

Legislative Council

Thursday, the 4th October, 1979

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

BILLS (3): ASSENT

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

1. Stock (Brands and Movement) Act Amendment Bill.
2. Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act Amendment Bill.
3. Honey Pool Act Amendment Bill.

ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Leader of the House), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West—Leader of the House) [2.38 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Members will be aware that a judicial inquiry into certain aspects of the Electoral Act, 1907-1976 was conducted during last year and the resultant report and recommendations of His Honour, Judge Kay, have been tabled in this House.

In addition, the Chief Electoral Officer and the Crown Solicitor reported jointly to the Chief Secretary and the Attorney General on the following matters—

- (1) Questions to be asked of electors on polling day;
- (2) clarification whether the same electoral roll was to be used at a re-election following a voided election;
- (3) the validity of proceedings of Parliament and the validity of actions of a Minister involved in a voided election; and
- (4) payment of costs of a party to a Court of Disputed Returns.

The purposes of this Bill are to implement substantially the recommendations of the report of the court of inquiry and to give effect to those matters considered by the Government to be

desirable following examination of the joint report of the Chief Electoral Officer and the Crown Solicitor.

The court of inquiry considered there was a need to redefine the word "native" to "Aboriginal" in terms of the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act, 1972 and this is given effect to in the proposals.

It was necessary to clarify the voting qualifications of prisoners and to provide a method of voting. The Bill proposes that the disqualification from voting will be related to the sentence given to the prisoner and being served by him. An amendment will permit such prisoners as are qualified to vote to do so by postal vote. The present machinery, in some instances, makes it impracticable for them to exercise this right.

The Bill also intends to ensure that the prisoner's residential qualification is protected while he is serving a sentence, to include in section 90 an additional reason for applying for a postal vote, and to ensure that mail between the Electoral Department and the voter is not censored. These provisions required certain consequential amendments concerning the submission of returns to the Electoral Department by institutions. It is proposed to prohibit canvassing within six metres of a prison.

An amendment to section 42 is included to provide that, where a claimant's name does not appear on any roll, the claim for enrolment shall be witnessed by specified witnesses. The persons eligible to witness such claims are proposed to be an electoral officer, a justice of the peace, a clerk of courts, or a police officer. Where necessary, descriptions of the witnesses have been amplified by definition. Under the Bill, the signature and designation of the witness will form part of the essentials of a claim.

In any other case a claim for enrolment may be signed by the claimant in the presence of an elector, or a person qualified to be an elector, of the Commonwealth Parliament or the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia. In such instances the person shall sign his name on the claim as a witness and designate the capacity in which he did so.

At present no provision exists in the Act to make it an offence to persuade or induce an elector to make application for a postal vote. This will be rectified.

The Bill proposes to amend the Act to enable the Minister to extend the present portable mobile box system to include any institution or hospital declared to be a special institution or hospital. The Minister may also declare any area of the

State to be a remote area which, by reason of its remoteness, presents difficulties for electors to attend at a polling place. It is proposed that such declared institutions, hospitals, and/or remote areas may be visited by electoral officials up to 14 days prior to and including polling day to provide voting facilities for electors in such institutions, hospitals, or remote areas. The Bill includes provisions prohibiting canvassing in certain cases in respect of institutions and hospitals.

Provision has also been included to appoint a polling place in the City of Perth for the benefit of absent voters during a by-election for a province or district.

The area relating to questions to be put to voters under section 119 is included for amendment; firstly, to make it mandatory for the presiding officer to ascertain whether the voter had voted before at the election, and, secondly, to allow the presiding officer to formulate questions in less formal language to assist the elector in answering.

Under the Bill, it is proposed that assistance which presently may be given to certain disadvantaged electors by electoral officials be extended to any elector who may request it. The assistance must be given by the official in the presence of any scrutineers present or, if none is present, then in the presence of another electoral official, or a person appointed by the elector. For the purpose of rendering voting assistance to electors who request it and to achieve uniformity, provision has been made to extend the authority of the Chief Electoral Officer to issue directions to polling place officials.

The Bill also seeks to repeal the part of the Act relating to limitation of electoral expenses.

With regard to the matters inquired into by the Chief Electoral Officer and the Crown Solicitor, it is proposed to amend section 119, relating to questions to be asked by the presiding officer to enable him, firstly, to ascertain from an elector who states that he no longer lives in a certain electoral district, whether his name appears on a roll for another electoral district, and, secondly, to decline a scrutineer's request to ask further questions which the presiding officer considers are unreasonable.

It is proposed to amend the Act to resolve any conflict that, where an election has been declared void by a Court of Disputed Returns, the re-election will take the place of the voided election and those persons whose names were on the roll for the voided election will be permitted to vote at the consequential by-election.

The Bill includes proposals that a Court of Disputed Returns, in addition to its power to award costs against an unsuccessful party to the petition, may, in its discretion, recommend that costs be paid by the Crown.

An amendment is proposed to section 172 of the Act to ensure the validity of the proceedings of Parliament and of any ministerial action which may otherwise have been in some doubt due to the voiding of an election by a Court of Disputed Returns.

It is proposed also to include as an offence the wilful taking of any ballot paper out of a polling place during polling at any election.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. R. Hetherington.

COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. I. G. MEDCALF (Metropolitan—Attorney General) [2.45 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Section 172 of the Companies (Co-operative) Act, 1943, contains a general prohibition on the use of the word "co-operative" in connection with any trade or business. There are certain exceptions, principally in relation to building societies, companies, or societies already in existence prior to the commencement of that Act, and co-operative companies registered under sections 172-176 of that Act.

The Companies Act, 1961 repealed the 1943 Act, except in relation to co-operative companies and in relation to societies registered under the Co-operative and Provident Societies Act. Section 382 of the Companies Act, 1961 provides that that Act does not apply to co-operative companies and that the 1943 Act will continue to apply to co-operative companies or proposed co-operative companies to the same extent as if the 1961 Act had not been enacted.

In other words, section 382 of the Companies Act, amongst other things, keeps alive the provisions of section 172 of the 1943 Companies (Co-operative) Act.

The intention of those provisions was that the general prohibition on the use of the word "co-operative", created by section 172 of the repealed 1943 Act, would continue to apply—other than in relation to those bodies specifically excepted.

There is some doubt in relation to the proposed credit union legislation, as to whether or not the provisions of section 382 of the Companies Act,

1961 are sufficiently wide to keep alive the provisions of section 172 of the repealed 1943 Act, as a general prohibition on the use of the word "co-operative", except in relation to co-operative companies and societies registered under the Co-operative and Provident Societies Act.

The Credit Unions Bill, which is currently being considered in another place, will permit credit unions to use the word "co-operative" in their name and for this reason it is considered desirable to resolve any doubts as to the application and intention of section 382 of the Companies Act.

The effect of this Bill will be to ensure the continuance of section 172 of the 1943 Act in so far as it contains a general prohibition on the use of the word "co-operative".

The PRESIDENT: Order! Would members please refrain from indulging in private conversations while the Attorney General is speaking?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. R. F. Cloughton.

APPROPRIATION BILL (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND)

Consideration of Tabled Paper

Debate resumed from the 2nd October.

THE HON. F. E. MCKENZIE (East Metropolitan) [2.50 p.m.]: I have examined the Budget and I cannot find anything in it to become excited about in our 150th year. I am particularly concerned about the level of unemployment in my electorate and if one examined the Budget one would find there are no real positive measures in it which would alleviate the current trend of worsening unemployment.

I suppose one must have a little sympathy for the Government when looking at the policy of the Fraser Government, and the Federal scene generally. One would then be able to realise the problems with which the State is faced. However, on the other hand, when one looks at the role which Sir Charles Court has played in respect of the situation in this State then that sympathy disappears. As we all know the Federalism policies of the Federal Government to a large degree were initiated by Sir Charles Court. The Premier stands alone on this matter.

If members refer to the events of the Premiers' Conference which was held in June this year they will note that Sir Charles Court failed miserably

to gain a better financial deal for Western Australia. An overview of the level of Commonwealth funding assistance for 1979-80 shows that general revenue payments have been increased by \$25.7 million which in real terms is 4.4 per cent; far below the inflation rate for the current year. When referring to specific purpose payments for the State for recurrent purposes it is found that they have been increased to \$1.3 million or 0.4 of 1 per cent in real terms. This is an overall increase of 2.8 per cent in real terms.

General purpose capital funds comprising Loan Council funding and general purpose capital grants have been cut by \$33.4 million or in real terms 25.2 per cent. Specific purpose payments for capital purposes have been cut by \$45.9 million or 27.8 per cent in real terms—an overall reduction of \$79.3 million or 26.6 per cent in real terms.

The total amount for the general purpose, capital fund, and specific capital purpose grants from Commonwealth funding to the Western Australian Government in 1979-80 has been cut by \$52.3 million in real terms. This represents one of the worst financial Budgets Western Australia has ever had. Therefore when one looks at the deal that Western Australia has received from the Commonwealth one sees it is a very poor one indeed. Of all the States, Western Australia has fared the worst.

Another area of concern to me in my electorate is the position relating to housing. As members are aware, in my electorate, the State Housing Commission is responsible for a number of units of housing and other areas which need to be developed for the future. As a result of the Fraser Budget the areas of housing and transport are the worst affected by the cutback of assistance to the State.

To illustrate the situation in relation to specific purpose payments for housing I will refer to the year 1975-76, the last year of the Whitlam Government, when the allocation to Western Australia was \$33.4 million. Even in 1976-77 under the Fraser Government there was a slight increase to \$35.4 million and again in 1977-78 there was an increase in specific purpose payments for housing to Western Australia to the amount of \$36.7 million. However, from that point onwards there has been a drastic cut in housing which in turn has severely affected the employment market of the State. For example, in 1978-79 the figure was cut from \$36.7 million to \$29.8 million. That was a substantial drop in funds.

However, in the current allocations to the State the \$29.8 million has been cut to \$15.1 million. It is obvious there that we have suffered badly at the hands of the Fraser Government. Nowhere in the Budget has the State Government allocated any funds from its Consolidated Revenue Fund to assist housing in this State. In the Commonwealth special purpose payments to Western Australia for housing in 1979-80 the figure has in fact been slashed by 61.4 per cent in real terms and this provides approximately 800 homes; that is, State Housing Commission homes.

In the last four Fraser Budgets, special purpose payments for housing have been cut from \$35 million—

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: That is not the whole story. Funds for housing come from other sources as well; for example, the building societies, if you are looking at the private sector.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I am talking about Government funds provided for housing. There is a severe cutback of funds if one looks at the allocations from other sources. There certainly has been a very slight increase, but the building industry generally as a result of this cutback is very severely depressed. If anyone in that industry or anyone involved in it were asked, he would agree with that.

The President and myself are members of the Canning Aged Persons Trust and last year the trust decided to build more units in Rossmoyne. A quote was obtained, but the trust found that it could not afford them at the time. Another quote was received recently and it was found that because of the downturn in the building industry it was much cheaper to have them built. Therefore it is obvious that the public expenditure is not being injected into that field to provide encouragement for private enterprise to build. This is the problem facing the Housing Commission. It is trying to recoup some of the loss in funding that will result from this cutback, by increasing at a very rapid rate the rental payments to be paid by people in this area.

So the low income earners who are in this type of housing are faced with this situation. They are under severe hardship because their incomes are down, especially when there is no overtime in their employment. They are faced with this substantial increase in rent whilst the task they face with regard to payments becomes even greater. Whilst we can have some sympathy for the State Government because money is just not coming from the Federal Government to the States—

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: And the taxpayer.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: —and from the taxpayer—for the lower income people; the figures in that particular field in real terms are substantially more than they were previously. I am talking about the low income earners.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: I was talking about the taxpayers generally.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: It is true that members of Parliament, on their salaries, have done very well, but it is the low income earners about whom I am concerned.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: I would not disagree with you on that.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The point I was trying to make is that while we can have some sympathy with the State Government—it is a fact that this State has suffered at the hands of the Federal Government more than any other State—I cannot forgive the Government because its leader, the Premier, was the proponent of federalism and, in the last four years while the Fraser Government has been in office in Canberra, it has meant an overall loss in real terms of \$134 million to this State. That is a lot of money.

I am naturally concerned about public transport, and here again I am afraid nothing in the Budget excites me. I cannot see any provision for the purchase of the five railcars and five trailers about which the Government has been talking. The Government may have another method of funding the railcars and trailers, but I cannot see in the Budget any mention of additional rolling stock for Westrail. That causes me and the people of Western Australia a great deal of worry because slowly but surely the public transport system is being wound down.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I am sure you were told new rolling stock was being obtained.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I asked a question about it in this House approximately a month ago and the answer given to me was that tenders had been called, no decision had been made, and no decision would be made until mid-December.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: When tenders are called people have to submit a tender price. Do you know the system?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Yes, but does it take the Government six months to make up its mind?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It sometimes takes the people who are tendering six months to put in a price.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The tenders closed on the 28th June and it will take the Government until mid-December to assess them and make a decision. That is an inordinately long time.

Earlier in the year I also asked a question about the linc buses and, by way of contrast, the answer I received was that the announcement to close the Perth-Fremantle passenger rail service was made on the 16th January, quotes were called on the 17th January and closed on the 17th January, and a decision was made on the 17th January. Tenders were not called, and I am not sure that is not a breach of the Tender Board regulations. I have not examined them, but I assume it must be all right, although I have some doubts. However, all that was done on one day, yet when it comes to railcars it takes six months to make a decision. I cannot understand the reason for that, but perhaps someone will enlighten me at a later date.

I think the Federal Government is at the root of all the trouble and the decision to close the Perth-Fremantle line. When we look at the 1978-79 Federal Budget we see the total spending provided for under the transport portfolio this financial year will be about \$1 008 million compared with \$934 million last year. This represents an increase of approximately 8 per cent in dollar terms over 1978-79, but a decrease of 0.5 per cent in real terms.

When we look at the position in relation to urban public transport funding, all States will suffer again as a result of Federal Government policies. A sum of \$42.7 million is to be made available to the States under the urban public transport programme on a two-to-one basis. The method of funding has been in existence since the Whitlam Government introduced the formula some years ago. Of that amount, \$2.7 million is a carry-over of the 1978-79 commitment. The amount made available this year is a decrease of 6 per cent in real terms on the 1978-79 year and a decrease of 44 per cent on the 1976-77 figure.

In real terms, in the last two or three years we have suffered a substantial cutback in this area from the Federal Government and unless the State Governments pick up the tab and reallocate their priorities the prospects for improvement in the public transport area are very poor indeed. We all know that the cost of fuel and transportation by motor vehicles is increasing. In fact, according to the documents I have read, in several countries throughout the world people are turning to public transport—slowly, but the trend is apparent. So I think in the not-too-distant future the Government will realise that its

decision to close the Perth-Fremantle passenger rail service was wrong.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Did I hear you say no provision has been made for new rolling stock during this current year?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I said no provision had been made in the Budget for passenger rolling stock. I am well aware that provision has been made in some other areas, but not for passenger rolling stock. That is the point I was making in regard to urban transport.

Unemployment, housing, and public transport are the main matters in the Budget on which I felt I ought to comment. However, I am very pleased about the Government's decision to allow pensioners a rebate of 50 per cent in respect of local government and water rates in the financial year commencing the 1st July, 1980. That is a step in the right direction because pensioners certainly need some assistance. We are all aware of the increasing burden on all sections of the community, but those with the least income have the most difficulty in meeting their commitments. If one can be complimentary at all, that is the only area about which I am pleased.

In the forthcoming financial year I believe the Budget, generally, will result in increased unemployment, notwithstanding the development on the North-West Shelf and other smaller developments which will create employment.

Overall we will find the employment situation will worsen, particularly in respect of young people. When I attend meetings in my electorate, I find the situation is worsening. Whereas 12 months ago although people did not like the unemployment situation, they felt a solution would be found to it. However, now people are very worried about the situation. Last night I attended a ratepayers' meeting at which Peter Shack was questioned vigorously regarding the unemployment situation.

He was questioned to such an extent that he offered to assist a number of people whose children would be leaving school and looking for employment next year. In fact, someone commented that the meeting seemed like a Peter Shack employment agency. He undertook to assist many people in respect of employment. Perhaps he has better contacts than I have, because when I endeavour to find employment for people, it is just not available.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Perhaps he will open up another car yard.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: It is a bad time to do that, because many small business people are

going before the Bankruptcy Court at the moment.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: At least he is giving it a go and not simply crying doom.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I cannot follow Mr Lewis' reasoning.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You and Mr Cooley are simply crying doom. At least Peter Shack is trying to find jobs for people instead of simply crying doom.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Of course, when one studies the figures released by authoritative sources, one cannot help but cry doom; and more so when one looks at the Budget of the State Government. The Budget contains nothing which will alleviate the unemployment situation which, as the years have gone by, has progressively deteriorated to such an extent that Western Australia is now at the bottom of the ladder.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Far too many members are interjecting. I request Mr McKenzie to address himself to the motion before the Chair.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I well remember that when the Tonkin Government was elected the present Premier said in his policy speech that, if elected, he would overcome the employment problems in six months. Instead of that, the situation has deteriorated.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: What was the unemployment figure in 1974? Wasn't it 7 000?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I think it was a little over 2 per cent of the work force.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: What was the population at that time? What about people from overseas? You must relate every statistic.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I am not interested in that.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Of course you are not; you don't want facts. How many jobs have been created?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: In June, 1974, 7 782 persons were unemployed in Western Australia, and that represented 1.64 per cent of the work force.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: That was when Tonkin was in office.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Was Tonkin in office in June, 1974?

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Well, he had just gone out of office.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! There is far too much cross fire which is not helping Mr McKenzie to address himself to the motion before the Chair.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The unemployment position has progressively deteriorated since then until now about 7 per cent of the work force is unemployed. What I am saying is that within 12 months a change of attitude has occurred in the community. I am trying to be kind to members opposite and to warn them of this, because I know some of them will face the electorate next year—I suspect it will be next year. I am advising those members that if the trend in their electorates is similar to the trend in mine, they might get a shock because people do not now think the employment situation will go away, and are starting to demand that something be done about it.

I must admit that Peter Shack handled himself very well at the meeting last night.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: He is a very good member of Parliament.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: He certainly took advantage of the opportunity to undertake a propaganda exercise. I could have refuted all the nice things he was saying and taken him to task, but it would not have been the right thing to do because he, not I, was being questioned.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You would not have taken the lead. You were crying doom.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Of course, Peter Shack told the meeting that the policies of the Federal Government are wonderful, and he explained how the Government would get out of the situation. I would have liked to get into that act. Nevertheless, he faced a barrage of questions and the State members were left relatively free.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: That is because everyone is happy with the State Government.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I would not say that. I think the ratepayers realised we were members of the Labor Party and there was no point in asking us because we had the answers.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: I do not think that was the reason they didn't ask you; I think it was because you didn't have the answers.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: We do have the answers, but we were not given an opportunity to express them. Perhaps on the next occasion a Government member will attend the meeting and assist Peter Shack with his answers. I must admit that he did a pretty fair job.

Earlier this year I attended the annual meeting of the Good Neighbour Council. I will not buy

into the matter of the necessity to fold up the organisation, because I was not involved with the council until I became a member of Parliament. However, many of the people connected with the council are concerned about the decision of the Federal Government to disband the organisation. The people concerned certainly have been most vocal in their opposition to this closure. Apart from Queensland, it appears that no State Government is prepared to fund the organisation to enable it to operate. The only State Government which has given an undertaking in that regard is the Queensland Government.

I do not want to be critical of the State Government for not funding the council because I am not fully aware of the situation and, therefore, I can only listen to what is said without being able to comment.

The meeting was addressed by the Rev. Edwin White, who was the secretary of the Good Neighbour Council and who was subsequently seconded to a departmental working party to discuss the problems faced by the council as a result of its being wound up. I would like members opposite to listen to what the Rev. Edwin White had to say in his address, because it indicates the treatment workers receive from the Federal Government. I refer to people working for the Good Neighbour Council when the decision was made to abandon the organisation. I hope we in this State are never faced with this type of situation, and I hope the State Government will not adopt the same criteria when dealing with people who become redundant in their employment. This is what the Rev. Edwin White had to say—

That brings me to the issue which took much of our time and gave us our greatest sense of frustration and failure, namely the future employment of displaced staff. I have already quoted the Gaibally recommendation that a working party should be created to assist with, among other things, "the appropriate placement of staff". The Prime Minister in his statement in the House went further, if possible. He said, "(the Government) will assist in the redeployment of staff". It is difficult to imagine a more positive and unequivocal commitment, and all the subsequent protestations that the Prime Minister really meant something else had a very hollow ring. It was clear to the working party that every one of the Councils believed that the Prime Minister had made a promise; . . .

We have heard about broken promises, but we have never heard about that one before.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Is the word "promises" in inverted commas?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: No.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: What were the first two words of the Prime Minister's quote?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: If Mr Moore likes, I will read it again—

It was clear to the working party that every one of the Councils believed that the Prime Minister had made a promise; . . .

The Hon. N. F. Moore: What were the Prime Minister's words?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I will read

—
The Prime Minister in his statement in the House went further, if possible. He said, "(the Government) will assist in the redeployment of staff".

The Hon. N. F. Moore: So you are ignoring the two words, "if possible"?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: If Mr Moore wants to hang his hat on a couple of words like that, if he wants to accept that it was not possible—

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: There are a couple of words used by Government Ministers, and they are, "subject to funds". I know that is three words, but nevertheless they are very important.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: If the Government will make scapegoats of the employees of this council that is being wound up because of lack of funds, I believe—

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That is an absurd statement.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: —that its priorities are very poor ones indeed. We are not talking about thousands of people. We are talking about the people who were employed by Good Neighbour Councils throughout Australia.

I will return to the report, and I will continue to read what was said—

. . . they believed it was a promise the Government could have kept; but they had no evidence that the Government had kept it or had tried to keep it. In my report I noted that whereas from the first the Government accepted full responsibility for any obligations the Councils might have to their landlords, it accepted no responsibility for what the Councils clearly saw as their moral and human obligations to their employees.

For landlords, there is one set of rules; for employees there is another. That is what I call a poor system of priorities. The report continues—

The working party has been criticised from within Good Neighbour for not finding jobs for Good Neighbour staff. The working party did all it could, making the most of its advantages in being a departmental group within the Public Service ambit. It failed in this particular matter because at every turn it ran into administrative brick walls which could only have been breached with the political support which might have been expected to follow the Prime Minister's promise, but which was not forthcoming.

That is the attitude of the Federal Government in respect of the Good Neighbour Council, as indicated to its annual general meeting by the Rev. Edwin White. I am sure everybody here would agree he is not one of those radical revolutionaries about whom we hear so much these days. Those quotes indicate his experience in trying to have the staff of the Good Neighbour Council relocated in other areas of Government employment.

The other matter about which I want to speak deals with the Keep Australia Beautiful Campaign. In this State the question of cans and their disposal is an important one. The record of this State is a very poor one indeed. I do not know whether it has anything to do with the canning industry, particularly in the soft drink field. I understand that the gentleman in charge of Coca-Cola Bottlers is on the Keep Australia Beautiful Council.

I am concerned about the number of soft drink cans which are thrown from motorcars or whatever. Apart from the work done by service groups, in many areas they are left to rust away on the sides of roads, beaches, and wherever. It is a massive job to tidy them.

On the 27th June this year, Alcoa sent me a news release, and I am sure every member of this House received one. The company was talking about the sponsorship of amateur athletics and that type of exercise, and it said—

One of these is our highly successful aluminium can recycling program. Alcoa currently collects more than 200 tonnes of aluminium cans per month at 77 Cash-a-can centres in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and the Northern Territory.

Members would be aware that South Australia has a deposit system whereby a surcharge is charged for each can bought. There is a cash incentive for people to return cans in South Australia. That

system is not mentioned as being included in the cash-a-can centres; but the reason for that is that at 5c a can there would be no problem in people returning cans to the retailers. In Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and the Northern Territory there is the cash-a-can system; but in Western Australia there is nothing at all. The news release continues—

Collectors who take their aluminium cans to the centres receive 35 cents per kilogram for their efforts.

Sure, it is not a princely sum; but nevertheless it is a financial incentive to return the cans. The Press release continues—

Collectors thus far this year have been paid more than \$350 000, for the returned cans.

The first question that raises is: why not Western Australia? I have seen very few aluminium cans used in Western Australia. It appears to me we are still the only State which is trading in steel cans. In the other States, when one buys a can of cool drink it is an aluminium can. Why are we so far behind that we are still dealing in steel cans?

I rang Alcoa in Melbourne from my office. I was attempting to discover the position in Western Australia, and currently there is no indication that aluminium cans will be manufactured in Western Australia. To a large extent it depends upon the current manufacturer, Gadsdens of O'Connor. The public relations gentleman at Alcoa would certainly welcome the introduction of aluminium cans into Western Australia.

That would be a step in the right direction. In the rest of Australia there is a system whereby groups are given the opportunity of cashing in and at the same time relieving a problem we are currently facing. It must be costing the local authorities, and the other people responsible for the collection of cans, tremendous sums of money to maintain the system. There is certainly a problem in this State.

I telephoned the Department of Industrial Development about this matter, because when I was travelling in the Eastern States I noticed that there were very few cans lying on the sides of the roads, whereas along the major highways in Western Australia we frequently see many of them.

When I read this news release I thought that perhaps it contained the answer to the problem. I spoke to the Department of Industrial Development and I was advised that one could deposit cans at Welshpool Containers Ltd. and at Gadsdens in O'Connor. However, no financial

incentive was provided to encourage people to use these depots. If there are no financial incentives, who will bother to deposit their cans at these places?

Groups such as the Scouts and the Girl Guides, which struggle along with insufficient funds, would be happy to provide a service so that they could obtain funds for their work in the community.

I do not know whether the Government can persuade manufacturers of steel cans to change to aluminium. If this were done, the people of this State could cash in on some of the incentives which are available. A total of \$350 000 has been paid for returned cans.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Carlton Breweries abolished non-returnable cans.

The Hon. F. E. MCKENZIE: That is a step in the right direction. I hope the Swan Brewery in this State will follow that example. In my opinion there is too much waste. It is impossible to educate people. It should be possible to recycle this type of material. That is the point I wanted to make in regard to steel cans. I hope the Government will look at the matter and endeavour to induce manufacturers to use aluminium cans so that they can be recycled.

There is another matter to which I wish to refer which concerns a constituent in my electorate. I have not dealt with this man personally, but I want to refer to the matter, because it relates indirectly to the use of 2, 4, 5-T and 2, 4-D.

This matter was reported in the *Daily News* on the 11th of July, 1979. The article refers only to 2, 4, 5-T, but I know that 2, 4-D has similar properties. I believe both of these poisons should be banned. Action has been taken in Victoria in this regard and I believe the Government should ban the use of both of these herbicides in this State.

I should like to read to members the statement made in the *Daily News* on the 11th of July, 1979, which relates to the effect that 2, 4, 5-T has had on one individual's life. The man's claims read as follows—

Mr Terry Spriggs is convinced that he is becoming seriously sick because he was exposed to the chemical defoliant, 245T when he was an Australian soldier in Vietnam.

He is also afraid that the chemical may be causing sickness among his three children.

Mr Spriggs (31), of Cloverdale, is an invalid pensioner. He is paid \$231 a fortnight by the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

He said today: "Every bloke who was in Vietnam has a fair claim on the Government. We should all get paid damages or compensation for being exposed to these chemicals.

"We still don't know half the stuff the Yanks used."

Dead jungle

Mr Spriggs said that he and other Australian infantrymen often had to search through areas of dead jungle which had been sprayed with 245T or bombed with napalm.

He said: "I can remember quite clearly the white fine powder of the 245T left behind and the big black slags of phosphorous from the napalm. It used to make your eyes and nose run from the fumes and dust."

He said he was perfectly fit when he joined the Army and went to Vietnam in May 1969 for 12 months.

Since the war he had developed nervous problems, duodenal ulcers, and bronchitis and suffered several heart attacks.

He said: "I was retired from my job with the Commonwealth Department of Transport last year—on the scrapheap at 30 years of age.

"I've got a pension for my war service, but it's only about half of what I was earning and we've had to sell up our house and cars. Now we rent from the SHC because it's all we can afford."

He said the Department of Veterans Affairs had acknowledged most of his medical problems were war-caused, but had refused to acknowledge his heart condition.

He said: "I decided to tell my story because there must be lots of blokes in my position, but they've probably given up fighting the bureaucracy because it's so frustrating.

"I'm going to try to raise it in Federal Parliament and get the RSL to take it up nationally"

A great deal more is said in the article, but I do not want to read all of it. I believe I have read sufficient to indicate that there is a real danger in regard to the use of 2, 4, 5-T and 2, 4-D.

This matter has been publicised widely in the Eastern States, but there has been little publicity here. However, I believe sufficient evidence is available to provide the Government with a basis for banning the use of these herbicides.

Recently I spoke to the mother of a child who suffers from spina bifida. She claimed her daughter was infected by these two defoliants prior to her birth as a result of which she was handicapped. I am concerned about the future of people who are exposed to these defoliants. Nobody is really sure of the possible effects they may have on the human body, despite the fact that the National Health and Medical Research Council has made a recommendation in this regard. Nobody is sure whether or not these defoliants cause deformities in children. Therefore, I believe that until such time as we know the effects of the use of these defoliants, they should be banned.

In conclusion, I want to bring to the notice of the House my concern about the recent problems in the north of Western Australia. Recently in the House we debated the Government's amendments to section 54B of the Police Act. Members on this side of the House made it perfectly clear in the speeches they made that they believed the amendments were cosmetic only. I believe the events of the last few days have proved that—

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That is utter nonsense!

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: —because on the day the unionists appeared before the court in Dampier 46 names were taken by the police.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: They should have walked in and asked for permission.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: My understanding is that the Government legislation was aimed at defusing a very explosive position.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You can only defuse reasonable people.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: There was no attempt to defuse.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Of course there was. "It takes two to tango". When people are as deliberately provocative as your union friends were, of course there is trouble.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: They were deliberately provocative because, as I have said previously, it is a bad law.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That law has been designed for the protection of good, law-abiding citizens.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: That is a matter of opinion.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You test the feeling of the public, any way you like.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The Minister knows very well the feeling of the public.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You know what happened in South Australia.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The way to solve the matter is to take it to a referendum.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I would not mind an election on the issue.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I challenge the Minister, and his Government, to take it to a referendum.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It would be wasteful. We know the situation and we can gauge the reaction of the people. Have a look at it.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The Minister is aware that when one goes to an election an overall number of matters are taken into account.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: This will be one of them; do not make any mistake about that. That is why we are so happy.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I believe it will be the downfall of the present Government.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Your friends have set out deliberately to make trouble.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The Government is continuing to organise trouble, and it has its head buried in the sand.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: No, it has not.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The Government will get the greatest shock it has ever had in its life.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: We do not believe in fairy tales.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I do not believe in fairy tales. I will be back here next year because I do not have to face the electors.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You will be a little lonely.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Next year the member opposite will be able to remind me of what has occurred. He has a good memory. I am trying to be kind to members opposite. As I have said previously, most members opposite are not bad people. They are misguided, but generally they are acceptable types of people.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Good. At least some electors thought so.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I do not want to be sidetracked too much, but if members opposite want me to debate the gerrymandering of boundaries, I will do so.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You have touched on almost everything else; you might as well have a go at that.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Some time ago you commenced your remarks by saying, "In conclusion..."

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I will try to spin out my remarks until the afternoon tea suspension; I am almost there.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: I am sure the President can use some discretion.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I am trying to be kind to members opposite because I do not believe they are fools, in any shape or form.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You are not unkind.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: However, if members opposite continue to ignore the wishes of the people, rather than take some positive action with regard to the problems of this State—such as unemployment and the like—that ignorance will tell at the polls. If members care to visit our library and have a look at the latest issue of *The Age*, they will see that the Australian Labor Party in this State is running at 54 per cent, and the stocks of the Liberal Party are down to 34 per cent.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Rubbish!

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The Minister should read the paper.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Your stand in the Pilbara was a total flop. That is not my view, but the view of the Press.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: It is impossible for me to continue because members opposite will not listen. They will be sorry at the next election.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: We do not want to listen to rubbish.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: On that note, I complete my speech in relation to the Budget.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. D. W. Cooley.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

House adjourned at 3.52 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Film Industry

236. The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Minister for Lands representing the Minister for Cultural Affairs:

- (1) Has the Minister requested any person or organisation to study the needs of the film industry in this State?
- (2) If so—
 - (a) who is undertaking this study; and
 - (b) when is it expected he will receive recommendations arising from this study?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (for the Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH) replied:

- (1) The Government has recognised the need to develop a local film industry. It has created a fund to provide assistance to establish a commercial industry in this State.
- (2) (a) The Western Australian Film Council.
- (b) The Government is continually monitoring the needs of the film industry to ensure the assistance provided will continue to encourage the development of a commercially viable Western Australian enterprise in this field.

ENERGY: NUCLEAR

Power Station

240. The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Has a decision been made on a site for the proposed nuclear power station north of Perth?
- (2) If so, what is the location of the site?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (for the Hon. I. G. MEDCALF) replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.

POLICE

Aborigines: Arrests, Charges, and Imprisonment

241. The Hon. Lyla ELLIOTT, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) How many Aborigines have been arrested in the metropolitan area in the last six months?
- (2) How many were charged?
- (3) What were the charges?
- (4) How many were imprisoned?
- (5) Does the commissioner inform his men that Aborigines should not be stopped unless there is a very strong reason to suspect them?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon replied:

- (1) to (4) No separate statistics are kept for Aboriginal offenders.
- (5) No.

242. *This question was postponed.*

MEAT: LAMB

Marketing Board

243. The Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Minister for Lands representing the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is the Lamb Marketing Board at the moment purchasing lambs in South Australia or the Eastern States?
- (2) If so, how many per week on average?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (for the Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH) replied:

- (1) No; the Lamb Marketing Board is however purchasing lamb carcasses in the Eastern States on an f.o.b. basis for shipment to Iran.
- (2) 2 480 tonnes of lamb were purchased in the Eastern States between July and September, 1979.

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

Wright Street Intersection

244. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Police and Traffic:

How many accidents have occurred where damage to vehicles has been sustained at the intersections of—

- (a) Belmont Avenue and Wright Street;
- (b) Abernethy Road and Wright Street; and
- (c) Belgravia Street and Wright Street;

for the last three years, and for the nine-month period ending the 30th September, 1979?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

The following figures indicate all reported accidents—

	1976	1977	1978	1979 (9 months reported to date)
(a) Belmont Avenue and Wright Street	6	9	25	14
(b) Abernethy Road and Wright Street	6	16	14	12
(c) Belgravia Street and Wright Street	1	5	15	4

TRAFFIC

Hardey Road

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

- (1) Since the opening of Leach Highway at the intersection of Hardey Road, Kewdale, has the increase in motor vehicles using Hardey Road, between Great Eastern Highway and Leach Highway, been higher than that originally estimated?
- (2) If so, would the Minister advise the weekly estimated number prior to the opening, and the current number of vehicles using Hardey Road?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (for the Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH) replied:

- (1) and (2) No specific estimate was made. However, there has been a steady increase in Hardey Road traffic over the years due to increased commercial and residential development in the general area.

Current traffic volume east of Alexander Road is 21 835 vehicles per day compared with 16 330 in 1976 and 17 319 in April, 1975. The Leach Highway bridge over the railway was opened in October, 1975.

TRAFFIC

Hardey Road

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

- (1) Is the Minister aware that the incessant traffic flow at peak period along Hardey Road, Belmont, between Great Eastern and Leach Highways, is making it almost impossible for local residents to enter Hardey Road during peak period times?
- (2) As the problem could become worse, will the Minister ensure priority is given to the construction of the Beechboro-Gosnells Freeway between Great Eastern Highway, Redcliffe, and the junction of Leach Highway, Kewdale?
- (3) Could the Minister give an approximate date on which construction of the freeway is likely to be effected?
- (4) If this is not in the immediate future, will any attempt be made to reduce the traffic flow along Hardey Road as Belmont is virtually cut in half at peak periods due to the increased numbers of vehicles from other areas using this route, causing severe frustration to the local residents?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (for the Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH) replied:

- (1) The Minister for Transport is aware that Hardey Road, Belmont is a busy road during peak traffic periods.
- (2) The possibility of constructing a section of the Beechboro-Gosnells Freeway has been raised by the Belmont City Council and is currently being investigated by the Main Roads Department.
- (3) No.
- (4) No feasible alternative is apparent.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

EDUCATION

Equal Opportunity Resource Centre

1. The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON, to the Minister for Lands representing the Minister for Cultural Affairs:

- (1) Is it a fact that a committee for the establishment of an equal opportunity

resource centre has twice made submissions to the Schools Commission for funds to set up an equal opportunity resource centre in Western Australia along the lines of those established in Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia, and that the Schools Commission has twice given such a project approval, subject to the concurrence of the State Education Department, and that this was refused thus effectively vetoing the proposal?

- (2) As the committee is once more making such a submission will the Minister either—
- (a) assure me that this submission will be supported at this stage by his department, or
 - (b) explain why such support is not forthcoming?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (for the Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH) replied:

- (1) and (2) As the Minister for Education is away from his office today he could not supply a detailed answer, but he has advised by phone that he will provide the information if the question is placed on notice.

RAILWAYS

Sleepers: Removal and Sale

2. The Hon. N. E. BAXTER, to the Minister for Lands representing the Minister for Transport:

With reference to upgrading the Perth-Kalgoorlie railway line—

- (1) Has a contract been let to any company, person, or persons for the purchase from Westrail of the timber sleepers removed from the line?
- (2) If the answer to (1) is "Yes", would he provide the name or names of the purchasers?
- (3) If no contract has been let, are the timber sleepers available for purchase by any person on application to Westrail?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (for the Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH) replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Answered by (1).
- (3) No. It is intended that timber sleepers unfit for further use by Westrail will be disposed of by public tender. Consideration is being given to the sale of small quantities to the public at Westrail Salvage Depot, Midland.