonne to \$2.46. That is an enormous increase and an enormous impost on the cost of coal. I have also debated the subject of coal versus gas, and how it is our opinion and contention that coal is a reliable and predictable source of energy, whereas gas is unreliable, unpredictable in delivery, and with a cost structure which will fluctuate according to the world economic situation. Gas has a few advantages, but it comes nowhere near coal when used for power generation. Gas is a magnificent asset to Western Australia, and to burn it in a power station is to deny Western Australia the opportunity of enormous income from the downstream processing of gas and the sale of liquid gas overseas.

I have also debated the subject of coal fired power station construction costs versus gas turbine construction costs. Along with all the views I have presented there has been an enormous debate by the general public of this State and that is the important thing which the Government must take into account. Many reports have been prepared - the Harman report, the Magasanik report from Griffin Coal Mining Co Pty Ltd, the Department of Resources Development reports, and the Energy Policy Unit report. The State Energy Commission of Western Australia has had reports every few months, and it has made a submission to the industry inquiry commission into power generation costs and distribution. We know that CRA has presented its own position on energy generation, as have all of the other companies and consortia which have been bidding for the right to tender to build a power station in Collie.

Along with these presentations, the Collie coal power station task force has been lobbying the Government, the Trades and Labor Council, the Labor Party, the Liberal Party, the National Party, SECWA, and anyone who will listen to it about the advantages of using coal and having a coal fired power station in Collie. Tonight I want to recognise the contribution that group has made. The Collie coal power station task force is made up of the whole of the Collie community. It has been coordinated by the Collie Shire Council and it has members from the mining companies and the unions that are represented in mining and power generation in Collie.

Mr Graham: Is this the coal consultative council?

Dr TURNBULL: No, it is a separate group which has been put together specifically to educate people in Western Australia - the Government, members of Parliament, the unions, and Trades and Labor Council members - as to the advantages of having a coal fired power station in Collie.

Mr Read: It made a very impressive presentation to Caucus.

Dr TURNBULL: Yes, it has done an extremely good job in educating people, particularly those in the city and those who have nothing to do with power generation. It has presented a well prepared case for all the aspects and advantages of Collie.

We are now approaching the final days when the Government will have to make a decision about the new base load power station. The Premier has said that the decision will be made before the end of the year and the Minister for Fuel and Energy has confirmed that on three occasions. On Friday the SECWA board will decide what it believes is the right way for the future of power generation in Western Australia. Following this the Government will make a decision. This is my last chance to reiterate in the Parliament the factors that must be taken into account in making this decision.

The most important factor is the opportunity to create jobs in Western Australia. We know

that with the present economic decline jobs are being lost. Unemployment lists are increasing, dole queues are increasing, and increasingly people are having to survive on three or four days' work a week. Western Australia is desperate for a new construction project, a new supply of energy and a new injection of confidence so that people who want to invest in Western Australia will have confidence that they can have the energy they need for their projects. In this respect a coal fired power station must have precedence over a gas turbine generating system, because it produces jobs in the construction of the power station, in the production of the energy source - coal - and in the operating of the power station. This factor continues for the whole lifetime of the power station. With a gas installation it does not. A gas installation is bought off the shelf from overseas and installed very quickly. Seven weeks is all it takes for a 30 megawatt gas turbine, and a 100 megawatt gas turbine would take a few months. In respect of job creation a coal fired power station must take precedence over gas.

The Premier has three options: One is a gas fired power station, the second is a coal fired power station, and the third is to delay the decision. Western Australia cannot afford to delay the decision. Western Australia must demonstrate commitment to encourage investors to bring in their money to invest in our downstream processing, particularly in the minerals area.

The last item I want to cover is the option of a privately owned and operated coal fired power station in Collie compared with a SECWA operated one. We know that the productivity within the power station will give the edge on the costing of the energy produced. The private power station ownership and operation will give that edge. We know that the companies which are bidding to be allowed to tender for this power station are having discussions with the Trades and Labor Council and the unions now, and they are talking of a union for the enterprise of a new privately operated power station. The unions in Western Australia have a very pragmatic outlook towards this situation at the moment - they have been forced into that attitude. The most important thing to the union movement in this State at present is jobs, and if jobs are going to be provided in a private power station, so be it. That was a quote from one of the vice presidents of the TLC, Mr Robert Meecham. In this respect I congratulate the union movement. If it is looking at jobs first, and an enterprise union for the new power station if it is privately operated, the union movement is to be congratulated because Western Australia desperately needs a new power station and the jobs which will be created directly and indirectly.

In conclusion, Collie is ready for a power station. Not only have we had a total community effort in the Collie Coal Industry Group, but also we have had total community support. Tomorrow I, as the member for Collie, and Hon Doug Wenn, as the Labor Party member for South West Region, will present to the Premier a petition from the people of Collie containing about 2 500 signatures, almost 50 per cent of the voters of Collie. It would surprise me if the Premier needed anything more to emphasise to her that Collie people will accept a coal fired power station. Collie people need and want the jobs, and recognise that coal in Collie will not go on being produced forever if we do not have a new coal fired power station. I want to emphasise that a new coal fired power station in Collie will bring economic development to Western Australia and help provide the necessary revenue to run our State.

MR BRADSHAW (Wellington) [11.10 pm]: The Treasurer's Budget speech stated that the Government's key objective was to create jobs in the private sector so that families could look forward to the future with confidence, and that would be achieved by scrapping private investment. We can all applaud that statement but the problem is that the state of the economy and the taxes and charges imposed on both small and big business create difficulties for businesses in the private sector to expand, and thereby achieve the objective outlined by the Treasurer.

At least the Treasurer has turned away from expanding the public sector to take up the slack in unemployment which unfortunately is increasing at a great rate in Western Australia. It is a sad state of affairs. I have been concerned for a long time about the boom and bust economy with which we have lived for many years. We witnessed that type of economy under the Fraser Government, and it has continued with the Hawke Labor Government. Such a system relies on high interest rates to control the economy. That is, high interest rates are put in place to slow down the economy. That has a drastic effect in that people cannot

take out home or business loans, set up new manufacturing businesses, or expand businesses. The Government must consider ways to overcome the boom and bust mentality in Australia. It should attempt to achieve an ongoing economy, one where we do not experience the highs and lows of the last 15 years. Not only is it terrible to see an economy slow down -

Mr Troy: How would the member suggest that we control oil prices?

Mr BRADSHAW: The Minister and his Government reckoned that they could do that in 1982 when they took over Government of this State. They were the smart ones who said they would fix the economy. We have seen how they have fixed it. We are now experiencing a recession, perhaps a depression. Obviously we cannot control the price of oil because that is influenced by events overseas. The Minister should remember that in 1982-83 the Labor Government had all the answers. It could fix the world recession and the oil prices. Now the Minister asks me for the answers. We face many problems -

Mr Troy: We have not had wage blowouts like Malcolm did.

Mr BRADSHAW: Does the Minister not think that related to oil prices and world trends prior to that?

Mr Troy: With the wage blowout?

Mr BRADSHAW: Of course, the inflation rate was running rampant. We have high unemployment and a high inflation rate. We have seen people thrown onto the scrap heap because they are out of work.

Mr Troy: A high inflation rate relative to what?

Mr BRADSHAW: Other countries.

Mr Troy: What about our own?

Mr BRADSHAW: We are talking about our own inflation rate.

Mr Troy: Is that relative to the previous periods of inflation in Australia?

Mr BRADSHAW: It has come down. However, Western Australia's inflation rate is still high compared with the rest of Australia. It does not matter whether that rate is running at seven or eight per cent, it is still too high. We must reduce the inflation rate to three or four per cent. We seem to have this boom and bust mentality where we kick off with high interest rates to slow down the economy. It slows down the economy, and it puts many people out of work; it prevents people from building homes; it breaks up marriages because of stress in the home.

It is about time we considered other fiscal policies to overcome the situation. One method would be to allow the dollar rate to drop; instead of holding up high interest rates we should allow the dollar to move to its true value. That process would have several effects: Firstly, we would have a better chance to sell our primary produce and our manufactured products overseas. It would also increase the cost of imports, which would reduce purchases of overseas goods by local consumers in Australia. As a result, we would not have the high interest rates which are crippling many businesses throughout this country; we would not experience the highs and lows of the past 15 years.

I do not know whether the Government agrees with the present high interest rates. The Government should realise how people outside are hurting. It is all very smart to ask how I would fix the oil prices. I do not have the answer. However, I have an answer for the boom and bust mentality. Now is the time for the Government to get off the bandwagon and review the high interest rates. It should move to the situation where the State's economy allows people to have jobs and continue to afford housing.

It is all very well to say that the Government does not have a high wages policy, but at least under such a policy people in general are able to continue their lives in a sane and rational manner. The Government should take action to reduce taxes and charges. We should manufacture our own goods. The days of manufacturing goods in Australia have gone; we tend to rely on overseas goods, and that upsets our balance of payments. It is no good having a quarry mentality where we dig up primary products, and cut wool from the sheep to sell overseas and buy it back at highly inflated prices. The Government must create incentives for new businesses. During the last seven or eight years, no incentives have been given to

establish new secondary industries to improve our balance of payments or to create jobs, as a result of which we would become more self-reliant than at present.

One area of the Budget which disturbs me relates to debts caused by the activities of WA Inc. I am astounded by the way the Government spends money without the approval of Parliament. This year, \$50 million-odd has been put aside for such a payment.

Dr Watson: That is one per cent of the Budget.

Mr BRADSHAW: It is still \$54.6 million. And another \$50 million has been put aside to pay off past debts. It does not matter whether that represents one per cent of the Budget, those funds could have been spent on schools. Little maintenance has been carried out on roads, on schools, or on public buildings. In a few years major problems will occur because the buildings will have deteriorated further. The member for Kenwick probably does not drive on country roads very often but I do frequently; I travel on the old coast road from Harvey to Perth. The road has deteriorated but the Main Roads Department tells me that is tough; it does not have the money to maintain roads. At a recent meeting of members from the Liberal, Labor and National Parties who represent the south west with school superintendents it was suggested that only the things which are dangerous at a school will be repaired. However, in a few years a massive catch up program involving massive costs will be required. This could be avoided by conducting a continual maintenance program. We have the same situation with our roads in which major problems will require major funding. This will require taxing people out of existence, which will be detrimental to our future in that it will be difficult for businesses to expand to create more jobs. It is a sad state of affairs that the Government did not seek parliamentary approval a few years ago for the large costs it imposed on the taxpayers of Western Australia.

The situation with juvenile crime is that the preventive programs are not working. Many young people who have had a difficult upbringing and have been tossed out of their homes - in some cases they leave - have gone on to a life of crime. This situation becomes intolerable, and we cannot just keep putting these people into institutions. Often these people leave the institution and re-offend. Some programs have been established to try to take these people out of the cycle. It has been proved in the Eastern States and overseas that wilderness programs are effective. In these programs young offenders are sent out to open areas and they participate in a range of activities to restore self-esteem and to care for one another. In many of these cases it has been very successful. A fellow from the Sydney City Mission was in Perth to help establish the Perth City Mission and he indicated that the New South Wales wilderness program had a success rate of 70 per cent of the people participating in the course returning better people and not re-offending. It is early days for that figure to carry much weight, but it gives members a little hope that ways are available to overcome the problems.

It is not the ideal situation to incarcerate these people as they leave the institutions worse people than when they enter because they learn new tricks. Also, this cycle of crime is very expensive for the community as many cars are stolen each day, which results in thousands of cars per year being stolen at a huge cost to the people of Australia. What sort of people do these offenders become? They marry and have children who are raised in the same environment and the same cycle. We must break the cycle through preventive programs so that the children are not put into that situation in the first place. We should try to keep the family together.

One of the biggest causes of family break-up is financial pressure as a result of increases in Government charges. A whole range of Government activities must be examined; we cannot just expect the Department for Community Services to fix the problems. The situation should be viewed from an economic point of view to ensure that costs are kept down so that these people can afford to maintain their homes and a reasonable quality of life. In that way we may keep families together.

Government provides funds for various organisations in the community, and some of these organisations are very important. The Asbestos Diseases Society does a great job. I attended a meeting of this group last week at which the Premier gave a talk and drew a raffle. This group represents those who are, or potentially will be, suffering from asbestos related diseases. The National Trust of Australia has a role to play in our society, as does the community sporting facilities organisation. During the deliberations of the Estimates Committees I mentioned to the Minister that this Government funding required examination.

I quoted the example of the Waroona Football Club trying to obtain contributions from the community sporting facilities fund, but this year \$2.4 million has been allocated to the fund and generally \$10 million-worth of applications are received; so many applications miss out. The Waroona Football Club applied through the local shire for the provision of new change rooms. The club had applied for a number of years in the mistaken belief that if it kept applying it would finally receive the funds. However, the cost of the proposed buildings has increased and if the buildings had been constructed on the first application they would have been built at a greatly reduced cost from the recent application. We should be considering whether such organisations will ever receive such funding so that these clubs do not live in hope. In that way they will not keep applying year after year with no success.

Also, I wonder whether some organisations should receive the funding they do. For example, I notice that the Pensioners Action Group received an allocation of \$20 000 this year. It is good that a Pensioners Action Group should exist, but we already have the Australian Pensioners League of WA which supports the interests of pensioners in Western Australia. Therefore, why do we need to provide funding to the Pensioners Action Group? The Liquor Advisory Council, which probably does a great job in its own way, had a budget of \$42 000 last year of which \$41 000 was provided by the State Government. I wonder about the value we receive for that \$41 000. I do not condemn those organisations as it is good that people establish them. However, the Alcohol and Drug Authority does a job similar to that of the Alcohol Advisory Council, and we have a duplication of services being funded by Government. I chose those two examples but there are probably many others which could be used.

It is about time that a hard look was taken at those organisations to see what value we do get for the funds supplied to them. If we feel that we do not get value for money perhaps this funding should be cut off.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Blaikie.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE - SPECIAL

MR PEARCE (Armadale - Leader of the House) [11.30 pm]: I move -

That the House at its rising adjourn until Wednesday, 21 November 1990, at 11.00 am.

I move this motion at the request of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association so that the Legislative Assembly can be used for its meeting tomorrow morning.

I also advise members, as I have previously, that in the last three weeks of scheduled sitting it will be necessary to sit some evenings that we have not previously sat. That will mean for this week I anticipate that the House will sit for Government business after dinner tomorrow evening, and in the subsequent week we can expect to sit not only Wednesday nights but also Thursday nights.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 11.31 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

WESTRALIA SQUARE - EDWARDS, MR KEVIN

Summa - Purchase Negotiations

1390. Mr COURT to the Premier:

- (1) Is Mr Kevin Edwards, a former senior Government adviser, currently negotiating for the giant Indonesian Company, Summa, to buy into the Westralia Square Project in St George's Terrace as reported in the *Sunday Times* on 9 September 1990?
- (2) If yes, does the Government think it proper that a former senior adviser with an intimate knowledge of the complex transactions which involve the Government in relation to this project is involved in these dealings which still involve Government guarantees?
- (3) If no, what action is the Government taking in this matter?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

- (1) Not to my knowledge
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) See reply to question 1391.

PARKER, MR DAVID - STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION

Anderson Property Interests - Further Commercial Contracts

1391. Mr COURT to the Premier:

- (1) What communications has the Government had with former Deputy Premier Parker over his attempts to try and persuade the State Government Insurance Commission to carry out further commercial transactions with Mr Anderson's property interests?
- (2) Has the former Deputy Premier given an assurance that he will not be involved in those commercial contracts that he had an intimate knowledge of while in Government?
- (3) If not, is the Premier considering any further action?
- (4) If yes, what will this action be?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

- (1) I have conveyed to Mr Parker my concerns regarding his approach to the SGIC. While I do not believe he has done anything wrong, I am concerned about the potential conflict of interest.

(2)-(4)

As previously announced the Government is considering options for preventing situations of possible conflicts of interest involving former members of Parliament and civil servants.

POLICE STATIONS - WAROONA POLICE STATION

Upgrading Funds - Manpower Increase

1543. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

- (1) Have funds been allocated in the 1990-91 Budget to upgrade the Waroona Police Station?
- (2) If yes, how much?
- (3) Does the Minister intend to increase manpower at the Waroona Police Station in the near future?

Mr TAYLOR replied:

(1)-(2)

No. The member will be aware that the current Budget is one of consolidation following seven years of unprecedented growth.

- (3) The Commissioner of Police has the responsibility for the allocation of manpower and keeps the staffing needs of all stations under constant review.

LAND - SYSTEM 6 AREA, M 53
Subdivision and Development Approval

1555. Mr KIERATH to the Minister representing the Minister for Planning:

- (1) Did the Department of Planning and Urban Development approve subdivision and development within the System 6 area, M 53, without referral to the Environmental Protection Authority for environmental impact assessment?
- (2) On what date did the Department of Planning and Urban Development give such approval?
- (3) Did Kalamunda Shire approve subdivision and development within M 53 without referral to the EPA for environmental impact assessment?
- (4) On what date was this approval granted?
- (5) How many other development and rezoning proposals are planned on privately owned land within the M 53 area?
- (6) (a) How many other development and rezoning proposals are planned on Government owned land within the M 53 area;
(b) which Government departments are putting forward their proposals?
- (7) Will compensation for the loss of the affected portion of M 53 be given in the form of securing other land elsewhere for conservation in System Six?
- (8) Which agency is preparing the structure plan for M 53?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

- (1) Yes. The State Planning Commission is the responsible authority for the approval of all subdivisions and those developments which abut MRS reserves. In the case of area M53 this land was zoned for industry before the system 6 report was finalised. Those applications approved are all in accordance with the current zoning. The Department of Planning and Urban Development now refers all applications it receives within M53 to the Environmental Protection Authority.

- (2) Subdivision approvals were granted on -

23 October 1984
14 August 1984
31 July 1984
13 March 1984
20 October 1987
23 May 1989
7 May 1990

Development approvals were granted on -

8 June 1988
15 June 1988
10 September 1988
24 October 1989 (2)
24 January 1990

- (3)-(4) This information is not held by the Department of Planning and Urban Development and would need to be provided by either the Shire of Kalamunda or the EPA.
- (5) There is currently one proposal to rezone the privately owned land from light industry to general industry before the Department of Planning and Urban Development. This has been referred to the EPA.
- (6) There are no current applications for the development or rezoning of public land within the M53 area lodged with the department.

- (7) The relative merits of individual conservation areas identified in the system 6 report cannot be readily transferred from one area to another especially in those instances where the conservation value is flora based as in the case of area M53.
- (8) The EPA has commissioned a consultant to prepare a study and structure plan for M53.

SOFTBALL - STATE SCHOOLGIRLS' SOFTBALL TEAM
Brisbane Championships - Emergency Funds Reimbursement

1557. Mr KIERATH to the Minister for Education:

With respect to the \$70 contribution by each of the members of the State schoolgirls' softball team to an emergency fund (to cover their competition at the championships in Brisbane in May 1990), and the subsequent reimbursement of only \$45 to each member, would the Minister -

- (a) advise the reason for the retention of the funds;
- (b) identify the authority under which this was done;
- (c) specify whether parents and players were consulted or notified in advance as to the retention of the funds;
- (d) specify whether parents have any avenue for recouping the funds if they object to them being held?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (a) It is standard procedure for all State schoolboy and schoolgirl sporting representatives to be charged a 10 per cent "emergency fund" fee. As the Budget is prepared many months in advance, this fund is used to offset any fee increases or unforeseen expenses that occur post budget. It is normal practice as outlined by the Australian Schools' Sports Council for all teams to contribute to national tournament management. However, by error this item was omitted from the budget presented to parents before the tour. Accordingly, the contribution of \$25 per player was retained from the emergency fund.
- (b) The Western Australian Government Schools' Sports Association; the association contracted by the ministry to manage interstate exchanges and competitive sport in schools.
- (c) Parents were informed pre-tour of the 10 per cent emergency fund procedure detailed above.
- (d) Parents have been informed by WAGSSA that if they object to the payment of the \$25, it will be refunded on application.

**HEALTH DEPARTMENT - CENTRAL OFFICE, ROYAL STREET, EAST
PERTH**
Staff Reduction

1572. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Are staff numbers at the Health Department at Royal Street in East Perth to be reduced?
- (2) Is this as a cost reduction measure?
- (3) If not, why are staff to be reduced?
- (4) Are some staff from the Health Department, Royal Street, East Perth being redeployed to regional offices or other field posts?
- (5) If yes to (4) how many staff are being redeployed to regional offices or other field posts?
- (6) What was the total staff complement at the Health Department at Royal Street, East Perth as at 31 August 1990?

- (7) What is the projected staff complement at the Health Department at Royal Street, East Perth for 31 August 1991?
- (8) How many staff at Royal Street, East Perth in the 1990/91 year will be -
 - (a) retrenched;
 - (b) devolved or transferred;
 - (c) eliminated by retirement or wastage?
- (9) How many personnel were located in or attached administratively to the Office of the Minister for Health as at 31 August 1990?
- (10) How many personnel who were located in or attached administratively to the Office of the Minister for Health will be reduced by retrenchment or devolvement in the 1990-91 year?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) A review of staffing in the Health Department central office is currently being undertaken in line with the Government's commitment to find more efficient ways of delivering health services. The review will seek to identify both non-essential activities and functions which might be more appropriately placed in the regions. It is anticipated that staff numbers in the central office of the department will be reduced, particularly in regard to devolution of functions.
- (2)-(3) As noted above, this review stems from the Government's determination to ensure that health services are delivered as efficiently as possible, as well as ensuring that the directions taken by the department following the 1989 task force recommendations are maintained.
- (4) While some positions will need to be relocated to field positions, any involuntary relocation which requires the employee to change his or her place of residency in order to take up the position, is against Government policy. It is, however, anticipated that a number of staff may have the opportunity to relocate to metropolitan based field positions.
- (5) The analysis of functions and activities referred to in point 1 has not been completed.
- (6) The East Perth complex comprises 663.7 paid full time equivalents (FTEs) as at the end of September 1990. In the time frame given it has not been possible to collate figures for August.
- (7) This will depend on the results of the review mentioned in point 1 which will recommend any -
 - (i) reduction of non-essential services, or
 - (ii) devolution of functions to regions.
- (8) (a) Nil.
(b)-(c) Subject to outcome of the review mentioned in point 1, any necessary deployments will be undertaken using natural attrition or agreed transfers.
- (9) 10.6 paid full time equivalent as at the end of September 1990.
- (10) The review mentioned in point 1 will include the Minister's office.

HOSPITALS - HOSPITAL LINEN AND LAUNDRY SERVICE

Board Control

1576. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is the Hospital Linen and Laundry Service run by a board?
- (2) If so -
 - (a) who is on the board of the Hospital Linen and Laundry Service;

- (b) how many times does the board sit annually;
- (c) what is the cost of the board's sitting;
- (d) why is the Hospital Linen and Laundry Service answerable to a board?
- (3) To which hospitals does the Hospital Linen and Laundry Service provide laundry service?
- (4) Are any of these hospitals private hospitals?
- (5) If so, who are the owners of these hospitals?
- (6) Is the Hospital Linen and Laundry Service involved in a court case concerning a wages dispute?
- (7) If so, when is this case to be heard?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) Yes. The Lakes Hospital Board. It is also controlled by a management committee which reports to the Lakes Hospital Board.

- (2) (a) The Lakes Hospital Board members are -

Mr R. Marshall	Retired from public sector
Mr C. Beaton	Retired from public sector
Mrs B. Baker	Redeployment Officer, Human Resource Management Branch, Health Department of WA
Mr P. Howe	Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Operations, Health Department of WA
Mr T. Canning	Project Director - Supply Services, Physical Resources, Health Department of WA

The HLLS Management Committee members are -

Mr N. Culver	Director of Administration, Fremantle Hospital
Ms J. Cruickshank	Director of Nursing, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital
Mr B. Gower	Assistant Director, General Services, Royal Perth Hospital
Mr C. Schuster	Acting Director, Human Resources, Authority of Intellectually Handicapped Persons
Mr W. Starkie	Manager, Metropolitan and Capital Financial Resources, Health Department of WA
Mr G. Brown	Administrator, Rockingham/Kwinana District Hospital.

- (b) The board sits bi-monthly. The HLLS Management Committee sits monthly.
- (c) The members of the Lakes Hospital Board and HLLS Management Committee do not receive a fee for their services. Administration costs associated with conducting the monthly management committee meeting are \$999 per annum (\$83.25 average per meeting) and \$487 per annum (\$40.58 average per meeting) for the bimonthly board meetings.
- (d) The general manager of the Hospital Laundry and Linen Service is responsible to the HLLS Management Committee (operational) and

the Lakes Hospital Board (the accountable authority) as the principal accounting officer under the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1985.

The Lakes Hospital Board was appointed in 1971 to administer the development of the proposed Lakes Hospital and the Hospital Laundry and Linen Service. The hospital was to be a teaching hospital with a relationship with a university. The Lakes Hospital Board controlled the entire site, including the area where the Hospital Laundry and Linen Service had been built, and therefore was deemed to be the authority. The development of the hospital has not proceeded leaving the board with the responsibility of the HLLS and the remaining land on the Lakes Hospital site.

(3) Hospitals -

Armada Kelmscott Memorial
Bentley
Bentley Geriatric Unit
Fremantle
Hawthorn
King Edward Memorial
King Edward Memorial - Concept Fertility Centre
Mount Henry
Mandurah District
Osborne Park
Perth Dental
Princess Margaret
Royal Perth
Royal Perth CSSD
Royal Perth Rehabilitation
Rockingham Kwinana District
Sir Charles Gairdner
Sunset
Swan Districts
Woodside

(4) No.

(5) Not applicable.

(6)-(7)

A complaint laid by the Electrical Trades Union of WA was heard in the Industrial Magistrate's Court on Thursday, 18 October and the case was subsequently dismissed.

HANDICAPPED - "THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHEN THEY LEAVE SCHOOL" REPORT

Decisions

1597. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What decisions have been made as a consequence of the presentation of "The needs of Students with Disabilities when they leave school" dated April 1990, as prepared for the Minister for Health, Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations, and Minister for Education?
- (2) If no action has been taken, when is it likely that decisions will be made as a consequence of that report?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) A special program to give young disabled people opportunities for employment, further education or training after they leave school was announced on 25 October 1990. The program, with an initial allocation of \$330 000 will provide a variety of work and training options tailored to meet the needs of individuals. The program will focus on those with severe or

multiple disabilities by analysing their needs, providing some competitive employment opportunities and assisting non-Government agencies to promote supported employment. It will also seek to establish a transitional process to provide developmental employment experience for children still at school. This will involve the Ministry of Education employing seven transitional teachers next school year.

- (2) Not applicable.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCY ACT - SECTION 86 AMENDMENT

Lease Renewal Letting Fee

1631. Mr TUBBY to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Does the Minister intend amending section 86 of the Residential Tenancy Act to allow agents to charge a letting fee when a lease is renegotiated?
- (2) If so, when will this Bill be introduced?
- (3) If not, why not?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

- (1) Cabinet considered and decided not to amend.

(2)-(3)

Not applicable.

PROGRAM STATEMENTS - MISSION STATEMENTS

Planned Achievements - Government Departments and Agencies Responsibility

1701. Mr COWAN to the Treasurer:

- (1) Were the mission statements and the planned achievements for 1990-91 statements in the Program Statements, included in the Budget papers, written by persons within the Government departments and agencies who are to comply with them?
- (2) If yes, who actually decides what the missions and planned achievements are for each department and agency?
- (3) How does the Government ensure that the public interest overrides the department or agency's self interest in the content of the various mission and planned achievement statements?
- (4) Was any instruction given to the authors of the mission and planned achievement statements to ensure that they would have some value as tools for measuring the performance of the Government department or agency?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

- (1) Yes.

(2)-(3)

Mission statements were developed for each department and agency some years ago as part of a Government-wide initiative to improve planning procedures in the public sector. The Public Service Commission coordinated that program. Planned achievements, within the context of the agreed mission statement, are the responsibility of the relevant Minister.

- (4) Yes.

JOONDALUP DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION - OFFICE OF LAND

SERVICES INCORPORATION

Assets and Cash Reserves Transfer

1705. Mrs EDWARDES to the Minister representing the Minister for Planning:

- (1) Referring to the Budget announcement regarding the new Office of Land Services incorporating the Joondalup Development Corporation amongst other authorities, is it intended that the Joondalup Development Corporation will be wound up?

(2) If so, to where will the assets and cash reserves be transferred?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

(1)-(2)

It is intended that the assets and cash reserves of the Joondalup Development Corporation will be transferred to the Office of Land Services which will be responsible for continuing the objectives and activities of the Joondalup Development Corporation.

POLICE - BUNBURY OFFICE SERVICES

Budget Allocation

1714. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

(1) What was the Budget allocation for police services in the Bunbury office for -

(a) 1988-89;

(b) 1989-90;

(c) 1990-91?

(2) How much was actually spent in 1989-90?

(3) If funding has been reduced does the Minister expect services to be reduced?

(4) If yes to (3), which services?

Mr TAYLOR replied:

(1) (a)-(b)

Budget allocations by region were not made in the 1988-89 and 1989-90 financial years.

(c) With the introduction of program management in 1990-91, the Commissioner of Police will be providing allocation to each regional officer to meet their operational costs, excluding salaries.

(2) An accurate expenditure figure is unavailable as the Bunbury region, as with other regions, is supplied with equipment and consumables from head office which are not costed to the individual regions.

(3) No.

(4) Not applicable.

ASSET MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE - CHIDLEY EDUCATION CENTRE, MOSMAN PARK

Adjacent Vacant Land Use Options

1741. Mr AINSWORTH to the Minister for Education:

Can the Minister advise -

(a) options being considered by the Asset Management Taskforce for the vacant land adjacent to Chidley Education Centre, Mosman Park;

(b) what proportion of the land would be utilised for purposes other than recreational;

(c) what consideration has been given to the special needs of the Centre's children, and for possible future expansion?

Dr GALLOP replied:

(a) The options being considered by the Asset Management Taskforce for the future use of the 8 000 square metre portion of vacant land adjoining Chidley Education Centre which is surplus to the Ministry of Education's operational requirements are -

(i) Retention for alternative State Government use.

(ii) Rezoning for possible residential use and disposal through a public, open and fair process.

- (iii) Sale of the land to the Town of Mosman Park for recreation/community purposes.
- (iv) Public disposal of the land "as is" for appropriate uses under the property's current zoning.

(b)-(c)

It is difficult to determine the proportion to be utilised for purposes other than recreational until a definite future use for the land has been established. However, following consultation with the school, a decision has already been taken to retain at least one third or 4 000 square metres of the vacant land area for the Chidley Education Centre. This land can be readily supervised out of school hours and is to be retained as active playing space for the school. There is adequate land available for the possible expansion of facilities in the future.

HOUSING - DUPLEX AND TRIPLEX DEVELOPMENTS

Unsewered Areas, Metropolitan Region - Septic Tanks Installation

1743. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has the Minister given approval to proposed duplex and triplex developments in unsewered areas in the metropolitan area to have septic tanks installed?
- (2) If yes, could there be a problem with possible contamination of groundwater supplies?
- (3) If yes, how will the problem of possible contamination of groundwater supplies be handled?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) The Government recently endorsed changes to the sewerage policy, Perth metropolitan region to allow low density development in specified areas which are not currently serviced by reticulated sewerage. The changes will enable septic tank systems to be installed in specific areas subject to health and environmental concerns being protected.

The areas are identified as either unconstrained or constrained. In the unconstrained areas, which are essentially on the coastal edge of the metropolitan region and do not impact on coastal wetlands or groundwater resources, triplex development may be approved. In the constrained areas, which are lands outside the unconstrained areas, duplex developments may be approved. Such developments will only be approved where site conditions are suitable for on-site disposal and a soil amendment system is installed to limit phosphorus leaching, thereby protecting groundwaters from pollution.

- (2) No, since any possibility of contamination of groundwater will be minimal and of negligible significance, due to -
 - (a) The limited number of approvals which are anticipated under the recent changes to the sewerage policy.
 - (b) The strict environmental and health requirements that will have to be met before such developments will be able to proceed using septic tanks.

- (3) Not applicable.

HOUSING - DUPLEX AND TRIPLEX DEVELOPMENTS

Unsewered Areas, Metropolitan Region - Septic Tanks Installation

1745 Mr MINSON to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Will duplex and triplex developments which are proposed for unsewered areas in the metropolitan area be allowed to have septic tanks installed?
- (2) If yes, could there be a problem with possible contamination of groundwater supplies?

- (3) If yes, how will the problem of possible contamination of groundwater supplies be handled?
- (4) Could there be a problem with an increase in the nutrient load of groundwater?
- (5) If yes, how is this problem to be overcome?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

Please refer to answer to question 1742.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT - FOUR COMPUTER SYSTEMS

Installation Cost

1749. Mr COWAN to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What has been the total cost of the installation of the four computer systems used by the Health Department?
- (2) Were there any cost overruns in the installation or initial commissioning of the systems?
- (3) What is the recurrent cost of maintaining and operating the computing systems?
- (4) Have the maintenance and operation costs -
 - (a) exceeded the estimated costs identified in the feasibility studies on which the decision to install each of the systems was based;
 - (b) exceeded budget estimates for any year since the systems' installation?
- (5) If yes to (4)(a) or (4)(b), by how much in each case?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) The four phase 1 systems of the hospitals information systems project provide day to day support for the management of patient activity in all teaching hospitals and six of the major metropolitan and country hospitals. The total cost over the four year development period to the end of 1989-90 for the approved first phase of this project was \$23.37 million.
- (2) No.
- (3) The recurrent cost of maintaining and operating these systems is \$1.14 million per annum.
- (4) No.
- (5) Not applicable.

HOSPITALS - GNOWANGERUP HOSPITAL DISPUTE

Health Department Inquiry Cost

1751. Mr COWAN to the Minister for Health:

What was the total cost of the Health Department's inquiry into the Gnowangerup Hospital dispute?

Mr WILSON replied:

\$323 107 65.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS - FRESH PRODUCE MARKET

International Air Services Inquiry

1752. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Can the Minister confirm that the Department of Agriculture has been engaged in examining and promoting improved aviation links with other countries or States for the sale of fresh Western Australian agricultural produce?
- (2) If so -
 - (a) which countries or States have been examined;

- (b) which aviation links were the subject of examination and promotion?
- (3) Which Western Australian fresh agricultural produce was the subject of the department's examination and promotion?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1) Yes. The Department of Agriculture has been investigating ways of increasing international air services out of Western Australia.
- (2) (a) Originally a range of countries were considered; that is, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Mauritius, the Middle East and Europe.
- (b) It was decided to concentrate efforts on one route. The destination was Brunei.
- (3) All fresh produce was examined, including dairy, meat, fruit, vegetables and flowers.

ANIMALS - WEST CHINA PROJECT

1753. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is the Department of Agriculture preparing a submission for a major animal project in Western China?
- (2) If so, what is the nature of the project?
- (3) Which departmental officers will be involved in the project?
- (4) What is the estimated cost of the West China project to the Department of Agriculture?
- (5) What is the expected return from this project for -
 - (a) Western Australia;
 - (b) the Department of Agriculture?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1) The Department of Agriculture carried out a project design in 1989 for the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau. The project is still under discussion between China and Australia and has not been finalised.
- (2) The project primarily involved sheep nutrition, health, wool handling, range management and sustainable grazing systems in western China.
- (3)-(5) If the project proceeds it will go to Australia-wide competitive bidding under AIDAB's normal procedures. The Department of Agriculture would assess any role in the project if and when the project goes to tender. Should a Western Australian consortium be the successful bidder the financial benefits to the State would be significant.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS - VIETNAMESE MARKET

1754. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Has the Department of Agriculture examined the Vietnamese market for Western Australian agricultural goods and services?
- (2) If so, what were the findings of the department?
- (3) What steps is the Minister taking in relation to these findings?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1) Yes. Two missions have been completed.
- (2) The Vietnamese market is beginning to open up. Vietnam is desperately short of foreign exchange. Initially, trade is likely to develop only on a barter basis. Vietnam is interested in Australian agricultural technology, particularly food processing, for example abattoirs, cold stores and canning plants. In return Vietnam can offer Australia products such as minerals, seafoods and spices.

- (3) Discussions have been held with interested private sector companies. The Department of Agriculture has recently met delegations from Vietnam. Close links are being established to take advantage of opportunities as they develop.

PORTS AND HARBOURS - ALBANY HARBOURS CATCHMENT AREA
Agriculture Department Advice and Research

1755. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Does the Department of Agriculture intend to give advice, and carry out research in the Albany Harbours catchment area?
- (2) If so, who will be involved in the process of -
 - (a) giving the advice;
 - (b) carrying out the research?
- (3) What will be the cost of this advice to and research for the Albany Harbours catchment area in 1990-91?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) Mr Ashley Prout has a specialist role in providing fertiliser advice to farmers in the Albany Harbours catchment area. This specialist role is supported by the other advisers at the Albany regional office of the Department of Agriculture.
- (b) Mr David Weaver is specifically responsible for research.
- (3) The Albany Harbours catchment area budget for 1990-91 is \$198 000.

FOXES - FOX PELTS
Fur Trade - Agriculture Protection Board Information

1759. Mr GRAYDEN to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is the Agriculture Protection Board in possession of information relating to the number of fox pelts taken in Western Australia for the fur trade in recent years?
- (2) If so, how many pelts were taken in each of the years 1985 to 1990 inclusive?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

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

LEOPARDS - ESCAPED LEOPARDS OR COUGARS
Strange Stock Losses, South West - Evidence

1760. Mr GRAYDEN to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is the Agriculture Protection Board aware of any evidence at all that substantiates claims that escaped cougars or leopards are responsible for strange stock losses in several parts of the south west?
- (2) If so, what is the evidence?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1) No incontrovertible evidence is available.
- (2) Not applicable.

ROADS - MITCHELL FREEWAY
Covered Walkways - Letter Reply

1762. Mrs EDWARDES to the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

When can I expect to receive a reply to my letter dated 6 February 1990, to the then Minister, Hon I. Taylor, MLA concerning covered walkways over the Mitchell Freeway?

Mr TAYLOR replied:

The matter is currently being considered by the police and Main Roads Department. I will advise the member in writing when the matter is finalised.

WORLD BANK PROJECTS, CHINA - AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT BID

1784. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Can the Minister confirm that the Department of Agriculture will be examining three World Bank projects in China with a view to bidding for sectors of the projects?
- (2) If so, can the Minister outline the nature of the three World Bank projects?
- (3) What sectors of the above projects would the department be bidding for?
- (4) What are the proposed benefits for Western Australia in the Department of Agriculture participating in these World Bank projects?
- (5) What are the costs that the Department of Agriculture expects to incur in bidding for sectors of the three projects?
- (6) What are the expected returns for these three projects for -
 - (a) Western Australia;
 - (b) the Department of Agriculture?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1) The Department of Agriculture is a member of Agritec, an Australia-wide association of private sector, public sector and tertiary institutions. Agritec is backed by Austrade. A Department of Agriculture officer accompanied an Agritec mission to China recently to examine three World Bank projects.
- (2) The projects are agricultural development projects in the Sichuan, Jiangxi and Henan provinces. They cover horticulture, livestock, land rehabilitation and downstream processing.
- (3) The projects are not sufficiently advanced to define bid areas. No tenders have yet been called by the World Bank. The purpose of the mission was to assess opportunities early in the project cycle.
- (4) The combined value of the projects is US\$160 million. There could be very substantial benefits to the services sector of the Western Australian economy if Western Australian firms won World Bank work in China.
- (5) The survey mission was paid for by Austrade. Bids are not contemplated in the near future. It is most likely the Department of Agriculture would support bids with the private sector and tertiary institutions should the opportunity arise. World Bank projects usually require input from private and public sources.
- (6) Because the projects are at any early stage of development, the question cannot be answered explicitly. The returns to Western Australia could amount to millions of dollars. The Department of Agriculture would be a facilitator, using its experience and expertise in overseas projects to help win the work for Western Australia. The Department of Agriculture would recover costs from project work to ensure that its core activity servicing agriculture in Western Australia was not affected. The aim of any Department of Agriculture involvement would be to improve the performance of the State in winning a share of the massive world budget for aid related work.

SHEEP - LIVE SHEEP TRADE

Angola and East Java - Agriculture Department Discussions

1785. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Can the Minister confirm to the House that Angola and East Java were involved in discussions with the Department of Agriculture in relation to the live sheep trade?

- (2) If so -
 - (a) where and when were these discussions held;
 - (b) which personnel attended these discussions;
 - (c) what decisions have been made as a result of these discussions?
- (3) Have any other countries been approached by the Department of Agriculture in relation to possible live sheep trade?
- (4) If so -
 - (a) where and when were these discussions held;
 - (b) which personnel attended these discussions;
 - (c) what decisions have been made as a result of these discussions?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1) No discussions have been held by the Department of Agriculture with Angolans or East Javanese concerning live sheep exports.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) All foreign delegations with which the Department of Agriculture has contact are briefed in a general way on the opportunities Western Australia has to offer in the area of live sheep export.
- (4) Not applicable.

JOURNALISTS - GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT

1788. Mr COWAN to the Premier:

- (1) How many journalists are employed by the State Government?
- (2) How many of these are employed by the Ministry of Premier and Cabinet?
- (3) How many journalists work in the Government Media Office?
- (4) Is the position Press Officer/Researcher, advertised in *The West Australian* on 13 October 1990, a new position?
- (5) What are the main duties involved?
- (6) Why could these duties not have been performed by existing staff?
- (7) Is the appointment consistent with the Premier's statement in the Budget speech that Public Service numbers are to be reduced through attrition?
- (8) If yes to (7), how is the appointment consistent with the Premier's stated policy?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

- (1) See reply to Legislative Assembly question 228 of 1989.
- (2)-(3) Fifteen officers are employed in the Government Media Office as media advisors to the Premier and Cabinet including one director, two Press secretaries to the Premier and 12 Press secretaries to Ministers.
- (4) No. The Press secretary originally designated to do country and community newspaper work has now been assigned to two Ministers.
- (5) Assisting in researching and preparing news and feature material for country and community media and liaison with radio, television and newspapers in regional and metropolitan centres.
- (6) The Press secretary pool has been reduced to 14, which is lower than the number employed by the previous Liberal Government. Some Press secretaries work for more than one Minister and none has time for extra duties.
- (7) Yes.

- (8) Of the five Press secretaries who have left the GMO in the last few months, only one has been replaced.

HOSPITALS - GRAYLANDS HOSPITAL
Mentally Disturbed Prisoner Facilities - Public Interest Inquiry

1791. Mr MENSAROS to the Minister for Health:

In view of the Minister's reply to question 1577 of 1990, would the Minister reconsider his answer to question 1404 of 1990 and concede that a 77 against and 5 for response is "virtually" unanimous, which was the wording in question 1404 of 1990, and in view of this, inform the House whether the execution of the planned building of additional facilities in the Graylands Hospital to accommodate mentally disturbed prisoners could be reconsidered, or at least a proper inquiry, with public input to establish whether building such facilities is in the public interest, could be instituted?

Mr WILSON replied:

I have nothing further to add to the answers already provided.

BUSINESS NAMES - REGISTRATION POLICY

1792. Mr MENSAROS to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

In reference to the Minister's reply to question 1703 of 1990, I again ask what the Government's policy is regarding the continuation of the requirement to register business names, knowing that according to the High Court's decision the responsibility for registering business names remains with the State?

Mr D.L. SMITH replied:

Present Government policy is to continue the requirement to register business names.

PRISONS - PRISONERS
Ombudsman's 1990 Report - Escapee Privileges Withdrawal, Review

1793. Mr MENSAROS to the Minister representing the Minister for Corrective Services:

In view of the concern expressed by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations in his 1990 report, will the Minister review the policy of withdrawing certain privileges from prisoners who have escaped?

Mr D.L. SMITH replied:

An escape from legal custody is a very serious breach of prison discipline, and especially in the case of minimum security prisons - where almost all escapes occur - also involves a breach of trust. The loss of privileges represents an effective management option in dealing with escapees and also serves as a deterrent to all prisoners who might contemplate escape.

I have considered the parliamentary commissioner's concerns in respect of the possible effects of the policy on suicidal prisoners and agree with the executive director of the Department of Corrective Services that it is unlikely that any prisoner would contemplate suicide on that basis alone. However, if an escapee, or any other prisoner for that matter, shows signs of being either suicidal, emotionally distressed or otherwise "at risk", procedures are in place in all prisons to ensure his or her safety and wellbeing.

SCHOOLS - CLOSURE
Benger, Roelands and Burekup Primary Schools

1795. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Will the Benger, Roelands and Burekup Primary Schools be affected by the recent decision to close schools?
- (2) If so, which of these schools will be affected and when will they be closed?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) None of these three schools is included in those that will close at the end of 1990.

- (2) The Government has convened a school renewal steering committee, chaired by Hon John Halden MLC, to develop policy guidelines and implementation procedures for the school renewal program. Until the committee's recommendations are made, no indication can be given regarding which schools may be considered for closure in the future.

PASTORAL LEASES - ABORIGINAL GROUPS

Mineral Exploration and Mining Companies - Access Difficulties

1796. Mr COURT to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:

- (1) Have some mineral exploration and mining companies suffered difficulty in gaining access to pastoral leases held by Aboriginal groups?
- (2) Does the Government have any plan to ensure that the mineral exploration and mining industry have access to pastoral leases held by Aboriginal groups?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

- (1) Not to my knowledge.
- (2) The Mining Act 1978 defines all pastoral leases as Crown land. Mining companies have a right of access to any pastoral lease for exploration and mining purposes in accordance with the provisions of that Act.

PASTORAL LEASES - ABORIGINAL GROUPS

1797. Mr COURT to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

- (1) How many pastoral leases are currently held either by Aboriginal groups or on behalf of Aboriginal groups by Aboriginal agencies?
- (2) What are the names of those pastoral leases?
- (3) What is the total land area of those leases?
- (4) Is there any intention of changing the tenure of those leases to a different form of land title?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

- (1) Twenty-six pastoral leases are held by or for Aboriginal groups in Western Australia.

(2)-(3)

Station	Area (hectares)
Pantijan	174 379
Doon Doon	387 179
Noonkanbah	169 791
Millijiddee	307 930
Frazier Downs	76 756
Billiluna	162 889
Lake Gregory	271 699
Carson River	307 701
Mt Anderson	93 712
Mowanjun	52 449
Bow River	300 888
Glen Hill	14 275
La Grange	178 911
Carlindie	65 254
Coongan	180 341
Kangan	123 616
Lalla Rookh	107 927
Mt Welcome	191 219
Peedamulla	274 555
Pippingarra	45 585
Walagunya	174 811
Callawa	55 530
Koongie Park	38 976

Elvire	64 170
Mt Barnett	125 303
Ullawarra	<u>268 333</u>
	<u>4 214 179</u>

- (4) Only Pantijan Station is under consideration for change of tenure to either special lease or reserve status, or a combination of both. However, negotiations are still continuing on the question of the most appropriate form of tenure.

**AGRICULTURE PROTECTION BOARD - OFFICER APPOINTMENT,
CRANBROOK**
Advertising Authority

1801. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Will the Minister be giving authority to the Agriculture Protection Board to advertise for the filling of the position of Agriculture Protection Board officer at Cranbrook?
- (2) If so, when will this authority be given?
- (3) If not, what are the reasons for this decision?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1)-(3) I have agreed in principle to the filling of the APB district officer position at Cranbrook.

**AGRICULTURE PROTECTION BOARD - OFFICER APPOINTMENT,
JERRAMUNGUP**
Advertising Authority

1802. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Will the Minister be giving authority to the Agriculture Protection Board to advertise for the filling of the position of Agriculture Protection Board Officer at Jerramungup?
- (2) If so, when will this authority be given?
- (3) If not, what are the reasons for this decision?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1)-(3) I have agreed in principle to the filling of the APB district officer position at Jerramungup.

WOOL INDUSTRY - REGIONAL PLANS

1803. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Will the Minister be releasing the Minister's proposed regional plans to address the adjustment needed by wool producers to meet the current problems faced by the wool growing industry?
- (2) If so, on what regions will the plans be focused?
- (3) When will the plans be released to Western Australian wool farmers?
- (4) What form will the plans be taking?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1)-(4) Two important documents have already been released to address adjustment pressures confronting wool growers. The first relates to "Extension Strategies to Assist Wool Producers", which was prepared by the Department of Agriculture in June 1990. The extension messages and programs identified in

this study are being delivered by the department in the affected regions. These programs are being revised and updated in consultation with industry.

The second deals with "Assistance Strategies for Growers in the Wheat and Wool Industries, 1990-1991", recently released by the Rural Adjustment and Finance Corporation. I will arrange for copies of these documents to be made available to the member.

SEWERAGE - DARDANUP TOWNSITE
Septic Problems - Health Concerns

1804. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Have there been health concerns expressed with regard to the septic problems at the Dardanup townsite?
- (2) If yes, what has the Minister done to overcome the problem?
- (3) If no to (1), will the Minister investigate the matter and let me know what the Minister plans to do?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) At the request of the Shire of Dardanup, I have requested the Minister for Water Resources to give priority funding to provide reticulated sewerage to the townsite area.
- (3) Not applicable.

SEWERAGE - DARDANUP TOWNSITE
Septic Problems - Health Concerns

1805. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Have there been health concerns expressed with regard to the septic problems at the Dardanup townsite?
- (2) If so, when can infill sewerage be constructed?
- (3) If no to (1), will the Minister make himself familiar and inform me when infill sewerage can be expected?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1) Health concerns have been expressed by the Dardanup Shire and the Health Department of Western Australia.
- (2) Dardanup is a high priority for infill sewerage in the south west region along with several other communities. Discussions are proceeding with the shire as to how the provision of deep sewerage can be funded.
- (3) Answered by (1).

R.M. SMITH & CO - MINISTRY OF PREMIER AND CABINET EMPLOYMENT

1807. Mr MacKINNON to the Premier:

- (1) When was R.M. Smith and Co first employed by the Ministry of Premier and Cabinet?
- (2) Who authorised their employment?
- (3) When was their employment terminated?
- (4) Why was their employment terminated?
- (5) What payments were made to R.M. Smith and Co for the work carried out during the period of their employment?
- (6) What work did the company of R.M. Smith and Co carry out during this time?
- (7) Which Ministers did R.M. Smith and Co deal with directly?
- (8) Were R.M. Smith and Co employed by any other Ministry or agency of Government?

- (9) If yes to (8), which Ministry or agency of Government and for what period of time was the contract?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

(1)-(7)

The member is referred to answers to questions 2119 of 15 December 1988 and 2055 of the same date and question 268 of 31 August 1989 asked in another place. The member is also referred to answers to a series of questions asked by *The West Australian* on 2 November 1990 and reported on 3 November, copies of letters exchanged between the Department of Premier and Cabinet and R.M. Smith & Co that have been publicly released and the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Premier and Cabinet's letter of 7 May 1990 to himself.

(8)-(9)

See reply to question 1808.

R.M. SMITH & CO - MINISTRY CONTRACTS
Surveillance or Private Work

1808. Mr MacKINNON to the Premier:

- (1) Which Ministries in Government currently have contracts similar to that arranged previously with R.M. Smith and Co for surveillance or private work?
- (2) What arrangements are now made by the Government on behalf of Ministers with respect to the security in their homes?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

- (1) None that I am aware of; however, I will arrange for all agencies to be surveyed to confirm the position and advise the member in writing.
- (2) The Police Department is used where necessary to assess and advise on security matters at ministerial residences.

MICRO-ECONOMIC REFORM - CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS
Meetings

1809. Mr MacKINNON to the Premier:

- (1) Who are the members of the Cabinet subcommittee on micro-economic reform?
- (2) How often has the Cabinet subcommittee met since its establishment?
- (3) When was it established?
- (4) What decisions has it made since its establishment?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

- (1) Hon Dr Carmen Lawrence, MLA, Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Public Sector Management
Hon Ian Taylor, MLA, Deputy Premier and Minister for Finance and Economic Development, Trade and Goldfields
Hon Jeff Car, MLA, Minister for Mines, Fuel and Energy, Mid-West and Small Business
Hon Gavan Troy, MLA, Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations
Hon Pam Beggs, MLA, Minister for Transport and Tourism
Hon Ernie Bridge, MLA, Minister for Agriculture, Water Resources and North-West
Hon Dr Geoff Gallop, MLA, Minister for Education
- (2) Three times.
- (3) 9 July 1990.
- (4) The confidentiality necessary for effective Government requires that the deliberations and decisions of Cabinet, including Cabinet committees and subcommittees, should be protected from mandatory disclosure. However,

key areas of activity by the subcommittee which have previously been made public include -

- Preparation of a comprehensive overview of the Government's progress on microeconomic reform;
- determination of the Government's policy on corporatisation of public trading enterprises; and
- oversight of the development of the Government's position in relation to the issues considered by the recent special Premiers' Conference.

STATE ECONOMIC STRATEGY COUNCIL - MEMBERS

1810. Mr MacKINNON to the Premier:

- (1) Who are the members of the State Economic Strategy Council?
- (2) When was the council established?
- (3) What are its objectives?
- (4) How many times has it met since it was established?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

- (1) Harold Clough of Clough Ltd
Trevor Eastwood of Wesfarmers
David Karpin of the Chamber of Mines
Peter Lalor of Sons of Gwalia
Peter Lee of the WA Farmers Federation
Angelina Low of Deloitte Ross Tohmatsu
Ross McLean of the Chamber of Commerce
Paul McLeod of the University of WA
Rob Meecham of the Trades and Labor Council
Stuart Morgan of Westintech
Keigh Peckham of the TLC
Lyndon Rowe of the Confederation of WA Industry
Geoffrey Venables of the Combined Business Association
- (2) 5 November 1990.
- (3)
 - . To provide a forum for the Government and key sectors of the economy.
 - . To review aspects of the State's economic structure and development.
 - . To monitor the impact of Federal policies on WA's economic objectives.
 - . To assess the role and impact of the State Government in the WA economy.
 - . To advise the Government on appropriate economic strategies.
 - . To foster community-wide awareness and debate.
- (4) The first meeting is scheduled for late November.

HOSPITALS - SOUTHERN CROSS DISTRICT HOSPITAL *Closest Hospitals, Merredin and Kalgoorlie - Funding Allocation*

1811. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Are the closest hospitals to Southern Cross District Hospital, Merredin (110 km away) and Kalgoorlie (240 km away)?
- (2) What was the State Government funding allocation to the Southern Cross District Hospital in the financial year 1989-90?
- (3) What is the State Government funding allocation to the Southern Cross District Hospital in the financial year 1990-91?
- (4) (a) Are any cutbacks in services planned for the Southern Cross District Hospital;

- (b) if yes, what are these cutbacks in services?
- (5) (a) Is there only one medical practitioner in Southern Cross;
- (b) if yes, are there any plans to review this situation?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) \$908 400.
- (3) \$904 700.
- (4) (a) No.
- (b) Not applicable.
- (5) (a) Yes.
- (b) No.

PRISONS - GNANGARA REGION
New High Security Prison Site

1815. Mrs EDWARDES to the Minister representing the Minister for Corrective Services:

Is the Government considering a site in the Gnangara region or any part of the north metropolitan region for the proposed new high security prison?

Mr D.L. SMITH replied:

Work on the site selection process is still at a very early stage. The Minister has written to local government councils in or near the metropolitan area - both north and south - seeking their advice on a suitable location.

HOMESWEST - RENTALS
Average Level and Increase

1817. Mr C.J. BARNETT to the Minister for Housing:

What has been the average level and increase in typical Homeswest rentals in both dollar and percentage terms for each year since 1980?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

The answer was tabled.

[See paper No 716.]

HOUSING - FIRST HOME OWNERS SCHEME
Cessation Compensation

1818. Mr C.J. BARNETT to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Has the Commonwealth Government honoured its undertaking to fully compensate the States for the cessation of the First Home Owners' Scheme?
- (2) How much has Western Australia received for 1990-91 by way of compensation for the cessation of FHOS?
- (3) Is there more to be received?
- (4) To what use is the Western Australian Government putting these funds?
- (5) How does the level of compensation for FHOS for 1990-91 compare with actual expenditure under FHOS in Western Australia in 1989-90?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

- (1) I do not believe that the Commonwealth gave an undertaking "... to fully compensate the States for the cessation of the First Home Owners Scheme".
- (2) \$625 000 in new funds.
- (3) Not in 1990-91.
- (4) Homeswest is currently developing a replacement deposit scheme targeted to low income earners.

- (5) I have attached a copy of correspondence to the Federal Minister, highlighting my concerns and which also addresses this question.

[See paper No 718.]

POWER STATIONS - MUJA POWER STATION

Employment Statistics

1819. Mr COURT to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) How many people are employed at the Muja Power Station?
- (2) How many of the people are designated as cleaners?
- (3) How do these manning levels compare with the Torrens Island Power Station in South Australia and a similar size plant in Queensland?

Mr CARR replied:

- (1) 695.
- (2) 40.
- (3) Torrens Island Power Station - 1 280 MW gas fired - currently employs 450 persons of which 18 are plant cleaners; however, the comparison with Muja Power Station is inequitable since Torrens Island is a totally gas fired power station. The absence of coal and ash handling plant not only results in lower staff numbers but also a cleaner station.

In Queensland, Gladstone Power Station - 1 680 MW coal fired - has six units aged from 1976 to 1982 and is therefore the closest comparison with Muja - eight units 1 040 MW. It employs 567 persons of which 46 are plant cleaners.

PRISONS - OMBUDSMAN'S REPORT

Canadian Lockup Status - Similar Conditions Establishment Plans

1820. Mr MENSAROS to the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

In view of the comments by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations in his 30 June 1990 report about the status of Canadian lockups and their permanent staffing with nurses which "must clearly place prisoners at less risk than in major lockups in Western Australia", has the Government or Commissioner of Police plans to establish similar conditions in Western Australian lockups?

Mr TAYLOR replied:

In acknowledgment of the duty of care for persons in police custody, facilities, conditions and procedures in police lockups have been under review for many years and considerable enhancements made. The major lockup at East Perth is currently being modified. The modifications include provision for a nursing post. Research is presently being undertaken into the nursing staff requirements for that facility. The issue will be kept under review to determine any future needs.

STATE ENERGY COMMISSION - SMALL BUSINESSES

Security Charge

1822. Mr COWAN to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) How many small businesses pay a security charge to State Energy Commission of Western Australia?
- (2) How many are -
 - (a) deposits with SECWA;
 - (b) in the form of guarantees by financial institutions?
- (3) What is the total value of deposits in (2)(a) and (2)(b)?
- (4) In how many cases does SECWA -

- (a) retain a security deposit;
- (b) call on the bank guarantee for the nonpayment of SECWA accounts?
- (5) For each of the last three years what is the value of -
 - (a) security deposits retained by SECWA;
 - (b) guarantees called on by SECWA for the nonpayment of accounts?

Mr CARR replied:

(1)-(3)

Small businesses are not classified as a separate segment on SECWA's customer database. Details relating to small businesses are not available. All customers on the general, commercial and industrial tariffs - L1/L2 - are required to pay a security deposit or arrange a suitable guarantee. This includes small businesses.

(4)-(5)

Statistics relating to the number and value of security deposits retained and bank guarantees called upon, are not maintained in a central database. In response to the member's question however, the following information is provided -

The security deposit is automatically offset against the account balance when a final account is billed. The billing of a final account may occur at the customer's request or because of outstanding arrears and termination of supply. If a credit balance remains a refund is generated. If a debit balance remains, recovery action is instigated.

SECWA will call on a bank guarantee in every instance where there is arrears following the finalisation of accounts and where normal recovery procedures have been exhausted.

For the period September 1989 to September 1990, SECWA wrote off \$951 215 for 699 bankrupt accounts. This was after the security deposits or guarantees had been deducted from the arrears.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT - SMALL DISPUTES DIVISION, LOCAL COURT

Practice and Procedure Review

1824. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) When does the Minister expect the study of the practice and procedure developing in the Small Disputes Division of the Local Court, in relation to the determination of disputes arising under the Residential Tenancies Act being undertaken by Mrs Judy McGowan, will be completed?
- (2) Will the review be made public?
- (3) If not, why not?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

- (1) The study undertaken by Mrs Judy McGowan has been completed.
- (2) No. The study was not commissioned by the Government but undertaken privately by Mrs McGowan as part of her outside study program at Curtin University of Technology.
- (3) Not applicable.

WOODS, KEVIN JOHN - TOMMS, NATHAN

Charges

1827. Mr STRICKLAND to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

What charges have been laid against Kevin John Woods in relation to Nathan Tomms?

Mr D.L. SMITH replied:

- (a) Five charges of procuring a male person to commit an act of gross indecency.
- (b) Four charges of sexual penetration without consent at a time when the complainant was under 16 years of age.
- (c) One charge of unlawful and indecent assault on a person under the age of 16 years.

The charges originally came before the court on 29 May 1990 and were remanded to 5 June 1990. On 5 June 1990 the matters did not proceed as the court was advised that the defendant was deceased.

PROGRAM STATEMENTS - AGRICULTURE-MARKET DEVELOPMENT SUBPROGRAM

Plant and Animal Product Market Studies - Indonesian- East Javan Agricultural Industries Examination

1828. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What countries were subject to market studies for a variety of plant and animal products as outlined in the 1990-91 Program Statements?
- (2) Which plant and animal products were subject to market studies?
- (3) Which Indonesian-East Javan agricultural industries were examined as part of the development of a sister-State relationship?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1) Japan, Indonesia, Holland, Italy, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, United Kingdom, Mauritius, Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand, Philippines, Brunei, Vietnam, USA and Canada.
- (2) Apples, plums, peaches, nectarines, avocados, mangoes, melons, nashi, grapes, carrots, cauliflower, broccoli, asparagus, onions, grapefruit, flowers, emu products, rabbits, skins and hides, hay, pet food.
- (3) A survey mission examined broad needs as part of the East Java sister State relationship. Horticulture and livestock have been designated priority areas for cooperation. A horticultural specialist will visit East Java next week.

SCHOOLS - CLOSURE

Warren Electorate

1829. Mr OMODEI to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Does the Government intend to close any schools in the Warren electorate?
- (2) If so, which schools does the Government intend to close?
- (3) Has the school fraternity/ies been advised of any action?
- (4) What actions has the Government put in place to cater for any changes in each case?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) There are no plans to close any schools in the Warren electorate. The Government has convened a school renewal steering committee chaired by Hon John Halden MLC to develop policy guidelines and implementation procedures for the school renewal program.

Until the committee has developed these guidelines and procedures, no further decisions will be made on school closures.

(2)-(4)

Not applicable.

SHEEP - AWASSI FAT TAIL SHEEP PROJECT
Wool Product Potential Research Plans

1830. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is the Department of Agriculture planning to research the potential of the Awassi fat-tail sheep as a wool producer?
- (2) If so -
 - (a) how much money will be spent on this research in 1990-91;
 - (b) how many personnel will be involved in the research;
 - (c) where will the research be conducted?
- (3) Will any private enterprise interests be contributing any funds to the research?
- (4) If yes to (3), how much will the contribution be in 1990-91?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1) The Department of Agriculture is funding a postgraduate research scholarship with the University of Western Australia. The research will document fibre and skin histology in the Awassi, test its potential as a carpet wool producer, and examine the possibility of fibre contamination between Awassi and Merino sheep under farming conditions.
- (2)
 - (a) Approximately \$16 000.
 - (b) One.
 - (c) Mainly at Wongan Hills Agricultural Research Station.
- (3) The Awassi Sheep Joint Venture will support operating expenses.
- (4) Approximately \$4 000.

NEEM - IMPORTED PESTICIDE CONTROL PRODUCT
Market Approach

1841. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has the Minister been approached to allow an imported product, Neem, to be put on the market for pesticide control?
- (2)
 - (a) If yes, has this chemical been approved for use in Western Australia;
 - (b) if no, why not?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) I have not been approached but individual officers of the Health Department have been approached for advice on the steps required for marketing approval to be gained.
- (2)
 - (a) The chemical has not been approved for use in Western Australia except for permission to trial a small amount under the direction of the Chief Entomologist, Department of Agriculture.
 - (b) As this is a new chemical it is subject to the Commonwealth Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Act and must be cleared by the Australian Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Council - AAVCC - before it may be registered and subsequently marketed in the various States and Territories. Notification of clearance has not been received from AAVCC.

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - EMPLOYMENT
Age Discrimination Legislation

1842. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Education:

Are there any plans to introduce legislation to overcome age discrimination in employment at the University of Western Australia?

Dr GALLOP replied:

The Government plans to amend existing legislation to overcome age discrimination in employment generally.

PHARMACEUTICALS - PRESCRIPTIONS

New Card

1844. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is it planned to introduce a new card which will be needed to obtain prescriptions?
- (2) If yes -
 - (a) will this card be a Federal or a State initiative;
 - (b) will persons be able to obtain prescriptions without this card;
 - (c) what will this card be called;
 - (d) who will be issued with this card;
 - (e) when will the card be issued;
 - (f) what will be the procedures involved in using this card;
 - (g) will the pharmacist have access to patients' records through this card;
 - (h) what information will be available to pharmacies through this card?

Mr WILSON replied:

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

GILDERCLIFFE LODGE - VOTING PRACTICE COMPLAINTS

Electoral Commission

1846. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform:

- (1) Have any complaints about voting practices at Gildercliffe Lodge been lodged with the Electoral Commissioner -
- (2) If yes -
 - (a) what election(s) have complaints been lodged about;
 - (b) what person or persons lodged these complaints;
 - (c) are these complaints being investigated?

Dr GALLOP replied:

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

HOSPITALS - HOSPITAL LINEN AND LAUNDRY SERVICE

Board Control

1847. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is the Hospital Linen and Laundry Service run by a board?
- (2) If yes -
 - (a) who is on the board of the Hospital Linen and Laundry Service;
 - (b) how many times does the board sit annually;
 - (c) what is the cost of the board sitting;
 - (d) why is the Hospital Linen and Laundry Service answerable to a board?
- (3) What hospitals does the Hospital Linen and Laundry Service provide laundry service to?
- (4) (a) Are any of these hospitals private hospitals;

- (b) if yes, who are the owners of these hospitals?
- (5) (a) Is the Hospital Linen and Laundry Service involved in a court case concerning a wages dispute;
- (b) if yes, when is this case to be heard?

Mr WILSON replied:

I refer the honourable member to the answer to his earlier question, 1576.

AARON LEE PEST CONTROL - CSIRO
Organochlorines in Soil Samples Test Protocol

1850. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Health:

If the Health Department has a full sampling and test protocol for finding organochlorines in soil samples, why is it necessary for Aaron Lee Pest Control to combine with the Commonwealth Scientific Industrial Research Organisation to formulate such a protocol?

Mr WILSON replied:

The Aaron Lee application system is a new approach for the application of organochlorines and it does not comply with Australian Standard 2057. The Health Department is prepared to approve this new method of applying organochlorines once safety and efficacy have been demonstrated. A protocol is being developed by the sponsor to demonstrate safety and even distribution of the chemical over the area to be treated.

The new protocol will involve certification by an independent testing authority such as the Commonwealth Scientific Industrial Research Organisation.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS - DEPARTMENT LIBRARIES
Staffing and Funding

1856. Mr MINSON to the Premier:

- (1) Which Government departments have their own libraries?
- (2) What are the staff numbers and the levels the individual staff members are on for each department library?
- (3) Have any of these libraries received funding and staffing cuts in this financial year?
- (4) What are these individual funding and staffing cuts?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

(1)-(4)

I have initiated inquiries with all Ministers with regard to these matters and will reply in writing when the information becomes available.

SCHOOLS - KARRAGULLEN PRIMARY SCHOOL
Upgrading - Capital Works Program Allocation

1861. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Education:

- (1) How much has been allocated in the 1990-91 Capital Works Program for the upgrading of facilities at Karragullen Primary School?
- (2) If there are no funds allocated in this year's Budget, when is it anticipated that these much needed works will be provided for in the State Budget?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) No funds were allocated in the 1990-91 Budget for an upgrade of Karragullen Primary School.
- (2) While it is not possible at present to give a definite indication when work will commence, the needs of Karragullen Primary School will continue to be considered when future Capital Works Programs are being compiled.

SCHOOLS - JURIEN SCHOOL
Construction Costs - Capital Works Program Allocation

1865. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Education:

- (1) How much has been allocated in the 1990-91 Capital Works Program for construction costs at the Jurien school?
- (2) What works are to be carried out against this Budget allocation?
- (3) When will these works commence?
- (4) When will the works be completed?
- (5) When will Stage 2 of the Jurien school construction (secondary school) commence?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) \$400 000.
- (2) A four-classroom teaching block
 Permanent preprimary facilities
 Administration and staff facilities
 Library resource centre
 Art/craft classroom
 Music classroom
 Change rooms and toilets
 Sports store
 Manual arts outdoor area
 Sun shading to existing specialist teaching areas
 Staff study area conversion
 Car parking and landscaping works.
- (3) March 1991
- (4) December 1991
- (5) No firm construction date can be given but stage 2 will be undertaken from a future Capital Works Program.

HOUSING - HOUSE STREET NUMBER REQUIREMENT
Legislation

1867. Mr McNEE to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Is there any requirement for houses in a gazetted townsite and street to have numbers displayed?
- (2) If yes, what Act provides for this requirement, which clauses are relevant, and who is responsible to ensure that the requirements of such Act are carried out?
- (3) Are there any regulations pertaining to this matter and if so what are they?
- (4) If no to (2) and (3), what provisions are in force for houses to be able to be identified to facilitate the delivery of mail or for other reasons?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

- (1) Local governments have the power to assign a number to each building or lot in a street.
 Where numbers are assigned, owners or occupiers are required to display the number in a conspicuous place.
- (2) Section 314 of the Local Government Act grants local governments the power to control the number of properties.
- (3) No.
- (4) Not applicable.

MARINE PARKS - MARMION MARINE PARK
Draft Management Plan - Commercial Beach Seining Phase Out

1870. Mr McNEE to the Minister for Fisheries:

- (1) In regard to the draft management plan for the Marmion Marine Park, does the Minister support the proposals to -
 - (a) phase out commercial beach seining;
 - (b) make beach seining licences non-transferable;
 - (c) not permit any new commercial fisheries other than those presently existing in the park;
 - (d) not permit new commercial fishing techniques other than those presently approved in the park;
 - (e) in regard to commercial rock lobster fishing, to monitor the impact on individual reefs and conflict with recreational users of, and if there are indications of intense fishing pressures or conflict, to review the position?
- (2) In regard to the draft management plan for the Marmion Marine Park and proposals that affect commercial fishing has the Minister consulted -
 - (a) Western Australian Fishing Industry Council (Inc.);
 - (b) Fremantle Professional Fishermen's Association (Inc.);
 - (c) Cockburn Sound Professional Fishermen's Association?
- (3) If not, will he consult these groups?
- (4) What is the Minister's policy in regard to the management of commercial fisheries within marine parks?
- (5) Does the Minister consult commercial fishermen organisations on management proposals in marine parks that may impact on their commercial fishing operation?
- (6) Will the Minister consider setting up a formal body, similar to the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority which advises the Minister for the Environment on marine parks, to obtain advice from the commercial fishing industry on management proposals for marine parks?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

- (1) (a)-(e)
Yes.
- (2) (a) Not as yet with respect to the current version of the draft plan now open for submissions. However, the specific commercial fisheries management proposals differ little from the previous draft about which there was extensive consultation with industry.
- (b)-(c)
I would expect the views of these associations to be made known through any consultations with the industry peak body, the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council - WAFIC. However, as the fishing industry will acknowledge, both the Fisheries Department and I are always willing to discuss any matters with any industry and/or individual.
- (3) Yes, through WAFIC in the first instance.
- (4) Commercial fisheries operating within a marine park should be managed in accordance with the management plans for those fisheries and the final plan of management for that marine park.
- (5) Yes, when appropriate, through WAFIC.
- (6) No.

POWER STATIONS - BUNBURY POWER STATION
Closure Intention - New Base Load Power Station Commission

1875. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

Is it the State Energy Commission of Western Australia's intention to close the Bunbury Power Station when the new base load power station is commissioned?

Mr CARR replied:

I refer the member to the answer to question 1794.

DRUGS - DEPENDENCE PRODUCING DRUGS
Health Department - Prescription Monitoring

1876. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Does the Health Department monitor the prescribing of dependence producing drugs?
- (2) For how long has this monitoring been carried out?
- (3) Have any trends emerged such as over-prescribing?
- (4) Has any action been taken as a result of the monitoring process?
- (5) If yes to (4), what action?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) Yes. All prescriptions for drugs of dependence dispensed in WA are monitored by the department.
- (2) The current computerised monitoring system commenced in January 1986. Prior to that a manual system was in operation.
- (3) Yes. Most trends identified have been of an individual rather than a general nature, for example particular drug addicts obtaining prescriptions from numerous doctors by misrepresentation, or individual doctors who appear to prescribe more than usual of these drugs.
- (4) Yes.
- (5) Various actions, depending on the circumstances, have been taken.
 - (a) Where drug addicts have successfully obtained prescriptions by deceiving medical practitioners the department has contacted the doctors in the areas that the addicts were active and alerted them to the addicts' methods. By cutting off this source of an addict's drug supply the addict may seek help earlier at an appropriate rehabilitative agency.
 - (b) Where medical practitioners have exhibited unusual prescribing patterns the doctors have been interviewed and counselled if necessary by a senior departmental officer. If this proved to be ineffective the doctor's rights to prescribe or use drugs of addiction have sometimes been withdrawn.

LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM GAS - WHOLESALE AND RETAIL PRICES

1879. Mr COURT to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) How are the wholesale and retail prices of liquefied petroleum gas determined in Western Australia?
- (2) What has been the maximum retail price for LPG gas in 1990 for the months of -
 - (a) January;
 - (b) February;
 - (c) March;

- (d) April;
 - (e) May;
 - (f) June;
 - (g) July;
 - (h) August;
 - (i) September;
 - (j) October;
 - (k) November?
- (3) Is the State considering introducing an additional levy on LPG gas, and has the Government been notified that the Federal Government may introduce such a levy?

Mr CARR replied:

- (1) Maximum endorsed wholesale prices for liquefied petroleum gas are currently set by the Prices Surveillance Authority - PSA - and are based upon the notional import parity of LPG less \$A20 per tonne.

The Federal Government has announced that from 1 January 1991, LPG prices will be partially deregulated. Under the new system, the PSA will judge whether market prices are reasonable, having regard to movements in CPI and overseas LPG prices. If increases are considered unreasonable, the authority can move to have producers or marketers, on a selective basis, declared under the Prices Surveillance Act 1983. This would mean that they would have to obtain advance PSA approval for price increases.

Retail prices are not regulated. They are determined by production and distribution costs and prevailing market forces.

- (2) There is no regulated maximum retail price for LPG. The maximum PSA endorsed wholesale prices during 1990 have been -

Effective Date	Propane per tonne	Butane per tonne
1 January 1990	\$247.00	\$217.00
1 July 1990	\$231.00	\$203.00
22 October 1990	\$293.00	\$258.00

- (3) The State is not considering an additional levy on LPG. I am advised, however, that the Federal Government is examining this possibility.

TREE TRUST - PUBLIC SERVANTS

Additional Payments

1882. Mr COURT to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) Have any public servants been paid additional funds for being involved in the Tree Trust or the Tree Fund Limited?
- (2) If yes, what payments have been made, and for what period do these payments cover?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) \$20 000 December 1988 to December 1989.
\$20 000 December 1989 to December 1990.
These payments were made for work on discretionary projects, approved by the Minister and Cabinet, which included the tree fund.

SERVICE STATIONS - UNDERGROUND FUEL TANKS

Regulation Change

1886. Mr COURT to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Is the Government considering changing the regulations in relation to

underground fuel tanks at service stations to ensure that no fuel vapour is released into the atmosphere?

- (2) If yes, what changes will take place?

Mr CARR replied:

- (1) The safety aspects of vapour release at service stations is controlled by the Explosives & Dangerous Goods Division of the Department of Mines to ensure that fuel vapour release does not present a public safety threat. No regulatory changes are anticipated in this area. I understand that the pollution aspects are being considered by the Environmental Protection Authority. It has not yet been determined if any regulatory changes are warranted in this area.
- (2) Any changes will be determined in the light of the result of the assessment by the Environmental Protection Authority.

GREENHOUSE EFFECT - GAS EMISSION LEVELS

Twenty Per Cent Reduction

1890. Mr COURT to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) What action has been taken by the Government to ensure that there will be a 20 per cent reduction on the 1988 emission levels by the year 2005 of greenhouse gas emissions?
- (2) Is the Government carrying out audits of industry's greenhouse gas emissions?
- (3) Are tax incentives being offered for fuel efficient motor vehicles?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) The Greenhouse Coordination Council was established in 1989 and requested to advise Government regarding how a 20 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions can be achieved. The Government is expecting to receive the council's report before the end of 1990.
- (2) Yes, the first step was the publication by the Greenhouse Coordination Council of a "Greenhouse Gas Audit for Western Australia". WA was the first State to publish an audit, other States are following.
- (3) Yes, lower annual registration fees for vehicles with small engines is one example.

NATIONAL PARKS - SAWLOGS REMOVAL

Legal and Illegal Removal

1893. Mr KIERATH to the Minister for the Environment:

Further to question 877 of 1990 relating to illegal logging in national parks -

- (a) did the Regional Manager of the Department of Conservation and Land Management, Mr Alan Walker, write to the Chairperson of the Committee of Enquiry into Forest Resources and Values in 1986 saying that "there have been sawlogs cut in National Parks in Western Australian both legally and illegally during the last twenty five years";
- (b) does Regulation 25 in Part V of the National Parks Authority Regulations in force since 1977 (Protection of Flora, Fauna and the Environment) state that a person shall not without authority fell or remove any flora (which includes trees) on a reserve (which includes national parks);
- (c) do these regulations not mean that, contrary to the statement repeated three times in response to question 877 of 1990, it was illegal to cut timber in and remove sawlogs from national parks prior to 1985 if the cutting and removal were carried out without authority;
- (d) will the Minister state whether authority was given, and if so by whom, for trees to be felled and sawlogs removed from -

- (i) the southern part of Warren National Park as shown on CALM Warren map (map reference HT 58-59);
 - (ii) Brockman National Park;
- in or about 1980-82;
- (e) will the Minister now name the national parks where sawlogs were cut illegally in the 25 years prior to 1986, as admitted by Mr Walker?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (a) Yes.
- (b) Yes.
- (c) Most of the instances quoted in response to question 887 of 1990 referred to removal of timber from national parks prior to 1985 with authority.
- (d)
 - (i) Tree felling and sawlog removal was carried out by agreement between the then Forests Department and the then Pemberton National Parks Board and later between the then Forests Department and the then National Park Authority.
 - (ii) Nothing is known about trees felled and sawlogs removed from Brockman National Park in or about 1980 to 1982.
- (e) One substantiated example of logs cut and removed illegally from a national park prior to 1986, referred to by Mr Walker, was the removal of logs from reserve 23740 national park vested in Manjimup Shire Council near Northcliffe in 1983.

PEPPERMINT HOLDINGS PTY LTD - PARMELIA REPLICA RESTAURANT
\$250 000 Deposit Payment - Swan River Trust

1894. Mr KIERATH to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) Referring to question 626 of 1990 with respect to the Peppermint Holdings' Parmelia Replica Restaurant proposed for the Swan River adjacent to the causeway -
 - (a) has Peppermint Holdings paid the \$250 000 deposit/bank guarantee as a performance bond to the Swan River Trust, as required by the approval determination for the Parmelia project;
 - (b) if not, why not;
 - (c) has Peppermint Holdings provided evidence to the satisfaction of the Swan River Trust that it has sufficient investment capital to carry out and complete the development, as required by the approval determination for the Parmelia project;
 - (d) has Parliamentary approval been sought by any party with regard to an access road across the A class reserve to service the Parmelia development, and if so, by whom?
- (2) Further to question 670 of 1990, would the Minister advise with regard to the annual lease payment of \$30 000 required to be paid by Peppermint Holdings to the Department of Marine and Harbours -
 - (a) on what specific dates since 17 February 1987 were lease payments made;
 - (b) what amounts were paid on each occasion;
 - (c) by what method was the payment made, and from which financial institution?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1)
 - (a) No.
 - (b) Peppermint Holdings have not made contact since the amended conditions of approval were forwarded.

(c)-(d)

No.

(2) (a)-(c)

It is not normal practice to divulge specific accounting records of lessee's payments as that would be a breach of commercial confidentiality.

SCHOOLS - CANTEENS

Separate Electricity and Gas Meter Installation

1898. Mr KIERATH to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

(1) Is there any intention by the Minister to install separate electricity and gas metering devices in school canteens so that the Ministry of Education will no longer be responsible for carrying the cost of those services to the canteens?

(2) If so, which schools will be affected, and when?

Mr CARR replied:

(1) No.

(2) Not applicable.

POWER CUTS - INDUSTRIAL RELATION COMMISSION HEARING

Adjournment Application - State Energy Commission Support Direction

1899. Mr COURT to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

(1) When did the Minister order the State Energy Commission of Western Australia to back a union application to adjourn a Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission hearing in relation to unions being banned from taking industrial action leading to power cuts?

(2) How was this direction given?

(3) To whom was the direction given?

Mr CARR replied:

(1) 8 November 1990.

(2) The direction was given verbally and confirmed in writing.

(3) The Commissioner of the State Energy Commission.

POWER CUTS - INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS COMMISSION HEARING

Adjournment Support Meeting - State Energy Commission Non-involvement

1901. Mr COURT to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

(1) Why was State Energy Commission of Western Australia not involved in the meeting between the Minister and the Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations and the unions which agreed to support the adjournment of a Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission hearing into unions being banned from taking industrial action which would lead to power cuts?

(2) Did the Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations request that this meeting be held and that this action be taken?

(3) If not, who did initiate the meeting?

Mr CARR replied:

(1) The meeting of 7 November 1990, was held at the request of the TLC unions. The unions asked specifically to meet with the Government and the Government was represented by the Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations and myself. Senior SECWA officials were kept informed through discussions with myself immediately prior to and immediately after the meeting.

(2)-(3)

Not applicable.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY - TERMS OF REFERENCE

463. Mr MacKINNON to the Premier:

- (1) Will the Premier give the Parliament a commitment that the terms of reference of the proposed Royal Commission will be announced prior to the Legislative Assembly's rising for the Christmas break this year?
- (2) Will she also give the Parliament an assurance that she will allow a debate on those terms of reference in the Legislative Assembly prior to the Christmas adjournment this year?
- (3) If not, why not?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

(1)-(3)

As I said very clearly in this House today and in the media it is our desire to have this matter resolved as quickly as possible. Obviously delaying either the terms of reference or the announcement of a commissioner is not something the Government would deliberately seek to do. It is my intention to do that as quickly as possible. Whatever the Leader of the Opposition thinks, I am not going to put a date on it and I do not want the media to be speculating that it will be Monday, Tuesday or whatever day. I will announce the terms of reference when they are properly drawn up and when we have a commissioner who has been able to examine them and who has agreed to take part.

ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY - OPPOSITION'S SELECT COMMITTEES

Government Employees Superannuation Board and State Government Insurance Commission - Documents Inquiry

464. Dr EDWARDS to the Premier:

- (1) Is the Premier aware of moves by the Opposition in another place today to conduct an investigation of documents relating to the Government Employees Superannuation Board and the State Government Insurance Commission?
- (2) Given her announcement yesterday of a Royal Commission which will look at all these matters in an impartial and independent manner, is it appropriate that the Opposition attempt to undermine the Royal Commission by pre-empting matters it will consider?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

(1)-(2)

In the debate today we issued a challenge to the Leader of the Opposition to indicate that he would, in recommending to his upper House members, insist that the Pike committee be wound up and that the Select Committee proposed to be established by Mr Foss would not be established. I understand now from what the Leader of the Opposition has said not only that he will not contemplate doing other than advising the upper House - it is as weak a response as one can get from the Leader of the Opposition - but also that Mr Foss has moved today to continue setting up that Select Committee. I find that absolutely extraordinary.

I came into this place a little while ago in time to hear the member for Scarborough say that perhaps it was not a good idea to wind up those committees because they could be a conduit to the Royal Commission. I am absolutely amazed at the reaction by the Liberal Party - I should exclude the National Party - to this matter. Within 24 hours of announcing the Royal Commission, in addition to the failure to address those questions squarely, the Opposition has shown its longstanding motivation. We have seen today its true motivation.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Dr LAWRENCE: The Opposition is not interested, but it is fearful of what an independent and impartial Royal Commission will show; it is fearful because the allegations it has made day by day and week by week by way of interjection, by way of motion and by way of speech will be shown to be the hollow rhetoric they are.

Several members interjected.

Dr LAWRENCE: The examination should be fair and impartial and, as I said today, the upper House Select Committees are not fair and impartial, especially those which consist entirely of members of the Liberal Party examining members of the Liberal Party. As the question indicates what we have seen today is that the Opposition has moved in the other place further to examine documents relating to the State Government Insurance Commission and the Government Employees Superannuation Board.

The Opposition cannot be taken seriously: For months and months it has been asking for a fair, impartial, wide ranging and powerful Royal Commission.

Several members interjected.

Dr LAWRENCE: It is undermining its credibility. The least the Leader of the Opposition could say is, "Subject to being satisfied by the Premier's terms of reference and subject to being satisfied by the Bill"; but no, he will not even get to first base. He has his shadow Ministers suggesting that even if the Parliament were satisfied with the terms of reference and the powers of the Royal Commission, the Opposition would want the committees to act as a conduit. That is the most absurd proposition that has ever been put before this House and, incidentally, it is not one that has been rejected by the Leader of the Opposition. Instead of being responsible and true to his word, the Leader of the Opposition has taken a cop-out by saying, "I might advise them if I think it is a good idea". Even then, presumably, his advice would be ignored as it often has been.

Several members interjected.

Dr LAWRENCE: Opposition members are no doubt independent, but on this matter it should be clearly stated that they will continue to distort and misuse any information that comes into their hands. They will use any venue to do that and they will look increasingly stupid as the Royal Commission is established and a fair and impartial avenue is provided. If the Opposition's committees continue in the face of that, if they continue to call for bits and pieces of information and if the Opposition continues to use the upper House in the way it has been suggested, people will recognise it for what it is. The Opposition would want to rue the day when the people finally understand that its motivation in this is not pure; it is self-serving and entirely political and it cannot be trusted.

The SPEAKER: Order! Before I call on the Leader of the National Party to put his question I advise members that during question time I am becoming increasingly concerned at the unfair and ill mannered tactic of continuously interjecting during a Minister's response. I have previously indicated my concern about that and said that if it continued I would cancel question time. I have given further consideration to that and I think that two or three members in this House should not be able to create a situation in which other members who want to ask questions are prohibited from doing that. Therefore, I advise members that I am seriously considering that those members who continue to ignore my calls for order will find themselves simply not seen by the Speaker during question time until such time as they can be as well mannered as other members in this place.

ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY - PREVIOUS 10 YEARS
Particular Items and Issues

465. Mr COWAN to the Premier:

In the Premier's announcement that there would be a Royal Commission she indicated that the inquiry should go back 10 years. I ask the Premier to indicate what particular items or issues dating back to that period of time she would expect the Royal Commission to investigate?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

The Leader of the National Party has been in this House longer than I have and long enough to know the time when some of the members in Government were members of the Opposition. At that time serious questions were raised about some business dealings. My specific reason for extending the inquiry beyond 1983 was to ensure that matters which relate to the Stirling City Council bribery allegations - planning matters - which pre-date 1983 are addressed.

STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION - STATE GOVERNMENT
INSURANCE OFFICE
Operations Review

466. Dr WATSON to the Deputy Premier:

Will the Deputy Premier inform this House what stage the commercialisation of the State Government Insurance Commission and the State Government Insurance Office has reached?

Mr TAYLOR replied:

I thank the member for the question and I am pleased to be able to advise the House that as of today we agreed to a consortium headed by Ernst and Young and including Mallesons Stephen Jacques and Potter Warburg to do the work in relation to the review of the operations of the State Government Insurance Commission and the State Government Insurance Office. The review will form the basis for the corporatisation of the State Government Insurance Commission and State Government Insurance Office and I expect it will occur as early as July next year.

The Government advertised nationally for expressions of interest to undertake this work. I am pleased that the national advertisement for expressions of interest attracted 22 applicants of the highest calibre throughout Australia. The review to be undertaken by this consortium will start immediately and we have put it to them that we expect the review to be completed by 4 February next year.

The corporatisation process will establish the State Government Insurance Commission and State Government Insurance Office on what is undoubtedly a fully commercial basis. It will also provide greater management authority and autonomy and will give them strict accountability for performance involving comprehensive monitoring arrangements. Also it will provide greater competitive neutrality as far as these organisations are concerned.

In addition, I have made it clear that the CSA, the union representing the majority of the staff, and the staff of the two organisations will be kept fully informed of developments and be consulted as part of that review process. The work on these organisations forms the basis of the announcement made by the Premier five or six weeks ago relating to the corporatisation of a range of Government organisations. We are determined that these organisations will be run in a way which ensures that the taxpayers of Western Australia get the best out of them and that they are shown to be quite clearly at arm's length from the Minister while still accountable to the Parliament and the people of this State.

**GOVERNMENT INSTRUMENTALITIES - APPROPRIATION
(CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND) BILL**
Policies and Programs Debate

467. Mr MENSAROS to the Treasurer:

In view of the experience gained from the new style debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Revenue Fund) Bill which reinforced the fact that a large proportion of expenditure of public moneys by Government instrumentalities is not subject to vote or even debate by the Parliament, and in view of the Treasurer's repeated statements that the Government wants to be accountable, will the Government consider asking for a nominal \$1 appropriation for every Government instrumentality, for instance the SEC or the Water Authority, to enable Parliament to debate the affairs of all those instrumentalities?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

I understand that this point has been raised a number of times as a means of enabling those organisations to have their policies and programs debated. I am not opposed in principle to that and am happy to examine the question and determine whether that will be an appropriate course of action in the next Estimates.

HOUSING - JOINT VENTURE HOUSING PROGRAMS, ALBANY

468. Mr READ to the Minister for Housing:

Are any joint venture housing projects planned for Albany?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

The Government, through Homeswest, has recently commenced a joint venture project with St Joseph's Lodge for the construction of eight aged persons' units in Albany. The development is located at Munster Avenue and Aberdeen Street, Albany. The contract has been awarded to Occama Homes. The contract value is \$498 000, Homeswest's contribution being \$220 000 for the partial funding of four units.

Construction has commenced on the project and progress is on schedule. This eight month contract is due for completion in mid-May 1991. Since 1989, under the homes for seniors construction program, 709 units have been completed throughout the State of which 95 were joint venture projects. In addition, another 767 units have commenced construction, 65 of which are joint ventures.

MINERAL SANDS - MUNDIJONG PROJECT
Minister for the Environment's Disapproval - Premier's Action

469. Mr BRADSHAW to the Premier:

In view of the Premier's answer to question 776 on 25 October 1990, and the fact that the Minister for the Environment in answer to question 778 on Tuesday, 30 October 1990 stated, in part -

Their opposition is soundly based and I would be surprised if the project ever received environmental approval - it certainly will not while I am the Minister for the Environment.

what action does she propose taking about the continued stand of the Minister for the Environment, which makes a mockery of her statement that normal environmental assessment will take place?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

Not surprisingly after a two week adjournment, I do not have a copy of that question here. I apologise for that as the member did give it to me. The critical thing about this matter is that I have full confidence in the Minister for the Environment conducting his affairs in a fair and dispassionate manner.

There is no reason to believe, the heat of the moment aside, that he will do other than fairly assess that matter when it comes to him.

PROGRAM STATEMENTS - ELECTORAL COMMISSION ESTIMATES
Education and Promotion Subprogram Planned Achievement - Electoral Education
Resource Centre Establishment

470. Mr KOBELKE to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform:

What are the details behind the planned achievement in the Education and Promotion Subprogram of the Electoral Commission's Estimates, "Establishment of an electoral education resource centre"?

Dr GALLOP replied:

The idea of creating a centre dedicated to the promotion and understanding of our system of parliamentary democracy was welcomed by the Government as far back as September 1989. What was required was a way to fulfil the idea in an economical sense.

The two portfolios which are my responsibility bring together education and the electoral system and there is the same combination in the functions of the Electoral Commissioner who, under the Electoral Act, section 5F(d), "shall promote public awareness of electoral and Parliamentary matters by means of the conduct of education and information programs and by other means."

Mr Les Smith has taken a keen interest in this project and has brought together officers from Parliament and the Ministry of Education in search of progress. At this stage the plans are close to being realised. This has become possible because of a spirit of cooperation between the Mayor of Subiaco, the Principal of the Western Australian College of Advanced Education, the Ministry of Education and the Electoral Commission.

The Early Childhood Museum will be relocated from the old Subiaco Primary School to the WACAE Churchlands campus and that school will be made available by the ministry to the Electoral Commission for a peppercorn rental. This solution to the provision of a site close to Parliament will enable the Electoral Commission to undertake the establishment and operation of the centre. A similar centre in a school in Lyons, Canberra, is a huge success for education about the Federal electoral system. The Electoral Commission anticipates that the centre could be ready to accept its first visitors in 1991.

ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY - PREVIOUS TEN YEARS
Planning Matters

471. Mr COWAN to the Premier:

In answer to my previous question, the Premier indicated some planning matters may go back 10 years. Can she give a specific outline of those planning matters and relate any others matters that occurred before 1983 that she might require the Royal Commissioner to investigate?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

Unlike members opposite, I have actually made it my business to treat this matter seriously and fairly. I am not saying that the Leader of the National Party is not. There are allegations, as the member knows, about bribery and corruption on the Stirling City Council; there are planning matters that were addressed by that council at least one of which predates 1983. As I said previously to the Leader of the National Party, I do not intend going further than that because the knowledge I have does not extend much further than that. It seems to me to be critical not to close the gate on that and have the Royal Commissioner say, "I could only go so far."

Mr Cowan: Notwithstanding that planning matter, what other issues are there?

Dr LAWRENCE: There are a whole range of matters about which people have made allegations. The Government is not going to be shovelling material at the

commissioner and saying, "What about Bunbury Foods? What about the natural gas pipeline?" although those matters have been raised. There may be members of this Parliament or the community who have information turning on the question of whether there has been corruption, illegal conduct or some unusual decision making and this is the opportunity for them to raise those matters. I have also said that I do not see that 10 years as prescriptive. If the commissioner finds that the trail goes back into the 1970s it would be a foolish Government - and a foolish Opposition, I suggest - that would want to stop that. I am also aware of the fact we need to constrain the investigation in some way. I think the decision about how far events should be traced back should not be constrained by an artificially applied time limit.

I am aware of at least one matter which is the subject of one of the terms of reference, and that is the bribery and corruption allegations following the police investigation. One of those matters needs a time line which goes beyond 1983.

It is important to recognise, since people often quote my brother, whom I love dearly, that he and his organisation have from time to time alleged problems with decisions made when some members opposite were Ministers in a previous Government. I did not want to draw a time line which precluded an examination of that time, but the critical question for me was the question of the planning matter in relation to the Stirling City Council. Perhaps my brother has a submission to make on decisions made under Mr O'Connor's Government or Sir Charles Court's Government; I am not sure. The opportunity is provided for that examination to be made, because we are talking about a political process here.

Members opposite want to talk about the Government all the time. I can understand the motivation for that, but the people in the community want a broader investigation, and they want a reassurance that there are no members sitting in this House, admittedly now in the Opposition benches, who have done a few unusual things themselves.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCY ACT - AMENDMENT

Lease Renewal Letting Fee

472. Mr CATANIA to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

Does the Minister intend to amend the Residential Tenancies Act to allow for the charging of letting fees at each renewal of a lease?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

I thank the member for the question. I have had an approach to request a change to residential tenancy legislation to allow a letting fee to be charged at each renewal of a lease where the same landlord enters into a lease with the same tenant. My view is that there is no justification for charging a letting fee when a lease is renewed with the same tenant by the same landlord. I have advised the parties making those submissions to me that I shall not be amending the Residential Tenancies Act to allow that to happen. It would add an additional cost which would be passed on to the tenant in the form of rent, and it would be an additional cost for the small investor who might have a house or duplex to let.

AUDITOR GENERAL - OMBUDSMAN

Parliament Appointment

473. Mr MINSON to the Premier:

Does the Premier, in accordance with the discussion paper entitled "The Independence of the Auditor General and the Office of the Auditor General", intend to introduce legislation to ensure that the Auditor General, and by logical extension the Ombudsman, are appointed by the Parliament rather than by the Government?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

As I have said before, that report - and some of the recommendations which the Ombudsman has apparently made from time to time in his reports, but particularly the Auditor General - is the subject of careful consideration by the Government. In relation to the Auditor General, I shall be consulting the leaders of both Opposition parties on that question, but until we have had a good, hard look at it I am not sure which of those amendments it would be appropriate to put before the Parliament.

May I ask members to get their minds around to the way in which they might make a positive contribution? We have two Houses of Parliament, and in each House a different party's will prevails, although the Government is formed in this place.

Mr MacKinnon: I have already drafted a Bill; it is not very difficult.

Dr LAWRENCE: With some respect, if it is like some of the other Bills the Leader of the Opposition has drafted, perhaps he has not given it enough thought.

MUTTON - SURPLUS MARKET *Department of Trade Development Action*

474. Mr LEAHY to the Minister for Trade:

What steps, if any, has the Minister taken to have his Department of Trade Development open up new markets for the current large surplus of mutton and, if so, what has resulted?

Several members interjected.

Mr TAYLOR replied:

He was also at Exmouth the other night doing a very good job. He is a highly respected member in that area. He never stops working.

Several members interjected.

Mr TAYLOR: This is an important issue, as members of the National Party know. I am pleased to say that the Department of Trade Development is seeking additional markets in China, West Africa and Eastern Europe for the surplus mutton. Subject to price agreement, a sample 20 foot reefer of boneless mutton will leave next month for China for evaluation. A sample 20 foot reefer containing a range of frozen products, including mutton carcasses, boneless packs, beef forequarters, goat carcasses and frozen chickens which will arrive in Angola in early November. Subject to the quality of the meat on arrival, substantial orders are expected, mainly for the mutton carcasses. Officials from Angola have been to Western Australia to inspect our abattoirs and other facilities. The East European market for frozen mutton is currently being evaluated for price by the supply of quotes and specifications. It is good to see some work taking place in that area to find a market for our surplus mutton.

HOSPITALS - WARREN DISTRICT HOSPITAL *Redevelopment Plans*

475. — Mr OMODEI to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Will the Minister give an assurance to this Parliament and to the people of Manjimup that plans for the redevelopment of the Warren District Hospital will ensure the hospital will be of a similar capacity to the current hospital - that is, a 70-bed hospital - to the exclusion of any Commonwealth funded nursing hospital?

- (2) If not, why not?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) No.

- (2) It would be foolish indeed to ignore the implications of the development or potential development of a 30-bed nursing home in the community in planning for the future hospital needs of that community when it is clearly the case, as the member should know, that the current hospital accommodates a large number of nursing home-type patients who would be better and more appropriately accommodated in a modern nursing home facility.

TIMBER WORKERS - REDUCED WORKING HOURS
Social Security Benefit Applications

476. Dr TURNBULL to the Minister for Community Services:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that many timber workers placed on reduced working hours have applied to the Department of Social Security to receive the family income supplement or an increase in it?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that the written reply from the Department of Social Security is that they are not eligible as their income has not dropped by 25 per cent and their applications will be reviewed after Christmas?
- (3) What action will the Minister take with regard to the severe interpretation of the guidelines by the Department of Social Security?

The SPEAKER: Order! I suspect the Minister can answer that question if he so desires, but I am not absolutely convinced that this is an area of his responsibility. If the Minister desires to answer it, that is for him.

Mr D.L. SMITH replied:

(1)-(3)

It is not directly within my province, but the member for Collie will be aware that on learning of the decision by the timber companies to reduce the number of hours being worked by some timber workers, and to lay off others, as Minister for Community Services and as Minister for South-West I arranged for the Department for Community Services to second the financial counsellor from the Anglicare service at Collie to accompany a person from the Department of Social Security, a person from the Department for Community Services and a person from the South West Development Authority to each of the towns in the south west where there were affected timber workers. There they took statements and conducted interviews with the affected workers to see whether increased levels of family income supplements could be paid, because many of the timber workers are already on incomes on which they are entitled to family income supplements.

I am not aware of the response to the applications which were filled out on that trip. If the member for Collie is aware that some workers have received that advice, and if their incomes have not dropped by more than 25 per cent, I would be more than comfortable to make a personal approach to the Federal Minister for Social Security to see whether any discretion is available in these matters. If there is no discretion, of course, we will not be able to do anything.

I have given an assurance to the timber workers' union regarding the funds it is seeking to ensure that a Christmas parcel will be available to affected workers at Christmas. I shall be looking to make a Government contribution to this from the Department for Community Services emergency fund, or other funds at my disposal. I hope that this will be met equally by the companies and be supported by contributions from the unions and from community groups. In that way the affected timber workers' needs will be taken into account, especially at Christmas.
