

Legislative Council

Thursday, 22 August 1985

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

TOURISM COMMISSION

Efficiencies and Cost Savings: Ministerial Statement

HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Minister for Tourism) [2.31 p.m.]—by leave: The formation of the Western Australian Tourism Commission heralded a new era in the development of tourism in this State. It has been a major initiative of this Government in its efforts to provide impetus and priority to this vital industry. Tourism is a most important aspect of this State's economy and has the potential to develop into the third cornerstone for our economic development, along with mining and agriculture.

In establishing the Western Australian Tourism Commission, the Government has created an organisation which has autonomy, commercial flexibility, and relevancy to the tourism industry's needs, both now and in the future. It was stated from its inception that the commission would be able to function in a manner which the former Department of Tourism could not. Such management autonomy and flexibility has enabled the commission to implement management policies, procedures and systems which have led to greater utilisation of taxpayers' funds. Efficiencies have been affected via a wide range of management decisions, reflecting a commercial approach to the operations of the commission.

The savings, efficiencies and better trading results achieved over the past 18 months have been considerable.

Allow me now to detail some of the highlights—

- (a) A comprehensive review of the commission's agents accreditation policy was undertaken during the 1984-85 financial year. The cost of administering the programme which was developed in 1971-72 was some \$520 000. A decision to abolish the scheme from 1 August 1985 was undertaken after full consultation with the industry. The available resources from this initiative have been

redeployed and better utilised to achieve the overall aims and objectives of the commission.

Savings 1984-85: Nil

Full year cost savings 1985-86 (est): \$364 575

- (b) On 1 August 1985 the commission introduced new procedures to collect commission on accommodation bookings. Revenue received in 1984-85 from this source was \$158 000. Preliminary estimates are that the revised system will provide in excess of \$350 000 to the Consolidated Revenue Fund in 1985-86. Additionally administration costs will reduce by some \$25 000 mainly in the areas of postage, stationery and staff costs.

Savings 1984-85: Nil

Additional revenue earnings 1985-86 (est): \$142 000

Administration cost savings 1985-86 (est): \$25 000

- (c) During the period under review initiatives to maximise investment income were implemented and income from this source increased from \$34 400 for the six months ended 30 June 1984 to \$175 900 in the 1985-86 financial year.

Additional revenue earnings 1984-85: \$107 000

Estimate 1985-86: Not applicable

- (d) On 1 October 1984 the commission commenced live operation on the State tourism authorities reservation and information system. The system has streamlined client booking procedures, enhanced carrier free sale opportunities and information data collection. Reduced communication costs are one of the many benefits of the system. During the period under review telex and postage charges decreased by 11.64 per cent and 3.22 per cent respectively over actual expenditure in 1983-84. Full year cost savings in 1985-86 are expected to total in excess of \$50 000.

Savings 1984-85: \$8 700

Full year cost savings 1985-86 (est): \$50 000

- (e) The commission's Perth, south and north promotional brochures have been rationalised into an 80-page pub-

lication. This initiative has seen the unit cost reduce from \$1.40 to 81c per copy resulting in savings as detailed.

Savings 1984-85: \$59 000

Full year cost savings 1985-86: \$118 000

- (f) Brochure and display material distribution procedures have been rationalised resulting in a unit price reduction per kilo of 23c.

Savings 1984-85: \$13 000

Full year cost savings 1985-86: \$40 000

- (g) Arrangements were entered into to sublet part of the existing floorspace of the Holiday WA Centre, Adelaide. Savings from this initiative in 1984-85 totalled \$6 000; however, full year cost savings in 1985-86 will total \$66 000. Studies will continue to be undertaken on a regular basis to determine the viability of each retail sales outlet.

Savings 1984-85: \$6 000

Savings 1985-86: \$66 000

- (h) The commission's decision to introduce a charge for the sale of State maps and research publications is expected to raise \$15 000 during the 1985-86 financial year.

Additional revenue earnings 1984-85: \$5 000

Additional revenue earnings 1985-86 (est): \$15 000

- (i) The commission's television advertising activities were curtailed in October 1984 resulting in savings of some \$365 000. A market segmentation study of all Eastern States tourist markets commenced on 1 April 1985. Further television advertising will not be undertaken until reliable market research data is available.

Hon. N. F. Moore: Because you don't spend it does not mean you save it.

Hon. D. K. DAns: To continue—

Savings 1984-85: \$365 000

Savings 1985-86: Not applicable.

- (j) During the 1984-85 financial year, commissionable sales through the Adelaide, Sydney and Brisbane Holiday WA Centres increased 24.4 per cent, 21.73 per cent and 51.34 per cent respectively while Melbourne sales decreased by 2.6 per cent. Overall sales increased by 17.03 per cent from \$18.4 million to \$21.5 million. The result was achieved without in-

creasing staff resources and provided a substantial boost to revenue earnings which were up by 22.28 per cent or \$330 890 from \$1.350 million to \$1 650 890.

Additional revenue earnings for 1984-85: \$330 890

- (k) As a general policy the commission is pursuing co-operative advertising opportunities wherever possible to maximise its media expenditure and is charging commercial rates for the use of its transparency library.

- (l) All directors and managers have recently completed a rigorous budgeting process linked to the setting of specific measurable objectives. Further benefits to flow from this activity will be dependent on the commission's Budget allocation for the 1985-86 financial year.

The measures detailed have saved the commission some \$893 000 during the 1984-85 financial year. Preliminary estimates indicate a further \$820 000 will be saved in 1985-86 as a result of the commission's management approach in rationalising brochure production, negotiating attractive freight contracts, leasing surplus retail space, revised commission collection policies, abolishing the agents accreditation scheme and the like. These efforts will continue to ensure that the commission achieves and maintains a high level of operational efficiency.

HON. G. E. MASTERS (West—Leader of the Opposition) [2.42 p.m.]—by leave: The Minister for Tourism gave me this statement 20 minutes before the House began.

Hon. D. K. DAns: You should have had it long before that. I sent it up four hours ago.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I can assure the Minister that I received it after two o'clock.

Hon. D. K. DAns: I am sorry.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The Minister gave me an indication that he would be making a ministerial statement but I received a copy of it after two o'clock.

My point is that ministerial statements are made with certain objectives in mind. I think that the types of ministerial statements which have been made today and on previous occasions by Ministers have been a misuse of the time allowed for ministerial statements. I think we should look carefully at the making of ministerial statements to see that this privilege—and it is a privilege—is not abused. The

Standing Orders Committee should consider my statement today and consider also tightening the provisions allowing ministerial statements.

I am certainly not happy with the style of statement made today. It was almost a gimmick to boost the Government's standing and to use this opportunity for its own ends. It was not a true ministerial statement.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: What is your objection to it?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am objecting to the form in which the ministerial statement was made. The provisions allowing ministerial statements are not intended to allow for that sort of statement to be made. It is not good for a Minister to stand in this House, seek leave to make a ministerial statement, and to have that leave refused.

Hon. D. K. Dans: With all of the controversy about the commission, I thought I was doing the right thing.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I think the Standing Orders Committee should look carefully at the provisions allowing ministerial statements so that there is no misunderstanding on either side of the House what they are about.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FOURTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed from 21 August.

HON. W. N. STRETCH (Lower Central) [2.46 p.m.]: Firstly, I wish to add my congratulations to those of my colleagues to His Excellency, Professor Gordon Reid, and Mrs Reid for the considerable contribution they have already made to our community. Their friendly and most dignified manner has already endeared them to the people of Western Australia. I think the office of the Governor of Western Australia is being much enriched by the encumbency of His Excellency and Mrs Reid and for that I thank them on behalf of the people of my electorate. We all wish them well for a happy time in Government House.

In moving the Address-in-Reply, Hon. Jim Brown deserves some credit. I thought his tribute to Her Majesty the Queen Mother was quite delightful. I took it with some optimism that, as the Union Jack now features largely on all literature of the Australian Labor Party that is an indication that there really does beat a strong loyalist and royalist heart in the modern-day Western Australian socialist. It reinforces my belief that the Australian flag is deeply entrenched within the community of Western

Australia. It should continue to fly in its present form. I hope it will do this as a tribute to our forefathers. They came from many nations and united under it to build this great country of ours.

Our forefathers made many compromises and many sacrifices. Many of them made the supreme sacrifice of laying down their lives for their flag and their country. They did so in order that the families they left behind could continue to live in peace and safety in this land that they were working so hard to build. They built this great nation with the geographical, economic, and social elements against them. This country is a very big country and its population was sparse and scattered. At this stage, I will not go into all of the hardships that those people faced. They worked under the flag and forged our modern-day values and loyalties.

Today it concerns me that these values and loyalties are under threat. My colleague, Hon. Phillip Pandal, ably outlined many of the situations whereby Labor policies are blatantly aiding the destruction of those values, including the family unit. I think the community owes Hon. Phillip Pandal a debt of gratitude for raising this matter and I hope those responsible will take note of the inroads that have been made into the values of our community. For example, we seem to be giving some extraordinary grants to some extraordinary groups. We can look around our communities and see the neglect of many worthwhile causes, while many unworthy groups are being given higher priority by the Government.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: What are the unworthy causes?

Hon. N. F. Moore: The TLC's trip to the north.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: Hon. Fred McKenzie deserves great credit for his attempts to defend the Federal Budget. He is never short on courage. I hope that that is the most hopeless cause that he ever has to defend. I hope that the honourable member, being such a pleasant fellow and a fine colleague, is rewarded for his loyalty with a place in the Federal Treasurer's lifeboat as the ship of state slowly founders. The economic ship will most surely founder if Governments of all persuasions continue to ignore the exporting industries of Australia. That is exactly what this Budget has done. At this stage I will not go into great detail on the Budget, but I will certainly allude to it later.

I was delighted also to note that Hon. Fred McKenzie was a keen reader of *The Australian*. I hope that he is not just a selective reader. Had he also read page 2 of *The Australian* of 21 August 1985 he would have found the heading, "The fabulous Spc is just a vision in Mr Keating's rose-coloured spectacles." A person as acute as the Hon. Fred McKenzie would have noticed another headline on that day, which read: "Welcome to the national recovery . . . that is, unless you are a consumer."

Hon. Lyla Elliott: Did you say that Hon. Fred McKenzie was a cute person?

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: No, acute. He might be cute, but I have no personal evidence of that. On page 14 of that same issue of *The Australian* is another heading titled, "Disgruntled farmers are likely to feel betrayed." A cartoon depicts Mr Keating saying—

And marketing assistance for the meat industry—if we've still got one.

His words were directed to a picketer carrying a placard with the words "No contracts." If Hon. Fred McKenzie were a keen reader of *The Australian* I have no doubt he would not have missed an article in the 10 August 1985 issue which was headed, "Tough times for farmers." I hope also that he did not miss the article in the 8 June 1985 issue headed: "Money for jobless spent instead on the peace bus." The article outlines the expenditure of CEP money for the People for Nuclear Disarmament group to buy a bus at a cost of \$80 638 to help spread the peace message among communities and schools. The same group received a further \$16 036 for disarmament education.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: An excellent cause.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: I submit that preaching peace in Australia is rather a misguided cause.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: Are you opposing peace?

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: My colleague, Hon. Sandy Lewis, made a very apt rejoinder to Hon. Lyla Elliott when she invited us all to join a peace march through the streets of Perth. He said that when the marchers marched in Red Square he would march shoulder to shoulder with Hon. Lyla Elliott. When a peace bus is financed by Russian roubles and rolls around Red Square I will support its purchase, but at this stage expenditure on such a bus is a gross misuse of the hard-earned money of taxpayers. There is much more to be said about the

Budget and the articles in *The Australian*, but for the moment I turn to the theme of compromise.

People must make compromises and sacrifices, but are tiring of compromise. They respect sacrifice, but are now looking for strong leadership by Government. The time for compromise and consensus by leaders has passed. I felt ashamed when I read some articles and letters about the Federal Government's condemnation of the South African Government. I am totally incensed with the pious humbug spoken about this subject. What right have we to stride about the world stage making pious statements about how others should run their own countries? What right have we to do so in view of some of the problems in our own country? I think it is a pompous presumption to indulge in such exercises. Its purpose is quite clear. The Government wishes to divert attention from the problems in our own country. The Labor Government has proved itself quite incapable of addressing itself to those problems.

There is evidence elsewhere in the continent of Africa that if the South African Government had not taken the stand that it has taken there would have been unparalleled bloodshed in the southern part of that continent. I do not go along with all that South Africa does, but I contend that it is the business of the South African Government. I condemn the Foreign Minister—

Hon. Lyla Elliott: It is all right to shoot people and put them in prison, is it?

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: I said that I did not agree with everything that happens in South Africa. I do not agree with what happens in many other countries, but I am far more concerned about what happens in our own country.

Hon. S. M. Piantadosi interjected.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: I am glad to see that colleagues on the Government side of the House defend the sorts of intrusions made in the lives of South Africans, but I go a little further on the subject. Had it not been for the stand by the South African Government there is little doubt that the Russians would have moved in under the pretext or the cloak of some people's liberation movement and, as is its practice, would have systematically allowed the slaughter of different tribal and racial groups by each other. It has happened all over the continent of Africa. It has happened else-

where. It is happening now in Afghanistan. I regret that the Federal Government has chosen to indulge in such selective condemnation.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: You are out of step with your Federal parliamentary colleagues.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: If Hon. Lyla Elliott had listened she would have heard me say that I do not agree with many of the things that happen in many countries. Some rather interesting statements have been made by people in all political parties. I do not agree with many of the things that are said. I am not the first person in a political party to disagree with statements made by leaders of their parties.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: You should quote your own people as well as those from the Government.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: We have in the past. I am not attempting to upset Hon. Lyla Elliott. The question is often asked about why this matter should be brought up in the State Parliament of Western Australia. There is a very good geographical reason for bringing it up here and that is the fact that we are a trading nation. We border the Indian Ocean, which is rapidly becoming one of the most important spheres of defence in the world.

Soviet submarines are sighted four times a week off our coast.

I quote from *The Bulletin* of 21 August. It states—

If revolution came to South Africa; if the country became completely destabilised and chaos set in, it is odds on that the Russians would be the first in to restore some sort of order and "assist" any Marxist set up.

Russia then would have control of the Simonstown naval base and therefore the Cape of Good Hope. Already Russia, with bases round the Gulf of Aden has pretty fair oversight of the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. On top of this they have the use of the huge former American bases in Vietnam. All of which would almost completely isolate Australia from Europe.

So there is every justification for raising this matter in this House. It is of grave concern to an exporting nation. It is one of our major threats, and it ill behoves our foreign Minister and Federal Government to go about criticising people who are doing their best to overcome some very difficult situations in their own land.

Hon. Garry Kelly: You want to suppress the South African blacks.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: I wish we could suppress some other things, including the member who made his speech last night!

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon. Robert Hetherington): Order! I would be glad if the honourable member were allowed to proceed with his speech with a little less interruption.

Hon. D. K. Dans: I agree with that.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: I urge members of the Labor Party to make very sincere representations to the Government in Canberra and to their own spokesmen at all levels to stop this nonsense when they are advocating these bans, boycotts and other things which will be totally ineffective. They are hypocritical, and I hope if they persist in them they will make the same threats and accusations against the Russians for what is happening in Afghanistan, because the real reason behind the situation in Afghanistan is the establishment of another port on the Indian Ocean and gaining access to it. That would totally encircle our trade routes.

The importance of that, as I have tried to point out to this House many times, is that we are an exporting nation. We rely strongly on free shipping trade routes from our State, and anything which impinges upon that freedom of shipping impinges very seriously on the well-being of our exporters and therefore essentially on the well-being of the people in this State.

Hon. Mark Nevill: Why is there a Russian base in Mozambique?

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: I do not know.

Hon. Mark Nevill: What difference would it make if there were one in South Africa? Absolutely none.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: Here we have evidence of the ALP playing conciliatory games with international socialists—

Hon. Garry Kelly: That is rubbish.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: And all the time trying to weaken the American alliance.

Hon. D. K. Dans: It is about to or it has severed diplomatic ties with South Africa.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I would be glad if the honourable member on his feet were allowed to proceed.

Several members interjected.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: Turning to naval bases, the Leader of the House told us they do not rank very high in the thinking of many nations.

Hon. Mark Nevill: There is nothing at Simonstown.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: What is important is that we recognise and that the members of the Labor Party must recognise—

Several members interjected.

Hon. Mark Nevill:—that we are against apartheid—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! I would be glad if the honourable member were allowed to complete his sentence; I am anxious to hear what he has to say.

Hon. Mark Nevill: —black beaches, white beaches, black trains, white trains—

Several members interjected.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: I will attempt to finish that sentence.

Several members interjected.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: —and that our exports are the lifeblood of this nation. Anything that impinges upon that—

A Government member: That is a well-founded myth.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: —is a very serious threat to Western Australia's future.

Hon. D. K. Dans: It was invented by a British Colonial Secretary.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: We have to get our priorities right when we are forming Budgets. This Budget totally ignores the exporting industries of Australia, to Labor's eternal shame. Despite the attempt by Hon. Fred McKenzie to make the best of that appalling document, it is a total failure because the Budget itself is a false document.

Hon. Garry Kelly: It is a hasty judgment.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: This is a release I received this morning in which the President of the National Farmers Federation, Ian McLachlan, states that there has been a double-deal or sleight of hand. It reads—

"There's been a double deal sleight of hand—the Government took more in May's mini-budget than they've given farmers tonight," Mr McLachlan said.

The budget initiatives take into account items NFF has been seeking, but they're overshadowed by the other decisions.

The package gives farmers 2.4 cents per litre for diesel fuel used on farm, and replaces tariffs on imported harvesters with an equivalent bounty on local production from January 1.

"The package will reduce farm costs by \$25 million in 1985/86—about \$147 per farmer," Mr McLachlan said.

My son rang me to say it was great to have the fuel excise lowered, it will mean a saving of \$51.84 for the year for our farm.

Several members interjected.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: Hon. Garry Kelly interjected in a disorderly fashion.

Hon. Garry Kelly: Very orderly I think.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: There is talk here about devaluation. What a present to give any country! It is a very short-term bandaid approach.

Hon. Mark Nevill: You are against the floating of the dollar?

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: To look at devaluation as an answer to the economic ills of any country is to put one back into the mentality of Germany before the Second World War when they thought all they had to do was to print more money and that would get them out of trouble.

Several members interjected.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: I invite members to go through their history books with a degree of logic.

Several members interjected.

Hon. Garry Kelly: Devaluation proves nothing.

Hon. Mark Nevill: You are representing the farmers.

Hon. D. K. Dans: Misrepresenting them.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: When the Labor Party starts to criticise me for misrepresenting farmers it had better look at its own record.

Several members interjected.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: In the final analysis what really counts is the balance of payments. We should take a lot more notice of that.

Several members interjected.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: The dollar reaches the valuation which other nations put on us as an indication of our place in the international economies of the world. Where are we now? We are losing places every month. We are sinking very rapidly. There must be an end to it

somewhere, and the end might be a closer than members on the Government side of the House might think.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon. Robert Hetherington): Order! There has been far too much raucous interjection during the honourable member's speech. I would be glad if he is allowed at least to finish one paragraph without being interrupted. If the House is not careful I shall have to take some more serious action. There is too much noise.

Hon. D. K. Dans: Throw the speaker out.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Point of Order

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I thought I heard the Leader of the House say, "Throw the speaker out." I am not sure whether he was referring to you, Mr Deputy President, or to the speaker on his feet. I believe you are owed an apology because that sort of remark is not in the right spirit of debate in this House. I am sure you agree.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I heard what the honourable gentleman said and he was not referring to the Chair. He was, I think, suggesting that I take certain action. I do not need any advice from the honourable gentleman, even if he is the Leader of the House. I believe we can proceed now, hopefully with fewer interruptions.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: I return to where I was discussing our external accounts and I will refer again to page 2 of *The Australian* and quote further from the article headed "The fabulous 5 per cent is just a vision in Mr Keatings rose-coloured spectacles." I quote as follows—

Our external account is in tatters and the current-account deficit could be much higher than last year's \$11 000 million.

The interest bill on foreign debt alone is likely to exceed \$5 000 million this year and there is further requirement to repay some of the capital of past borrowings.

This implies huge foreign borrowings on top of the gross external debt . . .

It goes on to say—

That is equal to 33.1 per cent of GDP and compares with \$13.9 billion in 1979-80.

The next part is very important. To continue—

By 1990 Australia could have a debt of about \$100 billion and would have the same trouble covering its external account as Mexico and the worst of the Third World basket cases.

I do not think it is a subject which should be taken lightly or a subject which should be the cause of such scenes as we have witnessed. It is a cause for people to go back and do their homework and establish where we are heading with all this.

The Government of the country seems to have missed the parallel between running the country and running a family's finances. Certainly a family can go on operating wherever it can raise money, paying higher and higher interest rates, but sooner or later the day of reckoning comes; and Australia is rapidly approaching that day of reckoning.

For many decades our exports have been carrying the country, and if they are put under threat, there will simply be nothing left in the kitty to pay back those overseas debts. The cupboard will be bare.

I return to my original theme: It is grossly irresponsible to ignore those export earnings in the manner in which this latest Federal Budget has done. I know there are severe difficulties facing any Treasurer in balancing these priorities, but I urge this State Government to make absolutely sure that the bottom line of this Budget is carried through.

All members of the Parliament have a responsibility to make it quite clear, particularly to union leadership, that any failure to discount wages—an inherent part of Mr Keating's Budget—would send alarm bells ringing among the world's moneylenders. If there were to be no such discounting we would probably face a further devaluation, which would lead to further difficulties in repaying our international debts.

I have no wish, as I am sure no other member has a wish, to see the Australian standard of living fall dramatically because of the profligacy of any Government. We on this side certainly do not wish to see it happen, but our influence on the present Government in Canberra is regrettably small. Government members though have the opportunity, indeed a very grave responsibility, to make sure that these wrongs are redressed very quickly.

The Federal Government's spending has certainly been curtailed in Mr Keatings' Budget, and we all welcome this. It is not before time.

Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Curtailed or reduced?

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: Reduced—a pedantic point, but an important one.

If members look at this graph I am holding they will see illustrated the grave increases which have taken place. They will see the mountainous leap under the Whitlam and Hawke Governments and they will see how far we have to go back to get to responsible Government spending.

Hon. Mark Nevill: Is that the deficit or expenditure?

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: It is Government outlay as a percentage of gross domestic product. The deficit has come down, and we have nothing but praise for that small drop.

But I take members back to what I said a moment ago and to that important thing which Hon. Jim Brown and others must remember, which is that that is a projected deficit cut which is all dependent on the discounting of wages. In other words it calls for restraint by all Australians who are earning a wage packet in whatever form, by all those receiving benefits and all the other things that go to make our cost of living bearable. The discounting of wages will cause difficulties and call for certain sacrifices.

Hon. C. J. Bell: I understand the metal workers are not going to share the burden.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: We hope common-sense will prevail among the metal workers and all other unionists. I tend to disagree slightly with my colleague in that I believe the rank and file working men—and I count myself among them because I have worked as hard with my hands as most people in this House and I will compare blister for blister with them the amount of work I have done—have a very real understanding of the basic problems facing this country. Many of them are prepared to make those sacrifices.

I am extremely concerned that it is their union leadership which is tending to make the cause more difficult. I think the Prime Minister is aware of this problem. It is a real test of the mettle of the union movement and its leaders to grasp their responsibilities and make sure that this projected deficit becomes a reality.

Most of the economist commentators have described the figures on the projection of the projected deficit as extremely rubbery. We hope that the goodwill of all people will allow this projected deficit to become a firm figure. It is far more important that we do that than score political points.

The real measure of how successful this Budget is going to be is how well this discounting is accepted by all Australians. If we miss out on this opportunity we will be headed well down that trail to achieving living standards found in those countries at the bottom of the economic scale, those countries not only in our own area but those in the rest of the world. I do not believe Australia deserves to be there; our industries are better than that.

I believe the amount of help to be provided to the rural community from this last Budget is a very poor reward for the work those exporters are putting into keeping this country's economy afloat.

The other disturbing factor is that some economists indicate we are now rapidly approaching the \$100 billion deficit mark. This amount is reputedly hidden in loans which do not show up. If that is the case the argument for restraint becomes even more compulsive, and it is essential that we meet this challenge now and meet our responsibilities fully.

The other matter which is making recovery difficult is the continual festering of strife between worker and management. Most thinking people recognise that any successful industry is an intricate and interrelated team operation. There are no workers and no bosses when a job has to be done; they all have their part to play. This is the essential change in attitude which must take place in our community if we are to overcome our problems and achieve the potential which this country undoubtedly has. Until that is recognised our productivity cannot be raised, and if it is not raised prices will continue to escalate. We must increase productivity so that costs per unit can fall. Only then will our goods be competitive on the world markets. Only then will our dollar begin to revalue and rise to its rightful place on the scale of world currencies.

Then and only then will we be able to pay back some of these crippling overseas debts and claw ourselves away from the spectre of international bankruptcy. That may sound extreme to some members, particularly those who do not understand where our wealth is generated. The signs are unmistakeable for

those who care to heed them, and we ignore them at our State, national and international peril.

Hon. Kay Hallahan: What do you propose should be done?

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: I have many proposals. I do not believe it is the right of a parliamentarian to be totally negative. I have some constructive proposals to put forward if the member will be patient.

What was disappointing about the Budget, and I find it indefensible, is that the Treasurer spoke of the economic difficulties faced by many primary producers and then handed them an absolute pittance by way of assistance. For most farmers in my electorate the fuel excise reduction will be worth less than \$250 a year, which is about two drums of diesel. That will not get much work done. The much publicised header tariff reform is also worth mentioning. How many farmers struggling to get crops in to meet this year's costs will go out and order a new header because the tariff has been removed? It was an illusory aid; it was a cruel thing to give farmers given the fact that those most in need are in no position to take advantage of the so-called gift. All the headers have been organised for this year, anyway.

Hon. J. M. Brown: At last year's prices.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: Many of them at last year's prices; they have already been sold.

I do not think we can take great heart from this Budget. It has done nothing to assist the real causes of the rural depression. We are faced with a Government which simply does not understand the situation, and I call again on State members of Parliament to make it very plain to their colleagues in Canberra and at the grass roots of their party that the exporting industries are on their knees. They cannot take any more! Yet we see statements like that which appeared in *The Sun News Pictorial* on 1 May 1985. In that newspaper Senator Peter Cook was quoted as follows—

"The Labor Party is a high-taxing party. It needs to be to carry out its reforms." Senator Cook said.

"The question is how you levy that and who pays it."

Some reforms will just have to wait a long time until the country's economy has recovered through the efforts of its exporters to a stage at which we can indulge in some of these extraordinary reforms. Now we have to get on with the hard slog of earning export dollars.

The Victorian ALP Senator, Robert Ray, was also quoted in the same newspaper on 1 May 1985 as saying—

"I personally have always had a belief that the fairest form of taxes is death duties. However the likely revenue implication is something like \$200 million per year," Senator Ray said."

Death duties on a farm are merely a question of pruning down capital. Any person knows that that is a sure-fire way to disaster. If one is to maintain one's export potential he cannot pare away at the vitals of production. We must move away from that idea completely because it has no place in the export earning industries of our country.

Hon. J. M. Brown: I think John Kerin supports that.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: I hope he does.

In the *WA Government Notes* of August 1985 I came across a statement that the National Economic Planning Advisory Council had agreed to a call by Premier Burke for a study of the impact of fuel pricing policy and tariffs and other trade barriers. How many more studies do we need? Where was the Premier when the farmers were marching on Parliament House?

Hon. J. M. Brown: Fighting for them in Canberra.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: Fighting for them my foot! What have we got out of it—absolutely nothing. I said in this House before we are sick to death of studies. We know what the impact of fuel is on our operations. We know what the impact of tariff restrictions is; we do not need more studies. We need commonsense application of the basic principles of economics to help our exporters get going again.

What did the other great export earning partner, the mining industry, get out of this Budget? How did it fare?

Hon. J. M. Brown: Tremendously!

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: Tremendously my foot! I refer to an article in the *The Australian* which stated—

If excise on petrol, chemicals and other farm inputs are not remitted the farm sector will be in further strife. So will our great miners who won just about nothing from this Budget.

Mining and agriculture account for nearly three-quarters of our export earnings and yet they featured as bit players in this Budget. Not an encouraging outlook for the stricken balance of payments.

I hope Hon. Jim Brown got that message. What can and should be done? I believe this House is a place for ideas, and I am prepared to stick my neck out and put forward some suggestions which the Government should be looking at. I am referring not only to this Government, but to our own people when they get back into Government shortly.

I think we should be looking at some method whereby those who deal in a free market situation—that is, our overseas traders—are able to purchase on the overseas free market as well. I would not suggest that they should be able to do that on 100 per cent of the value of goods. Perhaps 75 per cent of the value of an exporter's income should be allowed to be spent, if one likes, on duty free shopping for imports into their industries.

Full tax exemptions for primary producers on diesel fuel must be allowed. I hope that the Treasurer and Minister for Budget Management will find some way of working that into the State Budget. I think there is an urgent need to exempt duty on fuel used for the transport of primary production, including mining. I think relief from the high cost of borrowed money which is so essential in a fluctuating industry such as agriculture is essential. Interest rates are the main killers for most farmers in trouble. They do not expect to have five very low income-earning years in a row. No-one budgets for that; they just hope it never happens. Unfortunately, sometimes, as the farming members of this Chamber know, hoping is not enough and one does get a run of bad years. The farmers' only hope then is to get reasonable low-interest finance. We cannot compete in the Australian marketplace for low-interest finance; it does not exist. However, overseas finance is available on good terms.

I believe that, as with the purchase of duty free imports into farming, there should also be some way whereby farmers can avail themselves of lower-interest overseas borrowings. I know there are difficulties involved in converting those borrowings back to the United States dollar and I know the difficulties presented by the Australian dollar and the repayments. However, I think those are matters

that any responsible and conscientious Government should be looking at in trying to overcome those problems.

There are many other items about which I could speak. However, I hope that the major ones will be dealt with in the State Budget and there will be real and meaningful relief for the seriously over-stepped agricultural industries. I hope that some of the clever people working for the Government and for the Opposition will be able to come up with some worthwhile long-term solutions to some of these problems. I stress that the availability of long-term loans will be the ultimate salvation of our export industries because we do not farm for one year or five years. It is a lifetime occupation and, in many cases, those industries have been built up over more than one lifetime. It will take many decades to straighten out the affairs of many farms after such a disastrous run.

Hon. J. M. Brown: You had a great year last year.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: But look at this year. I presume that Hon. Jim Brown has looked at the overseas projections for grain on the world market.

Hon. J. M. Brown: Did you have a look at the minimum price for wheat?

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: I did. What scares the hell out of me is the amount of food stock in the United States after its season.

Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You would not grow all that much wheat.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: We grow very little wheat.

Another matter that concerns me is moves by the Government into the growing of pine in the bottom half of my electorate. It seems to be a little like the driver of a train deciding that he does not need the engine any longer and that he will do all the work himself. We cannot quite get the role of the Government straightened out on this matter. If I take the parallel a little further, the role of Government should be like laying a railway line. One lays the tracks and maintains the line but one does not try to replace the engine of the train and pull the carriages oneself. It is another way of pointing out the dangers of trying to be all things to all men. The result is that Government bodies such as the Western Australian Development Corporation and the Exim Corporation have been set up and that such conferences as the tax summit are held. However, someone forgets to grease

the train wheels and they all fall off. I do not want this to happen in my electorate with this agro-forestry scheme.

I have been in New Zealand having a look at the overall prospects for softwoods. It concerns me that New Zealand is a major exporter of pine. It exports enormous tonnages and members might be surprised to know that its fastest growing market is Australia. Another concern is that its timber output is likely to double by the end of this decade and double again early in the next century. I am worried because that is about the time that Western Australia will begin harvesting softwoods from my electorate and from other electorates close by. I hope the Government has done its homework on those forests which it is trying to induce my constituents to plant. I would hate to see their descendants, in the twenty-first century, having nowhere to export their timber and timber from other countries flooding the Australian market. It would be then impossible to compete, even on our home market.

Chile, on the other side of the Pacific, is planting more timber even than New Zealand. I think members can see that we are in for what one of the New Zealand millers described as "an aggressive market situation". I hope the Government has done its homework. I brought back much information and have given that information to the people who are working on the scheme for the Government. I believe it is too important a matter for my constituents to be playing politics over it. I will do all in my power to make this scheme work.

I urge the Government to listen carefully to the matters that I have raised and ask it to do its homework. Agro-forestry is a very complicated industry. It has many facets and there are many benefits to those participating in it. It also has many possible benefits to the economy. However, the Government must establish how it will dispose of the timber when it is harvested. It is no use growing something and hoping for something to happen. That is a great difficulty with the timber industry. The Government failed to address these matters in relation to the Shannon Basin. It forgot that it was dealing with an industry that has a harvesting time span of approximately 120 years. It is ignorant of the fact that the decisions made today will affect our great grandchildren. Five years lost in planting now could leave a large gap in future timber supplies 100 or more years in the future.

The situation is not quite so bad as far as pine is concerned because with pine one is working on a shorter time span. Many farmers are planting pine today and hopefully they will live to benefit from their efforts. It is not something to be gone into lightly and it is not something that should be gone into on a political basis. The reason I drew the parallel of the driver of a train is that one has to make business decisions along business lines and political decisions along political lines. As far as the timber industry is concerned it has been shown that the political decisions made have been disastrous. The same thing applies when political decisions are made about businesses, such as the Western Australian Development Corporation, on a political basis.

Hon. Kay Hallahan: There is nothing wrong with the WADC.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: I hope Hon. Kay Hallahan will not live to regret those words or the use of \$10 million of taxpayers' money.

My colleague, Hon. A. A. Lewis, has undertaken considerable studies into the timber industry and no doubt he will enlarge on those studies in his speech. However, I believe there is room for much more homework to be done on this matter. I know the Government is working on it, but there is a great deal involved such as the question of land tenure and the right to transfer plantations as they are established without interfering with the whole tenure of the farm. The executive director believes there are no difficulties, but I can assure him that there are considerable difficulties.

I note that the Government will introduce legislation this session to make changes to land tenure. I hope that it has left the door open to include changes to tenure that will incorporate changes to agro-forestry and also farming. New Zealand found that changes to its industry could not work without land tenure and I have every reason to believe that they will not work in Australia.

Finally, I urge members of this House to make a very strong representation to the Premier and Treasurer to give consideration to the rural industry in the forthcoming Budget because the situation in that industry is extremely desperate.

The National Farmers Federation's resume of the Federal Government's Budget points out that that Budget does not consider all the problems being confronted by farmers. If the Federal Government is not in a position to assist the

farming industry the State Government will have to show leadership and do something about it.

One of the most serious problems involves the anti-dumping duty with regard to di-ammonium phosphate fertiliser. If the Federal Government adheres to its recent decision it will cost farmers \$26 million. Members must bear in mind that the major impact of that cost will be on Western Australian farmers. I urge this Government to look seriously at this matter. I know the Government will not be able to interfere with the Federal Government in regard to this matter, but I hope that the Premier and Treasurer will recognise the difficulty being faced by farmers in Western Australia and that this concern will be reflected in the State Budget.

If the Premier walks away from his responsibilities as Treasurer he will sadly go down in history, and this Labor Government will go down with him, as a "media Premier", and a "dirigible Premier".

Most shameful of all this Government will go down in history as the negligent Government which, together with the Treasurer, scuttled the primary industries of Western Australia. The Treasurer is a modern-day Nero who fiddled while Rome burned.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.00 p.m.

[Questions taken.]

HON. KAY HALLAHAN (South-East Metropolitan) [4.14 p.m.]: I support the motion and commend His Excellency the Governor on his speech and the service he has rendered to the people of our State. I also make particular reference to the warm and friendly approach of His Excellency's wife, Mrs Reid. We are lucky indeed to have a woman with such obvious ability and practicality also serving our people.

I would, at the outset of my comments, make short reference to some of the matters referred to in the previous speeches. I make it clear to members present that at the Constitutional Convention in Brisbane there was no evidence or suggestion that our Premier, Brian Burke, was humiliated in any degree. He did make a significant contribution to that convention and his comments did stimulate debate. He acted in a very responsible manner and members of the Government delegation were very proud indeed to have his leadership and there was no ignominious reflection on any of us or the Government of this State.

Hon. P. G. Pental: That is not what some of your colleagues from the Eastern States said.

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN: The comments from Hon. P. G. Pental can be measured against his performance at the Constitutional Convention. He voted against the democratic practices motion and against giving greater autonomy to local government. His performance was abysmal so we do not need to take too much notice of what he says.

Hon. P. G. Pental: Coming from you, that is a compliment.

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN: I will try to do better next time.

Another point I wish to make reference to—and funnily enough it comes from the same member—is his reference to Government charges. I am quite astonished at the attitude of the Opposition. We do have a Government which is providing the soundest economic management we could hope for in the circumstances that we inherited in this State. The Opposition is running around trying to gen up the high charges business. It tried, but was unsuccessful. The media has not picked it up. They examined the Opposition's case and found it wanting.

Hon. P. G. Pental: I get people ringing me every day saying, "What about this codswallop from the Government."

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN: I make it quite clear that there will be no increase in six major State Government charges in 1985-86. The charges in nearly all other cases will be significantly less than the projected inflation rate. That is a fact that the people of this State appreciate; and the sooner the Opposition learns to acknowledge the facts of life the better they will be.

Hon. P. G. Pental: Why have receipts gone up 42 per cent?

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN: There is no evidence of that. The charges are well below the projected inflation rate.

Hon. Graham Edwards: It is the growth in the economy.

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN: I wish to speak about a matter in which there has been enormous achievement and improvement. I would have thought that responsible members in both houses would be pleased to hear of the very marked improvement in the unemployment figures in this State. It would be very bizarre and irresponsible if members of the Opposition had something negative to say about that. The improvement has been quite outstanding and has met all the projections and promises this

Government made when it came into office. I commend the Government and also the Minister for Employment and Training.

In this community there has been a great deal of hope engendered in people who are facing a pretty hopeless and depressing situation. Western Australia has the second lowest level of unemployment in Australia and is bettered only by Victoria. Some would argue that Victoria started off with a lower level of unemployment than Western Australia but our achievement here has been that much more significant. We have seen a very creditable job and a good performance by the Burke Government across all sectors of the community. I bring to the attention of Hon. Bill Stretch that we have a Government which is providing sound economic management for every sector of the community, and that includes the sector which the member represents in a fairly narrow way.

This improvement has taken place within the stabilising context of the accord and the improving economic situation. We are well aware that the Federal Government has engendered the accord and brought about the economic situation which made possible the improvements we have been able to make in this State. There is a great deal of evidence of this. In fact people are coming from other States to see what our employment schemes are, and to look at why they are so successful. I can tell members that it is only a short time since we were making trips east to see what the Governments there were doing. Our learning has been very rapid, and its implementation has been very fast indeed. We now have a State which is recognised as being a very good employment generator and a good job creator. The figures speak for that.

The unemployment rate was 7.7 per cent at the end of July, and from the end of June the figure of 8.2 per cent was very good. When we look at July 1984, 12 months before, the rate was 9.5 per cent. If we look again at the figures in mid-1983 when this Government inherited an abysmally managed economy, we were looking at a 10.7 per cent unemployment rate. In that short time of two years the percentage has dropped three per cent. That is a very satisfactory situation. It means that there are 49 000 more jobs in Western Australia now than in February 1983.

There are 4 200 fewer unemployed people now than there were a month ago and 10 800 fewer unemployed people than there were a year ago, and that improvement is good.

Hon. W. N. Stretch: Do you have a breakdown of how many were in the public and private sectors?

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN: I do not have those figures here, but I am sure the member could find them if he wanted them. The underlying strength of the State's economy is clearly reflected by those figures.

I make the point that since we came to Government 49 000 more jobs have been created. Admittedly, we are all very concerned about the very high level of teenage unemployment. Again that is an area in which a significant breakthrough has occurred in the 15 to 19-year old age group. The figures are very interesting for the end of June. In the 15 to 19 year age group there was a fall of 4.1 per cent in the number of people looking for full-time employment. At the same time at national level there was an increase of 4.6 per cent in the number of young people looking for employment. Our performance in Western Australia has bettered the national performance by 8.7 per cent in the 15 to 19 year age group. We all think that is a fairly significant breakthrough and that something very particular is going on in WA when our figures are so markedly different from those at national level.

I would like to refer to particular schemes to give members an idea of what is going on in our State and why we can be proud of that performance. The focus, of course, this year has been on the Skills West '85 programme which was a Budget initiative of last year. We are now starting to see the effects of that programme reflected in the monthly figures.

Some particular things characterise our employment programme in W.A. One is the very comprehensive range of employment programmes available. Every step has been taken to complement the initiatives taken by the Federal Government. Some comments have been made by a member of this House—I will refer to them later—to the effect that he thought that was not the case, but he is quite obviously misinformed. The comprehensive nature of our programmes and the way they complement Federal programmes is commendable.

In addition, in this State we have been working very hard to ensure the community is involved in the whole employment creation exercise. The involvement of the local community, as we all know, is a very sure way of dispensing knowledge and skills throughout the community and reaching the greatest number of people as quickly as possible. When we deal

with people who feel depressed and no longer needed, we obviously need a very wide network of people in the community assisting and doing what they can. It is not a very suitable model to have a hierarchical feeding schemes to people who are feeling in no way able to take them up. This has been a very successful way of operating.

The other way is to stimulate community involvement by using advisory committees. In fact, I had the good fortune to chair one of them in regard to the Job Link programme. That committee comprised representatives of the business community, the TLC, community groups and Federal and State Government bodies which were involved in employment schemes. Their involvement was to avoid any overlapping or confusion about the schemes. I pay tribute to those people who served on the various advisory committees involved with the various schemes because in their way they have taken the message out to their constituent groups and have added to the community's knowledge of what we can do about unemployment and the role they can play.

The other excellent initiative which has paid off was the appointment of employment development officers. These officers have been particularly active in the community in getting onto any group that might have a potential to create jobs and to reach groups which have never seen themselves as employment creators.

I suppose members would appreciate that it takes time to get these concepts off the ground because in the past we have not been faced with this problem. However, we need to say, "Unemployment is a community problem. What are we all going to do about it?" We have seen this enormous mobilisation of the Western Australian community. The service clubs have done marvellous work in supporting various health and other community benefit-type projects, but this is the first time they have actually been drawn in to help create jobs within their local area and it seems that it is paying off. The evidence is there.

I again refer to the Minister for Employment and Training. Under the responsibilities of that portfolio a very creative, able, and energetic team in the Department of Employment and Training has been drawn together by the executive director. The executive director has provided sound administration and leadership abilities to a staff which I think has been asked to address one of our most serious social problems. I think some of the staff probably feel it was a pretty daunting task to be

confronted with, especially in a community which was not used to the role that it was to be asked to play.

I pay tribute to all those people who took on that commitment. They have done very well indeed. Unemployment is not only a serious social problem, but, as members will realise, it is a serious political problem. In fact, it is probably our most serious political problem.

The other scheme which categorises Western Australian programmes is the Community Employment Initiatives Unit or the CEIU. Members will see those initials around in the community as the good work continues and they will become a byword to enable people to get onto their feet again. It is a particularly cohesive unit in this State, and it forms an umbrella for the employment programme.

In other States some employment programmes are operating in isolation from other programmes. We all know this is not the most effective way to go about it. In this State we are avoiding those problems with an array of programmes, and the linking up between the staff delivering them is quite impressive.

We all agree that unemployment is probably the greatest stress creator in our community. There is evidence of high suicide levels and breakdowns of marriages. Those who do not experience these extremes certainly experience lowered self-esteem and feelings of rejection. It seems that not being able to participate and contribute in one's own community is akin to a sentence of being locked out of all the positive and contributing things that we all take for granted. I understand people who experience redundancy have similar feelings.

I now quickly refer to some of the schemes that have led to this improved situation. I have pamphlets here and I would like these facts recorded in *Hansard*. This is a very good year for job creation in this State and that fact should be recognised. Skills West '85 was the umbrella initiative of the last Budget and under that scheme were two components of Job Link which I chaired, and the Job Placement and Training Scheme. The Job Link scheme has funded 41 projects which are spread across the width and breadth of this State. It has been one of the spin-offs of employment development officers moving around the whole State. Some members here would be very pleased indeed to know that rural and remote regional communities have not been neglected.

Hon. A. A. Lewis: Members of Parliament's participation should be greater.

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN: Indeed. I would be very pleased indeed to see increased participation by members of Parliament. Their participation so far has been very encouraging and has been quite significant in regard to the success of some of the schemes. I would ask all members to seriously look at their participation in employment schemes because it will certainly earn them the gratitude of the community in which they live. They can assist job creation and relieve family and individual stress as well as enriching the community in which we live and the productivity of their areas. Employment creation is very constructive and in every way we, as members of Parliament, look at it, it is very rewarding.

The number of participants that we estimate will go through the Job Link programme will be between 13 700 and 15 400. If we look at all the projects that have been financed, exclude the two research projects, and break that figure down, the total weeks funded were 1 918. As at 31 July there had been 283 operational weeks and the actual participation by that date was 2 205. Our projection was for 1 953 so the Job Link programmes are running in front of our projected figures. That is a very satisfying situation. In fact, out of those who have participated—it is a low number really because the number of weeks funded are still low—36.4 per cent have been placed and either gone into employment, or into training, or into some form of further education. The interesting thing is that the funding for each of those positions amounts to only \$356 per position. That would be the cheapest employment creation that one could hope to find.

Again, I think that comes back to the initiative of the staff and the Minister in that portfolio. They really have worked excessively hard and have been committed to the job that they are doing.

I wish to refer to other groups which have played a very significant role. In this regard I pay particular attention, with regard to Job Link, to those who have been of enormous support, including the Rotary Clubs and the ethnic communities and a whole range of welfare and civic-minded people in addition to the rural and regional communities. In fact, the focus of Job Link was to help the most disadvantaged link up with jobs and make it possible for them to move into a job from the situation where they were isolated and without the skills and networks to feed them into jobs. Some of those groups have immediate networks to facilitate that.

If we look at the most disadvantaged groups in the labour market, including the young, women, ethnic minorities, the disabled, ex-offenders, mature aged, those in rural areas and those in remote regional areas, we find Job Link catered for all of those groups. The focus, certainly, was on youth. However, all other groups were accommodated within that programme.

Job placement and training has a different focus. That was to actually create jobs and to get young people into the work force with a subsidy as a training allowance to the employer with an undertaking that, at the end of that period, the young person was to continue in the position. That has received enormous co-operation and participation by businesses of this State. I commend them for their willingness to create an extra position. Some companies created 25 extra positions to give young people a go and to get them out of their depressing situations and received a start in life.

Other initiatives are still to come out of the Department of Employment and Training this year. I refer members to the International Conference on Employment and Training to be held in Perth on 23 to 27 September. The speakers coming from overseas are really outstanding.

Hon. G. E. Masters: The Prime Minister is opening it, is he not?

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN: The Prime Minister is opening it. All the speakers coming for the conference have an expertise and a wide range of experience in this field. I think members should look at their diaries and make sure that they can attend this conference to hear these speakers in their own State. For once they will not have to travel abroad to hear speakers of this calibre.

Another thing that will happen which will bring employment-career advice to a whole range of our communities is the Careers Expo which will be held from 22 to 26 October. That conference will have a wide range of interests for the community. It will be held at the Entertainment Centre and will provide access to information and opportunities for employment and training to many people.

Another scheme is the Live Wire scheme whereby people will be encouraged to develop any feasible business ideas that they may have. They will be given help to bring those ideas to fruition. I think that is important because about 85 per cent of the owners of small businesses which go broke have no training

whatever. Many people in our community have good ideas but need a bit of coaching along the way.

I refer next not to an employment programme but to the Westrek programme. I was disturbed to see a transcript from an interview on the Australian Broadcasting Commission on 16 August in which Hon. Peter Wells was quoted as saying that, in one case, a young person placed in a position on a Federal Government-subsidised wage had lost her job because the employer could get a better subsidy for another person under the State Government's Westrek scheme. That is absolutely misleading because the Westrek scheme was set up to allow young people to participate in a community project with a team. Nobody is placed with individual employers under the Westrek scheme. I hope other members are not so confused as to also have that notion in their heads. It is a matter of great regret that no corrective statement was broadcast by the ABC, as I understand it. I think that sort of statement muddies the waters and confuses people about what is employment and what is training and life experience. The Westrek scheme is a remarkable scheme and one which we will look back on in future years and see as a great success.

I wish now to refer to a couple of other schemes because I think they demand that attention. Under the Community Employment and Initiatives Unit there is a programme called Co-Action. That is a scheme whereby projects are initiated, designed, and developed by unemployed individuals for groups and are based solely on the interests of the unemployed. There must be some benefit to the community, and it enables the unemployed person to develop skills and gain experience. It enables them to be linked with the wider community and gives them an opportunity to test their interests.

Those on the scheme remain on unemployment benefits but will be given small grants for the purpose of purchasing essential equipment so that they can try out ideas. The spin-off, of course, is that their skills improve and they link up with the mainstream work force. That scheme has a lot to commend it and is doing some remarkable work. Again, it fits any area of the State and is working in a great range of areas.

Another scheme that was recently announced was the New Enterprise Programme whereby the people involved come off unemployment benefits and go on to an Enterprise allowance. They are given training and many of them will

go on to establish their own businesses and be taken off allowances and benefits permanently. They will make what they think is a good and productive contribution to the community.

I wish to make the point in closing that, since we came to Government, we have created 49 000 jobs and unemployment has reduced by three per cent.

Hon. P. G. Pental: Charges are up by 42 per cent.

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN: The member does not want to recognise the positive and productive figures. I suggest he is out of step with the rest of the community's feelings on those issues.

If the honourable member continues to make remarkable assertions about figures which nobody believes, he will have great trouble in gaining credibility because all Government charges are below the inflation rate. With sound economic management by this Government in its next term of office Western Australia will have a very good future.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon. G. C. MacKinnon.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [4.41 p.m.]: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Builders Labourers Federation: Mr Binstead

HON. G. E. MASTERS (West—Leader of the Opposition) [4.42 p.m.]: I do not think the House should adjourn before I make a few remarks about a matter that is of great importance to the community. Over recent weeks we have seen the spectacle of the State Government, through a Minister of the Crown, Mr McIver, bow to the pressure of militant union leaders in an area that is of great importance. I refer to the Binstead affair. Mr Binstead is a member of the Builders Labourers Federation. He has quite a dreadful reputation within the community.

The decision of Mr McIver to undermine the authority of his foremen and supervisors on Government projects is quite scandalous. It demonstrates clearly the weakness of the Government. More particularly, it demonstrates who is in charge of this Government and who is giving the directions. That is evidenced by a Minister of the Crown backing away under pressure from certain union

leaders. Under such pressure he has said that the Government will continue to employ a person who is guilty of gross misconduct and is totally undermining Government worksites and the authority of Government officers.

Mr McIver ordered that Mr Binstead go to a site other than the one on which the trouble began, on a month's trial. The foreman and supervisors were rightly incensed and refused to work under those sorts of conditions and those arrangements. I think there was a strike for some time and more strikes were threatened. At the time of the dispute Mr McIver addressed a group of foremen and supervisors and said that anyone who leaked the details of the meeting to the Liberal Party would "Do their jobs".

As the BMA foreman and supervisors will not have a bar of Mr Binstead, who was guilty of being drunk on the site and of using the most foul language to foremen and supervisors, he is being paid by courier. As I understand it he is at present taking 1½ weeks' leave because concrete pours are taking place on the site and no interruption is wanted. Therefore, Mr Binstead has gone off for 1½ weeks. I am also led to understand that he is receiving some sort of *ex gratia* payment while he is away. If this is the case it demonstrates clearly to the public just what is happening and what this Government is about.

When leading hands and foremen had a meeting quite recently on the site, the BLF showed up in strong numbers and, to use the description given to me by one of those foremen on the site, they were big men wearing hard hats with hammers hanging from their belts. It was decided by the foremen and supervisors that they would cancel their meeting. They had a secret meeting that was arranged with the foreman and leading hands on an adjacent site.

I make the point that this sort of thing goes on all the time. More particularly, a Minister of the Crown has supported that person who has a very bad reputation in the building industry. The Government condones this sort of behaviour to the extent where foremen and supervisors who have a responsibility to maintain discipline in the workplace have to meet secretly and are threatened with being sacked if they leak details of meetings to the Liberal Party. Through all this the Government, and more particularly the Minister, Mr McIver, condones what is going on and allows those sorts of people to control the workplace—nothing more, nothing less.

It is a matter of public importance that these matters be raised in this adjournment debate. They should be thoroughly debated in the future. In the meantime, let the public be warned of what is happening. Let the Press and media be aware that Mr Binstead is still operating and that the Government is refusing to come to grips with the problem.

Police: Blue Light Discos

HON. TOM KNIGHT (South) [4.45 p.m.]: I do not believe the House should adjourn until I bring forward a matter of extreme urgency and importance to the whole of Western Australia, particularly the young people of Western Australia. The blue light disco in Albany was started some 12 months ago by the local police. At a recent function some 1 200 young people were present. Since then the public health section of the Health Department has indicated that the disco is not to continue, even though it has been acclaimed the length and breadth of Western Australia and police in other parts of Western Australia have started up similar functions. The Health Department's decision with the Albany disco could prejudice blue light discos throughout Western Australia.

According to the police involved, the attitude of young people has changed after mixing with police and being part of an entertainment organised by them. There has been a remarkable change in their attitude to the police. I believe the blue light disco is one of the best things to have happened for a long time. The organisers can take credit for bringing young people closer to the law and giving them a chance to understand it. However, the disco in Albany has been told it will not be able to open on the 30th of this month. Although tickets for the disco have already been sold, the public health section has said that it cannot go ahead because it requires one square metre for every person. The Albany Centennial Hall comprises some 600 square metres. The police have indicated that during most of the two hours the young people attend the disco they crowd around the disc jockey and two-thirds of the hall is left empty.

The Fire Brigade has stated that it believes the hall is completely and utterly safe for at least 1 000 people and perhaps more. The town council has no criticism of the facility and the police have also indicated that in the two hours the young people attend the function they are deeply involved in entertainment. It is very rare to see any of them using the toilets, but the public health regulations stipulate that there

should be one toilet to every 100 people. That limits the allowable crowd at the Albany hall to 500. That fails to take into account the fact that not all the patrons are females. As there is one male toilet to four female toilets, 400 females should be allowed in the hall. However, it has been indicated that there should be another porta-potty outside to cater for a crowd of 600.

I approached the Minister over the weekend and he very justly indicated that the conditions were laid down under the public health regulations and he could not change them or give permission for the disco to carry on. In all fairness to the Minister he was very helpful and explained things to me as best he could. I have since taken further advice to the effect that the Minister, if he so wishes, can introduce regulations to allow whatever he will to happen. Those regulations then have to come before this House for 15 days at which time he could then impose the regulations. The town council has requested that the disco be allowed to open on another night to allow its health inspector and a Health Department inspector to gauge the situation. The Fire Brigade fully supports the situation. Twelve to 13 police officers and their wives attend each of these functions and supervise the young people. The situation is such that it is different from anything that may be happening in other parts of the State. Much care is taken and the Fire Brigade's senior officer in Albany said that at the conclusion of functions he has attended the hall has emptied in less than two minutes. Members will appreciate that as soon as the music is finished the kids just stream out.

There are double doors on two sides of the hall in three different places. There is another exit through an entry portal and another double door exit through a tearoom area. I believe that in the interests of what has been achieved and to back up the police of this State in supporting young people the Minister next week should introduce a regulation allowing blue light discos to continue, in view of the fact that he

cannot give his approval for them to carry on when to do so would be against the public health regulations.

A regulation along those lines could be introduced. I am asking that the information be passed on to the Minister, because all members, regardless of political support, must be aware of the work being done in the blue light discos in Western Australia and the advantages they afford to the police and the young people. I am sure members will support me in any way they can to enable the disco to be held next Friday, 30 August; to give hope to the young people of Albany; to allow the situation to be properly gauged; and to view the situation and see that it is not like a nightclub or like some of the places around the world where there have been terrible accidents as a result of overcrowding.

The health regulations will not allow this situation to continue; and the council's hands are tied because it is obliged to enforce those regulations. Someone must make a move, which is why I raised the matter tonight on the adjournment. The problem is not peculiar to Albany but affects all the people of this State. When young people attend a blue light disco, parents know they are being looked after by the police—the law enforcement officers of our community. The fact that the kids are going to appreciate those officers will assist the officers in their work of law enforcement, and it will encourage a friendly attitude by the kids to the police in this State.

The police have asked me to do everything possible to make their case known, and to have a departmental officer attend on 30 August to prove beyond doubt that the situation is safe. It should not be a deterrent for the blue light discos in Albany; nor, hopefully, for others throughout the State, all of which have been very successful.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.52 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

CRIME: MICKELBERG CASE

Fingerprints

7. Hon. P. H. LOCKYER, to the Attorney General:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that Raymond Mickelberg's fingerprints were on fingerprint files from 1976?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that the Mickelbergs presented all of their affidavits to the Premier in October 1984?
- (3) Is the Minister aware that the Mickelbergs were promised copies of the reports collected by the Solicitor General regarding the fingerprint?
- (4) Is the Minister aware that the Mickelbergs have not been allowed copies of the reports used in the Minister's statement which declared the print to be genuine?
- (5) Is the Minister aware that one of the Mickelberg's fingerprint consultants, a Mr Reginald King, totally reiterates his opinion in relation to his affidavit which was handed to the Premier in October 1984?
- (6) Is the Minister aware that some seven to 10 days before he made his ministerial statement, declaring the fingerprint genuine, his office received a supplementary report from Mr Reginald King stating that he did not alter his original opinion regarding the issue of the fingerprint?
- (7) Is the Minister aware that out of the four experts consulted by the Mickelbergs, three of them maintain their original opinions regarding the fingerprint?
- (8) Is the Minister aware that the fourth consultant states that he cannot state whether the fingerprint is genuine or not?
- (9) Is the Minister aware that not one of the Mickelberg experts has stated that the fingerprint is genuine?
- (10) Is the Minister aware that a Dr Hilton Kobus has never stated to the Mickelbergs that the fingerprint is genuine?
- (11) Is the Minister aware that Dr Kobus is not a fingerprint expert?

- (12) Is the Minister aware that Dr Kobus' immediate superior has stated that Dr Kobus is not a fingerprint identification expert?
- (13) Is the Minister aware that the Solicitor General's investigator provided all the overseas experts with a negative of the fingerprint designated No. 16?
- (14) If so, is the Minister aware that this negative, No. 16, has been described as a better and clearer negative than others available?
- (15) Is the Minister aware that another negative, No. 15, was said to be the clearest and best available by the WA police fingerprint expert at the Mickelberg trial in 1983?
- (16) Is the Minister aware that the Solicitor General's investigator, Mrs Yeates, was part of the prosecution team at the Mickelberg trial in 1983?
- (17) Is the Minister aware that Mrs Yeates was the prosecutor at an appeal hearing which centred on the issue of Raymond Mickelberg's fingerprint?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) Yes, on the files of the central fingerprint bureau, but not on the Western Australian police files.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) I have not given or authorised any such undertaking.
- (4) Yes.
- (5) to (9) These matters are dealt with in my ministerial statement of 4 July 1985.
- (10) I am not aware of all that passes between Dr Kobus and the Mickelbergs.
- (11) Yes.
- (12) No.
- (13) Yes.
- (14) I am not aware of that, but I have no reason to doubt it.
- (15) I have not checked the transcript of the trial, but that statement would not be inconsistent with question (14). Negatives numbered 15 and 16 were both exhibits at the trial.
- (16) Yes.

- (17) I am not aware that Mrs Yeates has represented the Crown at any appeal in which the court has been asked to rule on any allegation that the fingerprint was forged.

8. *Postponed.*

AMERICA'S CUP: FUNDING

Ministerial Responsibility

13. Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Tourism:

- (1) Who is the Minister directly responsible for the management and allocation of America's Cup Funds?
- (2) What are the total funds made available so far for the America's Cup by:—
 - (a) the Federal Government; and
 - (b) the State Government?
- (3) Where have the specific allocations of these funds been made?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) The Federal Government's America's Cup funding programme is the responsibility of Hon. J. S. Dawkins, MP, Minister for Trade. State management and allocation is the responsibility of individual Ministers within relevant portfolios.
- (2) (a) \$30 million, of which \$6 million was spent in 1984-85.
 (b) \$7 648 404 for capital expenditure in 1984-85.
- (3) Allocations have been made for community and public facilities and services including public housing, transport, road improvements, Fremantle foreshore improvements, marina development, local authority projects, youth training in the hospitality industry, commissioning of several impact studies, sewerage system extensions, and upgrading police communications system.

HEALTH: HEARING LOSS

Audiometric Testing

33. Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Industrial Relations:

As a result of the passage through Parliament of the Workers' Compensation and Assistance Amendment Act which required audiometric testing for loss of hearing in the workplace to commence on 1 July 1985 I ask:—

- (1) Has the requirement for such testing been deferred by the Government for a period of one year?
- (2) Have the employers strongly voiced their opposition to such testing?
- (3) Is the Trades and Labor Council also opposed to such testing?
- (4) If "Yes" to (1), (2) or (3), is the Minister prepared to review both the legislation and regulations in view of the acknowledged opposition and expense involved?
- (5) If not, why not?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) I am surprised the member has not seen the Press release I issued on 14 August 1985, stating that the audiometric testing requirement of the hearing conservation (in workplaces) regulations be deferred for a period of one year. Drafting instructions to this effect have been passed to Parliamentary Counsel.
- (2) to (4) Yes, but in order to examine the concerns and problems that have been expressed, the Commission of Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare is preparing a discussion document for release shortly requesting information as to how the regulations can be improved and as to what difficulties are being experienced by employers.
- (5) Not applicable.

BILL OF RIGHTS

Submission: Discussion

34. Hon. P. G. PENDAL, to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform:

- (1) Is it correct that the Minister has made a submission to the Commonwealth in relation to its proposed Bill of Rights insisting on one-vote, one-value for the Senate?
- (2) If not, does he envisage that he will make a submission along these lines?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) Equal representation in the Senate for the original States of the Commonwealth, even though the States had vastly different populations, was a price that was paid to achieve the unity of a federated Australia. The imbalance in electors per senator between NSW and Tasmania approaches the ratio of 12:1 and does not take any account of enrolments or area but arises from the equal representation of States. To change this fact of the Australian Constitution would require approval at a referendum proposing such a constitutional change. It would therefore be inappropriate for the Minister to have made a submission along the lines of the question, and no such submission has been made.
- (2) See (1).

35 and 36. *Postponed.*

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Staff: Personal

17. Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Leader of the House:

How does he relate the answer to my question on 20 August this year on personal staff, wherein he stated—

Miss Fellows has always been attached to my personal staff.

with the statement he made to me in answer to question 684 on 21 March 1985, on page 1200 of *Hansard*? I asked the Minister—

How many officers does the Minister have on his personal staff?

The answer was—

I have no officers on my personal staff. There are seven officers attached to my office who are all career public servants.

How does he relate the answer regarding personal staff with the answer to an earlier question when he said he had no personal staff?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

Miss Fellows is a permanent civil servant; she belongs to the Public Service. She has occupied the position of Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council since we became the Government.

I interpreted the member's question to mean, did I have any outside personal staff or advisers, and I answered it quite correctly. Miss Fellows at present is the Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council and Secretary to the Premier and Cabinet at Parliament, so there is a fine line through there. I answered the previous question perfectly honestly.

Since that date, because of a number of things which involved the two ladies who work in the office, Miss Fellows has been temporarily detached from the Public Service on leave without pay on the advice of the Chairman of the Public Service Board and is totally a ministerial officer. She retains all of her entitlements as to leave and establishment. At the expiry of this Government she returns to her position, to her designation. When the Opposition becomes the Government, what they do with her is their own business.

I did not relate that question to Miss Fellows in the sense that she is a public servant.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Staff: Personal

18. Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Leader of the House:

Let me say for a start that Miss Fellows is a very competent person and I am in no way reflecting upon her ability.

Hon. D. K. Dans: I understand that.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: What I am saying is this: Perhaps I misunderstood his answer. He gave me an answer only a few days ago which indicated that a certain person had always been on his staff since she had worked for him. He gave an answer to a question in March this year which indicated he had no personal staff. I am asking whether the Minister would agree that the answers are in opposite directions, and whether he would agree that one of those answers was incorrect. Whether he understood the question or not I do not know.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I try to be reasonably lenient to all members of the House. Questions without notice are meant to be questions, and questions are things which seek information. I think the Leader of the Opposition asked a question. The Leader of the House was at pains to answer it. There is no provision for the Leader of the Opposition to make a speech about it. I suggest the question that he has finally got around to asking as the second question is identical to the first. Standing Orders clearly say he cannot ask the same question twice.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Overseas Trip

19. Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Was the Minister engaged in an overseas trip for the month of October 1984?
- (2) What was the purpose of the trip?
- (3) Where did the Minister go?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) to (3) I thought the member would get around eventually to asking the question correctly.

I made two trips overseas. One trip was to Hong Kong and to the Portuguese enclave of Macau. The purpose of the first trip was to gain background material on the operation of casinos. I had extensive talks with

the Royal Hong Kong Police Force, and in those talks I was assisted by an officer of the Federal Police who was attached to the High Commission in Hong Kong. I also had extensive talks with the Chief of the Judicial Police of Macau. I had a number of other talks with individuals, and I returned to Australia.

I returned from Hong Kong to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where I met up with the Chairman of the Casino Control Committee, who had been checking the books of the Genting Berhad Group. While I was in Malaysia I had talks with the Malaysian Police at every level, with the Chief of the Treasury Department, with the Minister, with the Assistant High Commissioner and with the Chief Superintendent of the Federal Police for the whole of the South-East Asian area, and with a sergeant who was his assistant.

I then journeyed to the Genting Berhad Casino in company with Mr Jarman (the Chairman of the Casino Committee) and Miss Fellows for some more talks with the Genting group. I think we went up in the evening and left at lunchtime the following day.

I then returned to Australia. Because we had had some other inquiries from the detective sergeant of the fraud squad I had some discussions with various people, and it was decided that, in company with that detective sergeant, I would go back to Malaysia.

I promised this House that while I was engaged with casino operations I would use all endeavours to see that everything was done correctly and according to the letter of the law as closely as I could. I will now read the course of events from a document—

An officer of the WA Police Force was involved in undertaking inquiries to assist in assessing the applications for a casino licence in WA.

That officer was Detective Sergeant Les Ayton who was attached to the Casino Control

Committee following an approach from the Chairman of that Committee, Mr Harry Jarman.

Following preliminary inquiries, an interim report was submitted advising that some matters required further investigation.

As a result, further inquiries were undertaken in other States and overseas.

I accompanied Detective Sergeant Ayton on at least some of his inquiries. I continue—

At the conclusion of these inquiries the then Commissioner of Police advised me that information gained by Detective Sergeant Ayton had been relayed to the Casino Control Committee.

The Commissioner's advice to me was that no reasons were advanced to preclude Genting Berhad from being considered for a casino licence.

With regard to tabling documents, I remind the House that details of Police inquiries are always considered to be confidential and I do not intend to breach that convention in relation to this matter.

I also advise the House of one additional point on this matter. In order to ensure continued Police monitoring of the questions associated with the casino, Detective Sergeant Ayton has been seconded to the office of the Minister for Racing and Gaming, with a brevet rank of inspector.

