DRAINAGE

Preston River District: Petition

MR BRYCE (Ascot—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [11.02 a.m.]: I have a petition which reads as follows—

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled:

We, the undersigned residents in the State of Western Australia do herewith pray that Her Majesty's Government of Western Australia will reconsider its decision to reimpose Land Drainage Rates in the Preston River Drainage District.

We believe that there is no justification for such a Drainage rate as any flooding that now occurs in the District results from Government Works such as the Construction of the New Inner Harbour at Bunbury.

Further, we believe that the Government's decision to impose such a rate is a real burden on the many residents of the District who are still recovering from the effects of Cyclone Alby.

We also believe that the intention to impose such a rate should have been publicly and clearly foreshadowed by the Minister with a view to him receiving submissions from residents of the area.

We also believe that the Minister for Works should as soon as practicable take action under Section 112 of the Land Drainage Act to write off all rates unpaid for the 1979-1980 rating year and that he should ensure that such Drainage Rates are not reimposed in any future years.

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

The petition bears 383 signatures, and I certify that it conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

See petition No. 115.
the country areas water supply scheme of the Public Works Department.

The only other point covered by this Bill relates to the percentage increase being charged on improved properties. This is justified. If immediately after a rate notice or the valuation has been re-assessed someone improves a property and it remains in that improved condition with a lesser rate applicable to it, it is quite unjustified if one compares the situation with the person living next door who has had a true valuation placed on his property.

The Bill allows the Minister to apply a percentage increase of the rate which would have been charged in the previous year had such improvements been in existence for the full 12 months. When the Valuer General's valuation is made, that becomes the prevailing rate. Necessary action is available to appeal against that rate. The Bill makes it very clear there is no appeal against the Minister's determination.

I see no great objection to this Bill. There could be problems with the increases. Some of my colleagues have ventured the opinion that a 300 per cent increase is a lot more than the natural increase or the escalation of costs over the period of years. Nevertheless, not all increases have been consistent; property valuations have escalated far more than prices for food and other commodities which govern the normal escalations on which we work. Unless we can find another system to establish a rating on these properties it would work. Unless we can find another system to establish a rating on these properties it would work.

Mr O'Connor: It is more like the last figure.

Mr JAMIESON: One has to be very careful that the figure does not get too high, because while there is acceptance by the population in general to cover the costs of this commodity which is so vital to country areas, one cannot get to the stage where the people in the country are not paying a fair proportion of their year-to-year requirements.

By comparison, members will be aware that although there have been several small losses by the Metropolitan Water Board of $5 million or so which have to be picked up by the CRF and other means, under the board's charter it is required to pay its own way. One could not extend that to the country areas water supply scheme, because people in some areas would find the price of water was beyond their capacity to pay.

It is sensible we have the two levels of charges and we maintain a fair proportion for people in country areas. Although the rates could be hard to meet, particularly when the valuations are escalating the way they have been on some properties, it is sensible we establish some means gradually to bring in equitable rating for these people. Under those circumstances, the Opposition supports the Government's moves.

MR LAURANCE (Gascoyne) [11.35 a.m.]: I support this Bill and commend the Government for its quick action to overcome what is a difficult problem for a number of towns in Western Australia. The member for Welshpool mentioned the town of Carnarvon in my electorate and I would mention also the small township of Denham in my area, which has been affected by valuations made after a long period of time. It is this fact which has caused the difficulty; there have been considerable increases in water rates of 200 per cent, 300 per cent, and even more in a few cases as a result of these new valuations being adopted. Of course, other towns have been affected similarly, but they will not feel the effect until next year. Because of this legislation, the effect will be eased for these people. One town has not been revalued for 12 years. Carnarvon has not been subject to revaluation for a period of eight years. It is because of this lengthy period between valuations being adopted that problems have arisen.

Because of the difficulty of bringing in differential rating to accommodate the new valuations—I am looking at the State-wide situation as distinct from a local authority which can adjust its local rates to meet increased costs—considerable problems are experienced by country people.

I support the proposition contained in the Bill that increases resulting from the valuations should be phased in over a period of years. This will bring quite a deal of relief to people in Carnarvon and Denham who have been faced with very severe increases.

I am concerned not only with the matter of water rating but also with sewerage and drainage rates, particularly sewerage rates. These valuations will flow through. They reflect a period of very high inflation over the last few years which has caused the problem of the very vast increases in costs of operation and capital costs involved with these public utilities supplying major services.

The real answer to the problem is to overcome inflation. Thankfully, the Federal Government has taken very strong steps in this direction. I
support the legislation because it brings a measure of relief to people who have had big increases in rates following new valuations on their properties.

MR McPHARLIN (Mt. Marshall) [11.38 a.m.]: I support this legislation. I notice it is to be backdated to the 1st July, 1978, and this is welcomed. With today's escalating costs we note with satisfaction there will be some easement of rates in country areas. The cost of financing the water supply scheme in country areas is very high. The service shows a considerable loss each year, running into millions of dollars. It is a service which needs continual assistance from the Government.

From time to time one gets complaints from consumers. A complaint raised with me on a number of occasions relates to farming properties which were once divided into two or three and so received two or three assessments. That means of course the consumption rate of each property was at the lower rate for a longer period of time because the first 1 600 kilolitres consumed was at the rate of 20c and after that the rate was 40c. However, as a result of grouping the farming properties as one; where there are two or three different locations with separate meters; they are then administered as one farming company or as a farming venture. In that way the consumption rate goes over 1 600 kilolitres much more quickly than previously and hence the higher rate is applied.

This scheme was brought in by the Public Works Department some time ago and is causing some farmers concern. Of course, it is operated under the provisions of the Act but it does cause rapid increases in charges to the farming community. There is no difference in the metering of a farming property or a farmers' house. Several people in my area frequently write to me on this aspect which causes them concern.

I think this measure is one which will meet with the approval of all concerned. I support the Bill.

There is another aspect I wish to mention with regard to sewerage rating. This occurred in Manjimup where a shire scheme existed previously. It was a self-supporting loan and the users of that scheme advertised for the loan and it was then paid for on a maintenance charge basis of between $8 to $10. But, since the taking over of the scheme by the Public Works Department the increases have been very considerable and one I cited went from $10 to $2 174.

Mr O'Connor: In one year?

Mr H. D. EVANS: Yes, in one year, and those water charges represent a very considerable drain on all the business houses involved, and there are quite a few of them.

The other one increased to $2 800. I have selected this case to illustrate the magnitude of the increase that can occur and in this case it comes back to 22 per cent in total of the gross rental value. Another case arose from the removal of the maximum water charge on the areas which are just outside the town boundaries and these represented again a very substantial increase. In view of this case I am wondering whether the Minister will indicate that this will proceed or a scheme similar to this will be adopted.

Mr O'Connor: At the out of town ones? The country areas water supply?

Mr H. D. EVANS: Farms in the main, or those which were rural properties previously. This is for domestic water and previously there was a maximum on these rates, but of course they escalated dramatically.

Mr O'Connor: We thought that where the maximum was removed the other would apply.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The maximum was removed on the rural properties and there are quite a few of these around most towns. There is one I am particularly concerned about which is running alongside the Seven Day Road out from Manjimup to the town dam water supply. With these properties the owners pay the cost of installation but the main was serving the town anyway. They provided the cost of tapping that and then they had to meet this additional cost. This is quite an anomaly. If the Minister could give an indication as to whether there will be any alleviation of the sewerage problem it would be appreciated because it is part and parcel of the same difficulty. Also, if he could indicate whether or not it is proposed by the Government to do something in this regard, I am sure it would be appreciated.

MR SHALDERS (Murray) [11.46 a.m.]: I want to express my support for this Bill and the gratitude of the business people of Mandurah that
the provisions have been made retrospective to 1978. Last year the business people in the town were hit very hard by a revaluation which caused their water and sewerage rates to rise dramatically.

For example, a small chemist shop in the town had the rates increased from $179 to $546. A small group of factory units which had its own water supply had the rate increased from $60 to $368, and in another instance a small electrical retailer had an increase in rates from $150 to $748.

Mr Jamieson: They are all good Labor blokes.

Mr SHALDERS: I do not know of their political leaning but this provision might assist them to change their minds if the member is correct. Of course those mentioned paid their rates at that time and would have had to pay the same this year but this back-dating provision will certainly assist them. It will not mean cash back in the hand to them but it will certainly give them a credit benefit for future accounts.

This Bill also takes into account the increases which have occurred on over-sized lots; that is those lots in excess of one acre. Previously irrespective of the lot size if the water was used for domestic purposes the water rate was levelled off at the domestic maximum of $33, but the change in rating means a dramatic difference. I wish to refer to a case where the area is in excess of one acre. The area is 7,689 square metres, and because the maximum no longer applies the rate will increase from $33 to $202.50.

I have some reservations about the change in this rating system although I understand the reason is the cost of main extensions. Certainly however, some of the people affected have actually paid for the cost of these extensions. In many instances these extensions are not for their benefit. The water will go past their properties to benefit others in smaller subdivisions yet they will have to pay a water rate.

I believe all these properties should pay at least a minimum rate of $33, which was previously the maximum rate. It seems anomalous, in the case I quoted a minute ago, that for another property of 250,000 square metres the rate will be only $21. I do not know why the people who own that property should not be rated at the domestic maximum of $33.

However, I am very pleased this Bill has come forward. The question of commercial and industrial water rates was raised by me in this House over 12 months ago when the increase occurred in Mandurah. I asked then that the matter be given consideration. The Government has done a great deal as far as finances are concerned, and the abolition of probate, among other matters, has not made it easy for the Government to bring forward measures of this kind, but I appreciate what has been done and I support the Bill.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Labour and Industry) [11.51 a.m.]: I thank members for their support of the Bill. Having been the Minister for Water Supplies at one time, and in control of this portfolio, the member for Welshpool has a wide knowledge of this matter and understands the reason for the introduction of the Bill.

The member for Gascoyne and the member for Murray have made approaches in regard to this matter in the past, and I am pleased that they, together with the member for Mt. Marshall, support the legislation.

In connection with the point made by the member for Warren, I explained the three tiers to him last week and I think he is now satisfied about that point. I discussed with the Water Supply Department the case he mentioned. The department was not able to obtain the information required. In respect of the other individual who had a farming property, the indication given to me is that where a maximum level has been taken away the individual will come under the increase of no more than 50 per cent. If the honourable member gives me the name of the individual involved, I will obtain details for him.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Labour and Industry) [11.54 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren) [11.55 a.m.]: Is it the intention of the Government to treat the sewerage increases in the same way as it has treated the water charges? The sort of increase I cited, from $10 to $2,800, would give little opportunity for an individual to budget. As a consequence, some real difficulties arise, and this increase is part and parcel of the water and sewerage charges. Is it the intention of the
Government has no intention of making any case of water charges?

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Labour and Industry) [11.56 a.m.]: The Government has no intention of making any further alterations to the sewerage aspect during this session of Parliament.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

APPROPRIATION BILL
(CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND)

In Committee

Resumed from the 29th November. The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Sir Charles Court (Treasurer) in charge of the Bill.

Progress was reported after part 6 had been agreed to.

Part 7: Attorney General—

MR BERTRAM (Mt. Hawthorn) [11.57 a.m.]: This part deals with the area of responsibility of the Attorney General, and the Estimates for the various segments for the year 1979-80 exceed $18 million, being Crown Law over $12 million, the Corporate Affairs Office approximately $1.5 million, the Office of Titles over $3 million, and the Public Trust Office almost $2 million. It is at this point one has an opportunity to discuss the part generally.

In recent times we have had evidence of huge battles taking place in what are referred to by the media as take-overs, where individuals with extraordinary wealth and power pay huge sums of money in order to obtain control of companies. Very often the types of companies they seek to control are those which have an extraordinary impact upon the community.

For example, notwithstanding the comments of one of the entrepreneurs that what he says in his newspapers has little effect upon the electorate at election time, not a politician in Australia would agree with him, and he would not be so stupid as to push certain aspects at election time unless he had very good reason for doing so.

Recently we had some evidence of the impact of the Press upon an election result in South Australia. That is one type of impact which is causing concern. In addition, in respect of these take-overs, as they are called, we have the situation where people and companies are paying huge sums of money to obtain control of other companies. I read recently that one particular person may well have earned himself within a few hours something like $11 million of income which would be tax free. Good for that person and good for that company, perhaps; but it does not seem to me and to people who have contacted me concerning this, to be very good for the people that one should be able by simple manipulation to pick up $11 million in a matter of moments and, furthermore, that the money should be tax free.

In theory, of course, the $11 million is paid for out of the pocket of a company or a person, but in reality we know it is paid for by the consumers—the people whom I represent and whom the other members in this place represent. No person will pay huge sums of money for increased purchase prices of shares unless he has a real idea that he will get the money back, and the only way he can get it back effectively is through profit. The best way to get an increased profit is to put up prices, as we have seen. It is done either by stimulating turnover or by increasing prices, and the people who pay the increased prices, by and large, are the overwhelming number of little persons whom in the main the Australian Labor Party represents.

It is about time the Government stirred itself and did not continue with its centralist obsession. It has a centralist attitude where it suits it, of course; it makes a lot of noise opposing centralism but probably if the truth is known it practises it far more than does the ALP. For example, if one asks the Premier to do something in respect of company or corporate fraud, or the requirement for companies to disclose the names of people and political parties to which they make donations of their shareholders' money, he immediately starts talking about centralism. He talks about a type of centralism which really amounts to, "Look, the Companies Act cannot be changed until our 'Big Brothers' in the Eastern States tell us what direction we should follow."

We know where the power in companies is centralised, and it is not in Western Australia; it is in Victoria and New South Wales. The Premier habitually passes the buck or seeks to escape responsibility in connection with decent company laws by saying we have to wait, for the more significant States; in other words, the company law of Western Australia is substantially what Victoria and New South Wales want it to be. That is a clear abrogation of the responsibility of this Government in respect of companies on the one hand and corporate crime on the other hand.

Whenever do we hear the Premier complaining about corporate crime in this State? Anyone would imagine it does not exist. Recently the Premier unlawfully sent off a letter which he
hoped would trigger off and justify certain prosecutions of people, and the Supreme Court said, "What you have done is quite ineffective." It might not have said it was unlawful, but that is the way the situation worked out. I understand now something is to be done quickly to correct that position; in other words, the Government has bungled another piece of legislation. One would have thought the Government could not manage to repeat the section 54B situation within six months, but in effect that appears to have occurred. Either the Act is faulty, or the Premier is unable to read and understand it. Now, once again, the time of Parliament is to be occupied by that problem. That is gross ineptitude which is manifested so plainly for us all to see.

The Premier seeks quickly to rectify that situation. However, what does he intend to do about a matter which is equally important; namely, corporate crime and the potential for it? The people of Western Australia are left completely in the dark. My research so far has found that he has been completely silent on the question. Either the Premier knows very little about the matter or, more likely, he does not care about it. This Government is lopsided; it plays favourites and usually the demarcation line for the favouritism is relevant to the colour of one's collar and, perhaps, one's tie.

If it is a white collar crime, the Government does not worry about the situation. The member for Roe recently made that abundantly clear when he advocated the thrashing or bashing of certain types of offenders; but he pleaded that he had not really got around to thinking what he would do about white collar criminals. Clearly he was expressing unwisely—the more experienced members of the Government keep quiet about this—the state of mind which resides in the Government.

Certainly, old-fashioned, conventional crime is a matter of concern to the Government; but modern crime, particularly on a big scale and done by "clean hands" and where white collars are worn, does not worry the Government.

In answer to a question I asked recently the Premier was able to put me right—he thought very cleverly—in respect of the matter of socialism, in that he alleged certain Labor Governments introduced a jungle of unnecessary regulations. As I said recently, if we took all the legislation and all the regulations introduced into the Parliament by the present Government and placed them in a stack one on top of the other, I am inclined to think the top of the stack would be at the ceiling of the Chamber. That indicates the prodigious volume of controls, which represents a huge attempt to eliminate the choice which people have; because every piece of legislation and every regulation tends towards direction. Legislation and regulations tend towards telling people what they may and may not do and, to that extent, limit, reduce and sometimes eliminate completely, the choice of people in their day-to-day lives.

As a result of this extreme volume of regulations, the Government established the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee a year or so ago. The committee has submitted a couple of reports so far. Let me say that I am not in any way at this stage reflecting upon the personnel of the committee; I think they are doing a very good job. However, there is no need for the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee. The Labor Party said it should not have been brought into existence in the first place. Now it has been working for a short time, the party argues along the same lines.

There are three members on the committee—competent men—and there is either a full-time or approaching full-time legal adviser who does the bulk of the work. She goes through the regulations and makes recommendations concerning them.

I am of the opinion it would be a lot cheaper and a lot better, and it would do the taxpayers some benefit, if, instead of having a Legislative Review and Advisory Committee, there was a committee of this Parliament to perform that function. Such a committee should have available to it the same legal adviser, or legal advisers, at any event. There is no need for the additional committee to exist.

Members of Parliament were put here for a number of purposes; and one of those purposes is to have regard for the regulations which come before the Parliament. We know that, largely, members have ignored that area. It was an area that needed something to be done about it. On this side of the Chamber, we say that taxpayers should not be faced with the cost of $15,000 to $30,000 a year for the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee on top of the costs already being met in respect of the Parliament.

The present committee should be dissolved, notwithstanding the work it has done. Members of this Parliament—and there are plenty of them walking around the place with nothing to do—should be formed into a committee, with the advice of the legal person or persons currently giving advice to the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee.

But what is the use of having a Legislative Review and Advisory Committee if, when it
makes its recommendations, nothing is done about them? There is some evidence of that on page 3 of the annual report of the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee for the year ended the 30th June, 1979. In paragraph 7 (ii) it says—

(ii) Betting Control Act Regulations (2/78): The Committee has not been advised of any further action following the tabling of the report.

Apparently it made recommendations for a set of regulations, and nothing has happened about them. What is the use of a report in that circumstance? Members will notice that the committee does not say that, having made its submission, it changed its mind. It simply says it has not been advised of any action. It has been ignored!

On the same page, the next item reads—

(iii) By-laws for the Shire of West Pilbara: Management of Halls (4/78):

What does the committee say? It continues—

The Committee is not aware of any action having been taken.

It does not say no action has been taken in this case; it simply says it, the committee, has not been told of anything. At the very best, that shows a lack of courtesy on the part of the Government. If it had done something, it should have had the ordinary decency to say to the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee, "This is what we have done." It may be that the committee does not agree with the action that has been taken.

There are other instances where, in consequence of the recommendations, action has been taken. The following appears on page 4—

(vii) By-laws for the Shire of Three Springs: Fencing (7/78):

The Committee understands that the by-laws are being reviewed by the Local Government Department in light of the Committee's report.

If the number of that recommendation is any guide, it seems that the action required is coming along at a very slow bat. Unless it is watched carefully, one might find that this recommendation meets the fate of some of the others—that is to say, it also will be ignored.

In respect of the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee, these are my points: the Opposition believes there is no need for that committee to continue; and there are members of Parliament who have the time and the ability to do that job just as well, provided, of course, they are supplied with the expertise and advice which is currently being made available to the committee.

When one goes to the end of the report, to the page following page 6, which is headed "Schedule", one sees the volume of regulations to which I have referred. The Government has gone completely crazy with legislation and regulations. I indicate the first page of the schedule, which has a list of regulations for the committee to consider. I would not know how many there are on that page, but I imagine there are 20 or 30 lots of them. They are the regulations, without taking into consideration all of the parts of the regulations. Members can imagine what a volume of law and regulation there is on that page alone. It does not stop there. After page 1, we find there are 12 typed pages—regulation after regulation.

The other day the Premier had the temerity, or the gall, or the outright cheek to allege that it is Labor Governments which have too much legislation by regulation. I refer members to the number of regulations in that schedule. It is the present Government that has gone crazy with regulation and legislation. It is not uncommon for Governments to regard themselves as having virtually absolute power, as this Government in this State does. I refer members to what the Government has done with the electoral boundaries over the years to ensure it keeps that power.

I sound a warning to the people of this State once again. If, in the near future, they return a Government, of whatever persuasion, with a huge majority, they should be prepared to cope with the consequences which flow from that situation.

I turn briefly to the matter of legal aid because of the very poor performance, not only of the Fraser Government on the one hand, but also of this Government on the other hand.

I have a copy of the Nation Review published in 1975. The heading of the particular article to which I wish to refer reads, "The injudicious death of the Australian Legal Aid Office". It goes on to say—

According to a recent Australian Nationwide Opinion Poll, 94 per cent of Australian voters see a need for the ALAO, which now has 30 branches throughout Australia and handles more than 14,000 cases a month. 76 per cent of Australians see themselves possibly wanting to use it. But Malcolm Fraser is pledged to abolish it. We ask: Why?

That question may very well be asked. The people in this State are suffering as a consequence of this action.
One does not need to repeat what has been said here on a number of occasions which is that there is no point in people having legal rights if they do not have the finance to give them access to the courts.

We have the position in this State that, if one is wealthy, one has access to the courts; if one is poor one can seek redress from the courts, because one has little to lose, and if an adverse judgment is brought against someone, he has no assets anyway; but the overwhelming majority of the population, which falls into the middle category, does not have easy access to the courts.

Recently I read a letter in which a solicitor said to his client, "You have a good defence, but there is no point in raising it, because the penalty which will be imposed on you will not justify doing so. If we succeed it will cost you more than if you plead guilty." That is an unsatisfactory state of affairs and, unfortunately, it is common today.

Not long ago the Ombudsman (Mr Dixon) acknowledged this and underlined the need for something to be done about the situation. Not only should the legal aid service be improved, but also the legal procedures should be streamlined. People should be able to exercise their rights under the law so that they may bring a case to the court and have it heard.

This Government has a very sad record in respect of legal aid. Recently quite out of the blue and after years of agitation by the ALP and both city lawyers and those located in the north-west—for example, Mr Peter Dowding—the Government announced that an air legal aid service would be provided to the north-west. This announcement was made after repeated and sustained agitation on the part of lawyers and the ALP.

The Attorney General said the air legal aid service to the north-west would commence in February next year. Earlier I made an observation in regard to the fact that the service will commence in February. The Government has announced the service; therefore, why should it not start in December? All members of Parliament are aware of the answer. No clear undertaking has been given that the service will continue after June of next year. If the people in the north-west are not very suspicious of the Government in this regard, they will never be suspicious of it.

The princely sum of $2 800 a month has been allocated to this service. Members talk about their grave concern for the voting rights of the people in the north-west; what about their legal rights? It is a fact that people exercise their voting rights approximately once every 1 000 days; but they may desire to exercise their legal rights at any time between elections. These rights are being ignored. The sum of $2 800 appears to be rather small, particularly in view of the fact that the Minister said in reply to a question that the Commonwealth would contribute a portion of the total cost of the service.

The Minister was not able to tell us the amount of the contribution to be made by the Commonwealth. It is obvious that, with an election pending, the Government felt it was necessary to make an announcement in this regard. We have been told the Commonwealth will contribute, but we do not know how much. I should like to point out that, in due course, questions will be asked in Parliament to ascertain how much the Commonwealth contributes to the service. It is possible that the Prime Minister may not even be aware that the Commonwealth is to make such contributions.

It is true that the amount allocated to legal aid in the Budget this year is greater than that allocated last year, but members should bear in mind that the sum set down last year was negligible. Therefore, one obtains little comfort from the fact that there has been an increase.

I should like to compare the amount contributed to legal aid in this State with that of other States; in particular, I should like to refer to Queensland, because I believe that State provides the best comparison with Western Australia. Both States have Governments of a similar ilk and the Premiers of this State and of Queensland behave in much the same way. Geographically these two States are comparable also.

Under the legal aid scheme operating in Queensland, in 1978-79 the total contribution allocated to this area was $7 462 735.

In Western Australia the expenditure will be only $3 683 368, less than half of that expended in Queensland. That is some indication to this Committee of the extent of the default of this Government in respect of legal aid.

I do not know the dimensions of the accumulated surplus of revenue over expenditure in Queensland, but I find it hard to imagine that any State in Australia had an accumulated surplus exceeding $44 million at the 30th June, 1979. That is an extraordinary surplus and it seems to give Prime Minister Fraser an extraordinarily powerful opportunity to prune further this State's finances. He more or less made that clear on television last night when he pointed out that none of the States have increased their taxes. I do not agree with him, but he said
he would not urge for income tax to be introduced by the States.

A State with a surplus of $44 million does not have much bargaining power when trying to obtain more funds from the Prime Minister, or from anybody else for that matter. That is the parlous condition in which the housekeeper, the Treasurer, has placed this State. The Prime Minister was good enough to tell us that he did not see any need to call on the States, to impose their own taxes. However, my own opinion is that the people of Western Australia will cop a double income tax; it is just a question of when.

The time to double income tax is not just before a general election, but shortly after the general election. If the people of this State have not reached the stage now where they do not believe the Prime Minister, they never will.

With regard to legal aid, this Government is culpable. It is not trying at all, and it is causing the people of this State tremendous exasperation to the extent where the Ombudsman found it necessary, when speaking to a municipal conference—as reported in The West Australian of the 25th October—to point out the dilemma currently facing people, particularly those in the middle income bracket. The insufficiency of money for legal aid has meant that the commission has had to prejudge, to a certain extent, cases before it has been able to decide whether to provide finance. I do not see how that position can be avoided completely. The Legal Aid Commission has been pushed into the most unsatisfactory position where it has to prejudge.

There was at least one case a few months ago where a couple of defendants on a rape charge were denied legal aid. The case went to trial and the only reason those two people were represented by counsel was the result of sheer good fortune. If the trial had proceeded, and the people had been convicted, they may very well have found themselves sentenced to imprisonment for between seven and 10 years. As a result of a fluke, and because a practitioner of some competence observed their dilemma and offered his services, both of those people were acquitted. However, they were denied legal aid by this Government. What a tragedy it would have been if both men had been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment.

Mr T. J. Burke: What was the name of the legal practitioner?

Mr BERTRAM: I think it was Malcolm Hall who represented the two accused. He is a very competent lawyer and it was because of his services that the men were acquitted. The overwhelming probability was that if those men had not had counsel at their trial, they would have been found guilty and currently would have been serving sentences of between seven and 10 years. That is the dimension of this problem.

I will come now to the question of the Law Reform Commission. It is doing worthwhile work and it is interesting to observe that a greater sum of money will be allocated to the Law Reform Commission this year. On the face of it, that is very good but there is no point at all in stepping up the efforts and the output of the commission unless the recommendations of the commission are acted upon. I have already said there is evidence that the Government is ignoring the recommendations of the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee. There is evidence to show that the Government, preoccupied with section 54B of the Police Act, and preoccupied with all sorts of other bits and pieces, is not doing the job it is supposed to do: The job of the Government is to bridge the gap between the law on the one hand, and justice on the other hand. That is really the business of the Law Reform Commission.

Acting as a responsible member of this place, I recently inquired—per medium of a parliamentary question—as to how many of the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission had not been acted upon by this Government. I presume that the list is a prodigious one, because instead of just providing an answer to the question, as any responsible Government would have done, and listing two, three, or four recommendations, the Government took the road of secrecy. From memory, I think I was told to look at the forthcoming report from the Law Reform Commission. That is one way to hide the facts.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the honourable member please resume his seat? He is referring in some detail to the Law Reform Commission and I have given him some opportunity to do so; but the vote for the Law Reform Commission was in Item No. 142 of part 2, and that is where it should have been discussed. For that reason, I ask the honourable member to draw to a conclusion his remarks in regard to that matter.

Mr BERTRAM: I am indebted to you; Mr Chairman. It shows that, like most of the rest of us, I am not infallible. I undertake not to depart further in that way.

The next matter I would like to talk about is the penalty of hanging in this State. I have asked a question or two on this subject recently. The answers reveal that in the space of five or six years 10 people have been sentenced to death in
this State and thus far not one of them has in fact been hanged. That information was given on the 27th November in answer to question 2369, which read—

(1) (a) How many persons have been sentenced to death since the 1st January, 1974;
    (b) how many of those death sentences have been carried out?

(2) What real likelihood is there of any executions being carried out in the foreseeable future?

The answer was—

(1) (a) Ten.
    (b) None.

(2) As the question is hypothetical, it is considered to be inadmissible.

On the 29th November I asked question 2423, which read—

Are the following criteria applied—

Point of Order
Mr O'NEIL: I rise on a point of order. The honourable member may be referring to a question which I understand was stricken from the record on a ruling of the Speaker. Could you check up on that matter for me, Mr Chairman?

Mr BERTRAM: I think the Minister may have a point. Perhaps I could get out of it by saying, "The question I had hoped to ask".

The CHAIRMAN: I therefore uphold the point of order. Please treat the matter in that way.

Committee Resumed
Mr BERTRAM: The question I hoped to ask on the 29th November was—

Are the following criteria applied when his Government decides as to whether a person who is sentenced to death by hanging will be hanged—

(a) sex;
(b) Age;
(c) antecedents;
(d) occupation;
(e) previous convictions;
(f) the number of capital crimes committed;
(g) the proximity to an election;
(h) race;
(i) the reservation that in fact the sentence to hanging will rarely if ever be carried out by his Government?

Mr BERTRAM: That question was not permitted, so that the very important answer it would have prompted was not given. Of course, with the way this Government answers questions and fails to answer questions, I do not suppose it necessarily follows that a satisfactory answer would have been given in this case.

The fact of the matter is that since the 1st January, 1974, there have been 10 people sentenced to death, and none of those people has been hanged. Probably there are other people who even now are under a hanging sentence, or will be sentenced to death.

We are in the unsatisfactory position where the provisions of the Criminal Code say that in a certain circumstance a person shall be hanged; but this Government wants the best of all worlds, as it always does. It likes the best of all worlds on electoral matters, and every other important question of which one can think. It does not believe in evenhandedness, except the Premier's variety which happens to be lopsided. On 10 occasions out of 10—that is 100 per cent—the Government has not enforced the law.

This is one of the relatively rare western democracies which still has the death sentence in its law. It is attracting very considerable disapproval from other, enlightened, comparable countries. So that the Government can curry favour with its conservative supporters, it does it this way: it says, "Well, we will keep the hanging penalty there; that will satisfy them. We won't lose any votes from that. But, we won't hang anybody pursuant to the law, so it will satisfy the others." The Government wins on a 100 per cent basis.

That is the sort of approach adopted by this Government to abortion, homosexual offences, and prostitution. It will not alter the law to bring it in line with reality, but it does not enforce the law. As we all know, the Labor Party's tendency is that if there is to be no hanging, hanging is abolished. If there is to be abortion, at least let us make it lawful and let there be abortions. If there is to be homosexuality, let the law say so, and let it be. However, the conservatives operate in a different way. They say, "There will be hanging according to the law, but hang nobody."

Mr O'Connor: Only in certain circumstances. You ought to know that.

Mr BERTRAM: The conservatives say that there is to be no abortion, but they allow abortions to go on in their hundreds of thousands. They say that there is to be no prostitution, but they allow prostitution. They say that there is to
be no homosexuality, and they allow homosexuality to occur. They say there is to be no gambling, and yet gambling goes on on a grand scale. That is the way the Government talks.

Mr O'Connor: Will you tell me where you stand on each of those questions?

Mr BERTRAM: I certainly will.

As well as adopting that line, this type of conduct is bringing this State into disrepute, having regard for world levels of acceptance. The State is being made a laughing stock, or even worse. The Opposition says simply, "If, as a fact, you are not going to hang anybody, then delete the provision requiring hanging from the Criminal Code, or under whatever Act of Parliament hanging happens to exist." That is not asking very much. It has the virtue of decency; and it would involve a degree of honesty.

Whilst the Government does not possess many of those qualities, it is the sort of thing to which it could aspire quite easily. We in the Opposition encourage it to do just that.

The Opposition becomes heartily sick and tired of the proposition that this State is the best in the world by reason of the fact it has its own Family Law Court, and its own legal aid set-up, and so on. No doubt there are some virtues in that. However, the childish, kindergarten technique of pushing around the propaganda concerning these achievements in the way the Government does reflects no credit on the Government.

Regardless of the system, there will always be pluses and minuses. One minus in this situation is the fact that if a lawyer is assigned to a divorce case he is paid a certain hourly rate, but if he is assigned to a criminal matter which is of State jurisdiction, he receives a different hourly rate. This applies for example if he is engaged at the Family Court, waiting for his case to be heard, the hourly rate is $48; whereas, if the same lawyer is travelling to a prison and visiting a person there, the rate is $35 per hour. That seems to be inconsistent and it needs correction.

To some extent we know the reason for the difference in that the scale of fees laid down for Family Court matters is fixed by the Commonwealth, and the scale of fees set for criminal matters is fixed by the State.

The situation appears to be most unsatisfactory, bearing in mind that a difference of $13 per hour exists. It seems rather odd that a senior criminal lawyer should receive less than a lawyer involved in a divorce suit, particularly if his client is charged with a capital offence. The matter should be rectified.

Recently I received an answer to a question I asked which contained the comment that the scale of fees had no relevance to the actual period of practice or experience of the legal practitioner concerned. My understanding of legal costs is that the period during which a lawyer has practised is highly relevant. For example, if one engages two Queen's Counsels to appear for one, when a member of the outer Bar could do the job quite adequately, one will not recover from the other side the fees paid for the Queen's Counsels.

That is an illustration of the point I am making. An inexperienced practitioner does not expect to receive the same fee as an experienced man. That approach should be followed in the fixation of costs to be paid to practitioners through the Legal Aid Commission, regardless of whether the costs are incurred in respect of matters which fall under State or Commonwealth jurisdiction.

I do not see any justification for the large differences in the scales of fees. Either the State fee is too little or the Federal fee is too great. Something should be done to reconcile the figures.

I have mentioned the matters which required comment. It may be necessary, as we proceed, to enlarge further on some items.

**Progress**

Progress reported and leave given to sit again at a later stage of the sitting, on motion by Mr O'Neil (Deputy Premier).

(Continued on page 5706)

**NORTH WEST GAS DEVELOPMENT (WOODSIDE) AGREEMENT BILL**

**Second Reading**

Debate resumed from the 27th November.

MR BRYCE. (Ascot—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [2.27 p.m.]: If this project is handled properly, it will be the beginning of the real industrial takeoff for Western Australia. Many of us are quite confident that it will produce a return of economic prosperity and a significant lift in community living standards. If the project is not handled properly, there is no doubt in anybody's mind that an enormous number of economic opportunities will be lost to all Western Australians.

Altogether an amount in excess of $A4 000 million will be spent on the project for the
development of production wells, offshore platforms, a 130-kilometre submarine pipeline, a liquefaction plant and export facilities at Withnell Bay, construction of various onshore pipelines, and, in particular, the Dampier to Perth pipeline. Various other costs will be associated with the infrastructure.

It is presumed the construction of the shipping and a great deal of the work in regard to the sophisticated engineering associated with the liquefaction plant will go to overseas companies. As the Minister indicated in his introductory speech on the Bill, it is possible, if Australian firms are successful in gaining the contracts, that contracts to the value of $1 000 million to $2 000 million could be won. However, that is dependent upon the ability of the firms to compete and deliver the goods.

I do not believe anybody doubts the significance of the tremendous impact of the multiplier effect of this level of investment and contract work that will be spread over four or five years, and perhaps even slightly longer. The fillip to the economy is exactly what we are looking for. The construction industry, the fabrication industry of Western Australia, the engineering industry and the transport industry all stand to benefit enormously. It does seem that the economic logistics of this project depend upon the ability of the joint venturers being able to export up to 6.5 million tonnes of LNG per year over a period of up to 20 years. I understand, from as recently as yesterday's issue of The Australian Financial Review, that they are trying to prune that back to as short as 12 years.

In addition to the export component there are some very significant implications for Western Australia's energy supplies and requirements. It is now well understood that the Dongara gas field will be depleted by 1987. This field is currently supplying approximately 2.3 million cubic metres of gas a day to Western Australian industry. As the Minister indicated in his second reading speech, significant restrictions have had to be placed on firms seeking access to Dongara gas because of the limit of the gas.

Under the terms of this particular agreement, 10.5 million cubic metres of gas will be supplied to Western Australian consumers, both domestic and industrial, over a period of 20 years. It is understood also that approximately two million cubic metres of this will be provided for the Pilbara for industry there and 8.5 million cubic metres a day will be piped by pipeline, owned and constructed by the SEC, to the southern part of the State.

In addition to that supply of gas, a quantity of approximately 1.7 million tonnes of condensate will be produced as a result of the liquefaction process. In recent weeks, publicity has been given to an announcement that, in addition to the condensate, the gas producers will be required to strip the LPGs from the gas before export; presumably to Japan. The Minister indicated today, by way of answer to a question, that the stripping of those LPGs will produce a volume of 600 000 tonnes of liquid transport fuel.

Mr Mensaros: Maximum.

Mr BRYCE: If we combined the volume of condensate and the volume of LPGs that can be stripped from this gas, we have a volume of transport oil that equals in production, approximately the level of the current Barrow Island field which is about 16 per cent of the actual level of production of oil in this country. I think that speaks for itself. It indicates that it is a very significant contribution on its own.

In respect of our own energy supplies, but more importantly when reflecting on the future, it is important to appreciate that a great deal of the Western Australian coast remains unexplored. One of the significant justifications for the endorsement of this particular project is that we, in Western Australia, can expect an increase in the level of exploration up and down the coastline—particularly in the north-west—as a cash flow to this project becomes a reality.

Another very significant fact of economic life, as far as Western Australia is concerned, is the implication for the 1980s in respect of Western Australia's industrial development. Most of us in this place—and I think there would be a fairly significant consensus of public opinion—would hope that during the 1980s we will achieve the establishment of a petrochemical industry in Western Australia in addition to a steel mill.

Now is not the time to be talking about whether it will be a jumbo steel mill or an ordinary steel mill, but these two industrial development projects sit on the horizon as far as the development of our State's economy is concerned.

The development of the gas reserve is particularly important in relation to these futuristic proposals. The elements and quality of the gas are very important for the future possible development of a petrochemical industry. Something of fundamental importance to both of these developments is the availability of a guaranteed supply of gas as a source of energy in Western Australia; not just the guaranteed supply
but also at a reasonable price. I will speak about the question of price later on in my remarks.

There seems to be very little point in developing an energy gas field in this State if the cost of the gas to Western Australian industry and in particular to the Western Australian iron ore industry will be at world parity prices. If it reflects the whims and wishes of the Middle East sheiks then it will place future projects—the steel mill and the petrochemical industry—in a very dubious position. I would hope that as we develop this enormous gas reserve which is one of real and tangible benefit to the State, that it is on a guaranteed supply basis and at a very reasonable price.

I will now refer to the impact of this project and the significance of it on the State's economy. All of us in this Chamber have listened to debates—and many of us have participated in debates—discussing the state of Western Australia's economy.

During the last six years the condition of the economy has been on a steady downward slide. The unemployment figure for Western Australia has skyrocketed from just over 7 000 in 1974 and now hovers between 33 000 and 40 000 people out of work in 1979.

Business bankruptcies and company failures, especially in the field of small business have reached fairly disturbing levels; so much so that in figures released only last week it was revealed that Western Australia had the most dramatic increase in the rate of bankruptcies and company failures of all the States.

Certainly, with all this gloom, I believe I am correct when I say there is a broadly based consensus throughout our State—and I indicate that our party is certainly a part of this broad consensus—that the North-West Shelf gas project is of vital importance to reverse the most severe post-World War II recession that we have encountered.

The knockers of this particular project have been fairly few in number, and I guess they have centred around the membership of the Western Australian Conservation Council. Their particular objection seems to be based upon the export of such a large quantity of gas from Western Australia.

I would like to indicate to the Minister and to the House generally that if I personally were confronted with the choice of two simple alternatives between a project designed, funded, and ready to go, to build a pipeline across this nation to articulate the rest of this country with North-West Shelf gas, and one that relies so heavily on export, I would prefer the former. However, that is not the case. No such second project is offering; there is no local market established at this stage to justify the financial investment of the magnitude involved in this project. Therefore, I believe the people who have been knocking the project on that ground particularly are left with the only conclusion of leaving the gas in the ground for another 10, 15, or 20 years. I do not believe we can afford to do that.

I would like to indicate to the Minister that as we anticipate the gas supplies at Dongara will be depleted, and as we agree the level of exploration needs to be lifted considerably, and because of the desperate need for the economic fillip from the injection of funds, we certainly agree with the broad consensus that has been reached.

I would like to make the point also that if we were here discussing this matter in totally different economic circumstances, we may come to a different conclusion. In years to come, with the benefit of hindsight, people may be able to criticise our decision. However, all of us recognise the very grave state of Western Australia's economy, and the significance of this project proceeding to provide the economic fillip necessary.

Some may well argue we are taking a calculated risk that we will find more gas and hopefully more oil, given the current energy climate. As I have said, a project involving funds of this magnitude and one which is strung out over the life of seven Parliaments—at least in its initial stage—cannot possibly get off the ground without a political consensus between Opposition and Government parties. I want to be a little critical in this respect. Most of the attempts to achieve that consensus rested principally with the Joint venturers and the Opposition. Now is the time and place to say quite honestly and bluntly that we in the Opposition have been frustrated and have felt very disappointed over the past few years that the Government seemed determined to keep us in the dark. I want to record our thanks and appreciation to the company for the assistance it has given us.

So I indicate that we support the agreement before the House because of its importance to the economy. But I must state we have had no say at all in the agreement, despite the importance of the need for basic consensus.

Having considered the details of the agreement, we are of the view also that based on the information provided to Parliament in the agreement and in the Minister's second reading
speech, we have formed the conclusion that the
Government has fallen a long way short of
achieving the best possible deal for Western
Australians of today and tomorrow in at least five
significant areas. In a short while I intend to
consider each of those five in turn.

It is reasonable to assume that a Labor
Government or perhaps even just a different
Government would have done things differently.
By daring to spend a little time explaining what I
believe the Opposition sees as weaknesses in the
agreement, and some of the things that we, as a
Government, would have done, I run the risk of
being labelled a subversive, an obstructionist, a
knocker, or a person who knows best.

When I was contemplating my remarks on this
particular subject just a few days ago, a rather
fascinating quotation was pointed out to me. It
referred to the difficulty of being able to offer any
form of constructive criticism without being on
the receiving end of some fairly ferocious abuse
from the Premier. In this respect I would like to
draw attention to the words of Sir Paul Hasluck,
a former senior Federal Liberal Minister—in fact,
he was almost the Federal Leader of the Liberal
Party at one stage. Of course, he was the
Governor General of Australia, and while in the
Federal Parliament he represented the electors of
Curtin which includes the people of Nedlands.

After a recent Nedlands ratepayers’ meeting, Sir
Paul’s remarks were reported in the Subiaco Post,
the Daily News, and The West Australian. He
said—

We live under a State Government that
knows best. It believes that any criticism is
either irresponsible, ill-informed or
subversive.

For the sake of this particularly important debate,
I hope the Minister for Fuel and Energy will
prove Sir Paul Hasluck wrong and that in respect of
the five particular facets of the project
development which concern us he will be very
keen to hear our constructive criticism and he will
comment on that criticism when he has the
opportunity to reply.

Firstly, I would like to comment on the
contents of the agreement, its presentation to
Parliament, and its consideration by the
Parliament. Very few people would question my
statement that this agreement was introduced to
the House with unprecedented haste. The
Government signed the agreement on the 27th
November, and on that very same day notice of
the Bill was given to this Chamber and the Bill
itself was introduced. I very much doubt that in
the history of this State an agreement Bill was
introduced to the Parliament on the very day it
was signed.

There is not much doubt that last week there
was a high level of expectation in this Legislative
Chamber that we would adjourn for Christmas
and that the Parliament would be dissolved to
allow time for the parties to prepare for the
election shortly after Christmas. Parliament even
held its annual Christmas dinner last week, and
many of us believed that would be the wind-up.

When I was a little critical of the Government’s
decision to introduce a Bill of such significance on
the assumption that it may take only one or two
days to be considered by the Parliament as a
whole, I indicated that the Bill was brought to
this Parliament before the joint venturers had
completed their feasibility studies and before the
contracts to purchase the gas had been signed. The
Premier, in replying to the debate that took
place last week in respect of the desirability of
postponing the second reading for a fortnight,
said that the leaders of industry would have
considered the contents of the Bill and would
know all about it, where they were going, and
what was happening, within 24 hours.

It so happens that one of the partners of the
joint venturers was the gracious host at a
Christmas cocktail party the following night.
Naturally, the subject of the North-West Shelf
gas agreement was a significant topic of
conversation. There were some very significant
Western Australians present at that cocktail
party; not only bankers but also leaders of
industry from various places were in attendance. I
concede that the Premier was right to the extent
that some of them had read the agreement.
However, some had not and others indicated they
would be interested to have a little time to
consider its contents and to provide an input as
far as my comments were concerned for the
purposes of this debate.

One very notable Western Australian who has
been around for quite a long time, at that cocktail
party, seemed rather cynical about the agreement.
He drew my attention to the fact that the
Government had brought the Bill before the
House fairly hurriedly. He said the agreement
itself was so broad that a bulldozer could be
driven through it in a number of places. He
maintained that, coming before the feasibility
study was provided for the Government, and on
the eve of an election, it bore all the hallmarks of
a little window dressing.
Comments from somebody as significant as that gentleman were interesting to me, because I am quite happy to concede that in age terms, I am a comparative novice alongside some of these aging captains of industry, who have been around for a long time. His comments helped me come to a conclusion. Having studied the substance of the agreement in very careful detail, I point out to the Minister that it contains a number of omissions or areas which we believe have not been considered adequately. The Opposition would like to draw the Minister’s attention to these areas and register its protest.

Our five areas of concern are, firstly, the fact that the majority shareholding and controlling interest in the project rests in foreign hands; secondly, the fact that no reference is made in the agreement which requires the gas producers to farm the development of the gas fields; thirdly, the omission of any reference to the royalty rate; fourthly, the confusion and uncertainty which exists, based upon conflicting public statements by the Minister for Fuel and Energy and the State Energy Commission regarding the guaranteed supplies of gas to Western Australian consumers; and, finally, the much vaunted clause 12, designed to provide preference to local industry which, in our opinion, has been so poorly and broadly worded as to become effectively a no-preference clause; indeed, one of our members suggested—perhaps a little facetiously—that it appeared to provide a preference to the rest of the world. We are certainly keen to discuss these matters with the Minister.

Our first concern is the question of ownership and control of the North-West Shelf gas development project. In answer to question 2504 this morning, the Minister indicated that four companies—namely, BP Petroleum Development (Australia), California Asiatic Oil Company, North-West Shelf Development Pty. Ltd., and Woodside Petroleum Development—all had a 16.67 per cent interest in the project. Mid-Eastern Oil has an 8.3 per cent interest and Woodside Oil Ltd. has a 25 per cent interest.

The Minister indicated in his second reading speech that the breakup of the ownership of the shares meant that 52 per cent of the shareholding rested in the hands of overseas investors and decision-makers.

Let me make a brief comparison between the development 15 years ago of the Pilbara iron ore resources, and the development today of an incredibly important gas resource. I would have thought we would develop a little more concern for that sophisticated argument which states, “resource development projects in Australia should be controlled by Australians”.

I emphasise this point: I cannot imagine at this time, any Government anywhere else in the world which would embark on a major development project involving an energy source allowing the control over the investment, the growth of the project, and all the other decisions which follow to rest in hands outside the country of origin.

In case anyone is inclined to misrepresent my position, I repeat that I have conceded on numerous occasions that foreign investment—particularly joint venture experience—is very important. However, I had hoped that by the time we reached the 1980s, we would have achieved a position whereby it was possible to have Australian control over all major resource developmental projects.

I know there are members opposite who have significant differences of opinion in philosophical terms with the position I am putting forward. Had it been necessary to use an ingredient of community—or public—capital to achieve a maximum degree of Australian ownership and control of the project, serious consideration should have been given to it. I fully understand that sort of suggestion is anathema to various members opposite. I am expressing a personal point of view. When the iron ore industry got off the ground some 15 years ago, we became aware that a significant amount of the return on those investments was going overseas. That iron ore industry today produces 115 million tonnes of iron ore each year, which is 15 per cent of the world’s iron ore production and 25 per cent of the entire traded iron ore throughout the world.

With all the mesmerisation associated with the capital cost of the gas project, it is well to remember that the total investment in the iron ore industry amounted to $2 500 million, and the replacement cost in 1979 dollars would be $6 000 million. I for one am only too happy to concede that our ability to marshall investment finance of that order is seriously limited. But I would have hoped that with the experience of the iron ore industry, where foreign shareholders had such a significant say in the distribution of the cake afterwards, that as we approached this major project in the 1980s we would have changed our priorities and position just slightly.

Mr Speaker, I am sure you are aware there is a growing trend in third world countries, resource-producing countries, of a very serious determination to secure much greater returns for resources, principally through two avenues; firstly, the price of the resource and, secondly, the
ownership and the control of resource development.

Many Western Australians would never dream of associating themselves with third world countries; but it is somewhat ironic that so many of these third world countries manage to be able to negotiate and bargain to protect their own best interests better than we do.

In our view, this particular project presented the Government with an ideal opportunity for a partnership between private and public capital in Australia. There are countless examples in other parts of the world where it is deemed to be desirable, effective, and responsible for the community through Governments concerned to participate in the development and the direction of the development of energy resources.

It is a pity we seem to be so far out of step that we reach the point where we have 48 per cent Australian equity in the project, but we will not consider the feasibility or desirability of increasing that equity if it involves public capital. I draw the attention of the House to the situation in the Middle East. Long gone are the days when people outside the Middle East told the people of that area how the returns and the development of their energy resources were to be spent. The rest of the world had its fair share of opportunity to do that over a very extended period of time.

In Mexico—and most Latin American countries—State-owned monopolies direct and control the development of energy resources in the interests of the entire nation. In all sincerity, I am not suggesting for one minute that that is the most desirable course of action to adopt so far as we in Australia are concerned, at least at this stage. There could well be some time in the future when it becomes almost a case of national emergency or necessity for Governments to play a very much more positive role in this particular field.

I have read of the benefits which are now flowing to Norway as a result of the Norwegian experience and association with the development of the North Sea oil project. Long after the construction work is finished the returns on the investments are pouring back into Norway because the Government of Norway has an equity in that project.

As I said by way of debate a few days ago, in this context I believe it is a great pity the taxpayers of Britain, through the British Government, will have a stake in this project long after the construction work is finished and the spin-off has started to die away. The taxpayers of Britain will receive an annual return from this gas. Exactly the same is the case with the taxpayers of Holland through a Dutch Government involvement with Royal Dutch Shell. Long after the spin-off and construction work have gone, individual citizens of that country will benefit from the exploitation of this gas.

I find that hard to reconcile with my own concept of the best long-term interests of the people I represent. For the Minister's benefit, I concede that this constitutes a point where our ideologies differ.

Mr Mensaros: Are you thinking of the British Government interest in BP or private shareholders?

Mr BRYCE: Yes, the British Government's involvement.

Mr Mensaros: Hopefully that will diminish.

Mr BRYCE: If the iron lady of British politics has her way and that Government divests itself of its interest in the North Sea project, it is my point of view it will be doing the country a great disservice, because when the time comes when that project produces a return, some of the return should go to the people of Britain and not just the shareholders of that company.

It is a great pity that Western Australians effectively have no equity in our project. I am talking about ownership and long-term returns. In the past the Minister has indicated to me by way of debate that if Western Australians wanted to involve themselves in owning shares in this project they could have acquired shares in Woodside Development Petroleum, which is a public company.

I cannot prove this figure, but I have some indication that as few as 8 per cent of all Australians ever go anywhere near a Stock Exchange or dabble in the day-to-day business of buying and selling shares.

Mr Laurance: Are you suggesting it is exclusive to that 8 per cent?

Mr BRYCE: Anyone can be involved of course. By definition, the companies are public. This is where I believe the Government of Western Australia could have done something constructive to galvanise the people of Western Australia to get behind the project. Had we advertised and pushed this project publicly in Western Australia and throughout the nation, I believe a great many Australians would have subscribed what may be defined as a rather small amount of private capital.

Mr Laurance: History does not bear out your theory.
Mr BRYCE: I know there is a tendency in this country to be very wary of project developments which involve large volumes of high risk capital; but given the changes in the world energy climate over the last couple of years, it is my belief the marginality of this project is no longer as big a factor as it once was.

I believe it was a great opportunity which we could have developed had we wanted to; perhaps a populist concept of a community development fund. There have been enormous community funds available where people have been encouraged to buy a brick in a building. Whether it involved very scarce funds available to Governments, or loan funds, it is my view the community would have benefited significantly by floating such a fund. I think such a concept probably will be considered by Governments at the national and State level in respect of energy projects well into the 1980s and 1990s.

I conclude my argument in respect of this point by drawing the attention of the House to the Premier's most unequivocal policy promise and undertaking at the 1974 election. Members will remember that document did not have page numbers and those of us who were here during the 1974-1977 period had great difficulty referring to the page after the one before.

Mr Clarko: That was the only thing missing from it.

Mr BRYCE: In his 1974 policy speech the Premier said—

We will negotiate for majority Australian ownership either in the short term or the long term wherever Australians are willing or able to contribute the funds. Our initial objective will be a majority Australian ownership in all major Western Australian projects by 1980.

Now, the Minister and the Premier may well respond with the suggestion that the money is not forthcoming and that the willingness to invest is not there. I rest my argument by saying the Government did not do all in its power to embark upon an advertising programme that could have mobilised perhaps enough capital—local Australian capital—to provide us with that small percentage that was needed to give us control of the whole project on a local basis.

The second basic reservation and matter for concern is that in the agreement there is no reference to the need for companies that will develop this resource to farm the gas fields as they develop the actual resource. It has been accepted in Government circles, and certainly in the iron ore industry, that it is essential in the long-term, best interests of our State to farm our iron ore resources as is done in Mt. Tom Price and Paraburdoo. The mixing of ores and blending high-grade and low-grade ores is important to ensure the industry will last for as long as it possibly can at an economic level.

As far as this project is concerned, in a comparative sense the same principle should be involved and should have been catered for in the agreement. The existing reserves we are talking about in this agreement involve three different gas fields. They are the North Rankin gas field which has a reserve of 243 billion cubic metres, the Goodwin reserve which has 73 billion cubic metres, and the Angel field which has a reserve of 40 billion cubic metres.

There is genuine concern, which has not been allayed by the Minister's answer to my question earlier today, whether the entire 6.5 million tonnes per annum of liquefied natural gas which will be exported overseas could well come from the North Rankin field.

The North Rankin field is the most attractive and most economic of the three fields. My argument is that all the gas which is to be exported from this country should not come exclusively from the North Rankin field. There is some logic and common sense in that argument. It draws our attention to the dangers of allowing the North Rankin field to be used exclusively for export purposes so that the fields to be left will be the Goodwin and Angel fields which are less attractive in terms of cost of production.

I am suggesting that in our opinion, in the best long-term interests of the State a means whereby the North Rankin field is tapped at the same time as the Goodwin and Angel fields are tapped should have been included in the agreement.

I find it strange and somewhat surprising that the names of the fields were not mentioned in the agreement at all. It is apparent from the Minister's answer, that the actual names of the fields are referred to in other documentation. That is something I readily concede, but it concerns me that when I asked the Minister today in question 2509 what guarantee there is that all the gas to be produced for export will not be taken from the North Rankin field, the Minister could not give me a guarantee. That is a matter of concern with a project as big as this one.

In the best, long-term interests of the State, we should have written into the agreement a requirement for the venturers to farm the resource—

Mr Mensaros: I completely agree with you, but when you say we should have written this into the actual agreement I say to you: If you achieve the
go-ahead for the project and get a commitment that they now develop the other two fields, then I offer you my portfolio immediately.

Mr BRYCE: In a very short space of time I might be very happy to accept it. A further argument is the question of royalties. Most normal Western Australians have been more than a little surprised that in an industrial agreement brought to Parliament—an agreement between the State Government and the joint venturers to develop a gas resource—no mention is made of the royalty that will accrue to the State of Western Australia as a result of the development of the gas.

By way of an answer to a question, the Minister indicated, that it was not necessary to incorporate a clause in the agreement that dealt with the question of royalties. Perhaps I had best quote here my question 2505 of today. I asked the Minister—

Why was the royalty rate for the North West Shelf gas not included in the agreement between the join venturers and the State Government?

The Minister’s answer indicated that such provisions already existed in the Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act, 1967. I do not profess to know that Act inside out, but I do indicate that I have read very carefully the sections of it that deal with royalties for gas and petroleum development.

While this particular Act states the royalty rate as 10 per cent of the wellhead price, there is also a provision in that Act to provide for conditions under which royalties can be reduced and are payable.

It is certainly not fair and reasonable to omit a reference to royalties in the agreement, on the understanding that any interested citizen, leader in industry, union leader, or academic would pick up the royalty from that Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act. It would have been very worth while to have royalties included in the agreement so that everyone who reads the agreement might know exactly where the Government stands in respect of royalties.

This morning the Minister’s answers to specific questions without notice were considered adequate to give us an example of what level of royalty may accrue to the Western Australian Government. However, the answers could have been supported with a reasonable example. For example, certain levels of production and estimates for the 10 per cent royalty rate of the wellhead price could have been made. I believe it was an evasion on the part of the Government and it may be that it is consistent with the Minister’s fairly often repeated statement to the captains of industry that Western Australia is a low royalty State. I do not believe the Minister would seek to withdraw from that position. I believe that is his attitude and it is another area which involves the question of degree and in which he and I certainly have to agree to disagree.

I was concerned to discover that in the 1978 financial year the value of minerals produced in this State exceeded $1 800 million and only $57 million was returned to the Consolidated Revenue Fund in the form of royalties.

Mr Coyne: They got $5 million in South Australia.

Mr BRYCE: The member may be correct. I imagine they received even less in Tasmania. One does not receive a large amount of mineral royalties from apples.

This State is heavily endowed with mineral wealth and there is a basic qualitative argument in respect of the question of royalties about how much should be returned to the people who own the resource as a community.

I do not suggest for a minute—and it would be mischievous of anybody in this Chamber to say I do—that the royalties should be so heavy or demanding as to drive away from this State people interested in investing capital.

Mr Coyne: The Government deserves some credit for its activities in regard to minerals in allowing these developments to take place.

Mr Jamieson: Who gave you a needle today?

Mr BRYCE: I am not suggesting for a moment that the Governments of this State since 1950—there have been accelerated periods—do not deserve congratulations for launching a significant number of developmental projects.

Mr Rushton: Is that in proportion to the number of projects developed over those years, or in regard to the basic work?

Mr BRYCE: There is a tendency in the minds of members opposite to lay claim to being the only Government which has ever succeeded in achieving industrial or project development in this State; but the record does not prove that to be true. I am speaking of Governments from 1950 onwards.

Mr Coyne: They have been stifled in South Australia. The Government has put on the clamps.

Mr BRYCE: I have not noticed that. As a matter of fact, I thought the Labor Government in Queensland many years ago, and the current Labor Government in New South Wales, have
rather attractive growth records as far as these matters are concerned. Nothing is achieved by trying to simplify the argument in terms of black and white.

The essence of my argument is: After the initial spin-off of construction has finished, after the multiplier effect of the orders lodged and contracts let in the initial years of construction, because we have no equity in these projects like so many other countries in the world, the best this State can look forward to is a return in the form of royalties.

One of the dilemmas in which we found ourselves in economic terms in this State after the 1960s was that that sort of reasoning and logic demands that we have one developmental project after the other in the pipeline, ready to flow; but that will not happen forever. If we are to be dependent upon the spin-off from the initial construction phase only, we will eventually get to the last resource developmental project and we will look back on a Western Australia in which very few of us have an equity in terms of what is being produced, and, if the Minister will concede, the level of royalties will be very low indeed, as a result of which the actual return to the community will be minimal. This is the appropriate time and place to express that particular difference of opinion.

The Minister indicated that 40 per cent of the royalties will go to the Commonwealth and 60 per cent only will come to the State. In true parochial fashion I should indicate I am not very happy about that. I would be prepared to suggest that perhaps we should look at rewriting some mirror legislation to see whether we can redress that balance a little further. If I find myself in the Minister's office in the future, I will be keen to initiate that.

The fourth of these particular points, in our opinion, is fairly basic to the economic future of Western Australia. It concerns the supply and cost of gas for Western Australian consumers. As I have said, the agreement provides for the joint venturers to supply 10.5 million cubic metres of gas per day for Western Australian use. Basically two million cubic metres of this will be used in the Pilbara, we hope, and 8.5 million will be piped to the southern part of the State. Because of a number of conflicting statements, several issues of very basic concern to Western Australians have been raised concerning the supply and cost of gas to Western Australian consumers.

The first matter, as I have suggested already, is the question of the price of gas to local consumers. The argument that there is little ultimate benefit to Western Australia if the gas is available to the SEC and to industrial and domestic consumers in this State at world parity prices only is a fundamental challenge to the development of this entire project.

I understand the terms and conditions applying to the SEC are secret and they will probably have to remain so; but presumably they are at a base price considerably below world parity price. If they are not, I rather hope they will be. The implications are very serious for Western Australian industry in respect of the future price of gas.

Industrial growth and the diversification of our economy will not happen if guaranteed supplies of gas from the north-west at reasonable prices are not available.

In 1974 the "energy bill" for all iron ore companies or producers accounted for approximately 5 per cent of operating costs. Today the "energy bill" that each of those companies has to face approximates 20 per cent of operating costs.

I should like to indicate on the very best of authority from Hamersley Iron Pty. Ltd. that because of the escalation in the price of oil and the lack of reliability of supply, it will no longer be regarded as the primary energy source for the iron ore industry. The iron ore companies in the Pilbara are already considering the technology and engineering to be used to convert to coal, if necessary.

It seems absurd, but Mr John Innes of Hamersley Iron Pty. Ltd. has made this point perfectly clear. There is not one iota of logic to suggest that the iron ore companies of the Pilbara should be expected to pay world prices for gas, because they have already come to the conclusion that the costs for oil, based on world parity prices, are precipitating a financial disaster for them. It would seem ironic, if not absurd, that the iron ore companies of the Pilbara should import coal from New South Wales for the purposes of generating power and treating iron ore, because they cannot obtain access to North-West Shelf gas at prices which are reasonably below world parity. There will be no advantage whatsoever.

If we are to get beyond the stage of being an economy that treats raw materials, we must have a guaranteed supply of reasonably priced gas for industry.

Because Mr Innes certainly cannot be regarded as subversive or as an obstructionist—at least not in the eyes of the Premier; I do not think he would regard Mr Innes as someone who was irresponsible in that respect—I would like to
quote something which Mr Innes had to say at a seminar conducted by the Australian Labor Party in September of this year. It was called "A Mining, Energy, and Jobs Conference".

At pages 76 and 77 of the transcript of that conference, Mr Innes said—

Gas producers argue that local iron ore companies must pay the same price as for imported oil. On such a pricing situation, our view is that we simply cannot afford to take the risk of using Australian gas. To be locked into a price escalation formula which is going to be dependent upon actions taken by OPEC could be a recipe for economic disaster.

He continues—

We would argue that there is no logical basis for insisting that North West Shelf gas being supplied to Pilbara based exporters must be priced on the same terms as Middle East oil.

Speaking on behalf of the iron ore industry, he said—

We would argue that the escalation of Australian gas prices for use in Australia should be geared to some local cost index and not to some largely artificial and unstable Middle East crude oil price. We already know that escalation on Australian supplies of coal can be indexed to local cost factors.

This is where he expresses his disappointment. He continues—

Discussions with the North West Shelf partners are still in progress.

Mr Mensaros: What date was that?

Mr BRYCE: It was the end of September. He continued—

It is quite conceivable that coal will have to be imported into the Pilbara to satisfy some of our local energy needs and extensive engineering studies to this end are now being conducted.

This morning, I asked the Minister whether it was anticipated that the cost of gas to local domestic and industrial consumers would escalate in accordance with any increase in world parity prices.

In reply, the Minister said that the escalation conditions were covered in the gas sales agreement between the SEC and the joint venturers, and that such conditions were confidential. Industry—and speaking particularly in respect of the iron ore industry—is particularly anxious about this question. I look forward to hearing the Minister's response in respect of that matter.

The question of the supply of gas to local consumers from the SEC also has been a facet of this project which has caused considerable concern. The agreement we have been asked to consider in this place is not explicit enough about the future.

I learnt only today, after the Minister was gracious enough to answer a question from me early this morning, that in addition to the 10.5 million cubic metres of gas to be supplied to the Western Australian market, the joint venturers are prepared also to let us have an additional quantity equal to up to 7.5 million cubic metres, as the demand increases. However, there is a very significant "but"; it seems to depend upon future discoveries of gas.

Perhaps if I take the elements of this argument and put them one after the other, members who are not particularly familiar with this fairly sophisticated subject will appreciate what I believe is a fairly serious situation.

At pages 6 and 7 of the Minister's second reading speech notes, he referred to the question of the supply of gas to the Western Australian market. The Minister indicated at some length that our needs of gas in Western Australia, so far as the future was concerned, were comfortably catered for in the agreement. I guess this is where some of us in Western Australia would, perhaps, take issue with the Minister. That is the Minister's opinion.

Conflicting statements have been made by the Minister and the SEC in respect of this particular question. The fact that there is a conflict of opinion has produced a degree of anxiety in some cases amongst those who are concerned about the long-term supplies of energy to this State.

At the present time the Western Australian domestic gas market is served essentially from Dongara, with 2.3 million cubic metres of gas supplied each day. We have already touched on the reality that significant restrictions have had to be placed on industrial consumption.

Because of a real fixed limitation, industry in Western Australia has had to import oil. That oil has been very expensive, and some firms have had to consider the engineering challenge which faced the SEC at Kwinana in a conversion to coal.

The Minister is well aware that mineral projects involving the refining of bauxite, the treatment of mineral sands—there is a whole range of local industries in the south-west, including the refining of nickel—require enormous quantities of gas as a source of energy.
I have with me an official document distributed by the SEC. It does not carry a date, but it is entitled “Dampier to Perth Natural Gas Pipeline”. Referring to the gas which the North-West Shelf project will make available to the southern part of this State, the document reads—

Of this 8.5 million cubic metres (300 MMCFD) will be transported to the South-West area markets by the Dampier-Perth pipeline. At this stage it appears likely that all of this gas will be firmly committed to final customers before construction commences.

In this document the SEC has set out that although 2.3 million cubic metres of gas currently is being supplied from Dongara, if given an option, Western Australia will switch to using 8.5 million cubic metres of gas each day for local consumption by 1985.

That is all that will be supplied under the terms of this agreement by the mid or late 1980s. The Minister indicated in his answer to Parliament today that by the turn of the century we will require 17 million cubic metres of gas every day to satisfy the needs of industry. That is the estimate. He spelt out to us that further discoveries of gas in the north would be necessary to bridge that gap.

I am not quite certain the agreement has been put together in the best long-term interests of Western Australia if, as the State Energy Commission has repeatedly said in some of its public documents and certainly as Mr Kirkwood has said in several documents which he has written and published, further discoveries of gas will be necessary into the future to guarantee Western Australian supplies when so much will be sent overseas. I offer to the Minister the criticism that I am therefore not really certain the project has been put together in the best possible way. Perhaps the chances of discovering more gas are good but some people argue it is not likely we will find another gas field of the Rankin trend or anywhere near that size.

The last of the five issues we present to the Minister as matters of concern to us is preference to local industry. Given that the project is controlled by overseas interests, that a very large amount of the gas in these fields will be sent overseas, and that the royalty rate has not been finally set and certainly has not been revealed to the people of Western Australia, the essential benefit to Western Australia from the development of the project will be the volume of contract work and the level of employment opportunities which will be given to Western Australian firms and Western Australian employees.

Clause 12 has been much vaunted, because this is the Minister’s response to public criticism from us in the past that Western Australian industry should be catered for, given preference, and duly considered. When we read clause 12, we on this side of the House have ringing in our ears some of the statements of the Premier that there was no fat on the project and that no realistic preference would be given to Western Australian firms. This concerns us greatly. It seems the sentiments expressed by the Premier have been embodied in clause 12, and I urge all members of the House to consider seriously the wording of it. Perhaps that very experienced and somewhat cynical gentleman at the cocktail party was quite right about a degree of window dressing as far as this clause was concerned. Clause 12 states—

12. (1) The Joint Venturers shall, for the purposes of this Agreement, as far as it is reasonable and economically practicable so to do—

(a) use the services of engineers, surveyors, architects and other professional consultants resident and available within the said State;

(b) use labour available within the said State;

(c) when preparing specifications, calling for tenders and letting contracts for works materials plant equipment and supplies ensure that Western Australian suppliers manufacturers and contractors are given reasonable opportunity to tender or quote;

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.04 p.m.

Mr BRYCE: Prior to the afternoon tea suspension I drew the Minister’s attention to our concern about the so-called preference clause—a very different preference clause from the one we have been discussing in recent weeks—which is clause 12 of the agreement. Its purpose is to write into the agreement a requirement essentially for companies to lean in favour of local manufacturers when tenders are being let. I believe, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Crane) that I was about three-quarters through committing that particular clause to the Hansard record, and I would like to continue with it because it is germane to the argument to include all four parts of the clause. Paragraph (d) reads as follows—

(d) give proper consideration and where possible preference to Western Australian suppliers manufacturers and contractors
when letting contracts or placing orders for works materials plant equipment and supplies where price quality delivery and service are equal to or better than that obtainable elsewhere.

So it is the very last part of that paragraph that causes us concern about the preference to be given to Western Australia manufacturers and firms in general. The paragraph says that as long as Western Australian firms are at least as good as, or better than, the rest of the world in terms of price, quality, delivery, and service, then the joint venturers ought to lean in their favour.

I recognise the degree of difficulty in enforcing such provisions in regard to commercial arrangements, but I would have thought the wording could be tightened up very significantly in the interests of local firms. I fail to see why it need be spelt out that Western Australian firms should be better than the rest of the world in regard to quality, price, delivery, and service before the joint venturers are to lean in their favour.

Mr Mensaros: Equal to or better than.
Mr BRYCE: They must be equal to, or better than, manufacturers from other places.
Mr Mensaros: I do not want to interject while you are speaking, but it would be easier for me to reply if you would suggest an alternative.
Mr BRYCE: I doubt whether I would have spelt out so much detail. Certainly I would not have included the phrase "equal to or better than".
Mr Jamieson: You give so many let-outs.
Mr BRYCE: Probably I would have ended the sentence about 17 words earlier. We need an unequivocal commitment on the part of the Government and the joint venturers to give preference to local firms.

Governments talk about preference to industry in Western Australia; and various agreements or schemes have been devised to lean in favour of local firms by allowing those firms a certain price margin. It may have been very difficult in a commercial sense to impose that particular formula on the joint venturers, but we on this side of the House are very concerned about the actual phraseology used. It may well be that in every conceivable case the gas producers would be able to find a valid reason to let a contract to an overseas or an interstate company. I am as parochial about a contract going to the "Eastern States" as I am to a contract going overseas.

That concludes the fifth of the five particular points I wanted to raise. A great deal hinges on the successful development of the North-West Shelf gas field.

At this stage I would like to be a little more elaborate in my thanks to the joint venturers, and in particular to Woodside Petroleum Development Pty. Ltd. for its co-operation over many months in certain ways. This company provided briefing sessions for Opposition members, and it provided speakers to attend seminars which the Australian Labor Party conducted on this subject. It responded very readily to our requests for information. Certainly I would like to thank them publicly.

Finally, let me emphasise that we recognise the need for a political consensus in respect of a project of this magnitude; we recognise the significance to our State of the depletion of the Dongara gas field by 1987; we recognise the desperate need for the investment boost to the State's flagging economy which this $4000 million project will provide; and we recognise the importance of stepping up the level of exploration for gas and oil off the Western Australian coast, which we believe will be stimulated as a result of this project going ahead.

For those reasons, we support the project and the Bill; although as I said earlier, based upon the information presented to the Parliament in the agreement and in the Minister's second reading speech, we express our regret that in our opinion the Government has fallen short of achieving the best possible deal for Western Australians.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [4.11 p.m.]: I am sure, Sir, you would anticipate that more than one member of the Opposition would be required to say a few words on this matter.

I have no doubt that what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has said signifies the intention of the Labor Party in this House to support the measure. I have done some study on this matter to see how far members of the Liberal Party support the measure outside the Chamber. I came up with a rather negative result, and I wonder how genuine are members opposite under such circumstances. I will show that in all sorts of resolutions and comments passed and made in the Federal council of 1979 and the last available party platform document, nothing whatsoever has anything to do with the North-West Shelf project.

It seems Liberal Party members consider the project insignificant, and deem it unnecessary to say much about it. I think it is a vital matter, and one which should have the approbation of the party faithful.

The early part of this project goes back a lot longer than the Minister. It is necessary for us to
ensure that the SEC has an advantage in respect of gas supplies as the Dongara supply runs out. This was known a long time ago. As a matter of fact, as early as the 29th June, 1971, in a minute to myself as Minister and the then Premier, the co-ordinator of development (Mr John Parker) sought our approval of a feasibility study of bringing gas from the Palm Valley field to Western Australia. We gave our approval. In its decision, Cabinet approved the recommendation for a State-sponsored pipeline feasibility study.

Bear in mind that was the 29th June, 1971. It makes one realise how far afield we were looking to maintain a supply of natural gas—a supply which we are now to obtain from a different direction, although it must be piped almost as far.

The proposal to pipe Palm Valley natural gas to Western Australia had some advantages. At the time the SEC even had, a sort of national pipehead arrangement in case it was decided to go ahead. The commission had a sort of loose option with the developers. Nothing had been done in that field at that stage; it is a fairly big field, although not as big as the Rankin field.

An alternative was to pipe gas from Palm Valley to the Gulf of Carpentaria and then to export it in a liquid form to Japan and other overseas markets. Probably that is still the ultimate process for that development. That proposition contained spin-off advantages to the State which the present development will not achieve directly. For instance, it was proposed to run the pipeline in the region of Mt. Keith and the Teutonic Bore, so that fuel in the form of natural gas would be available for that development to provide energy for mining and milling of the minerals there. That would have made the difference between the development being viable and non-viable. It remains non-viable to this time.

The Labor Government was given figures by Mr John Parker, who had plenty of pipelines. We were constantly looking through his plans; often one could not see the light at the end of his pipelines because he was a dreamer in his advocacy for the State. However, there was much sound logic in his purpose of tying up the system at that time.

After approval was given for the expenditure of funds for the feasibility study, Mr Parker came to me. By then the Rankin field had been discovered, and I asked him what was the position. He said it did not matter, and that the money would be well spent because the knowledge gained from the study would apply to the piping of gas from the Rankin field, once the gas was brought to the shore. To that extent, nothing was lost as a result of the feasibility study.

After that, of course, Ministers received a number of briefings by the Bocal people, both as individual Ministers and as the Cabinet. Bocal had in mind the development of this gas field. Its timetabling was that the gas would be brought ashore by 1983. That timetable has not changed very much. Many changes have occurred in respect of ownership, directorship, and other matters, but the venture still is following basically the same time schedule. Therefore, it is not surprising that the agreement has been brought before us at about this time.

However, several matters in the agreement have developed in a manner which is a little surprising to us. I will deal with them progressively. In the meantime I would like to say I am looking for an indication from members of the Liberal Party regarding what they think about the north-west gas field.

The latest possible information I could obtain—the Liberal Party is always well behind—is the 1976 reprint of the party platform. The librarian advises me, after visiting the Liberal Party as late as early this afternoon, that the Liberal Party WA division party platform reprint of September, 1976, is the latest available issue of the party's platform. That did not give me anything. One would have thought that even in 1976 members of the Liberal Party would be a little excited about this development. However, the platform deals with the general scope of activities of government, including native welfare, public administration, and even the north-west and the Kimberley. When I saw the latter item I thought surely this development would be mentioned, but it was not. In 1976 the party was going to do all sorts of things up there, including mineral development and an oil search. But even though the Rankin field was well known at that time, the platform contained no mention of what the Government had in mind in respect of its development.

I thought there must be something more up to date, so I looked at the Federal council agenda of plenary resolutions which were considered at their conference held in Perth on the 20th, 21st, and 22nd April, 1979. One would have thought that in this "year of excitement", the WA branch of the Liberal Party would see fit to discuss something to do with the North-West Shelf. However, again I was amazed to find no reference at all to this matter.

The matter of mineral export controls was dealt with. However, that related only to requesting the
Federal Government not to impose constraints and controls over mineral exports; it had nothing to do with the North-West Shelf.

I turn over a number of pages and come to the heading "Natural Resources". It deals with everything except North-West Shelf gas. It looks as though the member for Collie had a part in writing some of these agenda items because a strong effort came from the New South Wales delegation favouring a return to coal. The conference dealt with a national energy policy, energy conservation, and the use of liquid petroleum gas. I thought perhaps the last item might cover this matter, but it relates only to the use of LPG in motor vehicles.

The conference also discussed the conservation of oil fuels by using electric trains, coal-generated electricity in industry, and gas and electricity for home heating.

I thought the heading "Natural gas" might contain some reference to this subject; however, it related only to a request by the Queensland delegation that the council urge the Federal Government to conduct an inquiry into the price of natural gas with a view to achieving a more realistic use and price levels.

The conference discussed emission controls, the national heritage of the Barrier Reef, and a nuclear enrichment industry. However, the document contained nothing about the North-West Shelf.

Where does this so-called great Liberal Party stand on this issue? Why do not these documents mention the North-West Shelf and the requirements of the people of this country for its development?

On the other side of the ledger, the Australian Labor Party has never been ashamed to make public its decisions, and as quickly as possible. The Parliamentary Library has available copies of the Federal Australian Labor Party "Platform Constitution & Rules" approved at the 33rd national conference held in Adelaide in 1979. At page 133 of that document, under the heading "Natural Gas" the following very clear indication appears—

1. Allow exports of natural gas from the North West Shelf sufficient to justify development expenditure, but not more than should be allowed in the national interest having regard to Australia's domestic demand for hydrocarbons.

2. Discourage, in normal circumstances, the use of natural gas for base-load electricity generation except where existing power stations use natural gas. Gas prices should reflect the need to maintain power prices which are competitive with coal-fired generation.

Of course, as is mentioned in the agreement, that price is a bit lower than the price of alternative fuel. The Federal ALP policy booklet contains another large section dealing with hydrocarbon corporation. The booklet gives a clear indication of where the ALP stands on the matter of natural resources.

Perhaps of lesser importance, but nevertheless quite important in its own right is the platform of the State branch of the Australian Labor Party, operative from the 1st September, 1978. Again, this document—like all our documents—is readily available from the Parliamentary Library. On page 54, the following appears—

F. North-West Shelf
* Recognising that the development of the North-West Shelf requires the exploitation of many deposits whose profitability in the immediate future will be marginal, a Labor Government will

25. closely involve the union movement in all development discussions;

26. discuss with unions and industries whose workforce is involved, the provision of the skilled labour necessary for North-West Shelf projects from the State's and the nation's labour force, the question of social conditions in the area and the long term employment and retraining prospects for the workers concerned;

27. in keeping with Labor's determination to reduce levels of local unemployment the capital equipment for north-west developments should, as far as possible, be produced locally;

Evidently, that is what the Minister for Fuel and Energy was trying to write into his document. However, he went off the rails and ended up writing in a preference to the rest of the world, to the exclusion of this State. The State ALP policy continues—

28. allow the export of gas from the North-West Shelf to finance shelf development whilst ensuring that sufficient gas is retained for the needs of the State and the nation, particularly in metropolitan areas;
29. negotiate with the Commonwealth Government on all off-shore developments to secure their assistance in developing on shore industries, particularly petrochemical industries and pipelines associated with these developments.

That is a fairly comprehensive statement of where the State branch of the ALP stands on this issue. Compare it with the non-existent platform on this matter of the Liberal Party.

This matter does not seem to appear in any of the available Liberal Party manifestos. Perhaps there is some explanation for this. The Liberals seem to have a manifesto for everything else, but they disregard this important issue as though it were of no significance. I suggest the Government should look to its laurels and become aware of what is going on around it.

I am sure the Government has within its ranks—as we have within ours—members who are oriented towards the protection of the environment, and towards nationalism. Because of that, it is most important a party adopts a consensus view, and knows clearly where it is going; and, it should be prepared to produce a printed version of its policy in regard to various matters. Only in this way can a political party proceed without running into the difficulties it is likely to encounter if it operates on the blank cheque principle, as appears to be the attitude of the Liberal Party towards the cost of developing the North-West Shelf.

That section of the agreement concerning the State Energy Commission is to run for a period of 20 years, during which time it may purchase from the consortium up to 10.5 million cubic metres of gas per day. This seems to be a great deal by comparison with present-day energy requirements; it may or may not be sufficient. It is true that the SEC could put the gas to all sorts of uses. However, I believe it would be wrong to use the gas simply because it is readily available. It is quite different from coal and other types of fuel which are available in quantity and can be successfully employed in various areas. The Government should regard the North-West Shelf gas as a long-term resource; it should make sure it is not used indiscriminately, but remains available well into the future.

That seems to be the fundamental difference between the Government's thinking and the thinking of the Australian Labor Party on this matter. While the Labor Party wants the North-West Shelf project under way as soon as is practicably possible, we do not want to waste the resource; rather, we wish it used in a sane and sensible way, so that adequate supplies are preserved for the future, when it may be put to better use. In the meantime, we can use coal and other forms of fuel which are readily available. Indeed, the Liberal Party did say we should be looking to use them more than the hydrocarbon fuels so often used in the past. To that extent we are in unison.

There are a few points about the agreement which need clarifying. I notice that the joint venturers were obliged to continue their studies until the 30th November to enable them to determine whether the overall project was viable. In his speech, the Minister did not indicate that was so. He should have indicated if there were to be any extensions. An indication should have been given that the joint venturers had not concluded their studies, and that more time was needed. If the extra time is needed it has to be given; but that fact should not have been ignored when the Minister gave his speech.

Clause 6 of the agreement reads as follows—

6. The Joint Venturers shall notify the Minister by 11th December, 1979 (or such later date as the Minister and the Joint Venturers may agree) whether the Joint Venturers intend to proceed with the overall project and shall at the same time furnish to the Minister a summary of the results of their studies.

The Minister should have indicated that the joint venturers might need more time. I think they will; I think they will need two months. That is the suggestion which has been made to me by people in the consortium. We are very close to the 11th December and the legislation is not yet through Parliament. The Minister should have made us aware of this situation.

Included in the proposals is the word "if". Clause 7 states—

If the Joint Venturers notify the Minister of their intention to proceed . . .

The Minister did not make as many noises about markets as he should have done, because the people in the market places around the city—and the Minister visits these as often as I do and he should hear the same things I hear—are indicating that it is not easy to get markets for natural gas at this time. The Palm Valley people have tried for years to get markets without much success. They do not have a project as expensive as this and no doubt they will ultimately find markets. This field is particularly big and so the joint venturers will have an advantage over others. Nevertheless, recent history shows that obtaining markets is a problem.
I notice the joint venturers are obliged, within five years of the agreement, to indicate their capability to produce a saleable product. By that time, the industries on the other side of the world may be in a position of needing additional supplies. However, the present position is that there is not a very big acceptance on the part of those people to indicate their firm requirements.

That probably has a bearing on another matter my colleague dealt with, and that is the royalties which should be passed on. Royalties are to be based on 10 per cent of the pipehead price for the gas. Whatever the pipehead price is, the overall royalty will be 10 per cent, of which we will receive 60 per cent, with the remaining 40 per cent going to the Commonwealth, for doing very little. Perhaps we might need its assistance one day because of the location of these fields. It is important to realise that before we can issue people with permits to proceed with the offshore fishing magnates was trying to arm a fishing boat with a machine gun. At the moment, however, we do not even have that.

In many cases these fields are far closer to Indonesian shores than they are to ours. We have no means of protecting them other than by Commonwealth assistance and, therefore, we are justified in paying them a levy, which will be their overall share of the development. The Commonwealth will protect the equities of the people with whom we enter into contracts.

Even should the joint venturers decide to go ahead, there is another "if". The Bill states that on receipt of the said proposals the Minister shall approve of them either wholly or in part, without qualification or reservation, and within two months after receipt of the said proposals give notice to the joint venturers of his decision in respect of the same. The State is not bound by the joint venturers' proposals. This is not unreasonable in certain circumstances.

There are several "ifs" in this proposal which need clarification. Clause 8 (7) of the agreement reads as follows—

(7) Notwithstanding that under subclause (1) of this Clause any proposals of the Joint Venturers are approved by the Minister or determined by arbitration award, unless each and every proposal under this Clause are so approved or determined within 15 months of the date of the notice referred to in Clause 6 or within such extended period if any as the Joint Venturers shall be granted pursuant to the provisions of this Agreement then the Minister may give to the Joint Venturers 12 months notice of intention to determine this Agreement and unless before the expiration of the said 12 months period all the proposals are so approved or determined this Agreement shall cease and determine.

There are a lot of problems facing both sides if the road becomes bumpy. The bumps will be getting adequate markets and finance.

My understanding is that the Minister referred to 48 per cent of the finance coming from Australia and 52 per cent from overseas. The Government has not tied up this other finance. It is a sort of technical situation.

I am sure that if BHP, which is virtually the management interest, had tried a little harder it would have been able to get a little extra percentage to guarantee a hold over the venture within the confines of the Australian nation. This is important. It is not just a case of keeping out the multi-nationals.

In other countries of the world—in Canada particularly—other people were let in and the Governments had to buy back the farms. It was expensive. If the farms are bought initially, by the country concerned, and they are run on an equitable basis, the country knows where it is going. If a country does not own the farms from the start, all sorts of things can happen.

It is not by chance that countries other than the United States of America and, perhaps, Canada—and a few others I will not mention—control their national supplies. Mexico and other Latin American countries control their supplies, and watch them very closely. The same applies in South Africa. Each and every one of those countries regard it as vital to control its oil supplies. Those countries have decided they must have a majority say. They do not mind the development, and the knowhow, coming from somewhere else. They do not mind reasonable profits, but they retain the final say with regard to where the supplies are sold. That should be the ultimate responsibility of the country which owns the resource.

The Australian ownership is to be 48 per cent, and there should be some clarification as to why it cannot be taken further, even if the State Government, or the State Government in partnership with the Commonwealth Government, held 3 per cent between them. There would be no need to have any authority on the board, but a 3 per cent investment would ensure the resource was retained for the Australian people to make the final determination with regard to its use.
That type of proposal would be justified, and it should be examined before the development proceeds too far. I do not think the larger Australian companies would be against it. After all, BHP is a wholly-owned Australian company. I will admit that shareholdings are held by people throughout the world but, nevertheless, it is a wholly-owned Australian company for the purposes of finance. Even though some interests in BHP are owned by banks and insurance companies in other parts of the world, we disregard that because we see the company as Australian-owned and financed basically as Australian.

The Minister referred to preference to local contracts. I am sure that when the Minister wrote the Bill he intended to write something into it to provide such a commitment. I am not too sure, however, who drew up the agreement; whether it was the Crown Law Department or the lawyers for the consortium. Perhaps it was the lawyers for the consortium because they would know more about business procedure.

There appear to be many let-outs in the agreement. Goods could be of a better quality and more easily obtainable, but the price might be a little higher. It could be said then that an outside firm could qualify because of that difference. A Western Australian firm could be outbidden. The price and quality of certain goods could be suitable, but delivery a bit slow, and the Western Australian contracts would be out again. The position is not clearly indicated. Surely, where it is possible and where it is practicable conditions should be written into the agreement so that the matter can be determined by arbitration whether or not a local contractor should receive a contract.

The Minister did not make very clear how the proposed port authority was to be set up. He said it would be along the same lines as the Port Hedland Port Authority. I would like some clarification because, as I understand the situation, the Port of Dampier runs slap bang into part of the Port Walcott area. They are right alongside each other, and if they are to overlap with regard to entrances, a single port authority should be established to look after the whole region. That would seem to be a more sensible suggestion. Such a single port authority would be able to include later development at Point Samson. After all, the Fremantle Port Authority covers the whole of Cockburn Sound. Other port authorities cover considerable areas.

I think that perhaps if the Minister looks at the situation he will find that Port Walcott encompasses what he envisages to be the Port of Dampier. If a composite authority can be set up, the statement in the Minister's second reading speech will prevail no longer because what is envisaged will be too awkward.

For those who are not aware of the situation in Port Hedland, both the Mt. Newman company and the Goldsworthy company have a representative on the port authority.

Mr Mensaros: Have you seen the tabled document concerning the port authority? It is set out quite clearly.

Mr JAMIESON: I am trying to point out that the Minister suggested it be along the lines of the Port Hedland Port Authority. The Port Walcott area could take in Leslie Salt, Hamersley Iron, the joint venturers and possibly Cliffs. In those circumstances I visualise a port authority loaded with representatives of those companies, and it would not work. It works in Port Hedland because there are only two representatives of companies, together with the normal representative of the workers, business interests, and one other who usually comes from the sponsorship of the local authority.

The system works very well at Port Hedland, but if the authority is overloaded with representatives of companies there will be interminable trouble. I suggest the setting up of the port authority needs more clarification than is set out in clause 13 together with what the Minister had to say in his second reading speech.

The port area is very large, and it all falls within the preserves of the Roebourne Shire Council; therefore the council should have a representative on this body. Certainly I do not believe the formula set out in the Bill would achieve the best balance possible.

Clause 17 of the agreement is rather loose. It states—

(1) The Joint Venturers shall confer with the State Energy Commission with respect to the Joint Venturers' power requirements for the overall project during the constructional phase and the operational phase.

As I understand the situation, the SEC obtains some of its supplies from the Cliffs Robe River Iron Associates. Is it to be assumed that there will be some propping up of this organisation to provide other supplies? Will the SEC install its own generating plant, or will there be sufficient capacity from companies such as Hamersley Iron Pty. Ltd.? Will the SEC then dissipate this electricity for domestic purposes or for the build-up of industry associated with the project? We should be told the way the energy supplies are to be developed.
Mr Mensaros: It is in the SEC annual report which I tabled not long ago.

Mr JAMIESON: But how will it be distributed?

Mr Mensaros: There will be a Pilbara area power pool.

Mr JAMIESON: But will there be a power plant such as at Port Hedland or will the supply of energy depend on piecemeal production from several and many organisations that may break down from time to time and cause problems for which the SEC would not accept responsibility? This is the situation at Point Samson, and while the residents there are very happy to have power supplies from Cliffs Robe River Iron Associates, the number of breakdowns is quite high, and this is reflected right along the line.

In conclusion I would like to touch on the water supplies for the project, and this is something I ought to know a little about. In his second reading speech the Minister referred to the provision of water; the joint venturers do not have to supply water—that is the responsibility of the Government under special borrowing provisions. This will mean a rather expensive project to supply sufficient water for the many people who will live in the area and for the joint venturers as well.

The present water supply is far from satisfactory—every time I visit the area people show me what the water supply has done to their hot water systems. Frequently I have been shown a piece of half-inch copper piping which has been blocked by calcification caused by the water. It therefore looks as though additional sources of water by way of damming or some other method will have to be found. The present water is brought down from Millstream. Another possibility would be to dam the Harding River, but the Minister gave us no details—we have no idea how much such a project would cost the Government. Certainly arrangements will be made for special borrowing provisions, but anything borrowed must be paid back at some time and it is the citizens of the State who will be responsible for any costs over and above the pipehead or wellhead price of gas. So we must know exactly where we are going.

Unfortunately my time is running out and I would have liked to touch on a few other matters. The agreement is to run for 31 years, and I wonder why such a period of time was chosen. The joint venturers can then seek to extend the agreement for a further 21 years. Perhaps the Minister will answer some of my queries when he replies.

MR PEARCE (Gosnells) [4.56 p.m.]: I would like to join with my two colleagues in indicating our opposition to the measure before us. I believe we have genuine cause for complaint in regard to this legislation. The Government did not set up any consultation with the Opposition and certainly one might have expected such consultation in bringing before the Parliament a Bill for an agreement to set up a project on a scale as large as this one for the North-West Shelf gas.

This agreement will run for a very long time. As the member for Welshpool said, it is for 31 years in the first instance with a strong likelihood of another 21 years—a total of 52 years in all. One would have thought that the Government of the day, in setting up the agreement, would make sure that the necessary political consensus was in existence in regard to a project to run for such a long length of time.

The joint venturers themselves recognised this. Some members may have seen a film on television last Saturday afternoon. The film was produced by the joint venturers; it was narrated by Richard Attenborough, and it related to the challenge involved in the North-West Shelf project.

Very early in the programme the point was made that because of the massive scale of the project, political consensus was necessary. Long-term viability is of paramount importance, and the joint venturers sought agreement from the Federal Government and Opposition and from the State Government and Opposition before it even considered putting up the sums of money necessary. Members will realise that is a sensible arrangement because nobody wants to spend billions of dollars only to find that with a change of Government there is a change of rules.

So these circumstances have put the Opposition in a difficult position to debate this legislation. Certainly we are solidly behind the need for the North-West Shelf project for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the need for employment. So there has not been any doubt but that the Opposition would support this measure, and in principle we indicated our support some time ago. In fact, the support of the Opposition was indicated in the film to which I referred.

The joint venturers themselves have been quite punctilious in their co-operation with the Opposition to ensure that we will be onside with their ideas. They realise it may well be the case that the present Government may be responsible for the passage of this agreement through the House, but it may then play no further part in the project—members will realise we will have an
election in a few months. So the present Government may well be out of office even before the feasibility studies have been completed, the report given to the joint venturers, and a firm decision made to go ahead with the project. So the joint venturers realise the necessity for the Opposition to agree with the terms of the agreement, and this is why the Opposition is in a difficult situation.

While we are behind the project, we do not believe the Government has got the best deal for the State in the agreement it has brought before the Parliament. On the other hand, we will not imperil the future of the project or attempt at this stage to vary the agreement or to force into it the sorts of provisions that we would like to see to safeguard the State. In fact, we are putting aside our very firm qualifications with regard to our opinion of the Government's performance in setting up this agreement, in order to ensure that the viability of the project is sound; and when we become the Government we will adhere to the terms that are now being agreed upon by the Parliament.

However, at the same time we say that the best terms possible have not been obtained for the State, and the responsibility for that lies directly with the Government on two counts. In its determination to get the agreement through the Parliament before the election—calling it an historic document and an historic moment even though work is not yet going ahead—the Government has disguised the fact that the project may still not get off the ground, because the viability report has not yet been received and the joint venturers not only have not raised capital to commence construction of the project, but have been unable to tie up a sales contract on the kind of basis which is necessary to raise finance to commence construction.

So none of the essential things has been done. One would clearly expect an agreement of this type to come before the Parliament after the majority—or the essential majority—of such matters have at least been tied up. That is not the case. We are getting the agreement first; in effect we have been getting the agreement cart before the technical viability horse.

I believe the Government is rushing through the agreement at this stage in the hope that the people of Western Australia will be deceived into thinking the Government has finally got the North-West Shelf project going. It is most likely that at some stage in the future—perhaps towards the end of next year—contracts will have been signed for the sale of the gas, and things will start to happen. We will welcome that when it begins to happen. However, certainly it would be misleading to suggest the North-West Shelf project is genuinely going ahead simply as a result of the production of this agreement.

Given also the nature of the political consensus that is necessary within the State, and to which I have referred, the Government should have consulted with the Opposition on the terms of the agreement. That is a fundamental point to which the Opposition adheres. I say to the House also that the Opposition did in fact seek consultation with the Government on this matter. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition attempted to set up discussions with the Minister's department and with the Minister in this matter, and for a number of reasons that fell through. That is a most unfortunate state of affairs because if in fact the Opposition were to have a genuine say in developing the sort of political consensus I have spoken about, it would have to be achieved at a stage prior to the introduction of the agreement to Parliament.

Everyone will understand that the Bill itself is less than one page in length. In fact, it has only three clauses: the first deals with the title of the Bill, the second defines the agreement, and the third ratifies it. The bulk of the document is made up of the addendum or schedule, which is the agreement itself, and which the House cannot amend at this stage. It is not within the competence of the Parliament to try to vary the provisions of the agreement.

So, if there were to be true political consensus it would have to be established before the agreement was brought before the Parliament. As I have already indicated, despite the best efforts of the Opposition to establish such a consensus, the Government simply would not be in it. The Government has presented to the House an agreement which it has drawn up itself, and which the House cannot amend at this stage. It is not within the competence of the Parliament to try to vary the provisions of the agreement.

To summarise—because I do not want to spend a lot of time on this matter—the way in which the Government has failed to tie up the benefits which the people of this State were looking for
from the North-West Shelf agreement, one has only to look at clause 12 of the agreement which has to do with the employment spin-off that the State might expect. I think it is not unfair to say that one of the reasons that there is an urgent need for the project to go ahead is that people are looking for a considerable amount of employment to be generated by it, which will ease the very serious unemployment problem in Western Australia at present.

Probably it is true to say also that many people in the State have very serious doubts about the squandering of our natural resources with the rapidity which will be the case with the North-West Shelf project, in which a large amount of gas will be sold overseas which might otherwise be conserved for Western Australians at a future time. That is a point of view which has been put by the Conservation Council and many others.

It is probably true to say that the community is so concerned about the unemployment problem in this State that it is prepared to look at the short-term solution of the problem and give it priority over the need to conserve the resource for the future. That is a trade-off or balancing of priorities that we could not argue with, given the sad state of employment at the moment. But what we have seen happening, even in recent months, is that as contracts for construction are let overseas it is possible the North-West Shelf project might provide more jobs in Singapore and Hong Kong than in Western Australia. It is a marine project, and the site is not all that far from Singapore; and we might find ourselves promoting the prosperity of Singapore and Hong Kong at a greater rate than we are promoting employment in Western Australia.

Clause 12 of the agreement is supposed to give preference of employment to Western Australians; but as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has said, it is so flimsy that it provides almost no preference for Western Australians.

Paragraph (d) states—

(d) give proper consideration and where possible preference to Western Australian suppliers manufacturers and contractors when letting contracts or placing orders for works materials plant equipment and supplies where price quality delivery and service are equal to or better than that obtainable elsewhere.

All that means is that if Western Australia can provide the best possible price, there is an obligation upon the joint venturers to think about using Western Australian manufacturers. That will hardly tie up employment for this State; the only obligation on the joint venturers is to think about the matter, and they must think about it only when the best price they receive is from Western Australia. That is really a no-preference to Western Australia clause; it could be construed as a preference to the rest of the world clause. Certainly it does not place any obligation on the venturers which would help employment in this State.

The joint venturers may provide employment for this State. I believe they have some goodwill and may well go beyond the bounds of the legal commitment the Government has put upon them, and provide jobs in this State.

However, in respect of the matter of the jobs and contracts which will be let overseas, let us look particularly the marine aspects of the project. The contracts for the platforms, ships and big associated jobs will be let overseas. One can only say that the Premier, the Minister, and the Government are showing a considerable lack of confidence in the ability of Western Australia to carry out the construction of this project for itself. That is a lack of confidence which I do not share. I believe, in fact, that with proper planning it would be possible to have many more of the large constructions carried out in Western Australia than will be the case under the agreement as it stands at present; because the joint venturers have so few obligations—almost none—upon them to direct this work into Western Australia.

Whether the Government was not concerned about that, or whether it simply wanted to get the agreement through Parliament before it rose, as a rush job before the election; or whether the Government has a deep-seated lack of confidence in industry to do the big work; it does not say a great deal for the Government in the way it has gone about the matter.

I will conclude on that note. I support this project and I support, reluctantly, the agreement before us. I support if for the reasons that the Opposition, generally, supports it; that is, we must support the agreement if the project is to go ahead. However, in supporting it and voting for it and doing our half in setting up the project, I want it to be said that the Government has misused its position as the negotiator of the agreement. I think it has already allowed a lot of good spin-offs from the project to slip away from Western Australia.

I express the view also that should the Government continue in government, we will watch more and more employment, investment, and jobs slip away from Western Australians and go overseas.
MR SODEMAN (Pilbara) [5.11 p.m.]: I am pleased to hear the comments of endorsement from members of the Opposition, who have said they stand behind this project and support the Bill. I must admit that many of us in the Pilbara and throughout the rest of the State have been rather apprehensive about comments made in the past by Mr Bartholomaeus; but members of the Opposition have assured us that he is an individual crying in the dark. It is reassuring to hear their support of the venture in this Chamber.

There is no doubt that there is an air of expectancy not only in the Pilbara, but right throughout the nation in respect of this project. Certainly it is more intensified in the Pilbara—in Hedland, and particularly in Karratha. The business people in the area who have experienced a reasonably lean time in recent years are very much looking forward to this project coming to fruition, and to their gaining the obvious benefits from it.

Already an impact has been made in the north in respect of every aspect of community development. We are seeing studies occurring in respect of projected population figures, lifestyles, housing requirements, education requirements, recreation requirements of all kinds, water, power, and so on. Church groups are studying their needs, as are the various Government departments.

It is not my intention to talk about the technical aspects of the Bill which have been covered already by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and, no doubt, will be covered fully by the Minister in his response. One of the points I wish to highlight is that the current policies and activities of the State Government have created a very healthy base indeed for the North-West Shelf gas project to commence in the Pilbara—

Mr B. T. Burke: There are plenty of unemployed looking for work.

Mr SODEMAN:—particularly in regard to roads, housing, education, power, recreation, and other matters.

Mr B. T. Burke: Unemployment.

Mr SODEMAN: First of all, the roads programme is one of the best ever in this State’s history. We have a record roads programme in the north, where one third of the State’s road funds from State and Federal sources are being spent on one-twentieth of the State’s population. Whether it be the road to Broome or the road from Nanutarra to Paraburdoo and Tom Price does not matter, because the populations which will develop in the Pilbara will want to get to Broome for holidays and to travel to inland towns for sporting and other purposes. Completion of our roads programme will facilitate that.

At the moment we have a record State Housing Commission programme in the Kimberley and the Pilbara, where some $20.4 million is being spent. An entirely new design has been introduced, which has become most acceptable to the residents in the area. Rentals have been reduced to the level of those in the metropolitan area, and in some instances lower. Waiting periods are down to about three to six months. The present population is responding very favourably to that, and it augurs well for families which will move into the area as a result of the North-West Shelf gas project.

In respect of education, the Government has always had the objective of furnishing a complete education system for the young people in the Pilbara.

Mr B. T. Burke: You did not do much for the principal at Onslow, did you?

Mr SODEMAN: The situation as far as post-secondary education colleges is concerned is one with which people are very happy. They see that the education system in the Pilbara is moving into the next level of development. This will assist families with children leaving school, who are looking for further education. Normally they would have to send the children away and break up the family unit or they would be faced with going away and looking for employment elsewhere. The provision of the colleges will fill a very important need at an opportune time.

There were comments from the other side about power and water. We know about the initiative already undertaken by the Government in respect of power. It will ensure, if there is a breakdown at one point, the power will continue to flow. The situation will be unique. There will be a Pilbara area power pool, so that all of the existing power supplies are linked together and there will be backup systems throughout a very large region.

As far as water is concerned, the PWD has been conducting an ongoing assessment of alternative supplies. Most people are aware that there are a number of alternatives in the Millstream-Fortescue area and surrounding areas. They will meet the requirements of the expected expansion in Karratha.

To return to Hedland, the $15.5 million project recently opened in the Strelley area guarantees the future supply of water to Hedland for the next 25 years. Therefore, we are not apprehensive about being able to meet the demand for water in the Karratha region.
As far as recreation is concerned, the Government has, at every turn, been aware of the growing requirements in this regard in the Pilbara, and most certainly in Karratha. The Government has assisted with facilities; and the town of Karratha will be second to none in the State. The current project that the Roebourne Shire has embarked on has received tremendous encouragement from the State Government, as well as tangible assistance by way of finance. I speak of the community recreation centre, which is nearing completion in Karratha.

We have heard a lot of negative comments from the Opposition and others in the last six months or so in relation to the employment opportunities which are around the corner in this State. When one reads between the lines, it seems that really they are not criticising what is being done; they are lamenting the fact that something is being done, and that the unemployment situation in this State will become non-existent. Not only will we be employing the unemployed of this State but, as has happened in the past, we will be supplying employment opportunities for people from other States of Australia.

Mr MacKinnon: And New Zealand.

Mr Grill: You made that promise three years ago, and look at what has happened.

Mr SODEMAN: We are working towards achieving that. It is "sour grapes" from the other side that not only do we have an employment programme, but also that this Government is working successfully towards eradicating the problem altogether. When that happens, the people on the other side will lose yet another drum to beat.

A lot of families in the Pilbara have seen their student children approaching the age when they will be leaving school. The fact that they can go into our post-secondary education facility, the fact that we will be able to look after the apprenticeship training in the area, and that there will be further job diversification leads to tremendous peace of mind for those families.

In the past, the companies have responded extremely well to the need to create employment opportunities for young people in the Pilbara. I have no doubt that the Woodside group will be looking at playing its part. If the unions would have a look at their current policy on demarcation and the payment of wages to young people who are being trained, I have no doubt we would be able to employ all of the young people who come on stream in the Pilbara.

I summarise my comments by saying that I am heartening that members of the Opposition, notwithstanding the comments made by an endorsed Labor candidate, Mr Bartholomaeus, do support this project in principle. I am pleased on this occasion that the Government has created probably one of the healthiest community bases in Australia's history for a project of this magnitude to embark upon.

Mr B. T. Burke: Crawler!

MR T. H. JONES (Collie) [5.20 p.m.]: It is not my intention to traverse the ground already covered by my colleagues on this side of the House. However, I lend my support to the Bill.

I draw the attention of the Minister to a number of problems which are unfortunately associated with the legislation. As has been said, the viability of the project has not yet been established. This Bill merely sets up the machinery for the undertakings by the parties to the agreement.

A lot of matters have yet to be established, the most important being the viability of the project. The agreement involves a number of companies; and my greatest concern is with the ownership content, or the shareholdings. We know from the Minister's second reading speech that the ownership will be only 48 per cent Australian, and 52 per cent from outside Australia. I am of the firm opinion that our energy undertakings should be controlled by Australian owners.

It may be argued that the amount of finance required to get this venture off the ground may not have been available from Australia. However, it is a very dangerous practice, in my opinion, to permit overseas cartels to control or to have the monopoly over any of our energy operations within the State. I adopted this principle when the Government was giving thought to inviting a similar agreement in relation to the ownership of our energy commission operations. I opposed the proposal at that time, and I still hold the same view as I did on that occasion.

We have seen the problems associated with the Holden vehicle, as one example. When the Holden was brought onto the market, it was to be the workers' car. I do not have to tell members of this House what has happened to the Holden car. It was brought in for a specific purpose, and it was to be for the working people. Members know the profits that have been earned, and where they have gone. They know how the whole operation has been managed.

I am concerned at the ratio of ownership contained in this agreement. I voice my disapproval of that.
In essence, this is a regulation Bill. I do not think the Minister would deny that his powers under the Bill will be wide. He can vary the agreement with the joint venturers; and I will refer to that aspect in a moment.

What concerns me is the guarantee of the supply of gas. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked a question of the Minister today, and it clearly demonstrates our concern in relation to this. If we refer to page 3 of the Bill, in the schedule we find that the venturers will use up to 10.5 million cubic metres per day of treated natural gas over a 20-year term. Paragraph (d) reads as follows—

(d) the Commonwealth of Australia has approved the sale by the Joint Venturers to customers overseas of up to 6.5 million tonnes per annum of liquefied natural gas over a term of not less than 20 years;

The question asked by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition today indicates our concern. I will not quote the question, because the answer indicates what was in the mind of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Part (b) of the reply is as follows—

The Energy Commission currently expects that the demand for natural gas in 1985 will be approximately 10 million cubic metres a day and will increase to approximately 18 million cubic metres a day by the year 2000.

The future prediction of the demand for natural gas is difficult due to the rapidly changing price structure of alternative energy sources and the development of new sources of energy.

The most important part of the answer reads as follows—

The agreement with the North-West Shelf joint venturers provides for the firm supply of 10.5 million cubic metres a day with an option of a further 7.1 million cubic metres a day subject to proving up of additional gas reserves.

It is apparent to me that while we have a firm commitment to export overseas, there is a question about the viability of supplies of gas over a long period for the users of gas in Western Australia. The last portion of the answer indicated that the additional 7.1 million cubic metres a day would be subject to the proving of additional gas reserves.

No doubt the Minister can tell me whether it is a sound business proposition to permit gas to be exported when more fields have not been proved to guarantee the continuity of supply for Western Australia. This may be covered; but in view of the answer given to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition today, the Opposition queries that point. The Minister would agree it would be wrong to permit the export of gas if there was not an assured supply in the long term for the consumers of gas within the State of Western Australia.

The schedule to the Bill indicates that the State and the joint venturers recognise the need for employment opportunities. Naturally that is a little bit of window dressing prior to the State election. As the member for Pilbara has indicated, this Bill will overcome all the problems of unemployment in Western Australia! There will be no school-leavers out of work! It will take care of everybody in the employment field!

To a degree, the member for Pilbara is right; but I cannot accept that proposal when the viability of the project is still to be established. This Bill sets up the machinery. In making that assessment, in my view the member for Pilbara is looking only at the long-term situation.

The member for Welshpool drew attention to clause 7 on page 8 of the schedule. The whole structure of the agreement is such that changes may be made without reference to the Parliament. In fact, it is a regulation Bill.

I refer now to our concern about the regulations, and what will transpire. By way of a question today the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked the Minister for Industrial Development—

Why as stated by him is his second reading speech explaining the North-West Shelf agreement Bill, have the obligations to produce or process gas not been included in the agreement?

The Minister replied—

As explained in the second reading speech, these obligations are imposed in the memorandum of understanding already signed but to be translated into a formal contract to be entered into by the joint venturers and the SEC for the sale of gas to the SEC.

That is a rather peculiar way of entering into business negotiations. The Parliament is not informed.

That reminds me of the deal the State Energy Commission made with BP Australia Limited in relation to the supply of oil for power generation. There was a similar agreement. A Bill was enacted, but the pricing structure was not
revealed until the Tonkin Labor Government came into office.

Surely the Parliament should be advised of the pricing arrangements entered into between the venturers and the SEC. What does the Government have to hide? Why cannot it do what it must do without giving the types of answers to questions in relation to the venturers as were given in the House this morning?

We have complained about government by regulation. If we refer to the variation clause on page 24 of the schedule we find—

27. (1) The parties hereto may from time to time by agreement in writing add to, substitute or cancel or vary all or any of the provisions of this Agreement or of any lease licence easement grant . . . .

And on it goes. It refers to the matter being laid on the Table of each House within 12 sitting days; and subclause (3) reads—

(3) Either House may, within 12 sitting days of that House after the agreement has been laid before it pass a resolution disallowing the agreement, . . . .

It is just impossible for them to operate so, we have matters brought to Parliament—that is, the wishes of the joint venturers and the Government—and of course the Parliament then rises. The Government can then vary, alter, cancel or do what it wishes to this agreement without any recourse to Parliament. The Opposition complains about this system of government as I complained about it also recently when speaking to another Bill in this place. Parliament is now being asked to ratify the agreement without it being brought back to the Parliament. In the opinion of the Opposition it does not make for good government.

It is very different with the numbers game to alter or have the regulations disapproved. The regulations are made and laid on the Table of the House. I cannot remember in my 12 years in this place when regulations have ever been disallowed. However, if I am wrong I stand corrected.

Here again, history proves itself. Another facet is that the Government was pushed for time. The announcement and the signing of the agreement were within hours and the Government was anxious to get the announcement made before the next State election, so if there was to be any rub-off, it would be prior to the election.

There is no mention of royalties in the agreement. I think the Minister should indicate how the State will benefit financially from this agreement. Our deputy leader has mentioned five points in regard to this Bill and the matter of royalties is one of them. There will be ample time during the Committee stage to question some other matters in the Bill but with those exceptions I support the measure.

MR COWAN (Merredin) [5.33 p.m.]: I do not think there would be any member of this House who would not support the project to develop the North-West Shelf gas but that does not necessarily indicate that every person in the House supports the agreement unequivocally.

The agreement will certainly pass through the House today but I have some questions and would be grateful if the Minister would answer them for me. In most cases the schedule or the agreement is rather general and there are some specific points I would like him to refer to in his reply. Most of these points have been raised by members opposite so I will be repeating to some extent what they have said but I would like to add a few words of my own.

I can appreciate that with the matter of royalties it would not be possible to release the value of royalties at this stage when we are aware that the project will not operate until 1984. However, I ask the Minister whether he can give us some indication of the type of formula he will use. Will we be looking at the royalty that is charged for gas from other sources in the world? Can we have some indication of the amount of money which will be recouped by the State from a resource that belongs to Western Australia in general?

One matter which interests me greatly is one which has been stated time and again; that is, that we must export a vast quantity of gas. Incidentally, this is one of the few areas where the schedule is specific. It allows for the export of 6.5 million tonnes of gas annually. How do we know that the exports are necessary when we do not even know the price of gas to the export market? How can we arrive at a tonnage of gas to be exported when we are not aware of the price to be obtained for the gas itself? I would be much more prepared to accept a rather vague amount of export tonnage than a specific amount as stated in the agreement.

Many people in Western Australia fear that exports at this rate will bankrupt this State of energy in future years. We are the people who will be held responsible for that bankruptcy.

With regard to the cost of the pipeline to be constructed by this State in order to transfer the gas from Withnell Bay to areas where it will be used by local industry; I question why it is that we are using gas for the provision of electrical power
and the provision of heat energy in a process which does not necessarily require gas. It may be that the gas we are using domestically will be used for the wrong purpose. Of course people can argue for hours on end as to whether or not that is the case but I would like the Minister to refer to it.

Mr Mensaros: Which purpose are you referring to?

Mr Cowan: It is the refining of bauxite and alumina.

Finally, I wish to refer to employment. I had the privilege of being sent overseas two years ago on a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association study. I was able to examine the effects of the North Sea oil as the project operates on the northern coast of Britain. I do not think that we in Western Australia can draw any comparison at all with what has happened there and what is likely to occur here.

There are something like 18 production platforms in operation at present and something like five in the process of being constructed. Together with that is an enormous search programme for oil with the drilling rigs there. This makes up a formidable number of people to be contained in the work force either directly on the production or exploration platforms or indirectly on the maintenance of those different types of rigs.

In Western Australia, we will, at best, have two production platforms so the employment generated, in my opinion, will be insignificant, outside the construction phase. I am afraid that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is correct when he says that Western Australia is not likely to attract a great number of contracts to be let for the project. It will take something like four or five years before we can determine what effect this agreement has had on the State of Western Australia. It is my view it will have very little effect.

However, I certainly hope that in 25 years' time we will be in a position where the people in this Parliament will not be held responsible for a loss of very valuable energy resources. This Government does not own the resource and neither do the joint venturers. It is the responsibility of this Government to ensure that the resource is correctly utilised and the benefits of that utilisation of the resource will go to all Western Australians. I would hate to be a part of something which does not achieve that.

Mr Mensaros (Floreat—Minister for Industrial Development): [5.40 p.m.]: I would like to thank the members who have contributed to this debate for their support of the Bill, and indeed, I would like to thank them for the clearly considerate comments which have been made. The calm tone of the debate was perhaps somewhat unusual but very commendable and if this were repeated with all parliamentary debates it would not only greatly enhance the reputation of this Parliament but indeed the reputation and economic climate in Western Australia.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition lightly criticised the fact that the Bill has been introduced at a late stage and also that there was an element of urgency to it. I can assure him that it was not the design of the Government. As he knows and, as other members do, the State agreement with the development company does not spell out all the details and in the majority of cases they were executed and introduced to Parliament for ratification much earlier than the project has developed.

The negotiation of this agreement was particularly difficult, not only because of the large scale of the project but also because of the unusual manner of the project. Quite frankly, most of the companies involved in the project are somewhat unused to dealing in this State and they had no past experience to refer to as other companies have had. Also, because there were so many joint venturers, each of them employed a lawyer who, with due respect, wished to earn his fee; therefore he suggested something else to add. So, members can imagine it was not an easy negotiation.

The negotiations were parallel with the SEC sales contract negotiations, the conclusion of which allowed only a limited time to draft the agreement in its final form and sign it.

Indeed, when we debated the qualified adjournment for two weeks, the Leader of the Opposition by mistake, complained that one of the signatures had been on the agreement for three weeks. As he realised, it was the signature for the power of attorney. I physically participated with the last draft of the agreement being flown from here to the Eastern States to be signed and it arrived back just in time for the Bill ratifying the agreement to be introduced.

Judging from the tone of the comments in this House, I do not think anyone would have wished a delay of the development. If this Bill had not been introduced and presented to this Parliament it would have left the joint venturers with an amount of uncertainty from the point of view of the commencement of the project.

I was glad the Deputy Leader of the Opposition acknowledged that we as a Government—though
he may have said we as a Parliament—might be
criticised in the future in so many areas because
of the decision taken now. I think he implied that
one can have the best feasibility studies from the
point of view of anticipations and estimates, but
one can never guarantee that everything will
eventuate as anticipated. It is not only the
domestic area which has to be considered with the
price structure and any alternative energy.
I would not be surprised after the very quick
technological development of recent years that in
our lifetime some entirely new form of energy will
be invented or found.

Therefore, by implication, one can do only the
best as a Government, considering all the
estimates and forecasts which are being made and
the necessity, which the Deputy Leader of the
Opposition acknowledged, for the project to be
feasible, and proceed on these grounds.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition
mentioned also the consensus of the political
parties which is necessary and said this was due
more to the joint venturers themselves who co-
operated with the Opposition whereas the
Government withdrew and kept it in the dark. I
do not really think we have done that. I can recall
the Deputy Leader of the Opposition being at a
seminar which the Government arranged in order
to promote the possibilities inherent in the project
long before the agreement or the feasibil ity study
was concluded. Everyone was free to talk to the
Government officers who were there.

Certain elements are always confidential, as the
Deputy Leader of the Opposition acknowledged.
Other than that, all information has been given on
request and has definitely been given to all
sections of the industry, not only through their
associations and joint representation but also to
many individual people. I had many requests from
overseas people who asked, “Could we come in
here and establish a joint venture?” “To whom
could we talk who is representing a Western
Australian party?” “Where could we get land?”
and so on. Some of them have become
established. All associations, including the British,
Dutch, French, Scottish, and Belgian, involved with
offshore exploration and exploitation have been in
Western Australia—there was no secret
about it—and we have informed them to the best
of our knowledge.

I would like to comment on the five points of
criticism which the Deputy Leader of the
Opposition mentioned. First of all, he spoke about
the ownership and control of the project. In some
ways I could acknowledge this might be a
philosophical, party-political question, but at the
same time I would freely admit that the Deputy
Leader of the Opposition did not flog that aspect.
He said the project ought to have more Australian
participation through certain community efforts
to buy shares.

I quite agree with him that the Australian
public are not so advanced in investment,
particularly in long-term risk capital investment,
as are people in other parts of the world. I am
quite sure—although I have not taken out
statistics—that more money is turned over on the
races and other forms of gambling than in serious
investement—

Mr Bryce: It is a very big industry where I
come from and most would not think it was high
risk.

Mr MENSAROS: —in projects which would
be of benefit to the State. As the Deputy Leader
of the Opposition said, the project did not start
yesterday. It was in the preparation stage for a
long time, although in a very remote way during
the term of the Tonkin Government. The then
Minister (Mr May) had some obstruction from
Canberra. I am not saying this in a political sense.
I think he was the first to acknowledge it. He
dealt with quite a different equity composition.
This should not be forgotten.

At that time the Australian equity was very
low—only 10 or 15 per cent, represented by the
Woodside shareholding. That is why I am saying
the policy of the Premier, which the Deputy
Leader of the Opposition spelt out, regarding the
Government’s negotiating for higher and higher
equity has been pursued. It was during the term
of our Government that the negotiations went on,
with our consent and encouragement, between
BHP and the Burmah group in order that BHP
should buy the Burmah shares. That happened
with the encouragement of the Government and it
increased the Australian ownership to 48 per cent.
When we look at other projects, this is a good
achievement.

When we talk about Australian ownership
being desirable—and it is—quite frankly, there is
also a great deal of advantage at the beginning of
development to have major companies with world-
wide knowledge and technical expertise which is
incomparable. This project is not simply a matter
of production platforms and bringing gas ashore.
It is combined with a liquefaction plant. There
are not many liquefaction plants in the world.
Two of them—the first and another one—were
built by the very man (Mr Arnold Ploom) from
Royal Dutch Shell who has been resident in
Western Australia for the last 1½ years and who
has already designed and will build the LNG
plant. It is not easy even for large oil companies to obtain such expertise in this field.

One of the Opposition speakers—perhaps it was the member for Welshpool—asked how we could be sure of the markets. When we combine the matters of markets and ownership, we need these major companies to be sure of the market and to be able to negotiate successful sales.

Then we come to finance. If there is any impediment with this project it might be only with the weak Australian public shareholding's. Because they have no assets other than the resources, the bankers and financiers look very closely at the assets and the agreements with the State, and more closely at the sales contract with the SEC—every letter of it. There are, one must objectively state, large advantages, in having major, experienced, and immensely financial companies, because whatever the share of BP or Bocal in this project, no banker would be very excited if either company wanted to borrow $1,000 million, but if Woodside wanted that amount it could have difficulty.

Public capital is to some extent a matter of policy and to some extent a practicality; but when we talk about ownership and lump the project together with the pipeline, which is an essential part of it, we probably have much more than 50 per cent ownership, because the pipeline is owned totally by the State Energy Commission, a Western Australian Government instrumentality, and therefore, as some members would express it, the people of Western Australia have participation in it.

I do not think it is necessary to debate the question whether the Mexican or the South American situation is better than ours. I simply state that in all the circumstances I prefer Australia and Western Australia to Mexico and South America, whatever arrangements those countries make about their petroleum. Of course, it is always open for Australians and Western Australians to purchase Woodside shares on the share market.

The second criticism of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was that there is no reference to the development of the gas field. The reason is not only that it has been acknowledged the agreements are a framework but also we would not have any jurisdiction. In view of the mirror legislation of 1967, it is a joint action by the Commonwealth and the State—called in this case the "designated authority"—to issue the production licence. We as a State Government have no jurisdiction alone over the development of the offshore gas fields. Members might have noticed—and I emphasised it in my second reading speech—that the agreement therefore deals with facets of the development which are onshore; it does not deal with facets of the development which are offshore, because it cannot do so legally.

The situation in regard to royalties, the subject of the third criticism, is not unusual. I take the criticism of the Opposition as being made with goodwill, but nothing unusual has been done. If members look at any other industrial or resource development agreement, they will see the agreement usually—not in all cases—does not spell out the royalties. It refers to the Mining Act and its regulations, which spell out the royalties.

This is understandable, because if we want to change or renegotiate the royalties one way or the other, we can do so. If, for example, the nickel industry is at some stage in the doldrums and survival is in question, the royalties can be negotiated downward or a stay of payment can be granted—as it was on one occasion. If an industry is buoyant—such as bauxite and alumina—we can renegotiate the royalties upward. This we did with Alcoa recently. So we do not usually tie it up in the agreement.

Jurisdiction comes into it because the offshore royalties are provided for in the 1967 mirror legislation. The formula of 60:40 per cent is provided there. I would like to have more, but that was decided by the six States and the Commonwealth at the time. Perhaps my reference to the fact that royalties had not quite been determined was not well expressed. The position is that the Ministers for Mines of the respective States and of the Commonwealth—called the Australian Mining and Energy Council—are discussing in a very elaborate way with their advisers and respective Under Treasurers new and simpler formulas for royalties which will probably raise the end result of the royalty payment. So the reason for its not being in the agreement is that it is provided for elsewhere and it has not been finally agreed because new royalties are being considered.

I will make a brief reference to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's comment that the royalties are low when we talk about 10 per cent wellhead value. I think he said that if the royalties were only $57 million the value of mineral production in Western Australia was $1,800 million.

If the honourable member thinks all the mineral-producing companies had made a 10 per cent profit, which I think is an exaggeration, the profits would amount to $180 million, and in this
case the $57 million royalties represent nearly one-third of the profit before tax. The taxes are different because some of them have deductible items for exploration. In any event it cannot be said the royalties generally are too low.

We want to create in Western Australia an investment climate which is better than that anywhere else, in order to provide incentives to companies to come here and do more exploration and exploitation. Being a member of a federated country, we cannot give all the incentives. We cannot give them holidays in corporate and excise and exploitation. Being a member of a federated country, we cannot give all the incentives. We cannot give them holidays in corporate and excise taxes, which are matters for the Commonwealth; so we must give them incentives where we can.

I can assure the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that the flow on from this project will be much larger than the actual cash royalty we will receive. I need only remind him of the iron ore, nickel, salt, bauxite and alumina projects. If he thinks back over the last 20 years he will see what those projects have meant for Western Australia in the way of population and in the way of all sorts of facilities for the whole of the State. They have gained for the State the things which the member for Pilbara mentioned will be gained for the Pilbara by this project.

The fourth point made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition refers to the price and supply of gas. He objected to the notion that the price to local industry should be the world parity price. I am in a difficult position here because, if it was not the member for Collie, it was the Deputy Leader of the Opposition who acknowledged that commercial agreements such as a gas sales contract with the SEC should remain confidential. Why is that so? It is not at the whim of the Government. The Government wants to do the best deal possible.

Mr Jamieson: Why does this happen with some commodities and not with others?

Mr MENSAROS: I am trying to explain that. The Government wants to obtain gas at the cheapest price, but at the same time it does not want to prevent an opportunity for the supply company to sell gas at a better price overseas or even to other customers. The same applies to coal price agreements. Coal companies sell coal to industry, and it is understandable that they come to us and say "Do not divulse the conditions of your agreement to the world, because our other customers will want a better deal, and that is not good business for us." Their wish must be respected, and I think it would be respected by all Governments.

Therefore, I am not in a position to answer the question, even from the point of view of the royalty. I cannot answer any question which would lead the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to the price, which is confidential. However, I can give an assurance that the price conforms precisely with what the member for Welshpool read out from Labor policy; that is, it is a price which is good enough to compete with alternative forms of energy, particularly coal. This also is built into the escalation clause. That is as far as I can go.

With regard to Mr Innes, I can tell the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that what he said was true, but he did not say what services the Government rendered to the iron ore producers and processors in the Pilbara. At the time it was decided that two million cubic metres of gas per day will be sold in the Pilbara area by the joint ventures. They wanted to sell it at world parity price and at world parity escalation. What Mr Innes did not say was that I told them not to buy it, and because they did not buy it the SEC was able to buy it under much better conditions. The SEC can resell the gas to the same people under the conditions better than they would have got. Therefore, instead of criticism, I claim credit for the Government in that respect.

Mr Bryce: I think his criticism was aimed not at the Government but at the proposition.

Mr MENSAROS: One could argue theoretically that an oil producing company could say to BHP which mines iron ore and makes steel, "Why don't you sell us steel at a cheaper rate?" and BHP could in turn say, "Why don't you sell us oil at a cheaper rate?"

In connection with the supply of gas, I want to mention also that we cannot cover the increasing demand which will occur during the contract period of 20 years. Obviously the quantity has to be set by the sales agreement, and we have to pay for the gas even if we cannot use it all. When we have a long lead time, we receive the gas only after five years from the time of writing the contract which includes the quantity.

Partly in reply to the member for Merredin, as the project would not be viable if gas were sold simply for industrial and domestic consumption, we had to allow for the bauxite refinery exercise. We took a punt and said if the demand does not reach that amount by 1985 and we still have to buy the gas, we will not flare it but will use it to generate electricity. That is not the most efficient use of gas, but it is better for us to be prepared to buy a little more gas than we conservatively anticipate we will need. Then, if we find we have been too optimistic—which I do not think we have—we could use the gas for
electricity generation. We cannot cover the increasing demand over 20 years, other than by an option which we have done and which has precedence over exports.

I am sure more areas will be proved once gas starts to be produced. The history of other productions is the same. I have visited the ARAMCO field in Saudi Arabia, where huge quantities are produced every year, yet at the end of each year the reserves are larger. That has been the pattern in most cases. That also answers the question asked by a member in respect of why the term of the agreement is 31 years and 21 years; the reason is that although the legal agreement is written for 20 years, it is the experience that the company usually can supply for a longer period.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition mentioned the SEC pamphlet in connection with this matter of supply and said that 8.5 million cubic metres are committed to customers in 1985. It is estimated that by that time, taking into account the use by Alcoa, the whole 8.5 million cubic metres will be saleable, which is about the minimum quantity to make the pipeline feasible. We hope we can use it, but that is only an estimate.

Let me now deal with the preference to local industries clause. Virtually all members criticised this clause. To some extent this might be a question of policy, but if that is so we have not heard an alternative from the Opposition other than saying we should put the comma somewhere else.

Mr Bryce: I said you should end the sentence earlier.

Mr MENSAROS: The alternative policy is to compel the joint venturers to use Western Australian products, services, professionals, etc. Our policy is to give local industry the opportunity to be utilised in the project construction. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, we would not encourage new developers to come here, particularly large international companies, if we say to them that they must use Western Australian products. Secondly, we do not want non-viable industries in Western Australia. Industries of this type end up like weights around the Government's neck. If we cannot establish a competitive industry which can produce goods equal to or better than those produced elsewhere—particularly having the benefit of being here—we should forget about it. Members here are aware of the old arguments about tariffs, and we know that obsolete plants with tariff protections are still operating in some of the Eastern States, and these plants are like an albatross around the neck of the Government concerned.

From past experience we know that these large international companies have at their disposal the best engineering shops in the world in the Hague, plus the tremendous facilities of BP, and we should discourage that they supply everything for the project from overseas.

No Western Australian company can claim to have built an LPG plant, but certainly some companies can claim to have built the pressure vessels. From long negotiations we learnt that we had to watch the situation carefully. The international companies must be given a real opportunity to find out what the Western Australian manufacturers are capable of producing, and we have put this idea before them. Members will see that other subclauses of clause 12 provide that this policy relates also to subcontractors. We tied the knot closer when we had that condition accepted.

Also, the companies must report on these activities as the Minister requires. The Minister may request a report every six months, every three months, or even more frequently. In fact, this agreement is quite an achievement and it goes much further than any previous agreement including those drawn up during the term of the Tonkin Government.

The member for Welshpool spent quite some time discussing which political party had published which document about the North-West Shelf. I do not think that matter is of importance.

Mr Jamieson: But it shows whether one's party has an interest.

Mr MENSAROS: I do not have to remind the member of the difference between our parties—the Labor Party makes policies and the Liberal Party does not make policies.

Mr Jamieson: But your party commented on every other thing including abortion and God knows what else, but not on the North-West Shelf.

Mr MENSAROS: The Labor Party is the policy maker, and the parliamentary party has to accept that whether it likes it or not. It is the other way around in our party.

Mr Jamieson: In other words, everything they carry you go against.

Mr MENSAROS: Certainly the study must be completed by the 30th November, but there is nothing wrong with that. Members know that there must be a date for the completion of the initial studies. The joint venturers must notify the
Minister whether they intend to proceed with the overall project by the 11th December. I can only say that so far I have not received a request for an extension of time.

Mr Jamieson: But what about the requirement by the 30th November?

Mr MENSAROS: The agreement says that the studies must be completed by that date. We all know that a study was undertaken; it took 18 months to complete, and it cost $50 million. To all practical purposes that study is completed.

Mr Jamieson: It is finished?

Mr MENSAROS: Yes. The proposal to go ahead is hinging on one matter only and that is firm letters of intent by the overseas purchaser reaffirming their letters of interest.

I want to mention also that no agreement has been introduced to Parliament and followed up by development the next day. I do not want to be malicious, but if members examine the agreements written by the Tonkin Government, they will see that development did not start in many cases. So it is not a valid criticism to say that an agreement is introduced yet the project has not started immediately, as mentioned by the member for Gosnells. Indeed, I venture to say that this project will start much sooner after the agreement has been executed and ratified in Parliament than have most of the other projects.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr MENSAROS: I will conclude by giving answers to questions asked by members. The member for Welshpool mentioned the port authority. I tried to interject to say that I have tabled what could be called, perhaps, the heads of clauses of the proposed port authority Act, which spells out quite clearly that the Cliffs port would not belong to this port authority, but only Dampier and the joint venturers LNG jetty. The port authority would have five members, one from Hamersley, one from the joint venturers in the North-West Shelf, and two Government nominees; and the four of them would then nominate the general manager, who would be a member of the board as well.

Mr Jamieson: That would be ridiculous, because you have got one lot of shipping across the other.

Mr MENSAROS: It is exactly the same as at Port Hedland, and it is quite effective.

Mr Jamieson: No it is not, because they haven't got two lots of shipping crossing one another.

Mr MENSAROS: There are three companies working at Port Hedland, and there will be three companies working here.

Mr Jamieson: But one controlling body.

Mr MENSAROS: The participants have accepted it. Maybe it does not suit the member for Welshpool, but it does suit the joint venturers, Hamersley, and the State.

Mr Jamieson: It should not suit the State, because I don't want to be involved in stupidity. The Premier ought to have a look at that one.

Mr MENSAROS: In connection with the electricity supply, the power pool for the Pilbara area is subject to special finance being available outside the Loan Council. It has been promised. Ultimately there will be a grid system in the Pilbara. I do not know what power stations will be used, but obviously it will combine the stations, and it will eliminate the unnecessary excess capacity which is used by each party. In time, as the old plants become obsolete, the system will be centralised and larger plants will be built to supply the whole area.

The member for Merredin dealt mostly with matters which had been discussed already by previous speakers. He made one point, which I could not understand. He asked how would we know that the export of X tonnes is necessary if we do not know the price. It has been explained several times that it is in relation to scales of economy. The project is viable only with two platforms, because no financier or insurance company would accept one platform only. There is a certain capital expenditure which has to be recouped. Consequently, there has to be a certain quantity of production daily or the project is simply not viable. That is the reason that, beyond the domestic consumption, the balance of the necessary minimum production has to be exported.

The member for Merredin queried also the use of gas for the refining of bauxite to alumina, and whether that was necessary. The simple answer, which has been published many times, is that taking away the Alcoa bauxite refinery use, the domestic and industrial use at the start of production and for some years is not enough onshore use to justify the pipeline from Dampier to Perth.

The member for Merredin mentioned the question of employment. He virtually said, as other members did, that the project would be of benefit during the construction time only. That is not so, because the ongoing operations will have a tremendous flow-on of employment. He mentioned Britain and the eight platforms in the North Sea, and compared that with Western Australia's two platforms. The answer is that it is to our advantage, if we compare the population of
40 million or 50 million against one million; but the member forgot to mention that in the North Sea there is no liquefaction plant which, in itself, is a large part of the project. It is in addition to the two platforms.

I was happy with the comments of the member for Pilbara. He highlighted the local expectations and what is going on, by way of preparation in the Karratha area. Karratha will be the centre of the development.

I conclude my remarks by saying that, as I understand the comments by the members who contributed to this debate, the main criticism is that the agreement is not drafted properly—that the agreement is not sharp enough from the point of view of the State. No Government in its right mind, unless it wanted to jeopardise Western Australia's name as a resource development State, would repudiate unilaterally an agreement. That was not suggested; but the present Government, or successive Governments, have the opportunity, as do the companies, to start renegotiating the agreement. If members were aware of this, maybe they would be more responsible in their statements as to what could be achieved in such a development agreement to justify the large capital outlay.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Mr Mensaros (Minister for Industrial Development) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3 put and passed.

Schedule—

Mr JAMIESON: I hate to throw a discordant note into the debate. It has been fairly amicable so far. However, I appeal to the Premier to take some interest in what I have been saying.

Sir Charles Court: I have been listening.

Mr JAMIESON: Either the Minister does not understand the geography of the area, or he does not understand what I am saying. The State Shipping Service and other lines using the service wharf at Robe at present would cut right across the shipping lanes of the other companies involved. As I understand it, the shipping has been controlled by the harbour master at Point Samson, and all the pilots have been stationed there. It seems reasonable that when an authority is established, it should have control over the whole region and all the immediate shipping. It should not include one section of shipping and exclude another.

I do not see why, in the ultimate, this cannot be done properly. There would be less chance of confusion or conflict. There would be one body in control of all shipping in and out of the region.

This is all I ask; but it seems to be beyond the Minister's capabilities to understand what I am saying. Surely it is not excessive to ask that all reasonable care be taken, by combining the control of the shipping in the region under the one authority.

Sir Charles Court: It was considered. You must realise that it operates separately now, without let or hindrance. There is no problem at the moment.

Mr O'Neil: The two wharves are 30 miles apart.

Mr JAMIESON: The proposed wharf in the Rockingham-Cockburn Sound area will be tied to the Fremantle Port Authority. One would not think of putting it under any other authority. I see justification for combining them. They all are within the confines of the proclaimed port of Walcott, which is very extensive. It extends down to the islands.

The Government should have a good look at the whole matter. I do not think it should be discarded. The Premier said some consideration has been given to it; but sooner or later, because the region will have fairly heavy shipping, something should be done. There is a proposal that Broken Hill Proprietary will have a steel industry there. There would be service wharves for that industry. This will be in the Point Samson region but it will be closely associated with the other shipping lanes.

It is desirable that we do not have conflict, or we will finish up with too many port authorities trying to look after the one area. I make that request. I do not think it is unreasonable that in the future, anyway, the Government should consider this. If the Government should change, we would have a very close look at this, with all the people in the region, to see if we cannot come up with one authority to look after the whole area.

Mr MENSAROS: Members have conducted the debate generally amicably, so I will not make any reference to the member's comments about my mental capacity. That should be judged by others.

I assure the member that his point has been considered with the Department of Transport, which presently is in charge of the port authorities. There was the idea of combining all
the northern ports under a single port authority. The various suggestions have been discussed internally, before the companies have been consulted. After consideration, these ideas have been rejected. This has been given consideration, because it will affect Hamersley and the joint venturers.

It has been decided that the solution spelled out in the tabled side letter should be accepted. Nothing is unchangeable and there is no doubt that, if further plans are envisaged, the situation can be altered to cope with them. The member for Welshpool would be aware of plans to develop a deep water port for large vessels of up to 500,000 tonnes. If such plans come to fruition and greater demands are placed on the area, the whole matter could be renegotiated and a larger or extended port authority could be set up.

According to the paper which has been tabled, these provisions suited the companies. It was more acceptable to the Government, because it meant that the port would not come under the jurisdiction of two companies. Until there is an increase in usage of the port, the Government and the companies believe this is a reasonable solution.

Mr JAMIESON: I am aware the consortium will examine desalination and the possibility of obtaining water by that means, if it is not too expensive; but if it cannot be done in this manner a problem will arise.

It is true that usually dams are sited in areas where a river flows between high cliffs. Frequently Aboriginal sacred sites are located in these areas, because they favour locations where rivers flow between towering cliffs. This complicates the matter.

Many sacred sites have been discarded over the years, but it is necessary that they be protected to some extent. The Egyptians were very aware of this and did their best to preserve the stone carvings used in the construction of the Aswan Dam.

Likewise Aboriginal paintings and sacred sites should be protected also. I should like the Minister to clarify the intentions in this regard. Will the department endeavour to locate underground aquifers from which water can be pumped as is the case at Millstream? Alternatively, will provision be made for dams to be built on one or more rivers? If that is the case, what site is contemplated?

We are aware of the problems which have been faced in regard to the damming of the Fortescue River. For various reasons people object to this type of activity, and a considerable number of complaints arise.

Last time I asked the Government about this matter, no clear intention was evident. It is obvious that at the peak of development the companies will need twice the amount of water which can be supplied to them at the present time. Does the Government have a proposal under which the water can be provided? Has the Minister made a determination in regard to constructing a dam or using underground aquifers to supply the water which will be required?

Mr MENSAROS: The details have not yet been worked out, because there is a clause in the agreement regarding desalination which the companies may or may not use. At present a study is being conducted to see whether desalination is the most economical and suitable way in which to meet the companies' needs.

If a desalination plant is constructed the water required for the construction camp and the workers on the job will have been met and the water supply required for Karratha is not very large.

However, the Public Works Department is aware that desalination may not be the solution to the problem; therefore, it has carried out studies of the type referred to by the member for Welshpool. I understand the Mines Department has been looking for underground aquifers.

The Public Works Department has tentative plans which will be implemented after the joint venturers have indicated whether or not desalination will be used. During the second reading debate the member for Welshpool indicated that it would be costly for the State to supply the infrastructure required by the company, and water falls into this category. The Government realises it must be competitive on a world-wide basis and we have to get away from the idea that the companies must do everything. This was acceptable in the original stages of development, because there was less competition then; but it cannot be accepted now. However, this need not be a costly exercise. If the opportunity is provided by the Commonwealth for the State to borrow outside the Loan Council, the servicing of the loan and the repayment of the capital will be built into the charges paid by the company for the use of the infrastructure. That will not disadvantage the company, because it will be an ongoing cost which is tax deductible.

Mr JAMIESON: There is another matter I should like to raise.

The CHAIRMAN: I advise the member for Welshpool that this is his last opportunity to
Mr. JAMIESON: I should like to refer to the matter of notification of additional reserves of natural gas. I understand companies other than the joint venturers have concessions in this regard. There is no provision in the proposals under which these companies can become part of the consortium. I mention this, because if one of these companies finds a gas field, it might not be viable for it to exploit it on its own. Therefore, it would be desirable if it could join the consortium.

For example, in the Exmouth Plateau area there have been indications of gas fields which have not, as yet, been assessed fully. However, some may prove to be attractive. Would it be possible for other companies to install their own pipelines to supply to the works, or alternatively pipe the gas to a point at which it could tap into the joint venturers’ facility, so that wellhead prices are paid?

This is a major development and very capital intensive. Therefore, maximum use should be made of it. Has the department determined some way in which other groups can use the facility at a later stage with the blessing of the State Government?

Mr. MENSAROS: The present agreement deals only with the joint venturers who are mentioned in it and who hold the offshore permit. It is obvious the original offshore permit has been diminished through the statutory relinquishment of the offshore areas. The relinquished parts have been taken up by the various other permittees who are not members of the consortium.

Commercial considerations will dictate the solution if someone outside the joint venturers covered by the agreement finds gas which, in itself, is not economical to develop. This can be done either by a farm-in proposition or by renegotiating or reopening this agreement so that they may participate in it.

At this stage I would like to mention an important point that the onshore pipeline built by the SEC will have the advantage of being a common carrier. It is not a company pipeline. It was originally envisaged as being built by the joint venturers, but they lost interest in it. However, had that been done, it would have been a company pipeline and any other companies which found either gas or oil onshore or offshore along the area covered by the pipeline, would have difficulty negotiating to use it; but as it is an SEC facility, it will be a common carrier and anyone in the area who finds oil or gas may join in and use it.

Schedule put and passed.
Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

MR. MENSAROS (Floreat—Minister for Industrial Development) [7.57 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. JAMIESON (Welshpool) [7.58 p.m.]: The matter I should like to refer to relates to the fact that, under clause 37 of the agreement the joint venturers are exempted from the payment of stamp duty. According to the Minister’s introductory speech on the Bill, the period of exemption has been extended to nine years.

I realise a considerable amount of finance is involved in this matter, but I should like to raise a protest in regard to the fact that the scope of the exemption has been widened to include finance and insurance arrangements. A number of unforeseen matters could arise during the period of nine years and I feel the Government is being a little too generous by extending the exemption to include finance and insurance arrangements. Perhaps the exemption should have been extended to cover a period of nine years, but I feel it is unnecessary to include finance and insurance arrangements.

The State must have a regular income. Every time a person renews his insurance, he has to pay stamp duty. I believe the Government is extending the concession too far by allowing the company to be exempt from paying stamp duty on finance and insurance arrangements for nine years. The fact that it is free of the other stamp duty requirements for a period of nine years seems reasonable enough, but to extend it further is going a little too far and, perhaps, being too generous to the joint venturers.

MR. MENSAROS (Floreat—Minister for Industrial Development) [8.01 p.m.]: In a way, I am glad this subject has been brought up because it allows me to explain the situation. I think we all agreed to the period of nine years which was allowed because of the very large capital investment and the much longer time allowed for the construction of the project.

Regarding the other matters, it could be said safely that this is a courtesy arrangement.
because, whether or not we like it, I do not think anyone would imagine that these enormous finances will be found in Western Australia. They will be obtained from overseas. Therefore, I do not think we will lose anything in stamp duty.

From the point of view of the sales contracts, the SEC is a Government instrumentality and is exempt. In the case of overseas sales, which will be the majority of the sales, they will not attract Western Australian stamp duty either.

With reference to insurance—and I combine these comments with the argument we had about clause 12 of the schedule, the local content—if anything this provision of stamp duty exemption might be an encouragement to the joint venturers, or some of them, to utilise a local insurance broker. He will be competitive because no stamp duty will be payable. I cannot predict that will happen, but it is an encouragement. When we observe the enormous world-wide network of insurance brokers, and the actions of those established companies, I do not think we can hold out a tremendous hope that a significant amount of insurance will be underwritten in this State.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

GOVERNMENT AGREEMENTS BILL
Second Reading

MR MENSAROS (Floreat—Minister for Industrial Development) [8.04 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill before the House has two major provisions which are of importance to the many major developers who have ratified agreements with the State.

Clause 3 of the Bill aims to eliminate any possible uncertainty which may exist in relation to the manner in which Acts ratifying agreements have been effected over the past 30 years.

To establish the significance of the provisions of the clause it is necessary for me to provide the House with some background on the matter.

Over time, legal opinion has not been clear or consistent on the effect that flows from scheduling an agreement and providing in an Act that the agreement is ratified or approved. Consequently, the relevant provisions in agreements have, over the years, varied materially in their form.

In addition, amending agreements have created further variety in so far as some ratifying Acts have provided that the relevant agreement is simply ratified or approved.

Sometimes much more elaborate provisions have been made with the effect that the agreement is made a law of the State. Members might have noticed that in the Bill which we dealt with previously that was the case.

Late last year the High Court, in the case of Sankey v. Whitlam (1978) A.L.R. 505, had to decide whether the terms of the Financial Agreement between the States and the Commonwealth, which was scheduled in the Financial Agreement Act, 1928, and approved by that Act, was a “law of the Commonwealth”.

The High Court held that the scheduled financial agreement was not a law of the Commonwealth. Ratification, approval, confirmation, or the like were seen to be of legal importance, but did not make the terms of the agreement a law, according to the High Court.

This matter was again alluded to in a recent State Full Court ruling to which I will refer further.

The consequence is that in a number of our State agreements in which there are provisions whereby Parliament has simply ratified or approved an agreement, the terms of those agreements may not have the force of law. This could have serious significance.

By way of explanation, I instance here that the agreements consolidate the mining tenements and, therefore, override the Mining Act. They provide that companies do not pay rates to the local authorities. They might contain different provisions from those in the existing Land Act, and if those provisions do not constitute the law of the land then anybody can assail the agreements, and their implementation becomes jeopardised.

Agreements contain provisions expressly varying or overriding the operation of various laws of the State, and if the terms of some agreements do not have the force of the law, then the ordinary laws of the State might prevail and the relevant terms of the agreements might not be able to be fulfilled.

Consequently the ability of the company concerned to meet its obligations under the agreement, and the power of the State and its instrumentalities, to fulfil the contractual obligations undertaken in the agreement could be frustrated.

Members will be aware that agreements have over the years been negotiated with almost all major developers in this State. As a result, the Government has moved to rectify the position in relation to agreements which are at the heart of the economic development which has taken place in Western Australia since the 1950s.
The other major provisions of this Bill are contained in clause 4. A recent Full Court decision quashed the convictions of protestors who earlier this year disrupted work at the Wagerup alumina refinery site. The prosecutions were brought under section 67(4) of the Police Act which was not designed with reference to ratified industrial agreements.

That decision focussed attention on the inadequacy of existing legislation to deal with protestors who seek to disrupt industrial projects.

Clause 4, subclause (1), of this Bill makes it an offence for a person without lawful authority to remain on “subject land” after being warned to leave by—

(a) the owner or occupier or an authorised person on their behalf; or

(b) a member of the Police Force.

“Subject land” is defined in clause 2 of the Bill to cover either land that is set aside or is being used to implement a Government agreement or land where activity is being or is about to be carried out for the same purpose.

Subclause (2) prohibits persons without lawful authority from preventing or hindering such activity, or attempting to do so.

Subclause (3) provides for an averment in proceedings in respect of a Government agreement.

The Government, supported by the overwhelming majority of Western Australians who recognise the benefits of controlled sensible development of our resources, will not allow such a situation to continue.

Penalties provided in the clause are severe but they reflect the seriousness with which the Government views these deliberate acts of obstruction.

As members are aware the Wagerup project was, and all other projects are, required to comply with exhaustive environmental and other requirements. Such requirements are designed to provide maximum long-term benefits for residents of this State.

Consequently, the Government will not stand back and see these projects delayed by minority groups who seek to enforce their views on the majority of people who support the ventures.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Bryce (Deputy Leader of the Opposition).
sufficiently interested, he could ask about this matter by way of a question and I can then obtain the information from the Attorney General.

The Attorney General has supplied me with some notes in respect of the Consolidated Revenue Estimates, but certainly he has not referred to judges of the Family Court of the Commonwealth of Australia. It has been my understanding always that Western Australia has a completely self-contained Family Court system. I know to some extent it is funded by the Commonwealth, and if the member will look at Item No. 12, he will see there that the vote for the Family Court for 1978-79 was $367,000, the expenditure was $400,141, and the Estimate for 1979-80 is $468,000.

I have a note from the Attorney General and the Crown Law Department in respect of the Commonwealth grant for the Family Court of Western Australia the estimated revenue for 1979-80 is $1,547,000 and the actual revenue last year was $1,321,060. The Commonwealth fund recoups the running of the Family Court. If the honourable member wants an explanation of the breakdown of every item, I will be unable to give it to him. I will refer his request to the Attorney General if that is his wish.

Mr BERTRAM: That is what I would like. These matters come under the heading, "Salaries and Establishment 1/7/79". However, the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee is composed of three members only—an adviser, and perhaps a stenographer. I wish to know how the amount is split up.

Item No. 2: Administration Expenses, $1,076,000—

Mr GRILL: This item accounts for approximately one-twelfth of the complete allocation for Crown Law. Recently it was brought to my attention that when the Crown Law Department sends legal officers into more remote areas of the State, although it pays the air fares of the officers concerned, it will not pay weekend accommodation.

So in many cases an officer is flown back from, say, Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, or Port Hedland, for the weekend, and he then returns to one of these centres on the Monday morning. In most cases it would be far cheaper to pay the accommodation for the weekend. Firstly I ask the Deputy Premier whether that is the policy of the department; and secondly, does the Deputy Premier see that as being a proper way to spend the money of the department?

Mr O'NEIL: Once again I cannot answer specifically the question raised. Certainly it would seem to me to be a fairly strange policy if the accommodation for the weekend was less than the return air fare. I should think that the officers would be entitled also to some travelling expenses, so it may be cheaper to require the officer to return to the city say, perhaps, when a court is not in operation in a remote area, and then to return when the court is operating again.

I will raise this matter with the Attorney General. I know that if any of my officers travel long distances, sometimes they must stay for a longer period than necessary to complete the task involved because of the lack of transport facilities.

Vote put and passed.

Vote: Corporate Affairs Office, $1,371,000—

Item No. 2: Administration Expenses, $121,000—

Mr BERTRAM: Last year the vote for this item was $112,000. The actual expenditure was $95,084. This year the estimate has suddenly spiralled to $121,000, and this causes us to inquire as to the reason.

I imagine that the Deputy Premier will be able to put me right on this, but at least partially, and maybe substantially, it is the result of the rip-off which the Fraser Government has made of all the people in Australia, and perhaps more particularly of the people in Western Australia, because of the long distances we travel—and I am referring to the price of fuel.

An extraordinary deal was put over our Treasurer because he, in his federalism procedure with the Fraser Government, agreed to accept a certain percentage of income tax. The Prime Minister, being the shrewd gentleman that he is, decided the best thing to do was to ensure that income tax did not go up. So instead of filling the Federal coffers with income tax—by the ordinary and conventional method of doing so—the Prime Minister has filled them with this unjustifiable and iniquitous tax on fuel. By using this method, Western Australia does not get a cent extra.

Apparently the Treasurer has made an overture to the Prime Minister but the Prime Minister told him what he thought of his proposition. From what I can gather, the Federal Government is virtually minting money by way of fuel charges.

Mr O'NEIL: What item are you talking about now? Administration expenses for the Corporate Affairs Office?

Mr BERTRAM: Yes, this estimate has risen substantially.

Mr O'NEIL: But that is for many things, not just travelling expenses.
Mr BERTRAM: That is right. Everything is going up because of inflation, the result of the rapacious grabbing of Fraser.

Mr B. T. Burke: A deliberate manipulation of the fuel crisis.

Mr BERTRAM: Income tax is kept down, and so our share of the income tax is kept down to virtually nothing. On the other hand, we lose on fuel—we lose both ways. That is good housekeeping!

We are now seeing the legacy of new federalism. Clearly the Prime Minister has outwitted and outgeneralled the State Treasurer. Our share of income tax is kept at a minimum, but our outgoings are skyrocketing. It seems to me that very shortly we will have a double tax in this State—otherwise we will not survive.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Watt): Order! I have been trying with difficulty to establish the relevance of the member's remarks to this item. I ask him to confine his remarks more directly to the matter before the Chair.

Mr BERTRAM: I would be delighted to do that. There must be some reason for this skyrocketing allocation. I am advancing the proposition that perhaps rising fuel prices have contributed to the increase. I should like the Deputy Premier to explain the matter to the Committee.

Mr O'NEIL: Firstly, while the member for Mt. Hawthorn talked about skyrocketing increases, he neglected to mention that the vote for last year in respect of Item No. 2 was $112 000, while actual expenditure was only $95 084; this was probably due to a lower activity than that which was anticipated. The estimate of expenditure this year is $121 000. The increase in estimate over and above actual expenditure last year is $25 916.

This heading comprises postage, stationery, travelling expenses, contributions to interstate Corporate Affairs Commissions, investigations under the Companies Act, and other miscellaneous items. The increase is due mainly to a provision for inflation and growth in the existing level of activity.

Vote put and passed.

Vote: Office of Titles, $3 258 000—put and passed.

Vote: Public Trust Office, $1 808 000—

Item No. 2: Administration Expenses, $205 000—

Mr BERTRAM: This item appears under the heading "Contingencies" and is very similar to the one we have been discussing. The Minister, in reply to my query, explained that although last year's Estimate was $112 000, expenditure was only $95 084. In other words, the Government was way down in its estimate.

However, the same argument does not apply in respect of this item. The estimate for 1978-79 was $140 000, while actual expenditure was $141 528. That is almost balancing the budget; the Opposition would not argue about that. However, the estimate for this year exceeds last year's actual expenditure by $63 472, which represents an increase of nearly 50 per cent. The Committee is entitled to more than vague generalities from the Minister. The essence of any Budget is that the Estimates figures are not meaningless, but have some reality. Apparently, there has been no change in the overall circumstances of the Public Trust Office, yet we are faced with a gigantic increase in allocation. I think this is a legacy of the Fraser fuel rip-off under which the State not only loses its share of income tax by virtue of the fact that Fraser is keeping taxation down, but also is faced with increased fuel costs because of the Prime Minister's deliberate policy of increasing fuel prices.

Mr O'NEIL: The estimate for 1979-80 is $205 000, while the actual expenditure last year was $141 528, providing an overall increase this year of $63 472.

Items under this heading are: Postage, rent, stationery and stores, and miscellaneous items. The increase relates to provision for inflation, provision for landscaping an outside area adjacent to the Public Trust Office building, and provision for purchase of mechanical appliances previously paid from the Crown Law Department vote. I hope that satisfies the honourable member.

Mr BERTRAM: Actually, it does not. If I heard the Minister correctly, he did not mention travelling expenses. I think the trouble is occurring due to increased travelling expenses.

Vote put and passed.

Part 8: Minister for Education and Recreation—

MR PEARCE (Gosnells) [8.39 p.m.]: A number of interesting aspects emerge from the education estimates this year. Even more interesting figures arise from the Loan Estimates, with which I will deal later.

The continuing problem of unemployment quite clearly will be exacerbated in the next calendar year, when some 2 000 teachers can be expected to graduate from college at the end of this year. Members can appreciate that the teacher employment situation has continued to tighten over the last three or four years. We have gone
from a situation only four years ago when there were a then unbelievable 250 or 300 teachers unemployed to the stage where one could reasonably expect teacher unemployment to increase to something like 2,000 at the beginning of next year.

I understand the number of teacher graduates is starting to diminish because of the reduced intakes effected three or four years ago by teacher training institutions. Unfortunately, this diminished intake was introduced much too late. The Premier's speech made it clear very few of next year were a then unbelievable 650 from a situation only four years ago when there were 2,500 teaching staff. However, even if an additional 100 part-time teachers are to be required, we are looking at an extra allocation of staff of less than 900. It is my assumption that 2,000 or more teachers will graduate at the end of this year, leaving some 1,100 new graduates to find jobs.

Mr P. V: Jones: Your figures are too high.

Mr PEARCE: That is my estimate of the situation. I do not take into account people left over from the year before who are without jobs, or those who have left the service for one reason or another and who are now seeking to re-enter it—in many cases, unsuccessfully. It does not take into account married women on the temporary staff who will be lapsed at the end of the year.

Many of the additional jobs to be provided in 1980 are not to be provided at the beginning of the year except for the new places that are required because of the increase in the student population. They will result from movement through the year. It may be there will be 2,000 teachers jobless through the year; but there could be more who are jobless for a proportion of the year. It is getting to be a problem of considerably increasing magnitude.

I notice with a degree of cynicism when looking at the vote for last year and the amount actually spent that we find yet again the Education Department has managed to underspend its allocation by $9 million. I drew attention to this three years ago when the underspending was of the order of $6.5 million. Despite that, the next year it went to $7.5 million. This year it is $9 million. If the Government continues with this trend, presumably next year the figure will be perhaps $10 million or more.

As the Minister will probably tell us, it may be a simple failure to estimate properly. The department may have expected higher figures for salaries or that allowances for teachers would rise much faster. The point is the Education Department apparently appears consistently to underestimate its expenses by this amount. If it is the case that the Government is prepared to spend that amount on teachers' salaries, come next year for the fourth time around, the Government should try to spend the actual amount and so cut back some of this very serious teacher unemployment in the community which continues to build up year by year.

In many instances the problem is compounding. A teacher unemployed for two years, a trained teacher with no experience, is in a situation where he or she is virtually unemployable. Their qualifications are becoming out-dated and all their exertions to get their training requirements are becoming totally wasted. That is a situation of concern to the entire community and not just to the people themselves or their families who help them to study and become trained teachers. This is especially so at a time when there is so much concern about the quality of education, about literacy and numeracy problems. One would have thought the Government would be making...
provision to overcome these problems that many community people and, ironically, the Minister are pointing out.

I tackle the Minister most strongly about the quite irresponsible remarks he made in the Press and on television over the last weekend emanating from a speech he gave at the Hale School speech night concerning the viability of the Achievement Certificate.

Mr P. V. Jones: I will not alter anything I said.

Mr PEARCE: Perhaps not, but I am drawing attention to the fact that the Minister made certain very irresponsible remarks. If the Minister is saying the Achievement Certificate needs to be looked at or there needs to be an on-going assessment of it, I would agree with him. I spent two years, on and off, on a departmental-union BSE committee which looked at this matter. The committee made suggestions as to how the Achievement Certificate could operate, but the department took no notice of the suggestions which were made, despite the fact departmental officers were on that committee.

The principal of Hale School was one of those people who stood out when the Achievement Certificate was first introduced and said he thought very little of it. For many years—and probably still—Hale School conducted its own Junior Certificate. It was opposed to the Achievement Certificate in every way.

These 200 or so elite students who would get the Hale School Junior Certificate heard the Minister say that the Achievement Certificate was not providing a sufficient indication to employers of a person's ability and virtually implied that the certificate was useless. What a sense of timing on the part of the Minister! In the very week in which thousands of year 10 students will be going out to seek jobs for the first time, after years of endeavour to achieve worthwhile qualifications, the Minister said to all the people in the community that the single qualification with which these students would be going out to seek a job is virtually worthless.

Mr B. T. Burke: He is the glibest Minister in the House. He apes the Premier.

Mr P. V. Jones: Are you suggesting it is a good qualification?

Mr PEARCE: I am suggesting the Minister's remarks were irresponsible and deplorable. The Minister does not seem to have much of an idea of what the Achievement Certificate is about.

Mr B. T. Burke: He was in Tasmania when the Junior Certificate was on.

Mr Clarko: Don't you agree there are many teachers who do not particularly like it.

Mr PEARCE: In a sense, I am pleased the member for Karrinyup has joined the discussion.

Mr Clarko: Do you agree there are many teachers who are very dissatisfied with it, either in whole or in part?

Mr PEARCE: Of course, the wide spectrum of teachers have different views about the Achievement Certificate and how it could be made more viable. Some would like to see a return to the old Junior Certificate. However, they are in a clear minority, even according to the departmental view. The Minister would be well aware that in the early years of the Achievement Certificate, in 1973 and 1974, the department ran a comprehensive survey of teacher attitudes to the Achievement Certificate. It was a revealing survey. The committee I referred to based a lot of its discussions on that survey.

I am not saying there ought not to be a change in the award procedures, the assessment procedures, the reporting procedures used in schools; they can always be improved. No-one is saying the education system is perfect; quite clearly it is not. I am saying it is totally irresponsible of the supposedly most responsible officer of the Education Department, the Minister, to go on television, days after all the year 10 students have left school to seek jobs with their one, single qualification, the Achievement Certificate, to say to all the employers in the State that that very Achievement Certificate is virtually worthless as an employment qualification. The one thing these thousands of students have after years of sweat is said by the Minister to be worthless.

Mr Clarko: He didn't say that.

Mr PEARCE: Yes he did. It was most unfortunate for the Minister to have said such a thing. Perhaps he did so to ingratiate himself with Dr Tregonning and the Hale School students. Dr Tregonning and all the other reactionaries would undoubtedly be happy with the Minister's remarks because they would like to see a return to the Junior Certificate.

Mr Shalders: Dr Tregonning is a very sound educationist.

Mr PEARCE: I taught English at the junior level and I studied at school when the Junior Certificate was in force. I remember that 10 marks were given in the English paper for questions on poetry. The question contained five, two-line quotations from the book of Living Verse. We got one point if we could name the poem from which the quote came and another
point if we could name the chap who wrote the poem. It was a similar situation with regard to the novel, drama, and the like.

Sir Charles Court: Is that how you managed to pass?

Mr PEARCE: Perhaps so; the Premier may be perfectly accurate. More sensible, practical, and rational people may have been unable to pass.

Mr Clarko: That is atypical of junior English.

Mr PEARCE: I know it is not, because I taught it for years. I spent a year studying line by line the single novel we had to learn in those days, Lorna Doone.

Mr P. V. Jones: What has this to do with the subject before us.

Mr PEARCE: I was talking about the Junior Certificate which Dr Tregonning would like to have back. I reject any possibility of returning to the Junior Certificate. I condemn the Minister for the irresponsibility of his timing in alleging quite untruthfully and inaccurately that the Achievement Certificate is of no value as an employment qualification. It is unfortunate the Minister made his remarks at the expense of these thousands of year 10 students who are now searching for jobs in a period when jobs are difficult to find because of this Government's attitudes.

While I am speaking about the Minister I will give him a pat on the back also. In all honesty I am pleased with his stance with regard to the controversy being whipped up by certain elements in the community about coarse literature on school reading lists, mostly for years 11 and 12. Many of these groups have irresponsibly misquoted passages from these books and taken them out of context. People who have never read the books have quite inaccurately and untruthfully alleged that these books are pornographic or contain graphic descriptions of violence and are used for reading in schools. They have referred to the Salute to the Great McCarthy and implied it is available to very young children. This is quite wrong.

I am pleased to note the Minister has taken a firm stand behind the officers of his department who are doing a very sensible and responsible job of previewing the literature used in school courses to ensure that unsuitable books do not find their way onto the lists of approved reading for English courses. The proposition in the media that violence and pornography in books is being pushed on to young people is totally inaccurate. Many people do not understand what is going on in the school system. In a climate in which it would be only too easy for the Minister to take what one might describe as a Bjelke-Petersen approach and try to make political points from the situation and from the community reaction, I am pleased the Minister has withstood that temptation and has stood behind his department.

If I am to summarise the Opposition's attitude to the educational achievements of this Government I have to say the Government has done quite a fair job in continuing to put aside reasonable increases for educational expenditure year by year, at a time when there is so much pressure on spending in the State. I complimented the Government for its allocation last year and I compliment it again this year for its latest allocation. My praise would be more fulsome if the Government could spend the amount of money it allocates, particularly in the area of teachers' salaries.

There seems to be a double approach to the Government's education policies. Perhaps I could say one is the departmental-ministerial approach while the other is the Premier-Treasury approach. At the same time as the Minister does a reasonable job in backing up the department in the projects it wants to take on with increasing educational money, the Premier always writes into his speeches a caveat that we are not getting value for money and we have to make a reassessment of the value for dollars spent in the education area.

I do not disagree. I have heard that cliché in three Budgets and there has been no suggestion that any inquiry is to be carried out into the value of the dollars we are spending or that the Government is getting more value for each dollar it spends.

Mr P. V. Jones: All the time.

Mr PEARCE: That has not been indicated. This Government is not one for doing a job and being quiet about it.

Mr B. T. Burke: It is the most dangerous scenario-setting for occasioning precedents.

Mr PEARCE: It is what one has been anticipating—an oration from the Premier to show a degree of responsibility. Money is not wasted on education except possibly in the procedures that are worked out for building. There is wasteful expenditure in the construction field. However, I will speak on this during the Loan Estimates.

Like the curate's egg, the Government's approach to education has been good in parts and by implication, bad in other parts. We would like to see much greater concentration on the employment of teachers. A very considerable educational programme could be implemented
with reduced class sizes and an effort made on the serious matter of functional illiterates in the school system.

The attitude of the Education Department in this State is fairly accurately reflected by the Minister but not always by his Cabinet colleagues. So, in that sense, I suppose education should be grateful for the money and be a little wary of the trends that accompany its presentation.

MR TONKIN (Morley) [9.03 p.m.]: I would like to speak very briefly on this matter because the member for Gosnells has raised several points with respect to the old Junior Certificate. I know there are quite a few people who yearn for the good old days of external examinations. However, the concept of the Junior Certificate over the past few years of its life became an absurdity. What happened was that increasingly higher percentages of students sat for the Junior Certificate. At one stage it would have been 10 per cent of all 15-year-olds, however the percentage rose until it approached approximately 80 per cent.

The policy of the examiners was to still pass the same percentage and, given the spread of natural ability, in order to get 70 per cent of the increased number of candidates through, the standard had to go down until in the last couple of years the Junior Certificate became quite patent absurd. Seventy per cent were still passing the Junior Certificate at the arbitrary mark of 50 per cent, even though over 80 per cent of all 15-year-olds at school were sitting for the examination.

In the earlier days, there was not the time to discriminate between the strong and weak students so the examination was set to enable a weak student to get through. For example, I was a teacher of English and I am aware of this fact. How can reading one novel be a basis of appreciation for English literature? Just one novel was prescribed, therefore one had to go over and over that novel and the questions that were asked were quite absurd. One would be required to name the three uncles of someone in the novel. That had nothing to do with literature appreciation at all and it became a memorisation of facts in one novel.

Therefore, one found that with the most able students one could not push them beyond because it had to be made sure that everyone passed the certificate. It meant that the standard was set at a level of mediocrity.

Of course, with the advent of the Achievement Certificate teachers were treated as professional people. If it is required that teachers act professionally then they have to be treated in that way. Under the Achievement Certificate if there are more able students then the sky is the limit. It is not necessary to stay at one level because the examination is set so that 70 per cent pass. One can go as high as the students' ability allows. An examination can be set at a very high level and that is not holding students and teachers back.

With the Achievement Certificate concept various standards can be set and if there is a strong group of students with a very strong type of teacher he can write his own course and go to levels of research which are far beyond the work done under the old Junior Certificate. I just make that point because I was in charge of subjects with the old Junior Certificate when the Achievement Certificate was instituted.

Finally, I would like to make a point the member for Gosnells made which referred to the question of the campaigns being carried on by people about the so-called pornographic books studied in the literature courses. I notice in particular a very unfair attack which was directed against Mr Peter Gunning who is the superintendent of English in the Education Department. I know the Minister defended Mr Gunning and I appreciate his integrity for doing that. But I wish to comment on this not just in a theoretical way because I worked with Peter Gunning at the John Forrest Senior High School.

Indeed, in all my years of teaching there was no-one who could be said to have a higher degree of integrity or sincerity. Mr Gunning has always put the students first and I can think of no more dedicated teacher than he. This attack was made against him as a result of a TV programme which I did not see. Certainly the attack was disgraceful.

I hope we do not go much further on this road of trying to turn back the clock and trying to suggest that 17-year-olds do not live in the real world. I hope we do not try to pretend the real world is something separate from the scholastic world. This would be absolute nonsense. We would be completely hypocritical to suggest that 17-year-olds are children. If a teacher addressing a group of 17-year-olds called them children he would be in danger of being lynched, and rightly so. They are young adults and in many ways are more mature than some of the members of this Chamber. I know that because of my experience with these students and of course with my experience in this Chamber.

Mr Clarko: Do you think they know much about politics?
Mr TONKIN: It depends. Some are very naive but some are very knowledgeable on the subject of politics. Certainly I can think of a large number of 50 and 60-year-olds who know very little about politics.

I hope we do not go too far in the direction of trying to turn back the clock. I would like to commend the Minister for the stand he has taken on this question and particularly in regard to Mr Gunning who is a teacher of great integrity.

MR B. T. BURKE (Balcatta) [9.10 p.m.]: I want to direct the attention of the Committee to a specific problem that is the Minister's responsibility. It involves the accommodation provided for the principal of the school at Onslow, and I am sure this is something of which the Minister has knowledge.

Mr P. V. Jones: It has nothing to do with this debate whatsoever. It is not even my responsibility.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I understand it is the Minister's responsibility as far as the rejection or otherwise of properties through the Government Employees' Housing Authority is concerned. I understand the Minister's department informs that authority whether or not a certain property is required by his department. If it does that, as I believe it does, then certainly this is part of the Minister's responsibility.

Mr P. V. Jones: That is right.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Members will not be aware, unless they have some specific knowledge of the area, that the principal of the Onslow school lives in the part of the town which is known as "The Hill". This is part of the town which is almost entirely populated by Aboriginal Australians and it is part of the town which is the source of consistent trouble and consistent problems for the police in Onslow.

Earlier this year, one of the wives of another teacher teaching at Onslow and who also lives with her husband on "The Hill"—about three doors down from the principal's home—was the subject of a sexual attack. That attack gave some precision to the worry that had been felt by the principal and his family as well as the other teaching couple living in that part of Onslow. Other people in the town had long considered that "The Hill" was not a suitable place for a teacher with a family to live and bring up his children.

The principal approached the Education Department and I understand he received a sympathetic hearing from the department but the department was unable to find land on which an alternative home could be built. After the local shire council had considered the matter and decided to support the principal unanimously, the principal and the shire clerk looked at several blocks of land considered to be suitable. One was not considered suitable but others were.

They subsequently approached the Education Department and informed it of the land available. One of the blocks was a foreshore block which was considered to be ideal and the principal thought it should be taken up by the Education Department for the building of a home for the principal or for another teacher.

In July, the principal was informed that the Education Department had acquired use of the block in question. In fact on the 17th July that became common knowledge in the town. Members will be as surprised as I was to learn that on the 20th October the Education Department returned the block to the Government Employees' Housing Authority. As was related by an officer of that authority, the department had indicated that the block was not required by the Education Department. That is what the authority told the people from the town when they inquired of it as to the future of that block.

The shire unanimously agreed to approach the Minister for Education and the Minister for Lands and a petition was prepared and signed. There was considerable disquiet as to the meandering of the Education Department in this matter. Later, quite recently in fact, the Education Department informed the principal that it would be building a house for him on another block which had been acquired in the town. It was one of the blocks he discovered during his tour of the town in search for land, following the problems which had occurred.

At the same time the foreshore block, the one the principal was originally told would be the site for a house for his family, has been turned over to the Police Department. Not only has it been turned over to the Police Department, but I am informed the senior police officer in the town has chosen to remain in the house he is now occupying, and presumably the new house will be turned over to a junior officer.

It defies understanding why the Education Department has followed this tortuous path, why it initially indicated it required a block of land which it has returned to the Government Employees' Housing Authority and which has subsequently been allocated to the Police Department, and why it has been able to say to the Government Employees' Housing Authority that it did not require the block of land which was returned, yet has subsequently acquired use of...
another block on which a house is to be built and has told inquirers in the town that it is now seeking an extra block to build another house for one of the teachers in the town. In a moment I will mention whose electorate it is and the kinds of things being done by the representatives of that electorate.

The townspeople I know are very keen for the Minister to reconsider the position as to whether it is possible to allow the principal of the school to move into the house which is being constructed on the foreshore block. Townspeople have been very emphatic in pointing out to me that the location of the principal's present home is a disincentive to attracting principals to the town and to their continued residence in the town.

I will not tell members the numerous praises of the present principal which have been written and relayed verbally to me. It is sufficient to say he is well regarded and his assistance is requested there by many residents. It is short-sighted of the Government not to attempt to accommodate the principal's need.

I have been told no accommodation for single teachers exists in Onslow at the present time. The single teacher now there stays in shire quarters and during this year she has had five changes of accommodation. If the Government is sincere in advancing its policy of giving special consideration to isolated or geographically removed areas, certainly some single accommodation should be provided for the teacher in the town of Onslow. That is not being done now. In fact, the quarters provided by the shire this year will not be available next year, and the five moves the single teacher has had this year are likely to be compounded next year.

Now I come to what the local representatives have done in respect of this problem. The upper House member (Mr Tozer), who I understand is seeking re-election, might be expected to attack the problem with vigour, assiduously applying himself to it. On the 26th November, 1979, in a long letter to the secretary of the parents and citizens' association, he says—

(An interesting “aside” to the question under discussion is that in 1947, as a young cadet surveyor, straight out of the Army on a re-hab course, I sub-divided this and other Commonwealth allotments in the vicinity).

Mr Tozer informs the P & C—

I think that your Association would recognise that, as a Member of Parliament, I do not expect to interfere in the normal operations of any Government Department or instrumentality.

Apart from the breadth of the view of his own job, it is strange that a member seeking re-election should tell the P & C not to ask him to make any representations to a Government department or instrumentality during the course of his job. In addition, having delivered a stunning left hook, he lines up for the right cross and says—

It would be quite chaotic, if any elected Member could interfere with this purely executive function.

So we cannot say Mr Tozer has not given the association a fair hearing!

But not to worry about Mr Tozer's reaction. The lower House is where things happen. Mr Tozer, who has a much larger electorate than does the member for Pilbara, obviously does not have the time which the member for Pilbara has to give to individual problems. The member for Pilbara does not write letters; he appears on the scene personally and at a social function insults the principal, tells the principal he is only complaining because he does not want to stay in the town, and after he has provoked some disputation and an unnecessary and distasteful scene at this social function; and the principal retires gracefully.

Mr Tubby: Were you there?

Mr B. T. BURKE: No, but the member for Pilbara is here and can deny this later.

Mr Sodeman: I will deny it now. I am wondering where you got the fairy tale from.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I understand no blows were struck, but the member for Pilbara said in unequivocal terms that the principal was stirring only because he did not want to stay in the town. He did not say that only once; he repeated it several times.

Mr Sibson: How do you know?

Mr B. T. BURKE: I have received from Mrs Eileen Trott, the secretary of the P & C in Onslow, a letter which sets it out in detail. I have also received verbal information from three different people, one of whom told me he was present when this occurred.

Mr Sodeman: Was Mrs Eileen Trott at the function?

Mr B. T. BURKE: She did not tell me she was at the function.

Mr Sodeman: And the person who told you this was said, did he hear the conversation?

Mr Jamieson: We want your version in Hansard so that we can take it back.
Mr B. T. BURKE: I am happy to answer anything the honourable member has to say. Did the person who told me this happened—

Mr Sodeman: Did he tell you he had heard the so-called conversation between the principal and me?

Mr B. T. BURKE: No, the person did not. I am perfectly happy for the honourable member to say—

Mr Sodeman: It is a matter of the principal's fairy tales.

Mr B. T. BURKE: One of the principal's fairy tales! Once again the honourable member is happy to criticise the principal who is so highly regarded! He is now willing to say the principal is responsible for spreading fairy tales but to deny ever saying anything much milder than that.

Mr Sodeman: He is the only one who could have told you because no-one else was there.

Mr B. T. BURKE: He is the only one who could have told me that a conversation which did not take place occurred! That is perfectly straightforward!

Mr Sodeman: That is right, and that is the point.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The member for Pilbara is having it said straight to his face and he is prepared, I suppose, to defend himself.

Mr Clarko: You keep saying, "Don't get personal!"

Mr B. T. BURKE: I do not think this is getting personal. This is interesting.

Let me recap what has happened so far. Regardless of what the member for Pilbara has or has not had to say, the town is very keen that the principal be allocated the house now under construction. The block on which the house is being constructed was originally acquired by the Education Department, and subsequently handed back by that department to the Government Employees' Housing Authority with the rider that it was not required.

Mr P. V. Jones: Are you saying the Education Department actually purchased a block of land?

Mr B. T. BURKE: I did not say "purchased"; I said "acquired". That is the information I have. Is there a difference?

Mr Sibson: You are playing on words.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am prepared to tarry with you—something which most members are not prepared to do, and I will explain details. I can only say the word I used was "acquired".

Mr P. V. Jones: The Education Department did not acquire any land at all in Onslow.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am looking for the detail to which I referred.

Mr Sibson: You have not done your homework. You have not read the correspondence.

Mr P. V. Jones: I am trying to help by saying the Education Department did not acquire—to use your term—land and then subsequently hand it back to anybody.

Mr Clarko: That ruins his whole case.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I do not think it ruins the case at all. I am saying—and the Minister can explain how it did not happen, if he likes—that the Government Employees' Housing Authority informed one person in the town that the Education Department told that authority it no longer required the block in question. Previously it had said it required the block. If the Minister wants me to argue about whether or not it was acquired, we can do so, but it had indicated it required a block, subsequently did not require it, and is now setting about acquiring two more blocks. That is what happened.

Mr P. V. Jones: You are not right.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am also very keen to get from the Minister his assurance as to his preparedness to look at the possibility of providing the house being built on the foreshore block for the principal, and not for a policeman who, as it turns out, will probably be one of the more junior policemen and perhaps even unmarried—the senior officer has explained he intends to stay in the home he now occupies.

Mr P. V. Jones: That is none of the Education Department's business.

Mr B. T. BURKE: It is, because the department originally, on the 17th July, informed the principal that it had intentions to build on the foreshore block for the principal, and not for a policeman who, as it turns out, will probably be one of the more junior policemen and perhaps even unmarried—the senior officer has explained he intends to stay in the home he now occupies.
couple who may be moved to the principal's house.

But the department which said previously it did not require one block of land has acquired another and is seeking a second block for this other teaching couple.

The proposition some of the people have put to me is that the house on "The Hill" if it is to be the home of a Government employee is more suitable for a policeman. But I would not support that.

I would say the Minister should be prepared to look closely at the situation which results from the senior police officer's decision to remain in his present house. It may result in the more junior policeman being granted occupancy of the foreshore home, which, no matter what the Minister wants to say, was the subject of a communication from his department in July which said the department would be building on that foreshore block. Subsequently it was handed back to GEHA as is evidenced by the fact that the Police Department is now building on it.

Mr P. V. Jones: It said GEHA would be building on that block.

Mr B. T. BURKE: That is what happened. The Minister has a certain reputation for glibness but that sort of explanation will not wash.

Mr P. V. Jones: You said it was going to build a house on a block it had acquired.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Of course I am not saying that. Do not be so silly as to try to say that sort of thing when I have referred to the Government Employees Housing Authority four or five times. If that is a silly little thing—

Mr P. V. Jones: You said it was going to build a house on a block with—

Mr B. T. BURKE: Do not be silly! That is typical of the Minister's defences, but it does not make sense. The Minister knows as well as I do that the information was relayed to the principal by his department.

Mr P. V. Jones: Yes.

Mr B. T. BURKE: If the Minister wants to say that the Education Department has never built a dwelling and that GEHA has responsibility for the construction, then let him place his arm for strength on that argument. It is a weak reed. We are more interested in hearing some guarantee that the Minister will start taking the people of Onslow seriously. He is aware of the reaction in respect of this matter, and so is the member for Pilbara; it has been a significant reaction of concern, and a considered reaction.

Mr Sodeman: It is not the people of Onslow, as you know. What is wrong with the principal's house? Have you seen it?

Mr B. T. BURKE: No I have not. But I have already told the member what these people say about the principal's house.

Mr Sodeman: Until a few years ago it was the best house in town. Other principals have not complained about living in it. You say there was an attempted rape in the vicinity, and you are suggesting that someone else should go into the house. That is not a valid argument.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I have not suggested that anyone should enter the house.

Mr Laurance: Yours is a racist argument.

Mr B. T. BURKE: If it is the best house in the town, as the member for Pilbara seems to think it is—

Mr Sodeman: It was up till a couple of years ago.

Mr B. T. BURKE: —I cannot see any relevance in that argument. We are interested in the situation now.

Mr Laurance: You don't want teachers to live near Aborigines. What a racist attitude.

Mr P. V. Jones: Have you ever seen the house?

Mr B. T. BURKE: No, I have not. I am trying to relate to members opposite in a sensible manner what the people in Onslow have told me. If members opposite want to argue against the people of Onslow, let them go ahead. I am trying to tell them what the people of Onslow want, and that they are asking for some consideration. The member for Pilbara wants to tell me about a house four or five years ago. The member for Gascoyne wants to talk about racism. If he wants to accuse the people of Onslow of being racist, let him go ahead. The people signed the petition, and they wanted the principal moved. If the member for Gascoyne wants to say they are racist, let him go ahead. I am sure they will be interested in his comments when they receive a copy of Hansard.

Mr Sibson: How many copies will you send to Onslow?

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am happy to accommodate even the member for Bunbury. God knows what he is ever talking about.

Mr Sibson: How many copies will you send to Onslow?

Mr Sodeman: He was talking about you.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am perfectly happy to try to accommodate all members.

Mr O'Connor: Oh!
Mr B. T. BURKE: I am happy to accommodate even the Minister for Labour and Industry who, so far, has promised 35 portfolios in seeking support for the Deputy Premiership. Let me say this: The people of Onslow have expressed concern, and I am simply asking that the Minister for Education pay reasonable attention to that concern. I have related what Mr Tozer had to say to the people who expressed their concern. Do members opposite all support what Mr Tozer said?

Mr Tonkin: Of course they do.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I have told the Chamber what has been related to me, and I suggest to members on the Government side that the matter would not have reached my hands had it received sympathetic attention from the Government members whose job it is to look after that area.

However, apart from all the jokes that members want to make, let members think about the single woman teacher who has had five moves in one year. Let them defend that if they can. If the member for Gascoyne wants to be smart and to talk about racism, let him brand the whole of Onslow town as racist, because the things I have said are things related to me and faithfully repeated for the benefit of the Minister, in particular, and other members. If that is the attitude the member for Gascoyne wants to adopt, let it be on his head.

If the member for Pilbara wants to be so inconsiderate and so harsh as to discredit a principal as a teller of fairy tales, as he did earlier tonight, let him contradict the people who signed the petition and the councillors who voted unanimously in support of the principal's position; because he is saying that the man they want to keep in Onslow and whom they consider to be an excellent principal is a teller of fairy stories.

If the Minister wants to say he is not prepared to consider whether it is possible for the foreshore home to be made available to the principal, let him say that. However, I judge the Minister to be a little more sensible than his back-bench colleagues.

Mr Sodeman: The principal happens to be more interested in the foreshore residence than in the town and in the school.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Yet another insult heaped upon the principal. Let us have it firmly recorded in Hansard that the member for Pilbara says the principal is more concerned about living in a foreshore house than he is concerned for the town and his school. Yet the people of Onslow have told me that since the principal has been in Onslow Aboriginal children are being taught hygiene in a manner which has never previously been taught at the school; they tell me the number of head lice reports have decreased dramatically and that other hygiene problems which were evident prior to this principal taking up the position also have been halved. The member for Pilbara wants to say the principal is a teller of fairy stories! That is the sort of statement which will ensure that the member is nothing more than a passing fancy in this place.

Mr Sodeman: He places top priority on getting out of a house which a couple of years ago was the best house in town. Why?

Mr Jamieson: He keeps saying that.

Mr Sodeman: If he has a genuine interest in Aboriginal children as you say he has, and I am sure he has, what is his motive? There is nothing wrong with the house.

Mr B. T. BURKE: In the hope that the member is serious, I will go through the reasons again in the four minutes available to me. I hope the member will sit there for a moment.

The principal's house, along with the house occupied by another couple, one of whom is a teacher, are two of the very few—I understand it is less than half a dozen—houses occupied by white Australians in what is known as "The Hill" in Onslow.

Mr MacKinnon interjected.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Is the member for Murdoch going to interrupt too?

"The Hill" presents persistent and significant problems for the police and other residents in the town.

Mr Sibson: You are being racist now.

Mr B. T. BURKE: It is considered by people who approached the local authority, the member for Pilbara, the member for the North Province, and the Minister for Education, to be an unsuitable area in which a principal should be required to bring up his family.

Mr Coyne: Why?

Mr B. T. BURKE: For those reasons I have outlined, culminating in, according to information I have received—

Another married teaching couple 3 doors up from Principal's house. The Wife was subjected to an attempted rape earlier in the year. (Aboriginal chap got as far as...)

I will not read any more.

Mr Laurance: And you say the police—

Mr B. T. BURKE: If the member for Gascoyne wants to persist in foolish interjections, let him go ahead; but he will do so without me because I will
once again restate my position to the Minister. Would the Minister please, for the benefit of the people who live in the town and who have made the approach, consider whether it is possible for the requests of the townspeople in their petition, in letters written, and with the support of councillors—

Mr P. V. Jones: Where are the petition and the letters?

Mr B. T. BURKE: I have a letter here.

Mr Sibson: Did you discuss it sensibly with the Minister?

Mr Jamieson: He couldn't discuss anything sensible with you.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I have a letter dated the 19th November, 1979, of which copies were sent to J. Tozer, B. Sodeman, P. Dowding, and Ron Davies. I do not know whether the Minister sees his mail.

Mr P. V. Jones: Did Mr Pollard tell you I have already written to the P & C?

Mr B. T. BURKE: No, nor did he tell me that Onslow is north of Perth and that I live in Balga. Does the Minister want to make a point about that? Did he say something in his letter?

Mr P. V. Jones: You asked me whether I got the letter.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Minister asked me where are the letters and the petition.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Watt): Order! The member's time has expired.

MR WILSON (Dianella) [9.40 p.m.]: One of the most progressive and heartening developments that has occurred in our education system in recent years has been the development of special classes in high schools which have been given the name of alternative courses. These alternative courses have proved to be most successful in helping a large number of students in years 10 and 11 to bridge what for many of them would otherwise have been a very difficult period in their lives. The courses have helped them to bridge the gap between school and work, or between one part of their schooling and a further part of it.

Perhaps the situation in which these alternative courses have been pioneered—if I may use that word—has been the work which has been led largely by Miss Patricia Williams at the Balga Senior High School where alternative courses have been established over the last two years or so. I am pleased to say the very effective work done by Miss Williams has this year been recognised in the grant of a Churchill Fellowship to her, to enable her to gain further information so that this work may be spread throughout high schools in Western Australia.

I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to attend the graduation ceremony for alternative courses at the Balga Senior High School this year and last year. I was very heartened to see the way in which this feature of our education system has developed, both in terms of its effectiveness for students and in terms of the way in which it has very usefully involved parents, students, and teachers in a programme which has helped many students who otherwise would have opted out of the school system and been early school leavers. The children who have been helped in many cases would have failed to continue school without assistance because they had not been able to maintain grades.

Therefore, the officers of the department, and especially those responsible and the dedicated teachers involved in the courses are to be complimented for this development.

A further feature of the alternative courses seems to be causing some concern. In a number of cases where alternative courses are being extended, as at the Balga Senior High School where the number to be involved next year could be as high as 100, the accommodation in which courses are conducted has not proved to be adequate. Other difficulties have arisen between members of staff conducting alternative courses and members of staff responsible for established, traditional courses.

I understand there is developing a certain disagreement about the different approaches to the education system adopted by the respective members of staffs, and that there is much to recommend a further development in the alternative course system which would allow for the accommodation of alternative courses away from high school campuses. This would obviate much of the friction and misunderstanding that appears to be developing between the respective staffs involved in alternative courses and the traditional school programmes.

I hope the people in the department who are responsible for the supervision and the further development of the alternative courses would be able to have some assurance from the Minister and from the departmental heads that serious consideration will be given to the possibility, in the circumstances where it seems most desirable, of alternative course programmes being continued in accommodation which might be separate from or, to some extent, removed from the high school campuses generally.
I go on to talk about another problem affecting high schools, particularly the ones in lower-income areas. This is a problem which arises in the payment of book hire charges. I understand that the book hire charges vary from school to school; but I know that in one school in my electorate the book hire charges for one student can amount to a sum which is almost $50 a year; and that if in one family there happened to be three students attending the school at the same time, that family could be responsible for finding something like $150 a year for book hire charges.

The problem arises because so many families are not paying the book hire charges. Many of them are not paying any of the charges at all. I understand that, for instance, a lot of people who come from the United Kingdom come with the idea that they should not have to pay anything for education in Government schools. They resent having to pay; and they resent being reminded that they have to pay the book hire charges.

The problem is that the burden falls not on the department but on the school. As I say, in one high school in my electorate I have been told by the principal and by the registrar that between 25 and 30 per cent of the book hire charges have not been paid this year. That taxes the resources of the school greatly. It means that the school administration has to cut back on its expenditure. The strain falls on the school administration to make up the leeway that occurs by the non-payment of such a large proportion of book hire charges.

I am not trying to justify the non-payment of these charges; but I understand the policy of the department is that in cases where the charges are not paid by parents, the students are still to be provided with books. If the students are not provided with books, they become a very great problem for the teachers because they cannot take a meaningful part in classes. When it comes to the crunch, the department expects the school to provide the students with the books, whether the parents have paid the book hire charges or not.

There are parents in low-income areas who are finding, in these difficult economic times, with high levels of unemployment in areas like Girrawheen, where there is an unemployment rate of something like 12 per cent or 13 per cent, that it is difficult to meet the book hire charges. The burdens are being met by the high schools; and in such areas they are very great burdens.

When I asked a question of the Minister regarding the problem facing the school administrations earlier this year, he said the matter was under examination. I note from the Budget that the examination has not led to any increase in the school book allowances which are given to parents who are not able to afford the prices of school books. I understand that the school book allowance still cuts out at an income level of about $100 a week.

We have been told recently that the poverty level for the average family is $134 a week. Therefore, the level at which the assistance provided by the department cuts out is $34 below the poverty line. That seems to be completely unrealistic in terms of the stringencies which face many low-income people, unemployed people, and people on pensions who are expected to provide their children with a decent education, and to bring them up in a way they should be able to expect in our society in Western Australia in 1979.

I make another plea to the Minister. If that matter is under examination, I ask that the examination be completed as soon as possible so that the circumstances facing low-income people who are not able to pay these charges will be alleviated. I hope the level at which school book assistance is available will be raised, and that the difficulties facing high school administrations in such areas will be recognised.

One high school registrar, for instance, has suggested to me that consideration should be given to paying the book subsidy directly to the schools so that the schools would have that margin on which to operate. At the moment the subsidy is paid to the parents. Whether or not it is passed on to the school is left up to the parents. At the moment, the subsidy does not always cover the need it is meant to cover.

The third matter I want to raise is in regard to what I consider to be the continuing breakdown in the planning for the provision of new schools in growing suburbs in outer suburban areas. This problem affects one school at the northern end of my electorate—the Koondoola Primary School—which in 1978 had a population in the region of 820 students, and was the largest primary school in Western Australia. It was the largest, and probably the most overcrowded. In that year it produced probably some of the worst-prepared children in terms of their reading development, as a result of the overcrowding and the pressure.

Fortunately this year a new school was opened in that suburb. The number of children attending the Koondoola Primary School dropped to a more favourable level. However, that school finds itself on the raw edge of considerable development in the areas of Allinjarra and Ballajura. Everybody
has seen the advertisements about Ballajura; and everybody has heard about the projected influx of people that will occur in the next few years in that area.

Estimates have been made by the planning branch of the Education Department on the basis that, at the beginning of next year, as a result of that development and because there is no primary school planned in those developing areas until 1981 or even 1982, those children will be fed into the Koondoola Primary School. It is estimated there will be an extra 70 children from that development at the beginning of the school year in 1980; and perhaps by the beginning of 1981 up to 140 or 160 additional children will be attending the Koondoola school from the developing areas.

That might be the projection of the planners in the Education Department. Their projections are usually fairly conservative, for what might be policy reasons. Certainly they are not the numbers the people in the areas would expect. The rate of development in those new suburbs at the moment is very rapid. I would venture to say that, rather than 70 children coming from that new area in February, 1980, the number will be more like 120. By the end of the year or the beginning of 1981, and certainly by the end of 1981, there would be more like 200 children coming from that area into the existing Koondoola Primary School.

With the natural growth in school numbers from its own drawing area, the additional number will mean that the staff and children at the Koondoola Primary School will again be "in danger"—and I use the term advisedly—of becoming the largest, the most overcrowded, and the most disadvantaged primary school in Western Australia. That is a dubious honour it will hold for the second time.

When the extra primary schools are developed—and we cannot be sure that they will be developed in 1981 because the Minister said by way of answer to a question that it may be 1982 in Ballajura—we hear from the State Housing Commission that Marangaroo, directly to the north of Koondoola, will be developed and the primary school will, for the third time, have the dubious privilege of being overcrowded, and going through the process all over again.

It seems to me it is about time the disadvantages which this school will suffer next year and the year after, and for a number of years to follow, as a result of what appear to be overconservative projections of school populations in the area, needs to be considered again. The disadvantages those children will suffer over and over again in terms of their educational development and the development of their basic skills at a time when those skills should be developed should be seriously reconsidered by the department. The rate at which new schools are built in the area should be revised drastically.

The same condition applies to the apparently conservative projection of the departmental planners towards the provision of a high school in Koondoola. The latest information from the Minister indicates that nothing is likely to begin until probably 1981, at the earliest.

The figures given by the Minister, which have been provided by the planning section, indicate that the existing Girrawheen Senior High School will be able to cope quite comfortably with the number of secondary school children during that period. Unfortunately, experience in other growing areas shows that what the department considers to be acceptable conditions in high schools is not always in accord with what teachers and parents regard as being acceptable. The fear of the people in Koondoola, Girrawheen, and the other drawing areas for the existing high school and for the projected high school is that the existing Girrawheen High School will be allowed to develop into a monster, increasing to the extent of 1,400 or 1,500 students.

We all know what great disadvantages accrue to individual teachers and to individual children when they are required to put up with conditions for learning and for development generally in such an inhuman situation where there is such a huge number of students gathered together in crowded conditions, and in conditions generally which are unacceptable for any purposeful education to take place.

Again I place a plea through the Minister to the departmental planners to have another look at the need for a much earlier start to development of the Koondoola High School, or at least the first stages of it.

The other matter I want to raise concerns a number of very unsatisfactory conditions which exist in established schools in my electorate. I believe these conditions are substandard and no student or teacher should be expected to put up with them for very long.

Some of these matters were raised with the Minister some time ago and I am patiently waiting for a reply. For example, I should like to refer to the conditions under which the students and teachers work at the Mirrabooka Primary School which has been established for approximately 15 years. When this school was built it missed out on many of the advantages
which exist in primary schools constructed today, which are built along much more modern and attractive lines. For instance, at that stage carpets, fans, and other amenities which are taken for granted when new schools are built today, were not provided.

Of course, established schools in the metropolitan area find themselves begging for these facilities and they are thrown back on the resources of parents and citizens’ associations, assisted by a Government subsidy, in order that they may obtain them.

In the Mirrabooka Primary School, however, an interesting situation exists. It appears the department is prepared to accept a double standard in terms of conditions provided for students and staff on the one hand, as opposed to conditions for superintendents and regional people on the other hand. Part of this school has been taken over by the regional office for the north-east metropolitan regions.

Of course, the premises which have been taken over by the regional staff had to be first class. Before the staff moved in, the floor was carpeted and fans and heaters were supplied. Everything was done to ensure the staff worked in the utmost comfort. However, the ordinary teachers and students are expected to put up with the existing conditions. They do not have carpets, fans, or heaters. That dramatises a double standard which we should not be prepared to accept in our schools. If a standard is good enough for one level of the department’s operations, it should be good enough for the children of taxpayers and for teachers who are taxpayers. When two different sets of conditions apply to two different levels of the department in the one building, it seems to me it is time the matter was looked at seriously.

A school in my electorate, the Dianella Heights Primary School, was fortunate enough to have an extra block of classrooms added to it a few years ago. I say “fortunate” in a limited sense only, because one of the architects responsible—I do not know whether or not he was a Public Works Department architect—let his fancies have a bit of a flight and allowed his architectural idealism to overcome the practical requirements of the classroom situation. He designed the classrooms so that the large windows, which practically take up one wall, face north. As a result, in the middle of a summer afternoon the sun burns directly through the glass and makes conditions very difficult and uncomfortable for the children and staff.

That is a special situation. Even if the department is not prepared to provide relief under normal circumstances in the metropolitan area, in a situation in which it is virtually responsible for the conditions which exist, the matter should be looked at. I know the department has examined the situation in terms of providing tinted glass; but nothing more has been done about it.

More recently the parents and citizens’ association approached me and said it was prepared to provide $1,000 to purchase fans for the school, as long as the department was prepared to meet the cost of installation. It had obtained quotes for the installation of the fans and it was estimated the cost would be $1,400. When I approached the department I was told, “We cannot consider it, because the work would have to be done by Public Works Department people and it would probably mean rewiring the whole school. It could cost $10,000 and that sum of money cannot be spared.”

The department does not seem to have taken account of the quotes which have been obtained by the association from reliable electricians. The proposition did not seem to meet with very much success. I know the matter has since been referred to the Minister and I hope he will take a more sympathetic view of the situation.

Finally I would like to draw attention to a situation which exists in the Morley Senior High School where, for some time, it has been recognised by officers of the PWD that the manual arts section is very unsatisfactory inasmuch as it requires certain treatment to make the workshops more adequate acoustically. It requires dust extractors to make it more satisfactory in terms of possible disadvantages to the health of the students.

It is very unsatisfactory when the Government requests that employers provide suitable conditions of work for employees, but it is not prepared to spend the necessary money to provide suitable working conditions for students in classrooms. I again urge the Minister to have this matter investigated further to see whether funds can be made available as soon as possible to provide adequate dust extractors and to perform the work necessary to make this workshop more acoustically suitable for young students working there.

MR SKIDMORE (Swan) [10.09 p.m.]: I want to refer to two issues only which have been worrying people in my electorate from some time. Many months ago the department was approached to see whether a guarded crosswalk could be provided outside the Helena Valley Primary School. The usual requirements of the committee handling such issues indicated to the
parents and the principal of the school that it was not on. They could not have a crosswalk at the school because the traffic density was insufficient to justify it.

The parents of the children took up the matter with the department through two other members of Parliament, the Speaker of this House and a member of the Legislative Council. Letters and correspondence passed backwards and forwards between the members, the parents and citizens' association, the Minister at the time, and the Education Department; but no results were obtained.

I was contacted by the parents and citizens' association of this particular school in an effort to see whether I could do something about the matter, because the school is situated on the boundary of my electorate and that of the member for Kalamunda. The school is actually situated in my electorate, so the association felt I may have some success.

I suggested to the association that, in view of the endeavours it had made over many years to have a crosswalk provided, that it should seek a deputation to the Minister with a view to trying to talk him into accepting the fact that a special situation existed at the school.

I wrote to the Minister requesting that such a deputation be received and I was advised by him that, if I sent him the correspondence or information in regard to the matter, he would consider whether or not he would receive the deputation.

This surprised me, because I thought a deputation on such an issue would take with it all the information so that the Minister could decide to accept or reject the evidence as justification for the provision of a crosswalk.

However, I contacted the secretary of the parents and citizens' association who gave me approximately 30 photocopied pieces of correspondence between the association, the department, the Minister, and other members of Parliament. I sent this information to the Minister and waited for him to contact me in regard to whether or not he would receive the deputation.

I have waited for approximately seven weeks, but I still do not know whether the Minister will receive the deputation.

I contacted the parliamentary liaison officer attached to the Minister's office on no fewer than three occasions asking him when it would be possible for the Minister to give consideration to the request to meet the deputation. So far I have not received a reply.

I merely ask the Minister if he does not intend to extend the courtesy of meeting a deputation from the Helena Valley Parents and Citizens' Association attached to the Helena Valley Primary School, would he at least have the decency to tell me, so that I can tell the parents. Has his sense of fairness reached such a low level that he does not want to contact the parents or, for some reason, can he not see them? I should at least receive a reply from him, so that I may advise the parents who telephone me continually in regard to this matter.

I hope the Minister will tell me tonight that, notwithstanding what his departmental officers may be doing with the evidence sent to them, he will at least have the courtesy to meet the parents so that they can explain the peculiarities of the situation which exists at this particular school and which removes it from the normal run of schools which have requested such crosswalks.

Another matter I wish to mention is a simple fly wire door. The Swan View Primary School, after many years of effort, saved the sum of something like $12,000 to $15,000 which was subsidised by the Education Department to enable the school to build a new canteen. I can assure members it was a great occasion when that canteen eventuated, and the parents were able to provide lunches and all those things which are necessary for school children in today's society.

The canteen was not provided with a fly wire door, and that is where the fun started. The parents and citizens association wrote to the Education Department and asked whether a fly wire door could be fitted to the canteen. The reply received from the department was that it did not provide fly wire doors for canteens. Apparently the Education Department does not have much awareness of the health needs of the children who consume food prepared in that canteen.

When I was approached I thought it was a simple matter and easy to resolve. I was approached by the president of the local P & C at the school and asked to intercede on behalf of that committee. I thought that would not be much trouble. I approached the PLO at the Education Department who informed me he would take up the request. That was some six or seven weeks ago.

Since then I have made numerous approaches to Mr Morris, the parliamentary liaison officer, without any effect at all. First of all, Mr Morris said it was his fault and he had not done anything about it. Then, he said he was not able to give me any information as yet and that the matter was being reviewed. I simply ask the Minister: After
Mr COYNE: I think that was a very generous gesture on your part.

Mr SKIDMORE: The gesture was made only on the basis that the Education Department is not accepting its responsibility. The local P & C committee saved in the vicinity of $15,000 in order to provide a school canteen, and the department suggests it cannot afford to provide a fly wire door.

Another matter which has worried me for a long time is that I have been told a study has been made in all schools to assess whether the children in the schools have had a successful year of education. My understanding of the information given to me is that the department has been holding tests within high schools involving all classes at all levels to observe the way the children are performing; in other words, to see whether they have made any progress.

My informant tells me that in one class of 37 students, 15 were assessed by the departmental officers to be two to five years below their age group. I understand this average applied to quite a number of high schools in the metropolitan area. If this is so I am alarmed because it has been suggested that the intention of the Government is that remedial teachers are to be removed from all schools next year. If this is not so, the Minister may be able to tell me and I will be able to advise my informant that such is not the case. The fact that 50 per cent of one class were considered to be below their age group, I think, indicates we need more remedial teachers.

I am also concerned at the trouble being experienced by certain young students who are having difficulty fitting into the educational system. I think the Minister would be aware of the problem associated with a child at the Scarborough Senior High School, which resulted in a deputation to the department. Some parents have formed themselves into a group which is doing very good work amongst these children outside school hours. They do not take the children away from the school, but they are able to assist those children to reach a degree of competence so that they are able to cope with the rudiments of their educational needs.
Mr Davies (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [10.26 p.m.]: Mr Deputy Chairman I wish to speak and there are several other members from this side who want to speak.

The Deputy Chairman (Mr Crane): Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition was asleep.

Mr Davies: No, I was reading when the previous speaker suddenly resumed his seat. I resent that remark from the Chair. If any member from this side made a similar remark you would take exception and probably throw us out of the Chamber.

The Deputy Chairman: I made the remark because I did call.

Mr Davies: I resent your remark. I was sitting here reading and the previous speaker sat down rather suddenly. I got up in plenty of time. I believe the Minister thought he would work a shrewdy and cut short the debate. He has plenty of reason to cut it short because if any department has a need for someone to slip into it, it is the Education Department. That applies particularly since the Minister set up a committee to see where education is going. Has anyone ever heard of anything so ridiculous? After six years in Government the Minister sets up a committee to see where education is going. What a hallmark!

Mr P. V. Jones: What committee is this?

Mr Davies: It was reported in the Press that the Minister was setting up a committee to review the direction of education. The Minister does not even remember it.

Mr P. V. Jones: That is not right at all.

Mr Davies: I will get a cutting of the newspaper article and remind the Minister about it at a later stage. I think his statement was the height of absurdity: To set up a committee to look at the direction of education after the Government had been in office for six years. I am aware that the Government goes around in circles at times, and I thought it was natural for the Government to set up another committee.

I can recall debating policy during the last election campaign. My opposition candidate failed to turn up and somebody else was sent along. When I said I thought a particular matter was one which needed looking at by a committee, this fellow said, “Our Government does not set up committees; we get things done.” I cannot remember the fellow’s name.

Mr Nanovich: Was it Bill Smith? One usually falls back on that name.

Mr Davies: No, I do not think it was Bill Smith.

I have been amazed constantly at the number of committees which this Government has set up. It must lose itself in a maze of committees, and I will say something more about that shortly.

Firstly, I asked the Minister whether there was any formula for the appointment of gardeners to schools. One would think there would not be much hassle; either there was work for gardeners to do, or there was not work for them to do. The reply to my question was that there were guidelines: one gardener for larger primary schools, two for senior high schools, and smaller schools were served by part-time gardeners, depending on the extent of ground development. That sounds splendid if all schools were of the same size and if all had the same area of playing fields for the gardeners to maintain. Of course, that is not so.

The size of schools varies markedly. I understand there is some difficulty in maintaining the grounds at the Bentley Senior High School because its grounds are much larger than those usually associated with a school. Despite the fact that the regulations have been changed on a number of occasions, to provide for additional gardening assistance, the department has said it cannot depart from the norm.

This is typical Government service thinking. The Government says, “There is a formula, a standard, and do not go outside that”. Surely to goodness if the grounds are to be maintained properly, an additional gardener should be appointed—even an additional part-time gardener may answer a problem. However, it seems to be a case of a guideline having been set and no-one will move outside it.

I know guidelines are extended on many occasions for all kinds of things, and I do not have to mention them here tonight. However, this one area needs to be looked after, and looked after properly. I know extra gardeners are employed over the summer periods for watering, but that does not mean that they are not needed at other times of the year. So I make a plea for additional gardeners for schools.

I would like to come back now to mention the latest committee appointed by the Government. An advertisement appeared in The West Australian of the 10th November containing an announcement that, after discussions between the Education Department of Western Australia and the Western Australian Arts Council, it was decided to establish a joint committee to review, monitor, and assess all companies and individual artists who wish to perform in schools conducted by the Education Department. The advertisement
went on in some great detail and people were informed that if they wanted to be considered, they must make submissions by the 30th November. By the 28th December they would be told whether or not they were acceptable. It was hoped that the committee would be able to go around and view some of the organisations, and an important part of the committee's work would be to review a performance of the workshop preferably in the metropolitan area. If this were not possible, evidence of a company's production could be submitted by cassette, video or film.

The advertisement appeared on the 10th November and applications closed on the 30th November—20 days later. That left anyone interested less than three weeks to produce the evidence required.

So on the 29th November, the day before applications closed, I asked the Minister a series of questions. Part (1) was—

When was the schools performing arts advisory committee formed?

The reply was—

The committee is being formed at present.

I then asked—

Who are its members?

To which the Minister said—

The final membership has not yet been determined.

So I continued—

At whose request or direction was it formed?

The reply to this question was—

The Education Department.

I asked the Minister—

What are the terms of its charter?

The Minister replied—

The committee is being formed to review, monitor and assess all companies and artists who wish to perform in Government schools.

Finally I asked—

How often has it met?

And the Minister replied—

Not applicable.

A committee was being set up, it had been decided to call for applications which would close the next day, the applications were to be assessed by the 28th December—four weeks later—but the committee had not even been formed. Whose brilliant idea was it, after all these years of organisations going to the schools and some freedom of choice being allowed to the principals, to set up a committee to say who could and could not perform in the schools, and who was and who was not competent? Does this mean that all freedom of choice is being taken away from principals?

Mr P. V. Jones: Of course it doesn't.

Mr DAVIES: What does it mean?

Mr P. V. Jones: To begin with, when you said it is not formed, that is perfectly correct.

Mr DAVIES: I am glad about that because that was the Minister's previous answer to me.

Mr P. V. Jones: I had asked certain people whether they would care to join the committee and I had not heard from them at that time. But that did not stop us advertising.

Mr DAVIES: Has the committee been formed now?

Mr P. V. Jones: I have not heard whether everybody has responded as yet.

Mr DAVIES: So another week has gone by.

Mr P. V. Jones: What has that to do with it?

Mr DAVIES: The committee has to assess the work, look at the workshops, the video tapes, or play the cassettes, and make a decision by the 25th December—with the Christmas holiday intervening—as to whether or not the applicants will be allowed to perform in schools.

Mr P. V. Jones: How many do you think there are?

Mr DAVIES: The committee will take away the freedom of choice from the headmaster.

Mr P. V. Jones: You know that is not right.

Mr DAVIES: What is the purpose of it?

Mr P. V. Jones: To do exactly what you are suggesting except for the extra bits you are adding that we are taking away all the freedom. But it certainly is to assess people.

Mr DAVIES: A committee is to be set up, the department has advertised, and is the Minister now saying it should not have been done?

Mr P. V. Jones: You are saying it shouldn't be done.

Mr DAVIES: I am saying the system worked very well in the past and it should remain; the principals decided whether or not a performance was of value to the schools. Is the Minister suggesting that someone might want to show the film, "Now the Chips are Down"? I notice that the Film Board is now showing that film—the member for Murray seemed to be worried that some parent organisations had requested that it be shown at certain schools. I should think it now has the hallmark of decency as it is available from
the Film Board rather than from the ALP. However, that is not part of this question.

Applications to the committee I am referring to closed last Friday. The Minister tells us the committee is not yet organised, but even with the Christmas holidays intervening, by the 28th December it will decide which organisations can perform in schools. The Minister says that it does not mean only those organisations can perform in schools.

Mr P. V. Jones: Wait a minute—I didn’t say that.

Mr DAVIES: Well what did the Minister say? When I said that this would take away the freedom of choice, he said it would not.

Mr P. V. Jones: I certainly suggested it does not take away the freedom of choice from principals in the manner you suggested, because you suggested it would take everything away from the principals and that is not right.

Mr DAVIES: For goodness sake—have members heard an argument like that before? This is the Minister for Education speaking. Let us go back almost to square one. A committee is to be set up and it will decide what organisations, what areas of the performing arts, what drama companies, and what theatrical groups are of a sufficient standard to perform in schools. Previously the principal of a school decided which company or artists were of sufficient standard to perform in his school. So apparently the principal had complete freedom of choice in accordance with what he thought was of sufficient standard and taste for the school.

The Minister says that freedom of choice still remains, but he says also that not everyone can perform in schools. What he means is that this committee, not yet formed, will make up a list of names of people who will be acceptable to perform in schools. If that is not taking away the freedom of choice from the principals, I do not know what is. What is all this humbug about? A committee has been appointed, almost at the deathknock, at whose instigation? At the instigation of the Education Department.

I am concerned because the Patch Theatre is in my electorate, and this theatre has been operating in Western Australia since pre-war days. It has been taking plays and entertainment to schools for 12 years or more. It has toured the State from the northernmost towns to the southernmost towns, and it operates in a most professional manner.

I was rather amazed to see the work it had done in establishing a good rapport with schools in mounting performances which were acceptable to and desirable by the schools was likely to be taken away at the whim of another Government committee. Yet the Minister says no freedom of choice will be taken away.

No-one seemed to know much about the committee. The Patch Theatre told me that naturally, as asked, it went ahead and prepared a submission because a large part of its operations is in schools. It has a pantechinicon which it takes around to the country towns. In effect this is a mobile theatre; it saves bus fares and it enables performances to be held at places where they could not otherwise be held because of the lack of a stage. The Patch Theatre has set itself up very well to take entertainment to schools at a modest fee.

Representatives of the Patch Theatre saw Mr Harry Louden who told them that the committee was still being formed at that time—the 23rd November. The theatre needed to know quickly the findings of the committee because of the difficulties of timing in order to get ready for 1980. Its representatives then saw a Mr Garry Hodge and Miss Vanessa Murphy of the Speech and Drama Branch of the Education Department who had received no official communication but had read the advertisement and discussed details of it with the Patch Theatre representatives. It might be expected that these two people would know something of the committee’s operation, but this was not so.

The representatives of the Patch Theatre also saw Tim Mason of the Arts Council and stressed the point about the timing of the submission. The Patch Theatre commences in August to prepare for the next year’s touring, and although it had followed its usual course, it now finds it is under the dominance of a not-yet-formed committee. What kind of department is the Minister running?

I would like to tell members about the credentials of the Patch Theatre. It presented a lengthy submission to the Schools Performing Arts Advisory Committee, care of the Education Department.

The theatre listed its past work in schools, and certainly it does not operate on a commercial or an ad hoc basis. It has operated on the recommendation of the schools themselves. I would like to list here some of the towns at which the Patch Theatre has performed since 1968—

Ravensthorpe
Esperance
Salmon Gums
Norseman, then through to
Geraldton
Bunbury
Waroona
Harvey
the south-west
the north-west
Paraburdoo
Tom Price
Karratha
Dampier
Panawannica
Barrow Island
Roebourne
Wickham
Newman
Marble Bar
Shay Gap
Goldsworthy
Port Hedland
Broome
Cockatoo Island
Koolan Island
Derby
Wyndham
Kununurra
Darwin—by arrangement with the Northern Education Board.

And the list continues, right through to the northern wheatbelt, back again to the south-west, to Geraldton, to the goldfields, the great southern, the central wheat districts, Albany, and then up through Northam.

That is the suggested itinerary for this group for 1980, and yet it does not know whether it will be acceptable to this committee, despite the fact it has done its utmost to find out from the schools just what is required and how its performances are accepted. Indeed, forms are left at the schools requesting comments on the performances, and how they may be improved to meet the wishes of the school. There is a series of these forms from 1977 right up to the present date. These pro forma replies talk about standard of performance. A reply from one northern high school was, "excellent as usual". Another was—

The children found the characters believable. e.g. They "hated the witch".

Some voices and music were lost in the open theatre arrangement.

Under the heading "style of presentation" the following appeared—

From adult view costumes were only adequate but children liked them. However they voted the rooster's costume the best (which was the most elaborate).

Stage settings were quite satisfactory.

The schools are given the opportunity to suggest which plays might be performed. Under the heading "general" the comment, "Thank you for a thoroughly worth-while performance" was the tenor of most remarks.

From a Pilbara high school, the following statement was made—

In conclusion, we would like to thank the company for a performance enjoyed by all. We look forward to seeing you again next year.

Earlier in the school's comments the following statement was made—

We realize that the problems involved in funding and transporting elaborate stage settings to this area of the North West are a problem. From observing the children's enjoyment of the performance, a lack of such equipment did not detract anything from the performance.

Here is another comment from a school in the Kimberley—

Pirates and the Blind Sheik were an excellent balance—one "intellectual"—requiring an alert mind the other a rip-roaring child and audience participation type of play. Other schools describe the standard of performance as "superb; our students were enchanted and involved."

So it goes on. This is the type of organisation which has been taking plays of a high standard to the country areas from Darwin right down to Esperance and which now has been told it may be wiped off the list if it does not meet standards that a committee not yet formed sets.

The group does not go about this in an ad hoc manner. It is a properly prepared theatre group with an established series of plays and itineraries. It appears before children from the lower primary schools, upper primary schools and high schools. Plays for lower primary school audiences include, "Three Billy Goats Gruff", "Rumpelstiltskin", "Goldilocks and the Three Bears", and plays of that nature. Children in the upper primary schools see plays such as "Hansel and Gretel", "Rinse the Blood off my Toga", and others. High school audiences see plays like "Animal Farm", "Rinse the Blood off my Toga", "Androcles and the Lion", "The Taming of the Shrew", and others.

All these plays have been requested by the schools themselves. Members must realise that most schools in the Kimberley, and many schools in other country towns—particularly the more
distant ones—would see no performances of this nature were it not for the Patch Theatre. I can understand the concern of the Patch Theatre, being several months into production for next year’s plays, having an itinerary planned and having approached some schools and being requested by others to return, to learn that a committee might limit the freedom of choice of the school principals.

We know what has already happened in regard to education regulations since the screws have come on. I believe the least we can do is to ensure that an organisation such as the Patch Theatre is included in the list of acceptable organisations whose standards meet the requirements of the Education Department.

Let me say that more than anything else I do not believe the committee is a good thing. We should leave it up to the good sense and taste of the principal of each school. I do not believe the Patch Theatre will put on any plays containing profane language, nudism, or the like. I am sure principals could judge for themselves whether the standards are acceptable.

It is a wonderful thing that Patch Theatre is performing in these isolated schools. Many of these children never have the chance of seeing live theatre. In fact, many do not have the chance of seeing television. Whether that is a good thing or a bad thing, I do not know. However, it is a day of excitement when an organisation such as this brings a performance to the school.

I sincerely hope the Minister will think twice about this committee, which has already been set too tight a timetable to deal adequately with the matter.

I am just wondering whether the matter is already cut and dried. We know some of these groups want to be under the auspices of the Arts Council where they therefore might qualify for some sort of grant.

However, I wish to point out that this supposedly free enterprise Government—which uses “free enterprise” in the way it wants to, and when it wants to—should ensure no restrictions are placed on the Patch Theatre.

MR BERTRAM (Mt. Hawthorn) [10.51 p.m.]: It appears that hundreds of thousands of dollars has been overpaid by the Education Department to its staff; I imagine this would particularly involve teachers. That is a very real indictment on the department and the Minister. It appears that, as from the 30th June last, the balance of unpaid salaries still stood at something like $168 454. That gives members some idea of the immensity of the inefficiency which has gone on and it probably gives an indication of poor performance within the Education Department.

I hope the Minister will inform us how that situation arose, how it was discovered, what steps have been taken so far to correct the position, and how much overpaid money is still owing.

One can only hope there will be no repetition of this situation within this department or in any other Government department.

For as long as we have had accounting, the greatest problems have occurred in the payment of salaries. Some of the greatest frauds in history have occurred by reason of malpractices in respect of the payment of salaries and wages. So, the Opposition would very much like to know as much as it can possibly learn about this situation.

Part 8 also includes “Youth, Sport and Recreation” for which the Estimate this year is $2 764 000. That is a very miserly amount, especially when one considers the Government has accumulated a surplus in excess of $44 million. It is not good enough for the Minister for Education to spend his time sliding down cliff faces on the end of a rope, going through his monkey act while a cameraman from The West Australian records the moment. I do not see what that achieves except to bring disrepute upon the Minister and the Government. The Minister should be directing the administration of his department, not dangling on the end of a rope in the performance of some sort of circus clown act.

I recall on another occasion seeing the Minister for Education pictured in the newspaper in a pair of shorts, leading a gaggle of runners down the street. He was not sporting the most brilliantly athletic figure. He was supposed to be promoting the “Life. Be in it” campaign. However, I warn the Minister that in his present state of fitness, it will be “Life. Be out of it” if he keeps it up much longer.

The Minister should be providing his department with leadership, making sure his department receives its fair share of the extraordinary wealth of the Government. I cannot imagine any other State Government which has a surplus of this nature.

The Government seems to ignore many things, not the least of which is our huge unemployment problem. We remember how the Premier, when in Opposition, told us he could fix unemployment in six months. That was irresponsible nonsense. Before the last election, he informed the public he would produce 100 000 jobs. Of course, he has not carried out that promise, either. Anybody who really thought about the matter knew the
Somehow or other the Government has to find a way to provide employment for the growing numbers of young people who have no work. This massive addition to our unemployed will cause a number of very real problems, not the least of which was referred to in tonight's issue of the *Daily News*. I refer members to page 8 of that newspaper where a "Focus" article appears under the heading, "Young people with nothin' to do". The article contains a picture of young people in the city with the caption "The youngsters of the city..."nothing to do"..."nowhere to go.""

It is high time this Government faced reality and started doing something about this problem. This article really amounts to a plea along the line of the experience of youth workers around Australia. The article states—

So says the Rev George Davies, of the Uniting Church, whose work with youth on the streets and in the suburbs of Perth has given him an insight into a festering sore which, unless treated, has the potential to erupt into even greater violence.

Further on—

The feeling of being at risk walking in certain areas of the city and suburbs is probably greater than the actual risk, he says.

But the feeling itself is a sad sign of the times.

Further on it states—

The crux of the problem, the youth workers claim, is that local authorities still regard young people as a welfare problem rather than a life-style issue.

The article indicates that unemployment among young people is high, as is the crime rate. It indicated also we have to face up to this problem.

There are lots of facilities for recreation in city areas which have been established by local authorities and many people who have jobs and who have money enjoy access to these facilities. Somehow or other the Government has to find a way so that genuine unemployed people who are lacking in funds can gain access to the various facilities. It is one thing for people to be without a job through no fault of their own; it is another thing for them to be unfit and missing out on recreation when facilities are available. This is something which has to be faced up to in a hurry. It will not be done with a tuppenny ha'penny, miserly Budget for youth, sport, and recreation.

I do not know what is done in other States, but perhaps there are bowling or tennis clubs, etc. with facilities which can stand additional play and which are now going to waste. Perhaps there are school gymnasiums available which are not being used to their full capacity and which unemployed people are entitled to use to get exercise and to gain good health. I am urging the Government to look at this position and find ways and means, at a relatively small cost I imagine, to make these facilities available to those who need them. The facilities should be publicised so the unemployed people know about them. It is one thing for them to be unemployed; it is another thing for them to be idle. Idle hands cause them to get into mischief. The number of unemployed young people is not irrelevant to the amount of crime in the community.

There is little evidence the Government is facing up to this problem. If by Government policy we are going to have people unemployed, they are the victims of the Government's economic policy—the cannon fodder as it were—and the very least the Government can do is to make public facilities available for these unemployed people.

MR P. V. JONES (Narrogin—Minister for Education) [11.05 p.m.]: I think members who have contributed to this debate. In the main we have heard much the same as we hear every year at this time. It seems as though the member for Gosnells in particular—as he himself indicated—is harping on the same question of funding. I do not intend to repeat the arguments I have presented in previous years. I summarise the position by indicating it would be totally irresponsible of the Education Department or any other department or business not to set aside in its budget an allowance to cover award increases. The fact that the department has so many employees, whether they be teachers or public servants, requires that a considerable amount of funds be set aside for that purpose. Indeed, in the figures for the current financial year there is a provision for something like $14.8 million for award increases. That is not for salaries in the normal course of events; it is an allowance set aside to take care of award increases and so on.

Each year the member for Gosnells says the department is underspending the money it could have used to employ more teachers. I hope the member will get the message sooner or later. In
the funds voted by this Parliament last year from the CRF Budget, there was, if we leave aside the allowance for award increases, an overspending of what was provided by the Parliament. On that basis the member seems to think, as one or two others do, the Education Department is charged or should be responsible for the employment of people simply because there are people available to employ. I completely and utterly reject that concept.

As a point of interest I will indicate to the Committee what the employment of a teacher means. A three-year trained teacher in his first year out in the metropolitan area currently receives $10,874. That same person employed at Pinjarra would cost $14,346; at Esperance $15,224; at Kununurra $19,815; yet of that amount the salary component is only $10,874. In fact, the amount paid for rental subsidies this fiscal year is no less than $4.2 million.

Mr Pearce: How many teachers would you get for $9 million?

Mr P. V. JONES: I mentioned those figures so that I hope it can never be further suggested that the department has some form of employment responsibility based only on the fact that there are people available to employ.

The member for Gosnells and the member for Morley also referred at length to the questions of qualifications and the Achievement Certificate. I do not intend to dwell on this subject. Mention was made of the Junior Certificate. I have never mentioned this and have no intention of mentioning it. What I said and what I am happy to say again is that many people, including quite a significant number of teachers, are questioning some aspects of the Achievement Certificate as it stands today. It may have served the situation very well. However, there will be a review of the relevance and credibility of the Achievement Certificate at the present time. The review will result in either it being changed or reassessed. I make no bones about suggesting that if it is not relevant or credible, or if it is not doing its job, it ought to be abandoned and replaced with something which is acceptable, credible, and suitable for school leavers.

The member for Dianella referred to various alternative programmes and so on. He is quite correct. These programmes are starting to fulfil their part in the high school curriculum, and not merely as a form of link course. It is a form of education which will increase markedly. I have commented on book hire charges and the aspect of financial requirements placed on parents is one which I have mentioned in answer to a question from the member for Dianella. It is of concern, particularly in some areas. There is no easy answer to this matter. One matter of concern to the administrative officers in the Education Department is the considerable quantity of money held within schools which might not always be available in the sense that there are school funds of one sort or another which are invested in various banks and so on.

The member for Swan raised the matter of a crosswalk and this has been the subject of some attention already. He has said I have not responded and that is true. I am having a survey carried out regarding this matter, and as the Leader of the Opposition would know from the survey we conducted in his electorate which resulted in a walkover being built, it is not a matter which rests entirely with the Education Department. I found there were at least two physical counts taken in recent years outside the particular school involved and another assessment is being considered at the moment. If it is suggested it is worth while that I should meet with the people concerned I will do so. I will not discount the idea of a crosswalk without first getting the proper information.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to gardeners and so on and I will pursue that matter when I have read the transcript of his speech. I do not want to ponder on the committee he dwelt with for some time. I spoke yesterday morning with the gentleman associated with the Patch Theatre. Many principals have sought the advice of a committee, the department, or someone to tell them whether or not this particular company could visit their school.

Mr Davies: More shame on them.

Mr P. V. JONES: This is as much as anything as acting on providing some response to those who are seeking advice on these matters.

The last point I wish to refer to concerns the comments made by the member for Mt. Hawthorn. I have already responded to one in another situation but if he would like me to do so I will write to him directly about it. The member referred to the difficulty of youth sport and recreation grants. Again, he has misunderstood this matter.

In this State the contribution to recreation on a per capita basis is greater than that in New South Wales. The figures within the Budget primarily, if not entirely, relate to the administration of the department. It is also the salaries, allowances, and contingencies contained in that and is not as he suggested, the contribution to recreation; it is administrative. For example there are
considerable capital grants, salary grants, travelling grants, establishment grants, and the like and they are met for recreation.

There are several other items which I will respond to by mail. They are the items referred to by various members. I have no intention of responding to the member for Balcatta’s comments by mail and all I wish to say is that his comments were completely irrelevant and entirely misleading and bore no relationship to the situation and the subject matter of the discussion whatsoever.

Vote: Education, $370 682 000—

Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, $292 403 000—

Mr PEARCE: I wish very briefly to speak on the subject of salaries and particularly that of the 17 secondary superintendents. I would like to join with the member for Morley in his appreciative comments with regard to the English superintendent, Mr Peter Gunning, whom I believe was viciously criticised following an interview he gave to “Nationwide” about English literature courses.

I saw the interview and like the member for Morley I am genuinely concerned that this man has been misrepresented. He is a very moral person and one who took a very low-key approach in the interview. Subsequently, the next day he was selectively misquoted by the people promoting this campaign. These people misquoted Mr Gunning and called for his dismissal from the Education Department. I have nothing but contempt for people who campaign in that way; that is, in such a personal way. I wish to indicate my support for Mr Gunning.

Whilst on the question of education superintendents I would like to note in passing with a great deal of pleasure the decision of the Governor to give an OBE to Miss Nancy Richards who has been an English superintendent for many years. Her personal interest in the English department has resulted in a very high standard of English in schools.

With regard to the campaign against literature in schools, a young female teacher at Lynwood High School has been the subject of attack by this campaign for the use of a particular book in the lower school course. This particular lady who is a constituent and indeed a friend of mine was mentioned in the Daily News several weeks ago, and was indirectly mentioned in this circular letter the campaign group is sending out to all and sundry.

I might say I investigated the whole matter which took place in May this year and I am satisfied the parent at that time, after talking to the teacher, expressed her satisfaction with the choice of literature and the participation of her child in the programme. The parent said she was satisfied as far as the matter was concerned and the school heard nothing from the parent; that is, until the matter appeared again in the Daily News.

The Minister did not defend this lady in specific terms but I guess he did defend her in a general way when he spoke on the matter of literature in schools. I would like to defend this particular lady who is also a personal friend and say that I am prepared to stand up to the fanatical element in the community. The whole programme particularly disgusts me because it is directed at people who cannot easily defend themselves.

Vote put and passed.

Vote: Youth, Sport, and Recreation, $2 764 000—

Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, $1 370 000—

Mr H. D. EVANS: I would like to ask the Minister whether among the 34 recreation officers shown there will be one stationed at Manjimup? I was present when the Minister gave a very fair hearing to the representatives of the shire council and he indicated at that time he was prepared to put forward a proposition which he was hopeful would be accepted subject to the shire council meeting.

I was wondering whether the Minister could indicate whether provision is made for the appointment of an officer at Manjimup and, if so, has he any indication of when it will be fulfilled.

Mr P. V. JONES: In response to the member, yes. I am not sure whether there has been a response received from the shire but it was intimated certainly that we are looking at the appointment of an officer subject to the housing being available about February next year.

Vote put and passed.

Part 9: Minister for Industrial Development and Mines—

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [11.20 p.m.]: I would like to make mention of the various industrial development agreements that come to this House from time to time and are regurgitated at election time. We have coming before us again the Alwest agreement for the fourth time in four different elections. It is all very well for the Premier and others to use these as election gimmicks but it does not make the people involved very happy.
They do not understand our political system as well as they might and many of the principals of these firms certainly do not understand the difference in political philosophies when they are conned into certain decisions and determinations just prior to the election. They find out afterwards that it has been associated with some gimmickry and then they are indeed unhappy about the matter.

The Premier is always talking about the Opposition driving people away but I happened to go on a visit to the United States on the trail of the Premier last year. I found there was much concern after he had spoken about the terrible socialist expropriation and caused apprehension and then they are indeed unhappy about the matter.

The Premier is always talking about the Opposition driving people away but I happened to go on a visit to the United States on the trail of the Premier last year. I found there was much concern after he had spoken about the terrible socialist expropriation and caused apprehension and then they are indeed unhappy about the matter.

The Premier is always talking about the Opposition driving people away but I happened to go on a visit to the United States on the trail of the Premier last year. I found there was much concern after he had spoken about the terrible socialist expropriation and caused apprehension and then they are indeed unhappy about the matter.

When I explained to many of the legal people there the Western Australian and Australian Constitutional situation in regard to such matters they corrected that with some of their legal advisers. Some of the Shell Oil Company people were there and they were aware that what I was saying was correct. They said that I was correct.

It ill-behoves anyone to go around telling half-truths to people on the other side of the world. The Premier is well known for this. Years ago, he toured in front of the Tonkin Industrial Development Committee that went overseas and sabotaged some of the ground they were to cover. The Premier is the greatest saboteur we have ever had. As long as it suits his philosophy to do that of course he continues but it ill-behoves any person who is in a senior position in this State to do that.

The next matter for regurgitation will probably be area “C” and Marandoo or something like that, because the election is approaching and no doubt these matters will be broached again and again. This applies also to Alwest. This company is fairly genuine in its endeavours though sometimes it may not suit the philosophy of my party but nevertheless they are entitled to have their point of view. They are making a genuine move to expand their explorations to this part of the world and they should be correctly informed as to what is happening. The Liberal Party should not use this company for a cheap political trick during the course of the election.

There are more industrial agreements which have been written in this State and not acted upon than there have been written and acted upon. Perhaps many were done in good faith and some were political gimmicks and were written for that purpose alone. If this is the way people are treated, then of course they will be suspicious of any Government, whichever it may be in Western Australia. I suggest the Government of the day looks to its morals and makes sure this does not happen.

Like the Premier, the Minister for Industrial Development uses his fair amount of rubbish and nonsense when it comes to putting out statements and bashing the unions.

My complaint on this important section of development as far as this State is concerned is the matter of industrial development. This is probably tied up with mining developments or associated developments such as we have been dealing with earlier today. We need to have faith in the State and we need the confidence of the people of this State. We will certainly not obtain that if we have this constant use of the provisions of agreements for political advantage.

I do foresee that there will be developments and probably one or two more of the iron ore companies developments will get off the ground within the next five years. These will probably be the area “C” and the Marandoo projects.

Many others would like to get off the ground but they are more or less long-term projects and will have to wait their turn. If there should be some unprecedented upturn in the demand for iron ore and steel throughout the world no doubt their turn will come much more quickly then we anticipated. The four companies operating at this time are not producing their maximum output as it is, so they will be able to produce more without affecting other companies.

I am sure the Japanese will not see the Goldsworthy people go out of existence because they acknowledge it was the first company to provide them with premium ore. They have an interest in that company and they would be keen to see it continue.

As to the other companies, it depends on the contracts they can get. Some of them have been a little smarter in piecing together small contracts which in my opinion will ultimately see them in the business of producing and exporting iron ore when the contracts are tied together. In the meantime we hope there will be none of the chicanery which has been indulged in in the past by the present Premier, assisted greatly by the Minister for Industrial Development.

Votes—Industrial Development, $5 387 000; Mines, $12 210 000—put and passed.

Part 10: Minister for Transport—

Vote: Harbour and Light, $6 997 000—put and passed.
Part 11: Minister for Housing—

Mr T. H. Jones (Collie) [11.32 p.m.]: I rise on a question I have raised previously. I am wondering when the State Housing Commission will get some funding to carry out maintenance work.

I queried the Minister recently about a situation in my electorate where an occupant had been living for 14 years in a State Housing Commission home which has never had a coat of paint inside it in that time. The dado boards in the kitchen have been eaten by white ants. I contacted the supervisor in Bunbury who sent up the experts to rectify the problem. While he was there I asked him whether any painting work would be done inside the kitchen as a result of what had happened and he said, "I haven't any finance available at all to paint any houses internally in the south-west.".

I wonder when the Minister is going to take some action with the Government to bring about a proper maintenance programme for State Housing Commission homes. I will not use the word "slum" but little or no maintenance is being done on State Housing Commission homes in Western Australia. They are deteriorating. No money is available for painting.

Mr Sibson: Tenders for painting are being let almost monthly.

Mr T. H. Jones: It is a serious situation and the Minister knows it. No money is available for any upgrading work in the south-west of this State. I have been to several commission homes which have not had a coat of paint on the outside for years. I have appealed to the commission to provide fences where young children are involved. A policy was introduced to do away with fences in State Housing Commission homes and this causes problems for families with young children. This is part of the upgrading programme I want to raise with the Minister.

I do not know whether this problem has general application throughout other electorates but I think it has. I wonder when provision is to be made in the Estimates for a proper upgrading programme to bring the old commission homes up to a reasonable standard.

Mr B. T. Burke (Balcatta) [11.35 p.m.]: I want to draw a number of matters to the Minister's attention, I hope in a positive fashion and in a manner he will accept, to see whether the Government can take some action in areas which are his responsibility and which are crying out for some Government control and a Government policy aimed at relieving people in very difficult positions.

Firstly, there is looming on the horizon the question of an interest rate rise which will certainly be of major importance and concern. With the prime lending rate already reaching in excess of 17 per cent in the United Kingdom it is hopeless to expect the Federal Government or the State Government to do anything realistically to combat the market pressures which will force interest rates upwards.

What it is not idle to expect this Government to do is to prepare itself to act as efficiently and as quickly as possible to provide relief for people who are adversely affected by these increasing interest rates. I am sure the Minister will agree it has become almost inevitable that substantial rises will shortly occur and I urge the Government to move immediately to institute, perhaps through the State Housing Commission, a committee which will be responsible for considering excess hardships which will result from the imposition of increased interest rates as they affect people making home loan repayments.

In the present economic climate where people often have no job and those who have a job are often uncertain as to their future employment prospects, the increase in interest rates which will probably occur will be much more burdensome than it would have been in the past.

We are now operating under financial arrangements which did not take into account excessive and rising inflation and it seems whether or not we are successful in controlling our own inflation the efforts of other countries to control inflation affecting their economies will reverberate throughout our own.

The Minister would be deceiving himself if he did not believe that urgent and substantial arrangements need to be made immediately to prepare for what may occur should interest rates rise as violently as seems possible from the experience in the United States and in the United Kingdom.

I repeat that the Opposition seeks the Minister's assurance that he will consider the establishment as a matter of urgency of a committee which will be able to relieve the burden in cases of excess hardship.

The Opposition also seeks that this Minister consider making representations to the Federal Government with a view of reinstituting income tax deductibility of home loan repayments in respect of first homes. That scheme when it was in operation in its entirety was a valuable boon which relieved people of excessive home loan repayments by refunding money to them through their taxation refund cheques, or at least allowing
the deductibility of the amount of money paid by
the purchaser as his home loan repayment.

It is a very urgent matter and one which can
cause in political terms the downfall of
Governments.

The Minister has an obligation to assure the
House he has the problem at least within his
sights.

Other matters I want to draw to the Minister's
attention include the people I term "the new
dispossessed"—those who because of the
economic crisis are being thrust into a position in
which they cannot hope to save the deposit needed
to purchase a home which they have a right to
own. They are not the people at the lowest end of
the socio-economic scale for whom Governments
make allowances. They are people who fall
outside the categories of those who receive
Government assistance.

I am talking about people who perhaps earn
$210 a week and who constitute in 1979 a whole
new class of disadvantaged people as far as the
prospects of home ownership are concerned. Little
has been done for those people by this
Government and the numbers within that
category are swelling rapidly as inflation
threatens to rise again and increase at an
alarming rate.

Something needs to be done, not for the people
who are very rich or very poor but for the people
who are jammed in the middle—the new
dispossessed who can afford to pay rent but in
doing so have confiscated from them any prospect
at all of home ownership because of the economic
situation in which they find themselves and
because of their ineligibility for low interest
Government finance.

The Opposition also draws to the Minister's
attention the continuing and compounding need
for an independent housing information service.
We believe very strongly that the time is long
 overdue for the advice and services of an
independent housing assistance bureau. It should
have been established during the first term of this
Government. It has not yet been established as
the Government nears the end of its second term
and we stress again to this Minister the need for
an advisory bureau set up on an independent
basis—not by the Housing Industry
Authority—to advise people properly in respect of
their housing needs.

The other matters I want to mention include
the chaos into which this Government has
plunged the State Housing Commission or the
people who were State Housing Commission
purchase applicants and purchasers of homes.

Previously when this purchase function of the
State Housing Commission was handled by the
commission a standard set of criteria was laid
down by which people who qualified for assistance
would be able to obtain the assistance according
to a standard set of rules.

Under this Government the purchase function
has been diverted to terminating building societies
which adopt a variety of rules, societies which
confuse people and which provide assistance
according to their own lights—not according to
any co-ordinated or accepted standard practice
laid down by the Registrar of Building Societies
or by the Government through any of its other
functionaries.

I hasten to emphasise I am in no way critical of
the Registrar of Building Societies, who does a
marvellous job; but the number of occasions I
have had to contact him about this confusion
indicates to me the terminating building societies
are following their own will in respect of the
distribution of low interest Government funds.
The least the people who are eligible for these
funds can expect is that they will be treated in the
same way, regardless of the source from which
the same funds are allocated to them to satisfy
their housing needs.

The Opposition also wants to see some evidence
that the Government is investigating the
establishment of building co-operatives and
continuing co-operatives which will allow the
provision of cheaper housing and the provision of
housing more attuned to the needs of the people
who are seeking it.

All in all the Government's treatment of the
interest rate question and the Government
housing authority assistance has been less than
satisfactory. All members will know from
experience in their constituencies that the
problems complained about by the member for
Collie are common and are problems which are
recurring increasingly. The State Housing
Commission is being emasculated by a
Government which professes its policy to be in
line with its philosophy, which is the diversion to
private enterprise of the function performed by
the State Housing Commission.

The Minister has said previously in this place
that there is a class of people who cannot expect
to own their own homes. Under the Tonkin
Government that class of people did not exist;
under this Government it has been created.
Remember too, that this Government is one that
professes so strongly to believe in home ownership
as a right and not as a privilege.
I will conclude by re-emphasising that the Opposition urgently seeks some assurance from the Government that it is moving to make allowance for the bad effects which may result from an increase in interest rates. It includes in its submission to the Government the statements of the Treasurer, who said that the Federal Government will not artificially interfere with the movement of the money market in its establishment of interest rates from time to time. If that is to be the case, then let us make sure we have something to attempt to cushion the blow.

Let us reflect back to the time when this Government wanted to blame the Whitlam Government for increasing interest rates, when it attempted to downgrade the effect which overseas economic actions and policies were having upon the Australian situation. We see now in the context of the present problem that this Government is willing only too easily to flee to the overseas excuse, and how the Treasurer says it is unrealistic to expect that we will escape the effects of what is happening in other countries.

The Whitlam Government was expected to escape those effects; but the present Federal Government is unrealistic according to its own statement if it thinks it can escape them itself.

With those few words, I would seek an assurance from the Minister and resume my seat.

MR BERTRAM (Mt. Hawthorn) [11.48 p.m.]:
As I have mentioned from time to time in the past the people of Mt. Hawthorn do not really do very well out of the Treasury. Mt. Hawthorn is a built-up area and, therefore, largely the taxes the people pay are applied to other places rather than to their own.

However, there is a very small matter which I would raise briefly. Brady Street in Mt. Hawthorn runs into Anzac Road and almost at the point where they merge there is an on and an off ramp for the third stage of the Mitchell Freeway. At the side of those streets and behind them in Lysterfield Street, there is an area of land which I believe is owned or controlled by the State Housing Commission. It is not a very tidy area, and I believe with the expenditure of a little effort and money it could be made to look far better than it does at the moment. It is a sandy area. Perhaps of late it may have been tidied up a shade, but I believe it could be tidied up a lot better than it is at the moment. Furthermore, I am told that weed growth goes right to the back fences of homes, and when it dries out it constitutes a real fire hazard to the many elderly people who live in the area.

I would ask the Minister to take steps to look at that area and to have something done to make it look presentable not only for the people whose properties abut it, but also for the traffic in Brady Street and Anzac Road and, perhaps, also for the traffic on the freeway.

MR WILSON (Dianella) [11.50 p.m.]: I want to raise two brief matters in respect of the Estimates for the State Housing Commission. I refer firstly to the rather difficult situation which faces age pensioners waiting for Housing Commission accommodation. It seems the rate at which new units are built to accommodate age pensioners is far from keeping up with the demand which continues to grow. We all know that Australia, like other western countries, is facing between now and the end of the century an increasing proportion of aged people in its population. It seems that we are falling further and further behind in providing accommodation for those who look to the State Housing Commission or to public housing, generally, for accommodation as they grow older.

When units are built it seems to me a series of mistakes are made both in terms of the planning requirement and in terms of what appears to be a lack of co-ordination with other authorities in siting the developments. I would like to instance two developments which have occurred very recently, one of which is still incomplete. That development is occurring in Morley Drive in Dianella. I cannot think of a more unsuitable site on which to place units for age pensioners than Morley Drive. Anyone who has ever lived on Morley Drive will know it is fast becoming one of the noisiest and busiest major thoroughfares in the metropolitan area. Yet the commission, I suppose feeling somewhat constrained in respect of the sites available to it, currently is building a number of units fronting on to this noisy and busy thoroughfare, and within a few metres of it.

It seems to me that the commission displays a certain insensitivity in respect of its planning. I know that when consideration was given to the siting of these units, alternative sites were considered. Propositions were put for the exchange of the present site with other sites which were not so unfavourably situated. I feel the commission and its officers and planners have failed the elderly people who will have to spend their latter days in that most unsuitable environment.

I instance two other developments recently completed in Koondoola of substantial blocks of units for age pensioners. When I have made approaches to the Metropolitan Transport Trust
about bus facilities for these pensioners, I have been told no consultation took place with the trust in the siting of the units, in terms of bus services being available to the inhabitants. As a result of that the units have been sited a considerable distance from existing bus routes. The result of further representations made to the MTT indicated that it is unable to alter existing routes to take in the new units.

The other factor about this is that the people who are placed in the units almost without exception are frail, aged people—persons with serious heart ailments and lung ailments. They are people who need to be near public transport. It seems to me again a lack of consultation has taken place, and there has been a lack of concern, a lack of compassion and a lack of sympathy in the way in which the units have been sited.

I cannot for the life of me understand why considerable consultation and co-ordination of planning between different authorities does not occur before these much desired and much needed facilities are established.

I would urge upon the Minister further that before future developments are undertaken, greater co-ordination is insisted upon and that more consultation take place with other authorities so that units may be sited away from noisy, busy thoroughfares but within close proximity to public transport facilities.

MR RIDGE (Kimberley—Minister for Housing) [11.57 p.m.]: I thank those members who have contributed to this section of the Estimates. I am in sympathy with some of the matters they have expressed, and particularly the problems of maintenance of State Housing Commission homes referred to by the member for Collie. I would be the first to admit that our maintenance programme is not of the extent I would like it to be. However, if the member for Collie would like to make representations to me in respect of particular problems in his area, I will certainly have a look at them and see if something can be done about them. He referred to houses which are 14 years old and have not been painted. I do not know the time limit the commission places on carrying out that type of maintenance, but if he makes representation to me I will consider the matter.

The member for Balcatta spoke about relieving people in difficult circumstances. I suggest the State Housing Commission already does this inasmuch as it does allow rebates of rentals, as he is aware. These are fairly substantial rebates which amounted to something like $8.5 million in 1978-79, and will amount to a substantially greater sum in the present financial year.

He spoke also of the prospect of interest rate rises. I can recall the same member speaking some months ago in this Chamber and referring to the same prospect; but in fact, it has not occurred yet.

Mr B. T. Burke: It just occurred.

Mr RIDGE: Yes, but the situation went back to what it was a few months ago.

Mr B. T. Burke: Yes, the rate has just increased.

Mr RIDGE: Okay. The member spoke about the interest rate in the United Kingdom being something like 17 per cent. Of course, the rate in the USA is similar to that. Nevertheless, despite the fact that some people have said we will be subjected to substantial interest rate rises in the near future, that has not occurred. Of course some people in the financial community today will claim we will not see increases.

The member for Balcatta stressed that we should have some sort of committee to consider the major burden placed on people as a result of interest rate rises.

I am prepared to have a look at this question. It is premature to start implementing the formation of a committee; but nevertheless we are prepared to listen to reason if there is good reason for having such a committee.

On the other hand, I must re-emphasize that we are already granting rebates which were in the order of $8.5 million last year and it will be closer to $10 million or $11 million this year. There has to be a limit on how far one can go.

The member asked that urgent representations be made to the Federal Government in connection with the income tax deductibility of home loan repayments. I cannot guarantee that I have already done this; but I have made many representations to the Federal Government over recent months, and I have reason to believe that this would have been one of them. Nevertheless, I am prepared to check that and perhaps confirm with the member what the situation is.

The member spoke about the "new dispossessed"—the people who cannot save the deposit needed to own their own homes. He said there is a need for low-interest finance. This is a laudable situation; and I would like to think we could make low-interest finance available to people. We do have a scheme whereby the terminating building societies lend funds at 5.4 per cent initially to new home buyers. That rate is probably as low as it could go. I would like to
think we could allow more people to take advantage of this; but there are not sufficient funds available to be able to do so. I am not sure where the funds would come from. Any funds for that purpose would lessen the number of homes that could be built in other quarters.

Mr B. T. Burke: I was thinking if you could amend the State Housing Commission Act to allow the commission to borrow on the private money market, then it could have a scheme of augmenting the low-interest funds at nominal rates—7, 8, 9 per cent instead of 12 per cent.

Mr RIDGE: In fact, we are already doing that through the building societies. We are augmenting their funds and giving them the opportunity to lend to some people at cheaper rates. As the member appreciates, the interest rate rises by one-half of 1 per cent a year until it reaches the bond rate.

The member spoke of an independent housing information service. I am not sure exactly what he means. I was going to indicate we had the Housing Industry Association, but he went on to say he did not mean a body such as the HIA.

Mr B. T. Burke: I will give you an example. They hand out copies of contracts. The contracts are acceptable, and the members of the Housing Industry Association are the builders who subsequently build the homes according to the contracts that their own association has given.

Mr RIDGE: I cannot recall the name of the organisation; but there is one that was formed perhaps two years ago and which has produced its first model. The organisation is a group of people from the building industry, from the university, and the like. It has been formed to assess the quality of homes that have been built. A person elects, voluntarily, to submit his home to examination by these people; and if it passes all of their requirements, they give an award for good design. This gives an assurance to people that the home they are intending to purchase has been subjected to rather extreme criticism by people from within and without the industry. Of course, the group includes people in the finance industry as well, so they are sure they are receiving good value for money.

This is an excellent organisation; and it has been given a fair amount of publicity. Up to the present, only one home has been given a good design award. Bearing in mind that the owners submit their homes in a voluntary fashion, the number is not large; but as a result of the one award, I know many project builders and the like have submitted plans and specifications to the good design council to take advantage of the scheme. The scheme is aimed at protecting the buyers of new homes.

The question of purchase applicants and purchasers of homes was raised. Once again, this deals with the question of low-interest finance. As the member is aware, the system is that the funds are channelled through the terminating building societies. The societies are able to make certain funds available to the purchasers on a low-interest basis. Obviously the funds are not sufficient to go as far as I would like the scheme to go. I do not know when we will reach the situation where we will be able to provide cheaper finance; but I foresee that at some time in the future the SHC might have to move back into vendor finance. That would give us the opportunity to assist some people in the lower income bracket.

The member spoke about housing co-operatives and the attempt to provide cheaper housing. Once again, it is easy to say; but over the last couple of years the SHC has been able to obtain excellent value for its money because there has been a great deal of competition within the building industry. I do not think we will do better than we have done over the last couple of years. I would go so far as to say that the SHC has been able to build homes in the last 12 months for the same price that it built them 18 months or two years ago, as a result of the competition in the industry.

The member for Mt. Hawthorn spoke of Brady Street, and I cannot recall the name of the other road. He spoke about an untidy area. I do not know that the SHC necessarily goes around looking at untidy areas to see whether they can be improved. However, I will find out all I can about it. We will have a look at it, and determine whether it is a commission responsibility.

The member for Dianella spoke about the need for more units of accommodation for age pensioners. I am in sympathy with his request. There can be no doubt that our population of age pensioners is increasing. I am happy to say that the allocation of funds from the Commonwealth this year is double what it was last year. It is still insufficient; but I have reason to believe that, together with the State contribution, we are seeing this increase progressively. Like the member, I see the need for us to be able to treat the needs of aged people as quite urgent.

The member spoke about the people living in areas in Koondoola in particular, and perhaps in Morley Drive, where they are too far from facilities and particularly transport. I believe the SHC consults with people, and it tries to coordinate its activities with local authorities and
various other bodies. I do not know how these units come to be in a locality that is too far from public transport. If it is the case, I will have the commission give consideration to what it is doing. I will draw the remarks of the member to the attention of the commission, with a view to making sure this sort of situation does not develop again.

All in all, the State Housing Commission extends a great deal of compassion and sympathy to the people with whom it deals.

Vote: State Housing Commission, $10—put and passed.

Part 12: Minister for Lands and Forests—
Votes: Lands and Surveys, $11 855 000; Bush Fires Board, $839 990; Forests, $16 725 000—put and passed.

Part 13: Minister for Local Government and Town Planning—
MR BERTRAM (Mt. Hawthorn) [12.09 a.m.] Members will remember the rather rough passage of the Control of Vehicles (Off-road areas) Bill when it passed through this Chamber. At the time, the Opposition expressed its concern—and justifiably so—that the drivers of off-road vehicles would not be covered by third party insurance.

Since then it has transpired that third party insurance for off-road vehicles is compulsory in Victoria. That gives some support to the proposition that it should be compulsory in Western Australia.

It will be only a short time before there will be an accident and somebody will be injured as a result of the negligent driving of an off-road vehicle. That person may very well find himself unable to recover damages. He may obtain a judgment for a sizeable sum, but that will not be very helpful to him if the negligent driver—a young person—has no means.

I am suggesting the Government would do very well to re-examine this matter and to do something about providing or requiring that there should be third party insurance cover for the people driving off-road vehicles. One may imagine that some of those drivers may be far less competent than the people who drive conventionally on the roads.

That is a further argument supporting the need for people to be given some certainty, some security that if they are driving a vehicle and they are injured in a collision with an off-road vehicle, or they are knocked down as a pedestrian, they will receive the benefits of a judgment. They want a degree of certainty that, having been injured and having a right to recover damages, perhaps even obtaining a judgment for damages, they will receive the benefits of that judgment and will simply not be in a position where they are suing a person of straw, who has no means to pay.

This is a matter of getting in before the trouble starts. I would suggest the sooner the Government takes action, the better.

The other matter I would like to raise at this time deals with the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust. I spoke on this matter recently.

The CHAIRMAN: The member has referred to the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust. There is no vote for that matter in this part, so I would request him not to discuss that matter.

Mr BERTRAM: Are you able to give an indication, Sir, whether this important matter may be discussed at any stage, either in the Consolidated Revenue Fund Estimates or in the General Loan Fund Estimates?

Mr Jamieson: The third reading of this Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: You have already received what I think is very good advice. In the short time available to me I have not been able to discover whether there is an item which would cover this discussion.

Mr BERTRAM: Very well. I will take advantage of the opportunity at the third reading stage to pursue that matter.

MR WILSON (Dianella) [12.15 a.m.]: I would like to take this opportunity to raise again a matter which is of growing concern and that is the manner in which the apparent lack of co-ordination in the planning or road development, particularly in the north-east metropolitan area, is impinging on suburban streets in already developed suburbs. There are a couple of instances which dramatise the problem. For example, last year as part of its commitment to the development of the new Mirrabooka shopping centre and regional centre, the SHC constructed a new road which is known as Yirrigan Avenue and links the northern suburbs with the eastern suburbs via Alexander Drive.

In the year since that road has been constructed, it has generated a tremendous amount of traffic. In fact, I understand the traffic count indicates 11 000 vehicles use that road each day at the present time. This means that an area which, a year ago, was not available to through traffic has suddenly become invaded by a large volume of it. This traffic has had to find its way through established suburbs to get to where it is going. As a result, it has caused many headaches
and a number of problems for residents in those suburbs.

Another aspect of this matter, the nature of which can be seen easily, is the way in which problems have occurred at the intersection of Mirrabooka Avenue and Beach Road. At that intersection there are two dual carriageways converging on two single carriageways. The number of vehicles using the single carriageway in Mirrabooka Avenue south of Beach Road has doubled in the last two years.

That situation is aggravated by the fact that it is used as a bus route, and when buses are parked waiting to set down or pick up passengers, large queues of traffic form behind them and there are increasing instances of traffic jams in that particular area.

I instance those situations, because they epitomise the real nature of the problem. A State instrumentality—the SHC—is involved. Beach Road is the boundary between two local authorities, therefore, the City of Stirling and the Shire of Wanneroo are involved also.

Although, of course, we may be referred to various other authorities in an endeavour to find a solution, there does not appear to be an easy way for the different local authorities and State Government departments concerned to get together to try to co-ordinate, in terms of the road developments which are needed, at a pace which will allow for new road developments to feed into existing road developments in a way which will not impinge detrimentally on suburban streets in Dianella and adjacent suburbs covered by the City of Stirling and the Shire of Bayswater.

Recently, only as a result of strong action by local residents and ultimately through a decision by the Stirling City Council, the proposed Northwood Drive, which was to be a north-south link through the City of Stirling, was halted because of fears by local residents in regard to the way in which that particular road would generate through traffic and feed it into local streets. Such a situation would be intolerable to local residents.

The whole situation is one in which local authorities are being forced, through lack of funds, to make short-term decisions to try to cope with increasing traffic to the detriment of residents in established suburbs. As a result of those developments, I approached the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority and suggested that a day seminar be organised involving representatives of a number of local authorities including the officers of the City of Stirling, the Shires of Wanneroo, Swan, Bayswater, and Bassendean, and officers of the Main Roads Department and the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority in order to try to get a greater degree of co-ordination and understanding of the problems which seem to cross the existing boundaries and to examine provisions for gaining co-ordinated planning.

I had to wait some time for an answer, but I did receive one for which I was grateful. Unfortunately, I was told that, although my suggestion was highly commendable, because such a seminar would have to be well organised and costs were involved, and representatives from three levels of government would be required to present papers followed by a group discussion, the Town Planning Department was unable to spare any staff at the time to organise a seminar or prepare the papers which would be necessary.

The secretary of the authority offered to allow me to meet with the chairman and senior members of the Town Planning Authority and the Main Roads Department to discuss the basis of road planning issues and how existing procedures could be improved. I intend to take up that offer at the earliest opportunity, although I believe it is the second proposition.

I regret that it was not possible to have a one day seminar, because I had received a very favourable response to the proposition from both the Shire of Bayswater and the Shire of Swan.

I received a letter from the secretary of the metropolitan group "D" district planning scheme which noted the efforts I had been making to co-ordinate inter-local authority road planning in the north-east metropolitan area and seeking my support for the early construction of the North Beechboro-Gosnells Freeway in order to alleviate the traffic problems in the Bayswater locality.

I believe the authorities concerned recognise there is a problem in the north-east metropolitan region. One of the basic problems is the area has been left out on a limb. It is not part of any of the corridors, so it does not have any of the advantages which those parts of the metropolitan area which make up the corridor system enjoy in terms of provisions which exist under the corridor plan for co-ordination of planning.

I believe that, with further delays in the development of very necessary road systems in the north-east metropolitan region, many more problems will arise. For example, there is an urgent need for Beach Road to be extended eastwards to meet Alexander Drive and, hopefully, if the North Metropolitan Region Planning Authority agrees to applications for amendments which have been sought for that road to be linked with a realignment of Marshall
designed to handle the traffic it is now required to cope with and serious problems are developing there.

If the Beach Road-Marshall Road link were allowed to proceed at an early date, it would remove a great deal of traffic from Alexander and Morley Drives at a point further north. It would also provide much needed access to the developing industrial estate at Malaga which many people do not realise will be a major light industrial area which will offer valuable employment opportunities to people in SHC areas in the northern suburbs of Girrawheen, Balga, and Koondoola. Much needed employment opportunities will be given to a number of people in that area which is affected badly by the current unemployment situation.

Many considerations need to be taken into account and there are urgent reasons for greater co-ordination of planning for much needed road systems in that region and for planning that will allow traffic to feed through into other road systems which will be capable of carrying large numbers of vehicles.

I shall refer lastly to the great need within this co-ordinated planning for priority to be given for the development of the northern end of the Beechboro-Gosnells Freeway and to the development also of at least part of the northern perimeter highway.

If more priority can be given to these major road developments, or at least to some road developments within these existing reserves, a great deal of through traffic travelling from the north-east of the metropolitan area to the areas on the other side of the river will find much more convenient means of access.

Of course; this includes the urgent need for another river crossing. The present arrangement which has been forced on the Shire of Bayswater for the realignment of the present Hotham Road crossing so that it links directly with Grand Promenade, a development which is being carried out and causing a great deal of land resumption which is meeting resistance from a number of local residents, is a very short-term measure which is being forced on that local authority and which could be avoided if a much higher priority were given to another river crossing. Such a crossing is needed to relieve the present situation at the Garratt Road Bridge.

I hope the need for a much better, co-ordinated approach to new road developments and major road developments in what is virtually a forgotten part of the metropolitan area in this respect will receive the Minister's attention and will be drawn more urgently to the attention of the Town Planning Department and the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority. When I have my meeting with those groups, I intend to raise this matter.

Another matter I wish to raise is that of the continuing problem experienced by some residents in the metropolitan area from the noise nuisance of trail bikes. It seems that since the introduction of the legislation to control off-road vehicles, this problem has become worse in some parts of the metropolitan area.

Recently I approached the Shire of Wanneroo and the City of Stirling, amongst other local authorities in my electorate, and asked whether the legislation could be policed with the means at their disposal. I received written replies from all the local authorities I approached assuring me that there would be no problem and that they would be able to cope with the carrying out of the policing arrangements.

Recently I put a question to the Minister regarding one area in my electorate, the vicinity of Beach Road which is Housing Commission land. The land is undeveloped and it is used by trail bike riders especially during weekends and late afternoons during the week. This problem has continued in that area.

When I approached the respective local authorities I was told that they simply could not catch the offenders. The trail bike riders took to the bush in this undeveloped area and there was no way to control them.

It seems that all the hopes built up by the people with the introduction of this legislation, and subsequent to its proclamation, are being frittered away. As far as those people are concerned, in this particular area, the problem seems to be getting worse rather than better.

The offenders know they cannot be caught and they are continuing to engage in what is now an illegal activity. This is a very serious problem which has not been looked at sufficiently. It seems beyond the capability of local authorities to police the Act and, therefore, it is a problem of great concern to the residents in the area. I draw the matter to the attention of the Minister because I think the Government should be aware of the fact that despite the legislation which has been
promulgated it has not been possible to overcome the problem in certain areas.

MR PEARCE (Gosnells) [12.33 a.m.]: One of the more symbolic aspects of this Chamber is the way in which the small curved ministerial table in front of the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning now contains three sets of Hansard piled up like an embattlement. The Minister seems to be one of the most embattled members of this Parliament.

I would like to raise the question of the south-east corridor report, and what is likely to happen to it. This Chamber is due to rise in a day or two, or next week at the latest, and the south-east corridor plan has not found its way to this Parliament. In the normal course of events, Parliament will not sit again until late July or early August next year and, presumably, that means the south-east corridor report will be held over until that time.

Mr Davies: What about the Servetus Street report? That has been going on for six years.

Mr PEARCE: My leader has pointed out that other plans have been suspended for longer periods than has been the south-east corridor report.

The report is a significant planning device which will affect large portions of the metropolitan area, not only with regard to road patterns, but also the development of large areas of land in the Gosnells-Huntingdale area. I know the Gosnells City Council is perturbed about the possibility of a 12-month delay in planning because of the potential delay in the presentation of the report.

I observed a demonstration yesterday and today, while coming to this Chamber, of what is happening with regard to transport in that area. Albany Highway has four lanes, but someone has ordered a number of bulldozers into the area and one lane is being stripped.

Albany Highway services one-third of the metropolitan area, and as a result of that stripping the highway has been reduced to two lanes. The road has been stripped right outside the Carousel shopping centre, which means traffic jams of up to a mile on either side of the shopping centre. Of course, hundreds and possibly thousands of people are discomforted. In fact, that stretch of road between Leach Highway to the north and Nicholson Road to the south is the most used section of roadway in the whole of the metropolitan area. That mile of road in the vicinity of the Carousel shopping centre affects the whole of the traffic pattern in the south-east corridor. In fact, the report was designed primarily to overcome the traffic difficulties involved in that area.

I do not want to go over the matter of the bridge over the Canning River, and the upgrading of Spencer Road because we went through that previously when talking to the Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act Amendment Bill. On that occasion I mentioned the role of the member for Murdoch in getting this report shelved at the joint party meeting.

If the decision to build a bridge over the Canning River is to be shelved, some other plan will have to be found to overcome the traffic problems at this time. The options are simple. If the bridge, as one option, is removed then the alternative is to construct a bigger Albany Highway and/or build a new freeway system to the west of the settled areas. I have proposed both of those schemes previously. They are the only options available if the decision to build a bridge over the Canning River is abandoned. I have made the point in the Press, and in this Parliament.

I expect the Government to hold onto the report until after the election, and then trot it out and construct a bridge 2½ years before the next election. Possibly, the Government would then be in the position to survive the inconvenience and disability caused by the building of the bridge, and the effect it would have on the chances of the member for Murdoch being re-elected.

I am not suggesting the Government should not reject the decision to build a bridge. That is a decision I am happy to leave to the joint Government parties. I am saying that the Minister, or the MRPA, should not hang on to the report until the next sitting of Parliament next year. It should not sit back and hold up the planning of the south-east corridor both in terms of traffic problems, and also in terms of development of surrounding areas. Development plans around Gosnells are well in hand, and have been referred back by the MRPA. Let us not hold up these developments simply because the Government is not prepared to produce the report before the end of this session.

I hope the Minister will be in a position to produce the report before Parliament rises so that the recommendations can be put into effect. However, I will bet my bottom dollar—and I am just about down to it with the coming election—that will not happen. I would like the Minister to give me a hint as to whether or not the report will be made available.

If the Minister does not take the hint tonight I have a question on the notice paper for tomorrow.
asking when we may expect to see the report, and when certain things can be expected to happen. But, if the whole matter is to be deferred until after the election, and until Parliament sits in the second half of next year, traffic conditions will be chaotic in my part of the world. That would be a great pity simply because the Government is not prepared to grasp the nettle with regard to difficult planning decisions which have to be made. They should be implemented as quickly as possible.

**MRS CRAIG** (Wellington—Minister for Local Government) [12.40 a.m.]: I have definitely taken note of the comments made by the member for Dianella in relation to liaison regarding land use planning in his area. He has taken what action he has been able to at this stage of the proceedings by approaching the Town Planning Department in order to discuss this specific problem within his area to see whether there is some method of rationalising it.

Both the member for Dianella and the member for Gosnells have indicated the difficulties which concern planners when they endeavour to establish suitable transport systems while at the same time liaising with all the local authorities concerned in order to have efficient transport routes. The member for Dianella, in fact, made a comment to the extent that persons living in his area which has not been preplanned could be disadvantaged significantly because of the necessity to acquire their properties. He did not feel that was a fair thing but, in many instances, there is no option other than to do that.

I assure the member for Dianella I will refer to the department the specific matters he raised and I will discuss them. However, I am unable to indicate any short-term planning schemes that will be available. As he said, the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority has a very real responsibility in this area as do the local authorities. During planning we endeavour to get liaison, but sometimes our plans are not entirely what the ratepayers find to be acceptable to them.

Regarding the matter of the south-east corridor report, the member for Gosnells knows very well it has been referred back to the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority. I understand that stage “B” of that report is now in the hands of the authority, and it is to consider that report at its meeting in December.

It is my belief the authority will then consider the recommendations made in the first report, which the member for Gosnells saw, and which he wants to be tabled. The authority will put these matters into perspective with the recommendations made in the stage “B” report. I am unable to tell the member for Gosnells when the authority will resubmit its recommendations to me.

Mr Pearce: It does not really matter if it is not this week. It may as well be next July.

Mrs CRAIG: Obviously, if there was to be an amendment to the south-east corridor it would have to lie on the Table of the House for 12 sitting days. So the member for Gosnells is quite right in that if the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority makes any new recommendations in relation to the rationalisation of the transport routes, those new recommendations will have to go out for an advertising period of not less than three months. So, whichever way it goes it seems to me there is little likelihood of finality being reached before Parliament sits next year.

The member for Gosnells referred to traffic problems which already exist in Albany Highway, and he realises there is no point in rezoning land for the purpose of urban development. That would compound the problems which exist within the area he mentioned, specifically between Leach Highway and Nicholson Road.

So the short answer is that I do not believe we will receive any recommendation from the authority before such time as this Parliament finishes.

**Votes:** Local Government, $1 274,000; Town Planning, $2 644,000—put and passed.

**Part 14:** Minister for Health and Community Welfare—

**MR DAVIES** (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [12.46 a.m.]: I believe it was one of the colleagues of the Minister who today tabled the Crown Law papers dealing with the inquest following the death of Christopher Derkacz at Princess Margaret Hospital in January of this Year. At all times the Minister for Health has expressed his sympathy about this sad occurrence, and in particular, he was concerned about the instructions on the child’s medical chart; that is, “No resus., no ECN, no intubation.” He indicated that he did not hold with these instructions and that he did not know the circumstances under which the instructions were placed on the card. Hopefully he indicated to our satisfaction that it was not the policy of the hospital or of the Government that such procedures should be followed.

I am not being critical in any way of his actions or the way he has answered the questions posed to him on several occasions. I am grateful to the Government for tabling the papers—I did not ask
for their tabling, it was one of my colleagues who did that.

On going through the papers I can understand the difficulty of the City Coroner in coming to an acceptable decision. I was seeking an assurance from the Minister or some sort of guarantee that the circumstances with which he does not hold and with which I do not hold will not occur again.

I seek this assurance because many hundreds, indeed thousands, of parents in the metropolitan area, have children who suffer from Down's syndrome and from other handicaps, and these parents are very disturbed that something has happened which they did not think ever would happen. The whole problem is as simple as that.

I do not know what kind of assurance the Minister can give. Since he has answered questions in the Chamber, has he been able to talk with authorities from Princess Margaret Hospital, or has he been able to take any positive action? I am mindful of the relationship between the Medical Department and Princess Margaret Hospital.

I realise how difficult it would be to give a watertight guarantee, but certainly the parents need the assurance from the Minister that the kind of procedure referred to is not acceptable, and that as far as is humanly possible a recurrence will be prevented.

We all know that unforeseen circumstances can arise, but in this case from the evidence on the child's medical chart it was clear to anyone that the child started from behind scratch when he was admitted to hospital for treatment. Certainly we do not expect such behaviour at a hospital. I was surprised—as were most people—to find the Coroner thought it necessary to bring down such a decision.

We have now been sitting for about 14 hours, but I am sure everyone realises the seriousness of the situation I have described. Under normal circumstances certainly other members would want to contribute to this part of the debate, but as has happened on so many other occasions, we are legislating by exhaustion. However, I am not apologising for seeking such an assurance. Members can imagine how the parents of any handicapped child must now feel when they take that child to a hospital. They have always believed that everything possible would be done to restore the child to health, but apparently on this occasion instructions were given that under certain circumstances some life-saving procedures were not to be followed. Such a decision was not the right or the responsibility of a doctor, and I can appreciate the dilemma of the Coroner.

I would like to ask the Minister whether he has made any move to appoint a specialist to examine the record in relation to hyperthermia, or whether there has been any response from the National Health and Medical Research Council. I would just like to repeat that if any satisfactory clinical tests are to be carried out, the Tronado machine which is in full operating order at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital should be used. It is a pity that machine is still inoperative when action could be taken to commence the clinical tests.

Some concern has been expressed that the tests may not be made with the existing machine. I would like the Minister to make it quite clear that this is not so. Otherwise, there is little point in appointing a specialist in the way described by the Minister. I will be satisfied if the Minister will reply to my two queries.

MR BERTRAM (Mt. Hawthorn) [12.53 a.m.]: First of all, I would like to refer to the poor health supervision at the Hertha Road rubbish tip at Osborne Park. People in the immediate neighbourhood of the tip have had to tolerate noise, dust, rubbish, and foul odours for a number of years. Even in recent times many of the local people have found refuse, dust, and rubbish on their premises. The circumstances constitute a very real health hazard.

It may be that the City of Stirling has the prime responsibility for this tip, but the Public Health Department should be concerned with this problem. It is hoped that within the next few months the Hertha Road tip will be closed, but we are now into summer and the tip needs close supervision from a health point of view. I hope that the Minister will ensure that such supervision is given and that the health of the people in the area is looked after properly.

I wish to mention also an organisation known as the Alcohol Recovery and Rehabilitation Foundation of Mandurah Incorporated. From what I am told, this organisation has operated very satisfactorily for a number of years, and it has provided an excellent service to people who have a very real problem with alcohol. Representations have been made to the Government for added financial assistance to run the foundation, but thus far the Government has provided no monetary support.

The organisation has received support from the Lotteries Commission, but currently it has a sizable overdraft and it is in real difficulties to keep operating.

I understand that the member for Murray made some representations to the Government, but he had no success at all. I imagine he told the
people operating the foundation much the same story he tells people in Mandurah about other matters; namely, that the Government has no money. As a matter of fact the Government has plenty of money, and as I have reminded this Committee on a number of occasions, any Government that finishes the financial year with a surplus of $44 million or more cannot be said to be broke.

The foundation is a meritorious organisation and it has shown it is quite capable of self-help. It established itself, and it has met a great deal of its operating expenses. However, there is a limit to how far it can go, and it is well on the way to reaching that limit.

I would like to ask the Minister for Health to ascertain just what can be provided by way of urgent financial assistance to this organisation. It is not an irresponsible body, and it has already shown it can deliver a service to the community. Its management comprises bank managers, accountants, and so on—responsible people with experience. Any funds it receives will be handled properly.

The organisation is quite prepared to work hard to raise funds. It has done this in the past, and it will continue to do so in the future. However, it just does not have the capacity to raise all the funds it needs. At present its overdraft approaches $10,000.

Another matter which caught my attention recently and which I would like to mention concerns a young lady who was being trained as a dental nurse at the dental hospital. She had a rather impressive career from the standpoint of examination results. Recently she sat for examinations. I was told that on a Monday she took two examinations and passed each, one with 97 per cent and the other with 96 per cent. On the Tuesday she sat for another two examinations and again passed both with marks of 86 and 92 per cent. On the Wednesday she was proceeding to an examination when she was involved in a traffic accident. It seems she had the alternatives of not taking the examination that day and taking it subsequently, or of battling on and taking the exam. She chose the latter and achieved a mark of 59 per cent, which meant she failed by 1 per cent. She was then called upon to resign and I understand she has done that.

It seems to me if those statements are true—and I have not been able to go into the total story in the depth with which I would like to go into it—the young lady has been treated somewhat harshly. I would like to know whether that is the way in which young trainees usually are treated. If it is not, why has this person been treated in this manner?

Mr Davies: It is pretty poor economics when her training is wasted.

Mr BERTRAM: Certainly it would appear to be so.

Another protest I wish to make to the Minister concerns the fact that late last year, shortly after this Parliament rose, an announcement appeared in the Press that the Hawthorn Hospital which operated in Mt. Hawthorn for many years would have its mode of operation changed dramatically.

The announcement indicated that the transition would occur in February or thereabouts, so it would be an accomplished fact before the Parliament sat again. I had no notice whatsoever of that move. If some money is to be spent by the Government in one's electorate, often one receives an intimation of it. That is, when there is a plus mark, one is told about it; but if it is a debit mark, the matter is kept a strict secret and not even the member for the district has the faintest inkling of it.

When people complained to me I told them that is the way the Government operates, and that it just does these things out of the blue without even having the courtesy to tell the member for the district that the move is afoot.

I protest against that. It is the sort of situation in which some liaison could quite easily have occurred. If there is proper justification for a move, it should be communicated to the member concerned so that he may keep his constituents aware of what is going on. Obviously that procedure did not occur in this case.

Another matter which I wish to mention briefly concerns the use of heroin for the relief of pain in terminally ill persons. Back in April of this year I asked the Minister question 347, in the following terms—

1. Has the Government taken any action to allow medical practitioners to administer heroin to ease pain and help persons who are suffering terminal cancer and other painful terminal conditions?

2. If "No" why?
The answer was as follows—

(1) No.

(2) The importation of heroin is controlled by the Commonwealth Government. However, I am aware of representations to the Commonwealth Government to permit the reintroduction of heroin for medical use in such cases. The issue is to be examined at the next meeting of the national standing committee on control of drugs of dependence on which Western Australia is represented.

That sounded as though there was a chance of some action rather than the interminable delay which is referred to as keeping matters under review or under active review—I have never quite worked out the difference. So the matter was left in abeyance until the 15th November when I asked question 2223, as follows—

What progress has his department made towards making it lawful for medical practitioners to administer heroin to ease pain and help persons who are suffering terminal cancer and other painful terminal conditions?

The answer was—

Departmental officers have taken part in discussions at the National Health and Medical Research Council and the National Standing Committee on Drugs of Dependence, but no conclusion has been reached by either of these organisations to date.

So the matter of the use of heroin to ameliorate pain drags on and no decision has been reached. That is a most unsatisfactory situation. I believe in other parts of the world it is a common practice to administer heroin to terminally ill patients who are in pain. If it can happen in other countries to the advantage of patients, it seems to me that we should see to it that the same relief from pain should be made available to persons in this State. I urge the Minister to show some leadership on this matter and to let us have some action. If the decision ultimately is favourable, the quicker it is made the better it will be for those concerned.

I wish to speak briefly about the question of cigarettes and cigarette advertising. I do not suppose even 10 per cent of the members of this Chamber would not be of the opinion that cigarette advertising is injurious to people and has a disastrous effect particularly upon impressionable young people. Notwithstanding that, the Government has set up a committee to do several things. Officially, the first task of the committee is to monitor compliance with the code of practice of advertising of tobacco products, and to make recommendations in respect of changes to the code.

The trouble with voluntary codes is that they rarely if ever work. It is because of that fact that we have endless legislation to supervise all sorts of activities and organisations; because we have come to the conclusion so very often that unless we organise and control people through this Parliament, we will not achieve the level of conduct we want to achieve.

Then, almost as an afterthought, the committee has a third term of reference; namely, that it will also concern itself with the review of the evidence that tobacco advertising encourages our young people to smoke.

What an extraordinary transformation has come over the Minister. Before he was a Minister, he was prepared to go to all sorts of lengths to protest. I cite the Tresillian affair as one example. This issue makes the Tresillian affair fade into oblivion; yet now the member for Scarborough adopts a completely different attitude. Now, he is starting to manoeuvre and dodge around in much the same manner as he complained about when the Tresillian issue was at its peak.

The members of this Parliament know that cigarette advertising is a disaster. They know that only 7 people die each year in Western Australia from the use of hard drugs; that only 300 people die each year from motor accidents; and that 1300 people die each year from the use of nicotine. Probably, no people died as a result of the Government's decision to shift patients from Tresillian. The member for Scarborough went to the barricades on the Tresillian issue. In fact, he went so far as to resign from his position as Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet, which position is now enjoyed by the member for Gascoyne, no doubt at a rather impressive salary.

However, this issue is to remain hidden behind the Minister's committee. The Committee probably is not in the race to obtain evidence to establish from a statistical standpoint the impact of cigarette advertising on young people. I doubt whether 10 per cent of members in this Chamber would have the slightest doubt that cigarette advertising is having an impact.

Millions and millions of dollars are being spent on advertisements, and they are are aimed at a target. The target is the young people of our nation, and this advertising is having an effect. One wonders how much longer this situation will be tolerated.

Unfortunately, the committee does not look like bringing down its findings until after the election.
That seems to be rather a convenient situation for the Minister and the Government.

_The West Australian_ of the 12th November contained an article with the headline, “UN wants world to stop growing tobacco”. That is what the United Nations thinks about tobacco. However, the Government has decided that at least 300 people will die in this State each year, and that is all there is to it.

Mr Tonkin: Yet the Government gaols people for smoking marihuana.

Mr BERTRAM: I suggest if the Criminal Code of this State were being written in 1979 instead of 1913, serious consideration would be given to rendering a misdemeanor or a crime the pushing of nicotine into the mouths of young people. When somebody takes a gun and shoots a person, that person dies more or less instantaneously, and the murderer is brought before the courts on a charge of wilful murder. However, people, possessed with clear and unmistakeable scientific knowledge who push the drug nicotine at young people in the certainty that many will die while the rest will have their lives dramatically reduced in duration as a result, are rendered blameless by the present Liberal Government.

The killing of a person by a gun or by some other method is very often unpremeditated. However, lives are being taken in a premeditated fashion by the pushing of nicotine over a sustained period, and the “murderers” are not being brought to book.

I suppose that, at the most, only about 20 wilful murders would be committed each year in Western Australia, and the police make every effort to bring those people before the court. However, in respect of the people who murder more than 300 people each year by the drug nicotine, the Government appoints a committee to monitor the situation, to take evidence and try to prove something which the Minister knows full well cannot be proved.

We all know many things happen which simply cannot be proved. For example, we know with some certainty of two wilful murders, one which occurred in South Perth and the other in Geraldton, for which nobody has been charged. It may be that the police know who committed either or both of those offences. However, simply to know is insufficient; the police must be able to prove it.

I do not believe this committee is the brainchild of the Minister for Health; it is the Premier’s committee. The committee will need to be working for a great deal longer than a six-month period before it has any hope of obtaining sufficient evidence to prove or disprove allegations relating to cigarette smoking and advertising.

That is a confidence trick of the very worst variety. It is a committee set up to fool the trusting people. It is using those people. As I say, there may be 10 per cent of members in this Parliament who would know that that is not the case; but there certainly would not be more than 10 per cent.

There are people who are concerned that sponsorship of sporting bodies will suffer badly if cigarette advertising were to be stopped. I believe the public would be surprised to find that the total sponsorship of sport by cigarette companies in this State is relatively small. I believe, if an effort were made, there would be other companies and business organisations which would be only too pleased to come in and fill any gap if the tobacco companies were barred from pushing their cigarettes through sponsorship.

Mr Tonkin: It is the community’s wealth, and it would still be in the community, and still be used for sporting purposes.

Mr BERTRAM: That is very true. I believe the overwhelming number of sporting organisations and true sportsmen would believe that the ban on advertising should be applied instantly. It is not a case of the Government’s having to come in and take over sponsorship, and to fund sporting bodies.

They are my comments on that matter. The time allocated to me has elapsed, and so I will leave the matter at that point.

MR YOUNG (Scarborough—Minister for Health) [1.23 a.m.]: In reply to the Leader of the Opposition who raised the matter in regard to the child Derkacz who died at the Princess Margaret Hospital, I think the query deserves a reply. I am afraid I cannot give the sort of guarantees the Leader of the Opposition wants. It is sufficient to say that the child is dead, and nobody could be more upset about that than I am. Why the child died, and whether any action ought to be taken as a result of the child’s death will no doubt arise out of the report which I expect to receive from the Crown Law Department on the matter.

The Leader of the Opposition asked for an assurance that the circumstances which he described as such that neither he nor I would hold with will not happen again. I am afraid I cannot give an assurance in respect of a matter like that. The policy is quite clear. The policy is that all children, all people, all patients are to be treated equally in the public hospitals of Western Australia. If something untoward did occur and
sobody varied from that policy and practice, the Government is not in a position to make any guarantees whether it may or may not happen again.

I can say only that the policy was as I expressed in answer to questions from the Leader of the Opposition. It is unchanged, and it will continue to be unchanged while I am the Minister for Health, and while this Government is in power.

I will, however, naturally take a great deal of interest in the report from the Crown Law Department. I will examine the report to determine whether any further action needs to be taken.

Mr Davies: When do you expect that report?

Mr YOUNG: I expected it earlier than today, to be quite frank. I would say it would not be far off. I cannot give a precise time to the Leader of the Opposition, but I have requested that the matter be expedited where possible.

Mr Davies: Have you taken any other action? Have you spoken to the Princess Margaret Hospital at all?

Mr YOUNG: No. I do not think it is proper for me to take any action or to have any discussion with the administration of the Princess Margaret Hospital until I am advised in respect of the legal situation and put into the complete picture in respect of all the facts. The Government's policy on the matter is clear. It is well known to the administration of the Princess Margaret Hospital which, in fact, embraced that policy.

Mr Davies: Perhaps it would not hurt to remind them of it. It might mean something to the parents that the Government is taking some action.

Mr YOUNG: I am certain the parents of any child could not have been more assured by any statement I am likely to make or any actions I am likely to take than the statements I have made already in respect of the policy.

With regard to the matter of hyperthermia raised by the Leader of the Opposition, I have asked the Commissioner of Public Health and Medical Services, who is a member of the National Health and Medical Research Council, to see what can be done about obtaining the report that was referred to. I have raised a similar request in respect of the possible appointment of the specialist in oncology to whom I have referred. It is less than a week since that request was made, and I will follow it up to see whether anything can be done to speed it up.

The member for Mt. Hawthorn raised two matters. He raised the matter of the dental nurse. He said he had not checked all the facts in respect of that matter. I suggest that he do so and write to me if he feels there is any case to be made.

In respect of the Hawthorn Hospital, I have noted the comments of the member. I apologise to him for not having notified him, as the local member. I am sure he would have realised I did not notify the Hon. Bob Pike or the Hon. Roy Clauthon also in respect of the change of circumstances of that hospital. It would have been proper for me to have done so. I have made note of his comments.

I do not think that anything else raised by the member for Mt. Hawthorn is new to this Chamber.

Votes: Medical, $284 855 000; Public Health, $39 973 000; Mental Health Services, $50 237 000; Community Welfare, $35 358 000—put and passed.

Part 15: Minister for Water Supplies—

Vote: Country Water Supplies, Sewerage, Drainage and Irrigation, $48 327 000—put and passed.

Part 16: Minister for Mines—

Vote: State Batteries, $2 002 000—put and passed.

Part 17: Minister for Transport—

Vote: Railways, $169 121 000—put and passed.

Schedules A to D put and passed.

Clauses 1 to 3 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Treasurer) [1.30 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren) [1.31 a.m.]: I take this opportunity to raise a matter which has recently come to my notice concerning the Islamic slaughtering of animals. It is a problem which has very considerable overtones in view of the potential damage that could be done to our export market. It appears a question has arisen as to the method of killing adopted at Robb Jetty. Apparently the proper procedures in accordance with the rites of the Mohammedan religion are not being fully carried out.

I have a letter by way of report to the Ayatollah Mohammed Minhaj who is attached to
the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation in Sydney. As this is by way of a copy of a letter addressed to him it is of interest to note its content because, as I say, the ongoing consequences could be fairly serious. The letter is from a man working at Robb Jetty as a Muslim slaughterman. He previously worked in the Anchorage abattoir. It reads, in part, as follows—

I once again started to express my concern and complain. I have complained that Non-Muslim slaughtermen do slaughter sometimes the animals (sheep and lamb) whose meat are exported to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

So he has made these complaints against the methods he has observed. He went on to state—

It is also a fact that Muslim slaughtermen are under pressure: they want to see that the slaughtering of the animals whose meat are exported to the Islamic Republic of Iran is made according to the Islamic rites but they could not say anything to the non-Muslim slaughtermen or to the management of the abattoir.

That is the general context of the letter as it has been addressed to the Ayatollah Mohammed Minhaj. I think if it has already gone to that quarter it should be investigated as a matter of urgency. As this matter has come to me through my colleague, the member for Swan, it would be more appropriate if he fills in the background to it.

MR SKIDMORE (Swan) [1.35 a.m.]: Some time ago I asked a question of the Minister for Agriculture regarding the slaughter of animals to be exported to the Middle East market. I received the most vague of answers I have ever received from any Minister. On the 22nd November I asked—

(1) Who are the contractors for the killing of sheep for the export market to Iran and other Muslim countries?

The Minister’s answer did not mention anything at all about who had the contract; it was studiously avoided by the Minister. My question continued as follows—

(2) Is there any supervision of the killing that ensures that animals are killed according to Muslim laws?

(3) If “Yes” to (2), who is the person appointed to ensure that animals killed for the Islamic Republic of Iran are killed according to Islamic law and who selected that person?

The Minister’s reply was as follows—

(1) to (3) With the object of ensuring that Islamic religious slaughtering procedures are correctly carried out, the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation recently appointed to its staff an Iranian religious representative to oversee such slaughtering procedures in Australian meatworks.

I understand that the person appointed, Hojatoleslam Mohammed Nakhai, has approved the Muslim slaughterers who carry out slaughtering procedures at export works in Western Australia.

The information subsequently given to me when I raised the matter with those who had been in touch with me was that this was completely false. The person concerned was in fact a representative of the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation and the difficulty I had was that this person, who is known as the Hojatoleslam Mohammed Nakhai is also known as the Ayatollah Mohammed Minhaj. So the person I was referring to was one and the same person; but the Minister tried to make out it was the person who had been appointed to look into the question of the killing of these animals. In fact, the person who had been seconded by that person was Kamal Badr.

It is patently clear the killing of all the animals for our Middle East market and those going to Iran have been incorrectly killed; they have not been killed in accordance with Islamic rites. If the Minister and the Government wish to destroy this market currently available to producers in Western Australia by failing to carry out their obligations, which were stated by delegates of an Iranian delegation, the Minister and the Government have gone about it the right way. We will lose this market if the Government is not more circumspect in the manner in which these animals are killed.

I have also asked a question of the Minister as to whether or not Mr Oktem had made any complaints to the management of Robb Jetty about the manner in which these animals were killed and the reply from the Minister was, “No”. Yet in a letter to the Ayatollah Mohammed Minhaj, Mr Oktem indicated he had approached the management and had been told to shut up by the Australian slaughterman who considered him a troublemaker who was jeopardising the whole procedure. I shall quote from his letter as follows—

I have also noticed that the non-Muslim workers who are supposed to hold the animals in the correct manner and make the correct direction towards Mecca, they do not
do this work properly and they do not care about these matters at all. They do the job in a very quick manner in such a way that it does not satisfy the slaughtering of the animals in accordance with the Islamic requirements for the Islamic Republic of Iran. These problems take place every day. When I complained to those non-Muslim workers that they should respect the requirements of the Islamic law, they have insulted me with saying the worst kind of words any Muslim would hear ("get.....", ".....this job"......).

One can draw one's own conclusions of the sort of language used against a person who has an honest and sincere belief in his religion and the fact that Islamic rites should not be impinged upon. These rites are ignored by the slaughtermen.

When I asked the Minister who had the contract for the management of the slaughtermen, I was not told. The question was ignored. I know it is Mr Sadiq Bux. To the best of my knowledge he has the contract and he is the person I understand the Government of Western Australia has suggested as a representative to the countries which receive the meat exported from this State. The Government has suggested that he ought to be the person who represents the killing methods in the abattoirs, but in fact he was the very person who was going to do the killing under a contractual agreement with the abattoir boards. The Minister has hedged all the way down the line.

The Ayatollah made it quite clear that he did not want the person responsible for the slaughtering to oversee it in order to ensure that it was carried out in accordance with the Islamic rites. He wanted somebody completely separate from the slaughtering process to oversee it and he chose Kamal Badr. He accepted the job on the grounds that he had a religious belief which would be met by performing the job.

Irfan Oktem goes on to say—

It is also a fact that Muslim slaughtermen are under pressure: they want to see that the slaughtering of the animals whose meat are exported to the Islamic Republic of Iran is made according to the Islamic rites but they could not say anything to the non-Muslim slaughtermen or to the management of the abattoir.

I have also found that some of the animals are dead before the slaughtering because the work is done in a hurry, and yet the meat of these animals are exported to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

It must be quite clear to the Minister that animals which are dead are not acceptable to those export markets under the customs of the Muslim religion. The Minister has ignored the questions I asked in relation to this matter, and in the interests of the producers concerned, he ought to have been more concerned about the matter.

Mr Old: The questions were answered fully.

Mr SKIDMORE: I asked who had the contractual agreement to kill these animals and, as I understand it, it was a person called Mr Sadiq Bux and yet the Minister ignored that question and did not answer it on the two occasions I asked it. The Minister cannot say he was being honest in the answers he gave. In fact, he avoided the issue.

The Minister said also that Kamal Badr had never visited the Robb Jetty abattoir, but I have been told that on or about the 23rd August of this year he did in fact visit the abattoir in the company of Mr Max Bassillie who, as I understand it, is the manager in Western Australia of the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation along with Ayatollah Mohammed Minhaj.

Mr Old: I said the person was not known to the management.

Mr SKIDMORE: I have been told he attended the Robb Jetty abattoir in the company of Mr Max Bassillie and Ayatollah Mohammed Minhaj. He was dressed in a white coat on that occasion, yet the Minister said the management of Robb Jetty did not know he was there.

Mr Old: When did I say he was not there?

Mr SKIDMORE: The Minister has denied it, because he said this man was not known to the management of Robb Jetty abattoir.

Mr Old: Are you calling the management a liar?

Mr SKIDMORE: I do not know; but I might be tempted to call the Minister that if I were permitted to do so.

Mr Old: You just try it!

Mr SKIDMORE: The Minister does not frighten me for one moment. This is a cover up. These people are endeavouring to ensure their meat is killed in a proper manner and the Minister has gone out of his way to deceive the House on this issue.

Mr Old: Absolute rot!

Mr SKIDMORE: The Minister appears to have no concern for the people who produce the meat for the export market. He certainly shows very little sense of responsibility.
Mr Old: I have never in my life heard such crocodile tears.

Mr SKIDMORE: I do not offer any crocodile tears; all I ask is that the Minister be honest, and he has not been. He has misled me and he has misled the House in this regard.

Point of Order

Mr OLD: On a point of order, Sir, I ask that that remark be withdrawn. I have been accused of being dishonest and I ask that it be withdrawn.

The SPEAKER: I ask the member for Swan to withdraw the offensive remark.

Mr SKIDMORE: In the interests of getting some justice, I will withdraw the remark.

The SPEAKER: I ask the member to resume his seat and I ask him to make an unqualified withdrawal.

Mr SKIDMORE: I make an unqualified withdrawal.

Debate resumed

Mr SKIDMORE: The Minister has misled the House in the answer he gave in this regard. In fact the AM & LC has written to the regional director of the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs stating that it should investigate the visa held by Kamal Badr on the basis that he should be refused the opportunity to remain on a visitor's visa for the purpose of studying. When that man went along to see the department here, he challenged it on the grounds that it was not a paid job; it was voluntary.

This man told the department that he did this job because of his religious beliefs. However, the Minister has tried to take away from him the opportunity to make sure the animals are killed according to Islamic rites.

Mr Old: One of these days you will know the story.

Mr SKIDMORE: I have the evidence here. I also understand from information given to me that the Prime Minister wrote to the King of Saudi Arabia suggesting that the position of representative responsible for overseeing the killing methods used in Western Australia in regard to livestock to be shipped to that country be granted to Mr Sadig Bux. The Government of this State also wrote to him in regard to the question of supporting Mr Sadig Bux, but he has the contract for the killing.

Mr Old: The Western Australian Government wrote, did it?

Mr SKIDMORE: This information was given to me and I only suggest it may be right.

Mr Old: You seem to know everything about it.

Mr SKIDMORE: I do know everything about it. It appears to me what I am saying is correct. In fact, the Ayatollah Mohammed Minhaj has selected Mr Kamal Badr to be his representative in Western Australia regarding the supervision of the slaughter of animals whose meat is exported to Iran. Mr Fraser brought to the attention of the Ayatollah the fact that Mr Badr's visa would expire by the end of 1979, but the Ayatollah still wanted this person to be his personal representative. However, apparently the management of Robb Jetty is not prepared to recognise him and yet his appointment has been made known to the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation and the Iranian Government has insisted that he be recognised. However, the Minister does not want to accept the fact that he is the Iranian Government's representative.

Mr Old: You know it all!

Mr SKIDMORE: In conclusion I should like to say the Minister certainly has a great deal to answer for if his actions of failing to ensure the killing is carried out in accordance with the Islamic rites destroy a very productive market for the producers of Western Australia.

MR B. T. BURKE (Balcatta) [1.49 a.m.]: In the 15 minutes available to me I hope to outline to the House a compelling case for an inquiry at the highest possible level into the performance of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Board. An exhaustive study over the past few months has revealed alarming detail of just what is going on in respect of this State's water supplies and the disposal of effluent through the sewerage operations of this board.

As far as the Opposition is concerned, the facts that have been revealed show quite conclusively that in several areas very much is left to be desired in so far as the purpose of the board is concerned. We are all aware that from time to time, and perhaps lately with increasing frequency there have been complaints about the quality of Perth's water; about its colour, and about the sediment contained in it. Also at other times there have been complaints about the odour associated with the water.

Members of the water supply union say that turbidity levels are bad in some bores and that these bores are being discharged into the reservoirs; that the chemical treatment of bad bores in Wanneroo, in particular, and other areas is less than effective in carrying out what they are
designed to do. In fact, it has been revealed that at times the chemical involved in the treatment of water being brought from beneath the ground are often being washed into the reservoirs and workers are being told that the water being pumped into the reservoir will become suitable for consumption.

I am informed that there is insufficient knowledge on how this problem should be treated safely to allow some of the bores we are discharging into our reservoirs to be so discharged.

The problems involved, include excessive clay and peat in the water, and excessive iron content as well as chemical pollution of the reservoirs resulting from the discharge of bad water through the treatment plant which upsets the treatment process to which the water is subjected. In addition to that I am informed that the water control level which is set by the water control section of the board is sometimes unrealistically high, forcing the necessity to use water which should be discarded. At other times I am told that some bores are being allowed to run to waste for up to four hours as millions of litres of unhealthy water are being turned away.

I am told that the Wanneroo ground water varies from light brown to deep brown and at times there is a stench from the water which can only be described as being very strong. With regard to water being unsuitable for human consumption, at least seven different bores have been condemned and although the numbers cannot be specified, certainly that is a minimum number.

With respect to the Jandakot mound and the tapping of that mound for the Metropolitan Water Supply, I am informed that the water taken from the Jandakot mound during the period this study was carried out had an unbelievable stench. So that members will not be in any doubt about the quality that is being extracted from the mound, I have here a bottle which contains water from the Jandakot mound. This was taken on the 12th October and members can see from the colour of it that it is clearly unsuitable for human consumption. This other example I am holding was taken from the Jandakot mound on the same day and it was subsequently sent to the University to be tested by a professional person who reported that the acidity contained in the water was so high that a person should not put his hand into it.

To illustrate the water being distributed throughout the metropolitan area, I have a sample here which was taken from a main in Belmont. That is that sort of water consumed by the residents of that area. This was taken after the bore water was put into the system. That is the sort of rubbish that is being poured into the city’s water supplies.

As far as the Opposition is concerned that sort of evidence is enough to warrant an inquiry and explanation and an assurance at the highest possible level.

I wonder how many residents of Western Australia realise that what is being poured into the water off the coast of some of the most popular beaches in this State in the metropolitan area is up to 24 million litres of untreated sewage each day. I wonder how many members of Parliament know that not only are we the least sewered city in the Commonwealth but also the sewerage treatment system at Subiaco can treat less than half of the raw sewage pumped into the treatment plants.

Half of the sewage that comes from the Subiaco treatment plant is treated only to the primary stage. It is crushed and filtered and no chemical is added to it. It is in a raw sewage state when it is pumped into the ocean, 1000 metres off City Beach. Talk about sewered surf! The Government’s inactivity in this area is an absolute disgrace. In 1979 this thing is occurring while the Government is busy prosecuting people who have not paid their water account and whilst it is busy restricting the supply of water to some people. In addition industrial waste is becoming a major problem at the Subiaco plant.

Radioactive isotopes from the University and chemical waste from factories in the same area is served by the same treatment plant. I wonder how many realise that this may be a major cause for concern from the point of view of the health of some people in Western Australia and the metropolitan area in particular.

How many members know that 15 caustic soda tanks were set up in 1978 against the advice of a leading chemical expert in their department at that time? This was done in order to inject caustic soda into the sewerage lines to overcome the odour about which so many residents complained. How many know that the tanks are now being dismantled at an alarming rate because the warning of ineffectiveness given to the board was ignored?

The amount of money which was spent on the 15 tanks was given by the Minister as more than $27 000. The union says the cost of the tanks would be closer to $38 000.

Fifteen tanks costing some $27 000 to $38 000 were installed against the best advice of one of the
board's experts who is now retired. These tanks are now being dismantled.

The union is not particularly unhappy about the security of members' employment. One of the ways in which that can be best illustrated is by the absence of men to do area work—that is the maintaining and the repairing of the defects in sewerage mains.

When I asked the Minister whether area work was being carried out the Minister advised that this was done by four to six men each day. The figure shows the Minister is less than honest in his reply and on many days there was no-one available to do the area work.

As a result of the failure to carry out maintenance work which is so necessary there has been an increase in blockages. I will quote the figures for the blockages reported each week. In 1976 there was a weekly average of 51 reports; in 1977, 56; in 1978, 66; and in 1979—to September—75. There has been a cut-back of the work force involved in doing the work and therefore there is an increase in the blockages.

How many members know that there is only one tanker to carry out the job assigned to it of relieving pump failures?

It is patently clear that there are not sufficient tankers available to carry out the clearance of the sewerage systems when pumps fail which, in extreme circumstances, can cause sewage to flow back into the households which the sewers are meant to serve.

Practical problems result from the same lack of staff. I will refer to Mrs A. Lennox of 11 Fisher Street, Belmont. On a Friday morning a sewerage line to the household was broken by a contractor. A board inspector explained to the woman that nothing could be done immediately because no crew was available. The result was that from Friday until Tuesday morning no sewerage service was available, and a dangerous hole also resulted in the backyard of the property.

Another result of the failure by the board to carry out proper maintenance, and which is supported by reports from Flick WA, Stewarts Pest Control, and Economic Pest Control, is an increase in problems caused by rats. According to Flick WA, it seems the rats are coming from the sewers. Of course, that cannot be proved, but the firm is responsible and has been in the industry for a considerable time and it ventures to say so.

I wonder how many members realise that some areas of the Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Board's facilities have not been sprayed for cockroaches for five or six years. Only one crew is carrying out this work in the metropolitan area, and that crew has been told it is likely its services will be discontinued in the near future.

The restriction in time hardly allows me to develop the argument fully, but I think I have demonstrated clearly enough to members in this place that there are many aspects of the board's operations that require attention.

The problem all revolves around the deliberate attempt by this Government to render impotent the wages staff of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewage, and Drainage Board in so far as the fulfilling of their functions is concerned. I refer members to a question I asked on the 3rd October, when I requested the Minister to explain to me why since 1975 there had been a decrease of 544 in the number of wages employees of the Metropolitan Water Board.

I have pointed out the result of that decline in the work force. Millions of litres of untreated sewage are being pumped into the ocean within 1000 metres of some of our most popular metropolitan beaches. That is this Government's idea of performance. As far as I am concerned, it is a performance which is far from acceptable. It is something which is not heard about often. It is a blot on the copybook of this Government, and something of which the Government should be ashamed. One of the basic and fundamental hygiene requirements of any society has been neglected badly. It is an absolute disgrace that the sort of rubbish I have produced in these bottles is being pumped into the mains from which people take their drinking water.

During September of last year I visited some 13 or 14 countries and I tasted the water in the cities in each of those countries I visited. Without doubt, Perth's water supply was the least palatable.

There is no doubt that this is the sort of evidence which persuades us that this Government stands condemned by its inaction in this matter and its lack of concern about one of the basic requirements of the people it pretends to govern.

MR McPHERLIN (Mt. Marshall) [2.05 a.m.]: I want to refer to a motion which appeared on the notice paper in my name, and which was debated in this House. It dealt with the matter of a full trial to be carried out in a catchment area—any catchment area—which was subject to clearing restrictions. The trial was to be carried out under the supervision of Mr Whittington, the Department of Agriculture, and other farmers who were concerned. Members will recall that this House debated the motion, and it was defeated.
The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member to resume his seat. I draw the attention of the member to Standing Order No. 125 which states—

No Member shall allude to any debate of the same Session, upon a Question or Bill not being then under discussion except by the indulgence of the House for personal explanations.

On the question that this Bill be read a third time the member has sought to raise a matter already debated. The matter has been dealt with already by the House and, therefore, I must rule him out of order.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: The Premier.

Mr McPHARLIN: Mr Speaker—

Points of Order

Mr JAMIESON: My point of order, Mr Speaker, is that the Premier has risen to his feet to close the debate whereas the previous speaker had not sat down. I had a desire to speak, myself, and I did not rise because I am not able to do so while another member is on his feet.

The SPEAKER: There was no opportunity for the member for Mt. Marshall to rise again and debate the matter which he had raised when he commenced his speech. I ruled him out of order, and as far as I was concerned that was the end of the matter.

Obviously, if I am to give the call to the Premier I will cause the debate to be closed. If there happens to be other members who wish to speak I feel I have no option but to give them that opportunity.

Mr TONKIN: On a further point of order, Mr Speaker, you ruled that the member for Mt. Marshall was not able to speak on the subject he mentioned, but that does not prevent him from speaking to the third reading. The member for Welshpool did not rise in his place because the member for Mt. Marshall was still on his feet.

The SPEAKER: I agree it is within the competence of the member for Mt. Marshall to speak on another subject, and it is also true he was still on his feet prior to my giving the call to the Premier. If the member for Mt. Marshall can give me an assurance he will speak to something properly before the House, I will give him the call. The member for Mt. Marshall.

Debate Resumed

Mr McPHARLIN: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I was informed recently that an arrangement had been made between WISALTS and the Minister for Water Supplies for the extension of the Batalling Creek interceptor bank trials; and that they could be extended into a major trial area.

I find that arrangement to be most interesting, because this is a matter in which I have taken a great deal of interest and one which I have approached with all the sincerity I can muster. It is my desire that a full and thorough trial should be carried out somewhere.

When I was informed that an approach had been made to the Minister, and there appeared to be a chance that the project was to be developed, I visited the Batalling Creek area to observe at first hand the work being carried out. It appears the Minister for Transport is not taking a great deal of interest in this debate!

Mr Bertram: The whole thing has a hollow ring to him.

Mr McPHARLIN: It transpired that quite a number of members of WISALTS offered their services, their surveying and testing equipment, and their machines. Bulldozers were brought in, and the work was carried out.

Miles of banks were put in on two properties—Mr Max Ewen's property and Mr Leslie Craig's property. WISALTS informed me that this was considered to be a full-scale trial area which would give the sort of results it was looking for.

I paid a visit to the area on the day work commenced, and I met the members of WISALTS. I placed a question on the notice paper about this matter because I did not fully know what had happened. I did not know whether the Minister had entered into an agreement with WISALTS, and if he had, what sort of agreement it was. I understood that the equipment in the trial area was to be left there.

On the 29th November I asked the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies the following question—

(1) Was an approach made by representatives of WISALTS for concurrence in extending the Whittington interceptor drain bank system in the Batalling Creek area?

(2) If "Yes", was an agreement entered into by the Government for the extensions to be installed?
(3) If so, what are the terms of the agreement?

His reply was as follows—

(1) Yes.

(2) and (3) The proposal to extend the interceptor drains at Batalling Creek is entirely the responsibility of WISALTS. The trial set up by the Public Works Department will be discontinued and all equipment specifically installed for the purpose of the trial will be removed. However, the main gauging station at Batalling Creek is to remain and will continue to be operated by the department as part of its routine activities. This station is part of the permanent network on the Wellington catchment and was established two years before the interceptor drain trial was commenced. The data from the gauging station will be made available to WISALTS in accordance with the normal policy of making such data publicly available.

It appears that the equipment placed there after the trial banks were installed in 1978 is to be removed, but the gauging station is to remain. It is rather incredible that the equipment is to be removed because the monitoring would be much more efficient if it were left there. WISALTS undertook the work voluntarily. The only cost to them was for the fuel required to operate the bulldozers. The bulldozers commenced working on Friday afternoon of the 23rd, and completed the work on the following Monday, having worked right through the weekend. I understand that the work has been done to their satisfaction.

Members know of Professor Holmes’ report, but they may not be aware that Mr Conacher of the Department of Geography of the University of Western Australia has now made an analysis of that report. Mr Conacher has taken a great deal of interest in salinity problems in Western Australia for many years. I suggest to members that they should obtain a copy of this analysis because it shows clearly that Professor Holmes’ report leaves a great deal to be desired.

Mr Conacher has quoted the papers of many scientists who have researched the problem of salinity. I suggest that members should endeavour to become more familiar with this subject as it is a major problem in Western Australia. We must all co-operate and work towards solving it. It is futile to continue with the present conflict. We all want to see our water supplies preserved for the future and we all want to see the salt land reclaimed. To achieve these ends everyone must co-operate—the scientists, engineers, farmers, and others.

It is commendable that the members of WISALTS volunteered their time and machines to set up a trial to justify their beliefs. Many of these men have already seen the results of the interceptor banks. Certainly had a charge been made it is estimated that the trial would have cost something like $15,000. I understand that the matter of finance was discussed with the Minister for Water Supplies and it was hoped that after monitoring and testing the Minister may consider financing the project. The Minister should consider assisting a group consisting of people who are so firm in their beliefs that they will spend their own money to try to accomplish something for the good of the State.

The Minister and the Government should seriously consider assisting the group financially. WISALTS has about 900 members, who have worked hard for years and spent large sums of money on putting into practice those things in which they believe. This is a group of farmers who are hard headed in respect of the way they spend their money. They are analytical of things before they are involved in spending their money in an effort to prevent salt spreading so that highly productive agricultural land is not lost and the salinity of water supplies does not increase.

The Government would be well advised to have a closer look at what is being done. It would be well advised not to adopt an attitude of opposition or of condemnation; it should adopt an attitude of co-operation. Let us see if the work this group is doing cannot be improved. They are prepared to carry out their work in co-operation with scientists and engineers, and it is possible a better way to control salinity could be found.

Some of the men involved have experience of 30 or 35 years, and that cannot be ignored. Mr Whittington has experience of about 30 years or more. I have been associated with him and others for a number of years and I have inspected many areas in which this system has been installed. I suggest to the Minister that he give further consideration to examining the Batalling Creek trial with a view to helping WISALTS with its financial commitments. The men who brought in their bulldozers make their living from that, and they were prepared to give up three or four days voluntarily to install banks.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [2.23 a.m.]: I wish to discuss several matters. The first was raised by my colleague, the member for Balcatta, in respect of the Metropolitan Water Board. The
board has received quite a dosing of late in this House and from the public, generally; and still it seems it has not learnt any lesson in respect of public relations.

I am concerned mostly about the statement of the member for Balcatta—who seems to have his facts right—about the discharge of a considerable amount of raw sewage into the surf. The Premier will remember that it was the sewered surf that put the Hawke Government out of office, and it could well be the sewered surf which puts the present Government out of office. The Hawke Government lost four seats as a result of these worries, and it will remember that it was the sewered surf that put the Hawke Government out of office, and it will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.

On the last occasion a stain was emanating from a pipe which was broken in a storm. It is true that the pipe had not been fixed, but nevertheless the sewage emanating from it was treated, and not untreated sewage as is the case on the present occasion. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether that newspaper will do the same to the present Government.
Committees to be raised by way of substantive motion. In view of those precedents, I must rule the member for Welshpool out of order in raising the matter in this way.

Debate Resumed

Mr JAMIESON: It is unfortunate you have barred me from referring to this matter, Mr Speaker.

Mr Tonkin: The point is, they should learn their Standing Orders.

Mr JAMIESON: We hope that in the next session of Parliament, the Chairman of Committees and his deputies, carry out their functions in a fair and proper manner.

To return to our water supplies, the member for Balcatta tonight has given us a very clear demonstration of the quality of water inflicted upon the people of metropolitan Perth. The people deserve better; after all, they are paying more for their water than people in any other capital city. At one time, Adelaide was legendary as having the worst water supplies in Australia; now, we leave them for dead.

It is high time we did something to improve the situation. If the present board cannot improve our water supplies, it should be replaced. We were told the new commissioner would know all about water supplies. However, he knows very little about the subject. He may have extensive knowledge of local government, coming as he does from a very senior position as town clerk of a local authority; however, he has not been closely associated with water supplies in his career in local government.

No doubt he is relying on the same engineers who advised the previous head of the department. Whether the engineers are receiving the correct instructions from the board is a matter for conjecture.

I would like to see our water supplies improved before the problem worsens, and we find people becoming sick due to the poor quality water being foisted upon them. It seems quite unnecessary to have such a situation in this State. We are supposed to have adequate groundwater; obviously, we are not drawing it from the right source.

When one examines the water contained in the three bottles presented by the member for Balcatta, one can come to the conclusion only that the matter deserves immediate and full investigation.

MR STEPHENS (Stirling) [2.32 a.m.]: I refer first to the situation in our water catchment areas. The matter is of substantial concern in my electorate. Recently, I asked the Minister a question relating to the number of hectares purchased by the Government, and at what cost. The Minister revealed that in the Warren catchment area, some 2,612 hectares had been purchased at a cost of $609,500. This sounds like quite a lot of money, but it works out at only $233 per hectare, which is not a great deal for good farming land in this day and age.

The situation is even worse when it comes to compensation. Again in the Warren catchment area, compensation of $230,500 has been paid on 6,118 hectares of land, or $38.43 per hectare. When one considers the farmer is still liable for rates, firebreaks, vermin control, etc., one realises it is not a great deal of money.

The figures relating to the Kent catchment area are even worse. Some 2,658 hectares have been purchased for a total of $559,610, or $210.54 per hectare. Down in that area of the State, farming land is fetching anything up to $500 an acre, depending upon the degree of clearing, the age of the pasture, etc. These figures do not reveal how much of the land has been cleared, and how much is under timber; however, whatever the situation, the rate per hectare is very low. Compensation of $209,330 has been paid on 5,995 hectares, which is a rate of only $34.92 per hectare. The farmer is still expected to pay his rates at a reduced rate, and is responsible for the other aspects I mentioned.

The Government has been very fortunate to be able to purchase the land for that amount of money. It may be that to this point, the farmers involved were able to purchase other properties. However, I believe that as soon as this situation changes—and I believe it is changing now—the Government may find that the $2.5 million it has provided in the Budget for land acquisition will be insufficient for its purposes. Even so, the farmers who have been dealt with to this time have not been very generously treated.

I refer once again to the attitude of the public towards Parliament, and politicians. I am very concerned at a report in the Sunday Independent of the 9th September where, in an article headed, "Community despises politicians" the following appears—

A report commissioned by the Federal Government shows that Australians are generally disillusioned with governments and politicians.

According to the report: “There is a disturbing trend to believe that politicians in general are more concerned with themselves than with Australia.”
Part of that problem may be the public's realisation of the declining effectiveness of Parliament as an institution to look after the needs of the community.

We tend to operate in a 19th century atmosphere, so that we are ill-equipped to handle the sophistication of the modern age. I have mentioned previously we should consider revising our sitting hours. I suggested we could sit from 12 noon right through until 7.00 p.m. each day. When one looks at the clock at the moment, it encourages one seriously to consider revising the hours of sitting of Parliament so that we could avoid sitting through the night and half the morning debating various issues.

I believe also that a committee system could be introduced and used most effectively.

Mr Tonkin: Not by these conservatives.

Mr STEPHENS: One of the problems, of course, is the dominance of Parliament by the two big parties; this includes both sides of the House. We must get back to a more individual approach. Perhaps the public will come to realise the benefits of smaller parties and what they can achieve in the interests of the State, and the community as a whole.

It may also come back to the basic honesty of politicians in their dissemination of propaganda. With an election due next year, it is appropriate we should consider this aspect. It always strikes me as passing strange that whilst we have legislation to handle misleading advertisements, there is no system whereby we can control misleading statements by politicians or their parties. We could consider establishing a system whereby politicians could be called upon to prove their statements were substantially correct and not misleading. Just as we have legislation to prevent industry and commerce from misleading advertising, so we should legislate to impose similar restraints on politicians.

Mr Pearce: If everybody followed our example, it would not be necessary.

Mr STEPHENS: This would go a long way towards cleaning up the political situation and improving the dignity and integrity of both Houses of Parliament.

I was pleased to read in The Sunday Times of the 23rd September that when the Premier was criticising a forests group the following was reported—

"Exaggeration, scare tactics, distortion and character assassination are not acceptable methods in democratic society," Sir Charles said.

Mr Pearce: Perhaps he does not look on this as a democratic society.

Mr Jamieson: He obviously hasn't got a mirror in his house.

Mr STEPHENS: I think that comment in the paper is quite right. The Premier has frequently referred to the National Party as having been aligned with the Labor Party.

Mr Davies: Heaven forbid!

Mr STEPHENS: He made the statement, and I queried him in this House. He admitted that the statement was attributable to him. When I asked him to substantiate the statement by evidence, all he said was, "Look at the way you behave."

Let us look at the way we have behaved. Since the National Party was formed and till the 20th September, 1979, a quick check of Hansard reveals that 122 Bills were dealt with. Of those, 96 were carried on the voices, with virtually no opposition to the legislation. Of the ones that were opposed, the National Party voted the same way as the Government on 23 occasions, and we voted opposite to the Government on two occasions. On one occasion, we must have had business in the electorate, because there were no members present.

Mr B. T. Burke: That is responsibility for you. You didn't even bother to come.

Mr STEPHENS: No wonder the Premier was not prepared to enumerate any facts. While I support the Premier in the statement I have quoted, I feel that in respect of our behaviour in this House he should be mindful of that statement.

I notice that Sir Paul Hasluck was reported in The West Australian of the 19th November when he said the Government was ignoring the wishes of the people. He went on to say—

It dismissed criticism as being either irresponsible, ill-informed or subversive.

Let us make our arguments on a logical and objective basis, not distorting the facts.

Mr Bertram: How long do you think the Premier would last on that basis?

Mr STEPHENS: This leads me to another situation. When the National Party was formed, we went on our way because we wanted to be a genuine, independent third force. We made a decision that we would project ourselves on our policies and our performance and we would forget about the past. However, the past has not been forgotten about us. The National Country Party is continually attacking us in the paper; and we are starting to become a little tired of it.
Mr Pearce: Fair go. It is almost the only publicity you get.

Mr STEPHENS: We would not mind if the statements made by the National Country Party were correct. However, Sir Thomas Drake-Brockman made the statement that the people who left did so because they would not accept majority decisions. If members look at the facts of our leaving to form the National Party, they will find that the members of the National Party are the ones who did abide by the majority decisions. Sir Thomas Drake-Brockman said we were not prepared to abide by the policies—the ones on which we were elected. They were the policies of the National Country Party.

An analysis of the controversies which existed in the other organisation prior to the formation of the National Party will show that those members who are now in the National Party were the ones who abided by the policy. Recently in the Geraldton paper the leader of the National Country Party, the member for Katanning, made another series of allegations which will not stand up to the facts. He said that when the member for Mt. Marshall walked out of the coalition, that was unconstitutional. However, what the member for Mt. Marshall did at the time was to abide by a majority decision of the party conforming to the policies of the party.

Mr Davies: With principle!

Mr STEPHENS: That motion was carried at a State council meeting just prior to the coalition split. The sorts of things being said by Sir Thomas Drake-Brockman cannot be substantiated. If we have a system by which the validity of the statements made can be challenged. If the statements are found to be wanting, they must be corrected.

Of course, two can play the same game. I am almost tempted to say that we will not tell the truth about the National Country Party if the members of the that party stop telling untruths about us. We can point to the things that have been said. There was a strategy planning committee set up to review the effectiveness of the National Country Party. The Leader of the National Country Party did not see any reason for this, and he made three attempts to destroy the committee. What has not been revealed by the member for Katanning is that he became aware that the strategy planning committee had decided there was no future for the National Country Party while the member for Katanning was its leader, and therefore the committee had to be destroyed.

Mr Jamieson: That was a pretty good reason.

Mr STEPHENS: These are the facts. Mr Mayo stated the same thing in my office up here. He went along with that statement, but he went further. He said if there was a split in the organisation, “I would stay in and screw every last penny out of it before I left.” He indicated that he would join the new organisation; but I have news for him. He will never be accepted by our organisation. Perhaps we can learn where all the money to fight the campaign is coming from. The National Country Party sold its building, no doubt at the behest of Mr Mayo who, I believe, was screwing every last penny out of it in a scorched earth policy so there would not be anything for us to take over after the next election.

Mr Crane: You won’t even be here.

Mr STEPHENS: Look who speaks! Sir Lancelot gallops in on his white steed.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr STEPHENS: Such matters can be substantiated. I make the point that if we had a system such as I have outlined it would force politicians and political parties to be factual in their statements.

Mr Old: Mr Pure!

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [2.47 a.m.]: I am grateful to the member for Balcatta and the member for Welshpool for mentioning the Water Board, because there are a couple of items about which I wanted to talk. I want to say at the outset I have been disappointed that the Water Board has taken no action to remedy the situation which was raised so forcibly in this House last month.

We made it quite clear we were displeased with the methods adopted for the cutting off of water supplies; but far from improving the position, the Water Board has thumbed its nose at the Parliament, and it has made the position far worse.

When I returned to the Chamber, I heard the member for Welshpool saying that the employees of the Water Board do not even knock on the door now to say that the supply is being restricted. They have no regard for pensioners or babies. I know that children have to considered as babies. They have no regard for sickness; they have no regard for the fact that the person whose water supply they were restricting might have in his hand a receipt from the Water Board to show that the rates had been paid. Apparently none of those things are being considered at the present time.

The situation has become far worse as far as the consumer is concerned. The first thing the consumer knows is that the water is restricted. As
I heard one of the members saying earlier, it is when the water does not flow that one receives the first sign that the action has been taken.

I would have thought the Water Board might have taken notice of what was being said in the Parliament. I would have thought it would try to remedy the situation so that the people who had paid their bills and who had done nothing to the department would not have had the water supply restricted when it was due to the department's inefficiency that it had no record of the payment.

I am still receiving almost daily complaints in my office from people whose water supply has been restricted for one reason or another. There is no point in the Government's saying that we are here only to support the people who do not pay their bills. Of course, we are not here to do that. We are here to ensure that there is some measure of justice handed out to the people who owe money. In those circumstances, I deplore the action that has been taken by the Water Board.

No doubt the Water Board receives extra revenue because it is in a difficult situation, and it is taking this action to squeeze every cent possible from the public at large.

I take little joy in thinking we have set up an administration, independent as it is supposed to be, which can so completely disregard the wishes of Parliament. At least the country water board gives a final notice to its consumers in regard to the payment of rates. It is a duplicate copy of the original rate notice and it is sent out from the district office at an appropriate time so there is some warning given to the tenant. That is what any free enterprise organisation should do.

But the Metropolitan Water Board has decided it does not have to extend that courtesy to its consumers. It has a monopoly on the product and therefore it can take precipitate action. The first thing the consumer knows is there is practically no supply of water. This is just not good enough. If notice can be given to country consumers it should be possible to give notice to metropolitan consumers. With all the technology at the MWB's disposal; with all the print-outs and recording machines with the data they make available one would think it would be easier to send out final notices rather than for this to become more difficult. The fact that the board changed its procedure after so many years caught many people unawares. Many people have been upset by the change in rating procedures; but that is another story.

It is obvious that different people are treated differently; and I am referring to commercial consumers who are treated differently from domestic consumers. When I asked a question as to whether commercial consumers had their water supply restricted in any way I was told this did not happen, but rather, legal action was taken.

Why should there be this discrimination? The obvious answer is that people in business would go out of business if they did not have a water supply. This is not always the case; in many businesses a water supply is of little consequence. It is often far more important that a domestic consumer have a water supply. It seems there is some doubt as to who is a domestic consumer and who is a commercial consumer.

I asked question 2498 today about the definition of commercial consumers, the reply to which was as follows—

There is no definition of a commercial consumer. The Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act defines the expression "rateable land used for residential purposes" and the term "residence". Properties not covered by these definitions are treated as other than residential, which includes commercial properties.

Apparently if one does not have a residence one is considered to be a commercial consumer. Everyone else except a domestic consumer gets a final notice and is taken to court rather than have his water supply restricted.

I wonder how many cases have been taken to court during this current financial year or whether there simply has been a programme against domestic consumers to restrict water supplies and then charge a further $15 for reconnection. I am constantly receiving complaints about this matter and any further complaints I receive might be directed straight to Mr Glover who can attempt to fix them. He is the expert. His position had to be advertised twice; but since his appointment the situation has gone from bad to worse. We want to see something for our money. We were not convinced that such an appointment was necessary. We were told it was to put the board on a commercial footing. So the Government got a man with commercial experience from a local government organisation—the City of Stirling—to put the board onto a commercial footing.

Mr Jamieson: It needs to go back to the George Samuel style.

Mr Davies: It seems the situation has got worse and worse and this was demonstrated by, the member for Balcatta who indicated there seems to be more than a little concern not just with the quality of water going into the system but also with the amount of sewage going out of
the system. It is obvious the board is trying to squeeze every single penny out of the consumers.

Recently the board has written to various people demanding they pay $72 as a minimum rate for treating industrial waste. It wrote to the Meals on Wheels organisation in Victoria Park which has been processing meals for many years. It has the kind of waste one would find in ordinary household wastes, except that the quantity would be somewhat higher. Mr Speaker, I am sure you have seen the waste to which I refer when you have washed the dishes.

On the 21st September the organisation was told it would need a licence, applying from the 1st July of this year. That is how far behind the board is. The board has indicated a maximum biochemical oxygen demand, a maximum suspended solids figure, a maximum grease level, a maximum heavy metals level, and other requirements. The organisation has to sign an agreement as follows—

We hereby apply for a permit to discharge industrial waste to the Board’s sewer and agree that:

(a) payment will be made in accordance with the charges applicable from time to time
(b) the Board, if it considers it necessary at any time, may require that a more detailed agreement be entered into.

Members can imagine the confusion caused to these voluntary workers when they received this letter. They did not understand the terms of the application for the permit. They have never been required to apply for such a permit in the past. They pay their usual rates although they do get some concessions. They have been now asked to pay $72 for a special permit which will be backdated to the 1st July.

This is similar to a situation I pointed out the other day where the RTA is sending out reassessment notices to people who have already paid a 12-months vehicle licence. The RTA has said it requires extra money. That body, too, is squeezing every single penny from the consumers.

The MWB is just a money-making concern. In the letter it sent to the Meals on Wheels organisation it stated—

Formerly charges made for industrial waste were in addition on top of sewerage rates. In future the normal sewerage rates paid will be credited as an offset to the charge calculated from volume and strength of the waste discharged.

I do not know what that means. It looks like departmental mumbo-jumbo. I imagine if any person pays his sewerage rates he expects it to cover whatever is washed down the drain. This new gimmick is just a money-making concern.

A restaurateur from Fremantle rang me to say he had received a similar demand for $72. This man installed his own greasetrap at a cost of approximately $5,000. He had it pumped out regularly at his own expense, but he was told he had to have a licence, because he was putting the end result of the preparation of his meals through his own greasetrap and this was going into the system. The man said, “I am not going to pay. What will happen?“ He was told, “We will restrict your water supply.“ He said, “I can bring in water from somewhere else.” He was told, “If you have not got a water supply, you cannot flush your toilets and if you do not have proper toilets, we will bring in the Health Department and close you down.”

No explanation was given to this man. The hand of “Big Brother” was laid on him saying, “You will do what you are told.”

This man was being asked to pay $72 extra a year. This sum had never been paid before. The information sent out served only to confuse people. It was sent out several months after applications for licences should have been made and, of course, if people saw the advertisement in the paper, they did not think it applied to them.

Everything that has been said about the Water Board indicates one matter only; that is, there has to be a thorough shake-up. People must receive what they pay for. The board has to be run as a business organisation and consumers have to be treated as customers and not as people who are told what they will do. Instead, the consumers should be invited to take part in the process. The situation is not good enough and it is time the Government gave us a clear indication of what it thinks about the matter.

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Treasurer) [3.02 a.m.]: I had heard around the “portals” that there would be some sort of filibuster on the Estimates at this stage and this is apparently what we have had.

Mr Davies: You do not want to listen to rumours, because they were not true in this case.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I suppose one should expect some sort of grand finale to what has been a rather wearisome and poor quality debate on the Estimates.

Mr Bertram: You would not answer questions when asked them.
Sir CHARLES COURT: The only noteworthy aspect of the debate has been the time spent on it.

Mr Tonkin: You were not here half of the time.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The member for Morley should not make such comments.

Mr Davies: You have been outside the House most of the night.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Premier to resume his seat. I ask members to retain order.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I encourage debate on the Estimates, because one should expect from the Opposition and from the Parliament generally some considered opinions on the matters involved and some constructive comment; but we have not received that on this occasion. I do not believe members will be very pleased with the contributions they have made generally during the whole debate which has taken up approximately 50 hours.

I want to refer to the specific items which have been raised during the third reading. I was amazed and shocked to think that the member for Warren and the member for Swan would do what they have done this morning.

Mr Skidmore: Blame your Minister for it, not me!

Sir CHARLES COURT: They have tried to create some sort of instability and fear so far as one of our most important exports is concerned. I want to tell members that the particular Government about which they are now concerned, and I refer to the Government of Iran, has an Ayatollah in this country who has this particular responsibility. I remind members also that after the Shah left Iran, the new Iranian Government sent a high-powered group to Australia to look at all the killing facilities in this country.

Mr Skidmore: So what is new?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I took a special interest in the matter at the time, because it was so vital to us and my information is that Western Australia came through with a better record than any other State.

Mr Skidmore: And it has made a mess of that record since then by failing to carry out its obligations.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The members to whom I have referred are prepared to accept a comment by a person who, to the best of my knowledge, is still not personally known to the management of the works. He is still not known personally to the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation or to the WA Meat Commission.

Mr Skidmore: He is known to them. He had discussions with their representatives.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Premier to resume his seat. This is one of the few debates which limits the person replying to it to such a confined space of time; namely, 15 minutes. I ask the member for Swan and other members who feel they would like to interject, to have regard for the fact that the Premier is trying to reply to a number of detailed questions which have been raised by members and I ask the House to give the Premier the opportunity to do as much justice as possible to the debate in the 12 minutes which now remain to him.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I want to say to the members to whom I have referred that no-one would be more sensitive to the question of ritual killing than the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation or the WA Meat Commission, along with the management of Robb Jetty Abattoir, the Minister, and his department. It makes good sense that they would not take risks with an important market of this kind. And yet the two members concerned have been very happy to use this occasion, hoping to get some headlines in the morning, hoping to do something to damage this trade, and feeling they have struck a blow for their side, although they have brought up a matter based on a great deal of hearsay. These members were not prepared to bring up the matter in the proper way which they would have done if they had a genuine desire to protect the industry.

The member for Swan in particular cast very serious aspersions on the Australian slaughtermen. They were the ones he was attacking. He was attacking them more than he was attacking the Government, the WA Meat Commission, the management of Robb Jetty, or the Australian Meat and Livestock Commission.

I want to leave the matter with those members, because on reflection they will realise that it is very strange that they have shown this great antagonism towards Australian slaughtermen. Under normal circumstances, I would have thought the members would want to hear the slaughtermen's side of the story.

My final comment on that particular point is that, according to the best information available to me, because I have taken a great interest in the subject, there is no complaint before the Australian Meat and Livestock Commission or the WA Meat Commission.

The member for Balcatta chose this occasion to try to spread alarm to give the impression that
people are getting dirty, unhealthy water which has a bad odour. He said the water had sediment in it; in fact, according to him, it had everything in it.

Mr B. T. Burke: Are you happy with it?

Sir CHARLES COURT: There are times in any system when one might be able to obtain samples which would suit an occasion, but to the best of my knowledge the whole of the water supply which goes through our system is of good quality, and is monitored carefully. Once again members are reflecting on the workmen within that particular organisation.

Mr B. T. Burke: They are the ones who compiled the information, because they were so concerned.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It is strange that a group of men—I presume they were union officials—who want to take this sort of stand did not do so through the proper channels. If these men were concerned about their employment and the organisation they work in, if they were concerned about the public, they would not be parading this matter in public. They would be dealing with it in the proper way.

Mr B. T. Burke: Their superiors are telling them to put the bad bores into the reservoirs and that they will not settle. They have been told.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I do not intend to accept the word of the member for Balcatta on a matter as important as this.

Mr B. T. Burke: You do not have to.

Sir CHARLES COURT: But I intend to have the comments he has made tonight analysed, because he has made some serious allegations. He has not only made the allegations against the board, but he has made them also against the men who are doing the work day by day. The member is accusing the workmen of dereliction of duty and not having proper regard for the public interest.

The comments which have been made in regard to the quality of water, the non-treatment of it, and the claim that untreated sewage flows out into the sea will be investigated.

Mr B. T. Burke: Are you saying you were not aware of that?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I have always found that the board and its employees do their best to give the public a service.

The member for Welshpool said continually that we have not imposed water restrictions for political reasons prior to the election. That does not happen to be the reason at all. Members opposite are always trying to create this fear in the minds of the people. They try to convince people they will be without water and as soon as the election is over they will cop it. It does not do the Opposition any good. The alarm campaign will not do the Opposition any good whatsoever.

I refer to the member for Mt. Marshall's opposition about the matter of WISALTS. I think we can leave the matter there because there is nothing we can say to the member for Mt. Marshall about this. The people in Government circles are trying to act quite properly on the matter.

I do wish to inform the member for Mt. Marshall that I had occasion to speak with Mr Whittington on this matter because I wanted to make sure he was being properly treated. I had one interview with him and the president of his association but he would not listen to anyone. From the moment he stepped into the room he implied everyone was wrong except him. Later the men who came to see me were full of praise for Professor Holmes.

Mr Cowan: He said that it was good to have an independent assessment.

Sir CHARLES COURT: They wrote to tell me they thought Professor Holmes was a good appointment, but of course when Professor Holmes did not agree with them, he was the worst man in the world.

I want to assure the member for Mt. Marshall that there has been a great deal of goodwill and co-operation offered to him but co-operation needs to go two ways.

The member for Welshpool dealt with the matters which were also dealt with by the member for Balcatta. The member for Stirling dealt with the question of the catchment areas and the restrictions that are imposed on clearing. I do not think I need to go any further on that matter because he has said these things before and they have been effectively answered.

The Leader of the Opposition was critical of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Board as were some of his colleagues. They claimed that there had not been any action taken in respect of the collection of accounts and the cut-off of water, and so on.

My understanding was that the board had done its best to consult with the union and other people and to at least try and explain to the public that the board had a responsibility to collect the income. The board was sympathetic and understanding but it nevertheless had to press on with the job of obtaining some income. My understanding is that there have been some
investigations made and there is perhaps a greater degree of understanding now.

The criticism of Mr Glover was unfair. He has taken on a very heavy responsibility and has not been in the job very long. It will take quite a while for him to get on top of the job of this very big organisation. He is doing his best to adapt himself quickly at a time when there has been a great amount of criticism of the board and its actions which were not of his making.

It behoves us as responsible parliamentarians to try to get the message of the board across and to try to assist Mr Glover in his attempts to have the board reorganised. I believe he is on the right track to achieve that.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

TRANSPORT COMMISSION ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Returned

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE:

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier)

[3.14 a.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 11.00 a.m. today (Wednesday).

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 3.15 a.m. (Wednesday).
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

TOWN PLANNING

Nelson Location 4172

2467. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

(1) Further to question 1901 of 1979 relevant to national parks, and in view of the fact that maps published by the National Parks Authority and the Environmental Protection Authority show location 4172 as being completely surrounded by national park lands, would this not make that location an enclave within the Walpole-Nornalup national park?

(2) Would this not, therefore, be a direct contradiction of her answer to me in part (1) of question 1901 of 1979?

(3) As location 4172 appears to be an enclave of the Walpole-Nornalup national park, how does she justify any subdivision of such location?

(4) How is it envisaged that access will be gained to the said location or lots created by the subdivision?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

(1) The map published by the National Parks Authority does show Nelson location 4172 as being completely surrounded by the Walpole-Nornalup national park. That published by the Environmental Protection Authority does not.

However, the map published by the National Parks Authority is inaccurate as the land between the Frankland River and Nelson location 4172 is a foreshore reserve under the control of the Department of Lands and Surveys and is not a reserve vested in the authority.

(2) No.

(3) Funds were not available to acquire the land for inclusion in the national park. The Shire of Manjimup recommended approval of the subdivision.

(4) All lots have road frontage to the South Coast Highway.

TRADE UNIONS: NON-MEMBERS

Payments to Charitable Organisations

2491. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

(1) With reference to question 2052 asked on the 1st November, 1979 relevant to certain funding of charitable organisations, can he name the individual charitable organisations which have received funds from persons holding exemption from union membership certificates?

(2) What are the amounts paid into each?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

(1) and (2) A considerable amount of work is involved in compiling this information. I will make the details requested available to the member as soon as possible.

SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS

Parramatta Yacht Race: Visiting Premiers

2493. Mr HODGE, to the Premier:

(1) Did the Western Australian Government meet the—

(a) air fares; and

(b) accommodation costs,

incurred by the Premiers of other States during their visit here last week?

(2) If "Yes", what were the costs?

(3) What other costs did the Western Australian Government incur as a result of the visits?

(4) What advantages did Western Australia get for this expenditure?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

(1) to (4) I would be only too pleased to make the requested information about the modest sum involved available to the Leader of the Opposition if the honourable member seeks to pursue his question.

However, on reflection, I would hope that he would think it in rather bad taste to be parading such information about one's guests visiting here in response to an invitation extended to all Premiers and the Prime Minister to join with us in an important year within the family of the Australian Federation.
My only regret is that illness prevented the Prime Minister's attendance, and other commitments made it impracticable for New South Wales and Tasmania to be represented.

Most people appear to have appreciated the fact that the Premiers of Queensland, Victoria, and South Australia, together with the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, were prepared to take time from heavy parliamentary and other commitments to pay us the compliment of personally acknowledging our 150th Anniversary Year.

If it is any consolation to the honourable member, he will be interested to know that, quite apart from the general benefits of the presence of the State Premiers and Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, opportunity was taken to confer on a number of formal issues of significance to the States involved.

EDUCATION

Birt Committee

2495. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Education:

(1) Has he received the Birt report on the future of Murdoch University?
(2) (a) If “Yes”, will he make the report public before Parliament rises;
     (b) if “No”, why?
(3) Will he make a statement on the Government's attitude to the Birt report at the same time that he releases it to the public?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

(1) Yes.
(2) and (3) The report will be released as soon as possible following consideration by the Government and discussions with the interested parties.

POLICE

Christopher Derkacz: Death

2496. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

(1) Is the Police Department making inquiries into the circumstances of the death of a child, Christopher Derkacz, at Princess Margaret Hospital on the 22nd January, 1979?
(2) If not, why not?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

(1) and (2) Inquiries were made by the Criminal Investigation Branch and file forwarded to the Coroner.

HOSPITAL: PRINCESS MARGARET

Down's Syndrome Patient

2497. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

Will the Attorney General table a copy of the Coroner's file dealing with the death of Christopher Derkacz at Princess Margaret Hospital on the 22nd January, 1979?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

I am prepared to make available a copy of the proceedings before the Coroner. This includes the transcript of evidence, exhibits, and the Coroner's finding.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 530).
WATER SUPPLIES: SERVICES

Restriction

2498. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) Before supply of water to a commercial consumer is restricted, is a final notice for non-payment of an account issued?

(2) If so, at what stage is such a notice issued and how much time is given by such notice to finalise the account?

(3) What is the charge for restoring a full supply to commercial users after a supply has been restricted?

(4) What is the definition of a commercial consumer?

Mr O’CONNOR replied:

(1) See answer to question 2414(b). The water supply to commercial consumers is not restricted. Legal action is taken for recovery of accounts in arrears.

(2) and (3) Not applicable.

(4) There is no definition of a commercial consumer. The Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act defines the expression “rateable land used for residential purposes” and the term “residence”. Properties not covered by these definitions are treated as other than residential, which includes commercial properties.

HEALTH: NURSES

Community Health Services

2499. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

(1) Further to parts (2) and (3) of question 2320 of 1979 concerning a standard award for nurses employed in Community Health Services, it is not possible for the Public Service Board to assess the claim and reach agreement on it with the nursing federation before it is ratified by the Industrial Commission?

(2) If the Public Service Board is unwilling or believes it is unable to reach an accord on the proposed award with the nursing federation, without arbitration before the Industrial Commission, why has it not taken the initiative of bringing the award before the commission?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

(1) and (2) The Public Service Board has assessed the draft for a new Community Nursing Services Award which the Royal Australian Nursing Federation gave to the board late in 1978. In the letter the board sent to the federation on the 15th March, 1979, the federation was asked if it was prepared to amend the draft document to bring it in line with conditions applicable to nurses employed under the Nurses “Public Hospitals” Award. When the federation responds to the proposal contained in the letter of the 15th March, 1979, it may be possible to reach agreement with the federation.

LAND

Yardie Creek

2500. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

(1) Further to question 2371 of 1979 concerning lease of grazing land at Exmouth, what mining tenements exist in the area?

(2) Has the National Parks Authority ever requested the classification of land north of the national park and south of Vlaming Head lighthouse as a national park or reserve?

(3) Why was this area not made part of the national park when the national park was gazetted?

(4) What options, other than grazing, are there for the use of the land?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

(1) The Mines Department has previously advised that the following tenements were in existence over the area—

EP 41, TR 2614 H, TR 5980 H, ML 169 to 184 incl., MC 2332 to 2349 incl.

(2) Yes.
(3) At the time the national park was gazetted (1964) the area concerned was part of the Yardie Creek Station.

(4) That portion of the area shown on figure 9.8 in the EPA Red Book is proposed as an extension to the existing national park. Mining and petroleum tenements have precluded implementation.

SUPERANNUATION
Government Employees

2501. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Treasurer:

(1) Is the Government aware that some of its employees, specifically employed by the Public Works Department—Architectural Division at Welshpool, have been refused membership of the State Superannuation Scheme while at least one fellow worker has been a member of the scheme for at least 12 months?

(2) Is the Government aware that the above situation exists while other similarly employed workers in Government hospitals are accepted into the scheme?

(3) Is it a fact that other similarly employed workers of the Public Works Department—Architectural Division at Fremantle are members of the fund?

(4) Why does the Government selectively apply the membership requirements of the scheme?

(5) Will the Government take steps to ensure that all Government workers be given the opportunity to enrol in the scheme?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

(1) to (3) Yes.

(4) Membership of the Superannuation Scheme is available only to employees of the State who are employed in a permanent capacity.

(5) All employees of the State who are employed in a permanent capacity already have the opportunity to enrol in the scheme.

ELECTORAL: STATE
Quotas and Rolls

2502. Mr JAMIESON, to the Chief Secretary:

(1) What were the respective numbers of electors in each of the 55 Assembly rolls on the 30th November, 1979?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

The figures are given as at the 26th November, 1979, being the most recent computer information.

(1) District Enrolment

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ascot</td>
<td>15 698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balcatta</td>
<td>18 584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canning</td>
<td>19 837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clontarf</td>
<td>17 189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cockburn</td>
<td>16 320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottesloe</td>
<td>15 321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dianella</td>
<td>18 412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Melville</td>
<td>16 711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floreat</td>
<td>15 874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fremantle</td>
<td>16 661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gosnells</td>
<td>20 917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karrinyup</td>
<td>18 292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maylands</td>
<td>16 766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melville</td>
<td>16 283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morley</td>
<td>17 769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Hawthorn</td>
<td>16 764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Lawley</td>
<td>16 085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murdoch</td>
<td>22 786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nedlands</td>
<td>14 399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>14 267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarborough</td>
<td>15 161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Perth</td>
<td>14 851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subiaco</td>
<td>15 757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan</td>
<td>17 544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Park</td>
<td>15 095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welshpool</td>
<td>16 366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitford</td>
<td>27 226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany</td>
<td>8 435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avon</td>
<td>7 951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunbury</td>
<td>9 373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collie</td>
<td>8 863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dale</td>
<td>8 655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darling Range</td>
<td>8 615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geraldton</td>
<td>9 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenough</td>
<td>9 271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalamunda</td>
<td>9 650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalgoorlie</td>
<td>7 929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katanning</td>
<td>7 769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merredin</td>
<td>8 210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
District & Enrolment
Moore & 10,527
Mount Marshall & 7,921
Mundaring & 8,822
Murray & 10,583
Narrogin & 7,816
Rockingham & 12,595
Roe & 9,012
Stirling & 9,090
Vasse & 9,970
Warren & 9,239
Wellington & 9,094
Yilgarn-Dundas & 7,543
Gascoyne & 3,926
Kimberley & 6,014
Murchison-Eyre & 2,173
Pilbara & 16,725
Total & 711,854

(2) Metropolitan area & 17,294
Agricultural, mining and pastoral area & 9,003

(3) Metropolitan area
Maximum & 20,753
Minimum & 13,835
Agricultural, mining and pastoral area
Maximum & 10,804
Minimum & 7,202

(4) Gosnells
Murdoch
Whitford
Rockingham.

COURTS: LAW COURT BUILDING
Watts Construction Division Pty. Ltd. and GKN Mills Building Services Co.

2503. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Works:

(1) Is the Minister aware of a long standing vendetta existing between E. A. Watts, principal contractor, and G K N, main subcontractor on the Law Court building?

(2) (a) Is the Minister acquainted with the cause of this vendetta; and
(b) if so, what action has been taken by the Public Works Department to attempt to overcome this problem?

(3) As the contractors admit to being 83 days behind in construction time what thought has he given to requiring forfeiture of the contract by E. A. Watts?

Mr O’CONNOR replied:

(1) No.
(2) (a) No.
(b) None.

(3) None.

(4) $18,831,350 (original tender); $21,431,350 (anticipated final cost).

(5) The escalation is not considered high, but is normal and is caused by increases in the cost of labour and materials over the period of the contract and some variations to the contract.

ENERGY: GAS
North-West Shelf: Joint Venturers

2504. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

In respect of the six companies which comprise the joint venturers to develop the North-West Shelf gas field—

(a) what shareholding does each company have in the project;
(b) which companies are partly Australian owned;
(c) how is the 48 per cent Australian ownership referred to in his second reading speech accounted for?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

(a) The ownership structure of the North-West Shelf project is shown in a chart which—because it is complicated to print in Hansard—I seek to table.
(b) Woodside Petroleum Limited, North West Shelf Development Pty. Ltd.
(c) 29 per cent is public shareholding through WPL and 19 per cent is owned by BHP through North-West Shelf Development Pty. Ltd.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 531).
ENERGY: GAS
North-West Shelf: Royalties
2505. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

Why was the royalty rate for the North-West Shelf gas not included in the agreement between the joint venturers and the State Government?

Mr MENSAROS replied:
As explained in my second reading speech, there was no need to include royalties in the agreement because such provisions already exist in the Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act of 1967.

ENERGY: GAS
Wellhead Price
2506. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

What is the current world price for gas at wellhead?

Mr MENSAROS replied:
There is no such thing which could be described "world price for gas" either at the wellhead or on the market.

ENERGY: GAS
North-West Shelf: Royalties
2507. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

Which statutory provision determines that 40 per cent of the royalties received from the sale of North-West Shelf gas will go to the Commonwealth?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

ENERGY: GAS
Domestic and Industrial
2508. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

In respect of the level of industrial and domestic demand for gas in Western Australia—

(a) what is the current level of demand;
(b) what will be the anticipated level of demand in—
   (i) 1985;
   (ii) 1990;
   (iii) 1995;
   (iv) 2000; and
   (v) 2005?

Mr MENSAROS replied:
(a) The potential demand is as high as eight million cubic metres a day of which only 2.3 million cubic metres a day can be satisfied from the Dongara field.
(b) The State Energy Commission expects currently that the demand for natural gas in 1985 will be approximately 10 million cubic metres a day and will increase to approximately 18 million cubic metres a day by the year 2000.

The future prediction of the demand for natural gas is difficult due to the rapidly changing price structure of alternative energy sources and the development of new sources of energy.

The agreement with the North-West Shelf joint venturers provides for the firm supply of 10.5 million cubic metres a day with an option of a further 7.1 million cubic metres a day subject to proving up of additional gas reserves.

NORTH WEST GAS DEVELOPMENT (WOODSIDE) AGREEMENT BILL
Goodwyn and North Rankin Fields
2509. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

In respect of the Bill to ratify the agreement between the State Government and the joint venturers to develop the North-West Shelf—

(a) why was a requirement for the development of the Goodwyn gas field omitted from the agreement;
(b) what guarantee is there that all the gas to be produced for export will not be taken from the North Rankin field?
Mr MENSAROS replied:
(a) Requirements for development of the gas fields are contained in other documentation—the production licence to be issued under the Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act, 1967, and in the memorandum of understandings between the SEC and the joint venturers.
(b) Under the agreements entered into by the State and Commonwealth Governments and the SEC with the joint venturers natural gas for Western Australia has first priority in both reserve allocation and deliverability.

ENERGY: GAS
North-West Shelf: Infrastructure
2510. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:
(1) What is the estimated total outlay by—
(a) the State Government; and
(b) the joint venture partners,
for infrastructure work associated with the North-West Shelf gas project?
(2) Will he itemise the details of the commitments in respect of both the State Government and the joint venturers?

Mr MENSAROS replied:
(1) and (2) As mentioned in my second reading speech the estimated cost of additions to the water supply, social, and civic facilities in Karratha, general purpose facilities in the port and the airport are of the order of $110 million.
The extent of the joint venturers' share of the cost of the infrastructure and the amount of their own infrastructure has yet to be finalised.
Such matters will be the subject of proposals under the agreement.

NORTH WEST GAS DEVELOPMENT (WOODSIDE) AGREEMENT BILL
Gas: Production and Processing
2511. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:
Why, as stated by him is his second reading speech explaining the North-West Shelf agreement Bill, have the obligations to produce or process gas not been included in the agreement?

Mr MENSAROS replied:
As explained in the second reading speech, these obligations are imposed in the memorandum of understanding already signed but to be translated into a formal contract to be entered into by the joint venturers and the SEC for the sale of gas to the SEC.

ENERGY: GAS
North-West Shelf: Side Letters
2512. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:
(1) Will he table a copy of the side letter to the agreement which outlines the principles involved in proposed legislation to establish a new port authority at Dampier?
(2) Will he provide an itemised list of all side letters and other contractual documents between the State Government and its agencies and the joint venturers relating to the North-West Shelf development project?

Mr MENSAROS replied:
(1) The letter was tabled during my second reading speech, when I introduced the Bill.
(2) No. The documentation includes the outcome of negotiations between the SEC and the joint venturers relating to commercial matters and it is inappropriate for these to be detailed.

LAND: KARRATHA
Residential
2513. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:
What is the current price for blocks of residential land in Karratha?

Mr MENSAROS replied:
Land last released in Karratha had a reserve price of $10,300 for standard single residential lot, fully serviced.
ENERGY: GAS
North-West Shelf: Stamp Duty

2514. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

What is the estimated cost to the State of providing exemptions from stamp duty for a period of nine years in respect of the North-West Shelf project?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

This is impossible to estimate as it is not known what assignments of ownership the joint venturers will execute. From point of view of sales contracts the contract with the State Energy Commission as a State instrumentality would be exempt from stamp duty in any case and most other documents would not be subject of State stamp duty.

JOURNALISTS
Government Employment

2515. Mr BRYCE, to the Premier:

Does the Premier have the information promised in answer to question 2265 of 1979 relevant to the number and detail of the journalists employed by the State Government?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

(1) 9.
(2) 12.
(3) Mr F. G. Williams
    Mr J. Roberts
    Mr T. Fitzpatrick
    Mr R. J. Grant
    Mr J. A. Terrell
    Mr C. R. Chambers
    Mr I. M. Anderson
    Mr G. R. Harris
    Mr E. M. Wilson
    Mr K. A. Flanagan
    Miss G. Ayling
    Mrs C. Crooks.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT
Carnarvon Shire

2517. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Local Government:

(1) Is he aware that a man aged over 70 years of age was recently appointed to a position as a health surveyor by the Shire of Carnarvon?
(2) Is he aware that in making the abovementioned appointment the shire passed over at least one other application from a much younger person who was properly qualified for the position?
(3) On what grounds can the Public Health Commissioner refuse to approve an appointment of a health surveyor put forward by a shire?

Mr YOUNG replied:

(1) Yes.
(2) No.
(3) Primarily qualifications and competency. Age is generally not a consideration.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT
Carnarvon Shire

2516. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

(1) Is he aware that the Commissioner of Public Health recently approved the appointment by the Shire of Carnarvon of a man aged over 70 years to a position as health surveyor?
(2) Is he aware that in making the abovementioned appointment the shire passed over at least one other application from a much younger person who was properly qualified for the position?
(3) What is the Government's attitude to the question of the most suitable retirement age for employees of Government, semi-Government, and local government authorities?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

(1) and (2) No.
(3) The question of the most suitable retirement age for local government employees is entirely within the premise of the local government authorities.
PRISONS: ESCAPEES AND PAROLEES

**Actions: Liability**

2518. Mr WILSON, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

(1) Has the State Government or the Minister responsible any liability in respect of anybody who is grievously harmed or murdered by a person who is an escaped prisoner or on parole or who has absconded from any form of legal custody?

(2) If “No”, what legal provision exists to protect the Minister from being held accountable for decisions, actions, or negligence on the part of persons in his department or acting under legislation within his jurisdiction?

(3) What is the Government’s policy regarding the State’s liability in such cases?

(4) Does the Government accept any moral responsibility in respect of anybody who is grievously harmed or murdered by a person who is an escaped prisoner or on parole or who has absconded from any form of legal custody?

Mr O’NEIL replied:

(1) There may be some liability in some cases.

(2) Not applicable.

(3) To accept any such liability which the State may have.

(4) The State has also accepted a degree of moral responsibility for all criminally caused injuries by the enactment of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Act.

HEALTH: MENTAL

Hospitals and Electroconvulsive Therapy

2519. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Health:

(1) What are the numbers and percentages of patients in each of the following approved hospitals—

(a) Graylands;
(b) Swanbourne;
(c) Heathcote;
(d) Lemnos; and
(e) Stubbs Terrace,

who are in receipt of social security payments?

(2) What were these figures for each of the past five years?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hospitals</th>
<th>Patients</th>
<th>Pensioners</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Invalid</th>
<th>Widow</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graylands</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>percentage</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swanbourne</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>percentage</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heathcote</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>percentage</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemnos</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>percentage</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) For each approved hospital what is the breakdown of actual recipients of social security pensions, i.e., age, invalid, unemployment, widow, etc.?

(4) Is psycho-surgery or electroconvulsive therapy treatment administered to patients in the Stubbs Terrace approved hospital?

(5) If electroconvulsive therapy is given, how many treatments were given in the past 12 months?

Mr YOUNG replied:

(1) At the 30th November, 1979, the numbers and percentages of patients in receipt of social security payments at the following approved hospitals were—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>TYPE OF PAYMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>Graylands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>Swanbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c)</td>
<td>Heathcote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d)</td>
<td>Lemnos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>percentage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) Ongoing statistics containing this information are not maintained by Mental Health Services and the answer would require considerable research of the department’s financial records. If the member will nominate the dates over the past five years at which he requires the information, I will convey the answer in writing to him.

(3) See (1).

(4) and (5) Neither psycho-surgery nor electroconvulsive therapy is administered to patients of the Stubbs Terrace hospital which, as I mentioned in (1), is not an approved hospital.

HEALTH: DRUGS

Culture Source

2520. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Health:

Is there any investigation or planned investigation in Western Australia to locate the actual source point of the current drug culture in an endeavour to arrest the decline it threatens to bring about in the community?
Mr YOUNG replied:

I find it difficult to believe that the member is so naive as to believe drug addiction and dependence, which cover such a wide range from heroin to tobacco, is the result of a conspiracy originating at an actual source point.

There have been a number of investigations into drug abuse and the latest is the Australian Royal Commission of Inquiry by Mr Justice Williams, whose complete report is awaited.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

ENERGY: GAS

North-West Shelf: Exports and Royalties

1. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

   (1) Is it a fact that initial exports of LNG in 1986-87 will be at a level of up to 4.4 million tonnes per year? When is it anticipated the export level will reach 6.5 million tonnes?

   (2) What would be the estimated total revenue received from the gas royalty in the first full year of production at current price of royalty levels for gas?

   (3) What is the estimated annual quantity of LPG to be stripped from the natural gas prior to export?

   (4) Why has the Government provided in the agreement between itself and the joint venturers that the provisions of the Gas Undertakings Act of 1947 will have no application to the joint venturers?

   (5) Is it anticipated that the cost of gas to local domestic and industrial consumers will escalate in accordance with increases in world parity prices?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

I thank the Deputy of the Opposition for notice of this question, the answer to which is as follows—

(1) Since the marketing negotiations between the joint venturers and potential Japanese customers are not complete, it cannot be said what level of LNG exports will be required in 1986-87. The time over which the export level may build up to the maximum 6.5 million tonnes level also will not be known until marketing agreements are complete.

(2) In view of the above answer, revenue from royalties cannot be assessed for the first full year of production.

(3) The arrangements for the extraction of LPG are still being finalised but up to 600 000 tonnes of LPG could be produced from the project annually.

(4) The provisions of the Gas Undertakings Act of 1947 are applicable only to gas retailing undertakings. The obligations of the joint venturers in the North-West Shelf project are spelt out in the ratified agreement and in the gas sales agreements in the State Energy Commission.

(5) Escalation conditions are covered in the commercial gas sales agreement between the SEC and the joint venturers and as such are confidential.

ELECTORAL: STATE

Instructions to Presiding Officers

2. Mr TONKIN, to the Chief Secretary:

My question without notice, of which, paradoxically, notice has been given, is as follows—

(1) Have instructions to presiding officers pursuant to subsection (3) of section 102A of the Electoral Act as recently amended been formulated by the Chief Electoral Officer?

(2) If so, will he table a copy of the instructions?

(3) If such instructions have not been formulated, when is it anticipated that they will be formulated?
(4) Will such instructions be changed as presiding officers change, or will there be some attempt at uniformity?

Mr O’NEIL replied:
I thank the member for Morley for notice of his question, the answer to which is as follows—

(1) The Chief Electoral Officer advises that no instructions have been formulated under subsection (3) of section 102A.
(2) Not applicable.
(3) and (4) This is an discretionary power vested in the Chief Electoral Officer.

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Wildlife Conservation Act

3. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

(1) Why has the Wildlife Conservation Act not been proclaimed?
(2) When does he expect that it will be proclaimed?

Mr O’CONNOR replied:
I thank the member for Gosnells for notice of his question, the answer to which is as follows—

(1) Proclamation of the Wildlife Conservation Act has been deferred pending finalisation of regulations, advice to the commercial flora industry of the administrative changeover, and arranging take-over of responsibility for flora conservation from the Forests Department at a suitable time.
(2) The present expectation is that the amendments to the Wildlife Conservation Act relating to flora conservation will be proclaimed in February, 1980.

RAILWAYS AND BUSES

Fremantle-Perth: Concessional Fare

4. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Premier:

I preface my question by pointing out that one of my constituents, who recently retired from the railways, received a pass which allowed him to travel by rail for the concessional fare of 15c. However, since the closure of the Perth-Fremantle railway service, he has found himself disadvantaged by virtue of the fact he is unable to travel by bus at the same concessional fare.

In view of the inconvenience being caused to many of my constituents who are ex-railway employees and who wish to travel to Fremantle for the pleasure of visiting the port or the coast to do a bit of fishing, will it be possible for the Government to extend the concession so that it applies also to travel by bus on the Perth-Fremantle route?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:
I could not quite follow the import of the honourable member’s question. When I receive a copy of the question, I will follow up the matter.

ELECTORAL: STATE

Enrolment Claims

5. Mr TONKIN, to the Chief Secretary:

(1) How many objections by citizens have been made to the enrolment of persons for the State electoral roll in each of the past three months for the seats of—
Morley
Murchison-Eyre
Kimberley
Pilbara
Gascoyne?
(2) What is the procedure followed when such objections are received at the Electoral Department?
(3) What are the possible outcomes of such procedures being followed?
(4) How many objections have been upheld in each of the past three months for each of those seats?
(5) What reasons have to be adduced by the objectors before it is accepted that there is a prima facie case for further investigation?
(6) What action is taken against objectors who are being plainly frivolous or mischievous?
Mr O'NEIL replied:

Once again, I thank the member for Morley for adequate notice of his question, the answer to which is as follows—

(1) Nil.

(2) On receipt of an objection in duplicate with a deposit of 25c with each objection, the registrar is required to set down the objection for hearing before a magistrate. The registrar is required to notify both the objector and the person objected to the date and place of hearing and shall forward a copy of the objection setting out the grounds of the objection to the person objected to.

The person objected to may appear at the hearing either in person or by an agent appointed in writing under his own hand or he may forward by post to the registrar a statement signed before another elector of the same district or province setting out the reasons for his remaining on the roll.

(3) Direction to the registrar by the magistrate to retain the name on the roll or to strike the name off the roll or to make such amendment as may be necessary according to such determination.

The magistrate may make such order for the forfeiture or return of the sum deposited.

(4) See answer to (1).

(5) This is a matter for the magistrate to decide after consideration of the written objection lodged by the objector.

(6) If the magistrate considers the objection to be not reasonable, he may make an order for forfeiture of the sum deposited and such order as to costs as he thinks fit.

ABATTOIR: ROBB JETTY

Employees: Dismissal

6. Dr TROY, to the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is the Minister aware that 70 workers at the Robb Jetty meatworks have received dismissal notices, and are considerably distressed at this situation?

(2) Will he give an assurance that the Robb Jetty meatworks, as controlled by the WA Meat Exports Commission, is not to be closed in the same way as the Midland abattoir?

Mr OLD replied:

(1) I am aware some retrenchments are imminent. This is a seasonal Meat Commission practice which has been aggravated this year by the rapid decline in stock numbers coming forward.

(2) The Government has no intention of ceasing operations at Robb Jetty. It will remain open to cope with the stock which is continuing to come in.