

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 20 April 1982

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

RAILWAY

Boyup Brook-Katanning: Petition

MR EVANS (Warren) [4.32 p.m.]: I have a petition addressed to the Honourable Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly in the Parliament of Western Australia assembled, which reads as follows—

We the undersigned residents in the State of Western Australia do herewith petition that Her Majesty's Government of Western Australia will reverse its stated intention of closing the railway line between Boyup Brook and Katanning as from 1st June, 1982, and will allow the rail operations of this section to continue.

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

I would point out the conflict between this petition and the reported statement of the Minister in the Press that the shire and those involved had supported the closure.

The petition bears 431 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. 6.)

MINISTER OF THE CROWN: MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY

Alteration of Report: Standing Orders Suspension

MR BRIAN BURKE (Balcatta—Leader of the Opposition) [4.34 p.m.]: I move, without notice—

That so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent the Leader of the Opposition moving the following motion forthwith:

That this House expresses its alarm at the actions of a Minister of the Crown in causing the alteration of a report to Parliament to prevent public criticism of him by one of the statutory authorities for which he was responsible.

Further, this House calls on the Premier to condemn the Minister's actions and to affirm that it is his government's policy that it is unacceptable behaviour for a Minister to direct statutory authorities to suppress criticism of the performance of a government or a Minister.

Some time ago the Premier was given notice of the Opposition's intention to seek the suspension of Standing Orders, so the move will not take him by surprise.

The matter referred to in the motion to suspend Standing Orders—the substance of the motion that the Opposition seeks to move—in this case concerns a very important and urgent principle. We can have no doubt, from the statement by the former Minister for Conservation and the Environment, that he caused to be altered a copy of the report of the Waterways Commission. Mr Speaker, as a guardian of the traditions of this place, I know that you will see the Minister's action as something that should not have happened. We are of the same opinion.

To inform members briefly of the urgency that surrounds the matter, let me recite what transpired in respect of the Waterways Commission's report. During January a copy of the report was delivered to my office. No, it was not, as the Minister said in the Press, a draft of the report that the commission was presenting. It was a properly bound copy of the report, that differed in one respect only, as far as I am aware, from that which was subsequently tabled in the House. The one respect in which it differed from the copy that was later tabled—on 18 March, to be precise—is the respect that has provoked this motion.

This is an urgent matter, because the House should take no time whatsoever in protecting itself from the indiscretions of Ministers, and it is the contention of the Opposition that this matter involves an alarming indiscretion by the former Minister for Conservation and the Environment.

To outline to members the nature of the indiscretion, let me refer to the recalled version of the Waterways Commission's report, and to paragraph (c) of that part of the report which was included under the heading, "Peel Inlet Management Authority Annual Report". In paragraph (c) in the first report that was produced in a properly bound fashion and distributed before being recalled, the following words were printed—

This study is now completed and A Ministerial Briefing on the Report was held on 8th June, 1981.

The Chairman was greatly dismayed at the apparent lack of interest shown in the Report at the briefing, despite the fact that Dr Hodgkin had stressed the urgency of the situation during his address.

Mr Blaikie: Who was the chairman?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The report continued—

Very few questions/comments were forthcoming following the briefing and no discussion took place on the recommendations to alleviate the problem contained in the Advisory Committee's Report and the Environmental Protection Authority's letter to the Minister.

Bearing in mind the time taken in preparation of the report and the calibre and competency of the people involved, this was found to be most disappointing.

Dr Hodgkin visited the Authority on several occasions during the year to inform members of the progress of the above study and once again the Authority wishes to express its gratitude to Dr Hodgkin for this continuing contact.

That report originally distributed was recalled and the paragraph I have just read to the House was deleted from the report which was subsequently circulated.

It seems to us that no Minister of the Crown is acting properly in directing that reports which statutory authorities submit to him and which subsequently he is to table in the House should be changed by that Minister, especially in circumstances as doubtful as these, where the change made was one that removed from the report apparent criticism of the Minister.

The House should waste no time whatsoever in making its attitude towards this Minister's action quite clear, and it should make no bones about reaffirming its attitude in a matter like this. If statutory authorities are to have their reports vetted prior to their being tabled in Parliament I suppose we can expect in future that Ministers will never be criticised in reports that come to them prior to their being tabled.

Mr Blaikie: How did you get your report?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: As I said previously, the report was delivered to us—

Mr Tonkin: By the Government.

Mr O'Connor: No.

Mr BRIAN BURKE:—presumably by the Minister, his agent, or the Waterways Commission.

Mr Herzfeld: Why did you photocopy it?

Mr Blaikie: It was a public report?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: When the report was recalled the Opposition was naturally wondrous that it should be recalled, because it appeared to be completed. It had been properly bound and delivered in the normal way as are reports delivered from all sorts of organisations and authorities. The Opposition decided it should retain a copy of the report. That is all; there is nothing strange about that.

There is something strange about the Minister's statement that the report he saw and caused to be changed was only a draft report, because the Government or the Waterways Commission does not deliver to the Opposition draft reports for its attention. Obviously the report was in its completed form. It was delivered to the Opposition, yet within an hour or two it was recalled and changed in substance.

Mr Blaikie: What date was that?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: It was during January of this year.

Mr Blaikie: And that is a report to be tabled in the Parliament?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: To answer the member's question and to get on with my speech, I indicate that the tabled version of the report exhibits the complete absence of the paragraph I read to the House.

Mr Blaikie: When was the tabled version tabled in the Parliament?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I have already explained to the House that it was on 18 March. I do not want to keep repeating myself.

That paragraph which was changed was prefixed by the letter "e" in the recalled version of the report, and in the subsequently issued version it was replaced by another "e". It was simply excised from the report.

The Opposition does not want to labour the point, but it does want to say that Ministers are not acting properly if they direct the alteration of reports by statutory authorities after, or even before, those reports have been distributed in the normal way to members of the Opposition and to other interested bodies. More so is it important when the substance of the criticism is about a difficult and important problem; and still more so is it important when the deletion made is one that relieves the Minister of criticism.

I can remember no previous case that parallels this one in the nine years I have been a member of Parliament, and in discussions with people who have been here longer than I have I have been

unable to discover any other example that even approaches this sort of action by the Minister.

I urge members on both sides of the House to realise that if we do not express an opinion about what the Minister has done, he and his colleagues and, eventually, Ministers from this side of the House, will be in a position from which to delete, change, or even add to reports of statutory authorities with impunity. Yet another of the valuable traditions of this House—and there are many I would say that are valuable—will be lost for all time. If we refuse to say to this Minister that he should not have changed the report sent to him or caused it to be changed, we will be failing in our responsibilities. I hope the House will accept the proposition that Standing Orders should be suspended to allow this matter to be debated.

MR BRYCE (Ascot—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.46 p.m.]: I second the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition because it constitutes a fairly important occasion when the Parliament has the opportunity to establish standards of conduct and standards of acceptable propriety for Ministers. It is not simply a question of legality so far as the Statute is concerned; it is a question of what is proper and correct conduct for a Minister.

The **SPEAKER**: Order! The member will resume his seat. The Leader of the Opposition was at pains to indicate that his remarks were aimed at expressing the urgency in having the House consider this matter ahead of other business. I say to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and to any other member who wishes to enter this debate that they should confine their remarks to that point and not debate the merits or demerits of the motion that will be considered if the House agrees to the motion.

Mr BRYCE: Mr Speaker, I appreciate your position and I was endeavouring to emphasise the urgency of this question when compared with the other business on the notice paper.

For some strange reason a Minister of this Government has gone to extraordinary lengths to suppress trenchant criticism of himself as the responsible Minister by an agency for which he was accountable. We are firmly of the view that the way in which the Minister has done this constitutes a fair and important reason for us as an Assembly of legislators to consider the appropriateness of a Minister's recalling a report which had been circulated by a Government agency and changing that report, and in the act of doing so, deliberately suppressing criticism of himself and his performance.

The Leader of the Opposition has indicated that it was the Waterways Commission report, and we on this side of the House are very seriously concerned at statements that have been attributed to the Minister that the report delivered to the office of the Leader of the Opposition was a draft report. It is fanciful to suggest that it was a draft report. It was a completely finished, printed, and bound report containing statistical tables and colour photographs presented in precisely the form that so many reports are presented to members at their constituency offices.

Mr Laurance: But it had not been tabled in this Parliament. It was given to you as a matter of courtesy. You betrayed that courtesy.

Mr BRYCE: One wonders how long the Minister has been in this House if his memory is so short as to enable him to imagine that it is not a frequent and customary practice for departmental and statutory authority reports to be circulated to MPs during a parliamentary recess and then, as a matter of formality almost as soon as the House resumes, Minister after Minister stands in this Chamber and tables not one, but a whole bundle of reports. Let there be no question about the propriety or custom of members of Parliament receiving reports from statutory authorities and Government departments when the House is not sitting. I emphasise that this report was delivered, as have been delivered many reports of this nature, to the office of the Leader of the Opposition when Parliament is not sitting.

Within an hour—

Mr O'Connor: Did anyone oppose the debate on the issue?

Mr Brian Burke: No, but we asked you and you did not indicate. If you had told us this earlier—

Mr O'Connor: I have no objection.

Mr BRYCE: If that is the case, I will be very happy to resume my seat.

Question put and passed.

Alteration of Report: Motion

MR BRIAN BURKE (Balcatta—Leader of the Opposition) [4.51 p.m.]: Let me apologise to the House. I had anticipated when the matter was raised with the Premier this afternoon that we would have received an answer about the Government's attitude towards adopting the procedure and, as we had not received an answer, I assumed that the Government was not happy to continue with the debate. That is a normal assumption.

Mr Pearce: The last time a suspension was agreed to, I was notified at four o'clock on the very day!

Mr O'Connor: I was notified about four o'clock and I did not issue any objection; I thought that communicated approval from my point of view. I think it is a misunderstanding and we need not go on.

Mr Blaikie: Really?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: That is by way of explaining to the House what went before. Let me formally move the motion.

Mr Blaikie: It probably does not suit your contemporaries!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I move—

That this House expresses its alarm at the actions of a Minister of the Crown in causing the alteration of a report to Parliament to prevent public criticism of him by one of the statutory authorities for which he was responsible.

Further, this House calls on the Premier to condemn the Minister's actions and to affirm that it is his government's policy that it is unacceptable behaviour for a Minister to direct statutory authorities to suppress criticism of the performance of a government or a Minister.

I will not go through all the points I raised when moving for the suspension of Standing Orders, but I will take the opportunity to re-emphasise one or two of the most important points. The first is that the report received in the office of the Leader of the Opposition during January was received in the normal way and was a normal report. It was not a draft report, but was properly bound.

As to Suspension of Standing Orders

The SPEAKER: Order! Would the Leader of the Opposition please resume his seat? Members will know that for a motion for the suspension of Standing Orders to be carried out there is a requirement for a constitutional majority. As there was no dissenting voice and there were present in the House more than the required number of members, I declare that the motion for the suspension was carried by the required majority.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Thank you. It was a report delivered in the normal way and was normal in appearance. Certainly the Leader of the Opposition's office was given to understand that the delivery was one of a number taking place involving the same report being taken to a variety of places in the normal fashion. There was no indication that it was a draft report that was being forwarded as a matter of courtesy, and

which should be kept confidential. There was no indication that the report was anything but the final report. Certainly, the report that was eventually tabled in this place varied in only one significant respect from that which was delivered to the Leader of the Opposition's office. The significant respect is the excision of those words I have read to the House.

For members on the Government side to say that the copy of the report was forwarded as a courtesy or was somehow or other a premature report not to be used and not to be read or discussed until after it had been verified as the substantial or accurate report, is simply nonsense. Does that mean that in future every report delivered to the office of the Leader of the Opposition is to be regarded as a temporary report or that, if the Minister desires, it is to be subjected to significant changes? The Government cannot perform in that way.

This will mean simply that in the future there shall not be delivered anywhere at all copies of reports because if reports are to be delivered and then changed, their inaccuracy will be unacceptable and misleading.

The motion seeks to do a number of things, the first being to criticise the Minister for having made changes, particularly because the changes made were changes that lessened the criticism of his performances.

The second thing that the motion does is to attempt to stress upon the Premier the need to give a public assurance that it is not his way to have a practice adopted whereby reports are changed. Certainly, during the drafting stages the people making the report are perfectly entitled to edit and proof read versions and as a result of that editing and proof reading, to change the report. However, once the report is adopted or at least once it is circulated, it seems to us to be improper—we are not saying illegal, but improper—for the Minister to change the wording. Let me re-emphasise that I am not saying that the Minister has broken the law, but am simply saying that he has acted in a way that is not a proper way and certainly a way in which we hope the Government would see fit to assure the House will not be repeated.

If that sort of assurance is not forthcoming, I would then suggest to members in this Chamber that we have sacrificed another one of the safeguards that persists simply because we do pay tribute to their worth and to their value, but if we are going to have a situation in which reports are changed at the behest of Ministers, particularly when a change is made to delete criticism of

Ministers involved, that is not a satisfactory situation.

I am not saying that the Minister has broken the law. I am simply saying that the Minister should be told that he did the wrong thing. Perhaps his position should be reviewed. Certainly the Premier should stand in this place and say that he will tell Ministers in the future that they should not change reports and they should be very careful particularly about changes that appear in the public eye to be ones that benefit them or the Government politically.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Premier) [4.58 p.m.]: I oppose the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I do so because—

The **SPEAKER**: Order! The Premier will need to resume his seat. The motion for a suspension of Standing Orders was a machinery one and did not require a seconder. Once the motion had been carried it gave the opportunity for the Leader of the Opposition to move his motion, which is a substantive motion requiring a seconder. Is there a seconder to the motion?

MR BRYCE (Ascot—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.59 p.m.]: Before I commence my remarks on the seconding of this motion, would you, Mr Speaker, be good enough to clarify the position with regard to the time of day and the taking of questions?

The **SPEAKER**: I am about the last fellow in this place to have any say in that matter.

Mr BRYCE: My understanding was that we were to take questions now.

Mr O'Connor: We will continue with this motion.

Mr BRYCE: In conveying to the House my reasons for supporting this proposition, I will not again cover the ground I was touching on a few moments ago. I certainly want to emphasise that the report that was delivered to the office of the Leader of the Opposition was not a draft report and if the Minister of the Crown insists on this publicly he is misleading the public. I challenge him to say it inside the House and run the risk of deliberately misleading Parliament. To suggest that that document as amended was a draft document is a total fabrication of the truth because, as I emphasised a few moments ago, the report was printed, bound, and contained statistical tables, coloured photographs, signatures, and everything else that a finally produced departmental or statutory authority report would be expected to contain. Therefore, it is complete nonsense to suggest that somehow or other a draft report got out from underneath his grasp and that it had to be reviewed.

It is also nonsense to suggest that the report was delivered to the office of the Leader of the Opposition on a confidential basis. The provision which governs the activities of the Waterways Commission and which provides for the authority to produce an annual report to the Parliament is to be found at page 38, section 43, of the Waterways Conservation Act. It prescribes very specifically that as soon as possible after the 30th day of June in each year a report shall be presented to the Minister, and the Minister shall cause the report to be laid on the Table of the House. So, the report of the activities of the authority for the year 1980-81 was due as soon as practicable after 30 June last year.

Like so many other Government authorities and departments, a considerable passage of time elapsed between the end of that financial year and the actual presentation of the report. Members will appreciate that the House was not sitting in January of this year, and that it is par for the course for a statutory authority or a Government department to produce and circulate departmental reports during the period of a parliamentary recess. That is the method by which this report was produced.

Yet the extraordinary thing was that the original report, in the section dealing with the Peel Inlet Management Authority, contains some fairly trenchant criticism of the Minister in regard to the way in which he responded to a briefing by the authority. The Leader of the Opposition indicated that the criticism touched specifically on the Minister's apparent lack of interest in and concern for what this authority regarded as a serious question. The authority was concerned that real, first-class expertise and a great deal of effort had been applied in putting together the report, the subject of which was discussed in the briefing to the Minister; yet the Minister appeared to show so little concern that it played on the mind of the Chairman of the Peel Inlet Management Authority to the point where he felt the Minister's behaviour or response warranted a reference in the chairman's annual report.

That is a rare situation. The criticism was made. It then became a matter of concern to the Parliament—a matter involving questions of standards, decency, proper conduct, and correct behaviour on the part of Ministers—that the Minister involved should take deliberate action to withdraw the report completed and circulated by this statutory authority. The report was withdrawn, and the entire section dealing with the estuarine and marine advisory committee's study of the Peel and Harvey estuarine system was

deleted because that was the section which contained trenchant criticism of the Minister's apparent lack of interest in what the authority considered to be an important question.

It was an unusual practice, to say the least. I already have suggested it was extraordinary; in fact, probably it is unique in Western Australia.

Mr Stephens: Do you not think that perhaps that is the reason the Minister was removed from this portfolio? Action already has been taken.

Mr Blaikie: Do not let your imagination run riot with you.

Mr Young: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is checking around for his script writers.

Mr BRYCE: I am unaccustomed to being struck dumb by interjections from the member for Vasse and the member for Stirling. It is extraordinary—even unique—that a Minister should withdraw a report and change it deliberately to suppress criticism of himself.

The very essence of the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition is to call upon the Premier to indicate to this Parliament and the public generally just where his Government stands in respect of this type of behaviour. Does the Premier consider it is reasonable conduct for a Minister of the Crown to behave in this way?

After all, in a conservative Cabinet, it is the Premier who is the standard setter; it would be his responsibility and his alone to set the standards by which his Ministers must live and work. Will the Premier accept our challenge to explain to the people of Western Australia and, more particularly, to the members of this House that he does not agree Ministers of the Crown have the right deliberately to recall reports of statutory authorities simply because they happen to contain criticism of the Minister's performance?

The action of the Minister in withdrawing the report clearly impinges upon the integrity of this Parliament. As the elected representatives of the taxpayers of this State, we provide in countless Statutes a requirement that Government departments and statutory authorities set up to administer the process of government in this State should answer to Parliament and, in doing so, account for their actions through the elected representatives to the taxpayers of Western Australia. We do not do that as a matter of habit; we simply happen to think it is an important matter of principle under the Westminster system of government.

Therefore, it touches on the integrity of this Parliament if a member of this House or of that

other place, acting in his role as Minister of the Crown, effectively censors the report an authority is going to make to this Parliament by suppressing a section of the report containing criticism of the Minister. However, that is precisely what the Minister did. The motion calls upon the Premier to indicate clearly where his Government stands on this question of standards.

Mr Blaikie: Would you say that both Mr MacKellar and Mr Moore were honourable people?

Mr BRYCE: MacKellar and Moore acted in a reprehensible fashion as far as our Westminster system of government is concerned. Mr Speaker, I am sure you would recognise that any reference by way of interjection or substantive comment in this debate to MacKellar and Moore has absolutely nothing to do with the matter currently before the Legislative Assembly. Of course, we are not unaccustomed to hearing the member for Vasse interjecting in that fashion, so I hope you will forgive me if I am slightly tempted to reply.

I conclude my remarks by emphasising to the Premier that the motion is concerned with whether his Government accepts this Minister's action as being the correct and proper thing for a Minister to do. By responding to the motion, the Premier has the opportunity to indicate to Western Australia that he supports the principle of fair and reasonable standards of behaviour on the part of his Ministers.

We on this side will be surprised indeed if the Premier defends his Minister and suggests that his action to suppress criticism of himself constitutes the standard the Premier sets for his Ministers.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Premier) [5.10 p.m.]: I oppose the motion. In my opinion, the Minister did not act improperly. The motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition asks the House to express alarm that a Minister of the Crown caused an alteration to a report to Parliament to prevent public criticism of him by one of the statutory authorities for which he is responsible.

We must get this matter into its proper perspective. Members would know that, from time to time, reports go to Ministers and to the Government. When this report came to the Minister, he noticed that the Chairman of the Peel Inlet Management Authority expressed dismay at his apparent lack of action on a certain matter.

Mr Bryce: The phrase used is "lack of interest".

Mr O'CONNOR: In fact, there was no lack of concern. Following the Cabinet briefing to which the chairman referred, the Minister himself took action. He went away and investigated the matter and brought reports to Cabinet. In fact, Cabinet and the Government agreed to provide \$400 000 to effect that particular project.

The chairman quite rightly took the matter back to the authority which said, "Yes, from the information we now have, what is in the report is incorrect and we should rectify it." Is there anything wrong with that? I see nothing wrong with it at all.

The Minister would not have been doing his duty and would have been acting improperly had he not taken the time to study the report and notify the Chairman of the Peel Inlet Management Authority of the inaccuracy it contained.

When one looks at the matter and realises the concern the Government had for the matter and the fact that Cabinet had listened to what the authority had to say and then allocated \$400 000 to help rectify the problem, one can hardly say the Government was not concerned about the problem.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition read from page 38 of the Waterways Conservation Act; however, he read only part of a section, and I believe he would have done justice to the House had he completed his quote.

Mr Bryce: I only referred to the section; I did not quote from it.

Mr O'CONNOR: I am sorry; I thought the honourable member quoted the section. I wish to quote the entire section, because the Opposition must know very well what it contains, and the fact that the Minister would have been acting improperly had he not done what he did. Let members judge for themselves the propriety of the Minister's action. Section 43 (1) states—

43. (1) The Commission shall as soon as practicable after the thirtieth day of June in each year make to the Minister a report of the proceedings of the Commission during the year ending on that day—

Members should listen to the balance of section 43 (1) and (2), because it is important. It states—

—and the Minister shall cause the report to be laid before each House of Parliament within nine sitting days of the House after the receipt of the report by the Minister.

(2) Except in so far as the reference is commendatory, no particulars relating to any individual business shall be disclosed in the

report of the proceedings of the Commission laid before Parliament.

That would include confidential Cabinet briefings. Therefore, under the Act, had the Minister not taken action along the lines suggested, he would have been acting improperly.

Mr Brian Burke: Have you read the report?

Mr O'CONNOR: Not in recent times; I read it some time ago.

Mr Brian Burke: The point I am making is that there is reference to all sorts of things within that category. However, the matter under discussion was not what went on at a Cabinet meeting, but at a meeting held to brief the Minister.

Mr O'CONNOR: The points about which the Opposition is complaining are that the Minister referred back to the Peel Inlet Management Authority, or to the commission, a particular point that was intended—

Mr Brian Burke: Are you sure it is intended? If the Waterways Commission or the Peel Inlet Management Authority said that \$400 000 was disinterest and not significant enough to justify the work done, you have a difference of opinion. So the Minister tells them what to do.

Mr O'CONNOR: The fact was that this went back before the commission, and I believe that the members of the commission decided unanimously to alter it. That indicates whether or not it is correct. Irrespective of that point, the \$400 000 was given by this Government. I will read this provision again—

Except in so far as the reference is commendatory, no particulars relating to any individual business shall be—

Mr Bryce: What do you mean by "business"?

Mr O'CONNOR: To continue—

—disclosed in the report of the proceedings of the Commission laid before Parliament.

A confidential briefing—

Mr Bryce: Individual business?

Mr Pearce: Absolute rubbish! No details of that are given in the report. It is grossly improper.

Mr O'CONNOR: I say quite frankly in my opinion the Minister acted properly in referring back to Mr Robbins an inaccuracy in the report, and did his duty as a Minister. It is difficult to understand why this motion is before the House. The Minister has done nothing improper. Nothing the Opposition has said indicates to me in any way that he has acted improperly. I oppose the motion.

MR BARNETT (Rockingham) [5.16 p.m.]: Unquestionably in the eight years I have been a

member of Parliament in this House the number of improprieties I have witnessed—and this is no reflection on you, Mr Speaker—has increased. In the first year I was here I was able to bask relatively happily in the knowledge that members generally were honest and upright citizens and the answers to questions and the debates were based on absolute truth. Sadly, over the following seven years that situation deteriorated and the number of improprieties has increased each year. Admittedly some of them are small and insignificant when seen individually. But if they are put together we begin to receive a very clear picture—and it is certainly being received by members of the public—of members of Parliament not just telling lies in this House but making absolutely untruthful statements and whole speeches which are not based on truth.

I believe that situation must cease. We model ourselves on the Westminster system and in the last few days we have seen what has happened in the United Kingdom and Australian Parliaments. I am not saying that what we are discussing is quite as serious as what happened in the UK. But it is serious—it is a reflection on the way members operate in this place. In the United Kingdom a Minister resigned because of a mistake he made, and a Federal Minister resigned over a matter of \$200. Another Minister had to resign because the first Minister was his friend and he said, "Oh well, it is only \$200. Let us not worry about it this time." The Ministers were found out and they had to resign.

Normally a copy of a report goes to all members and it is usual for the Leader of the Opposition to receive a copy first. As the mistake was discovered early enough, the reports that would have gone to other members were not distributed. It was probably necessary to recall only the one report which had been delivered to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Blaikie: Did you get one?

Mr BARNETT: The original report delivered to the Leader of the Opposition was like the one I am holding in my hand for everyone to see. It was a final report with coloured photographs on each page. However, it did contain a small but significant criticism of the then Minister for Conservation and the Environment. It was my opinion that this Minister had been carrying out his duties in a very unsatisfactory manner.

Mr Blaikie: What was your impression after the report came out?

Mr BARNETT: I discovered that a public servant had had the courage of his convictions and that he had confirmed my belief that this

Minister was not concerned about the portfolio with which he had been entrusted. What happened then? The Minister read the report, or someone drew his attention to it, and the office of the Leader of the Opposition was contacted and asked to return the report. I suppose it was a reasonable request. It was equally reasonable for the staff of the Leader of the Opposition to assume that something was wrong with the report and to photocopy it for their records. That was early in January.

On 18 March a further report of the Waterways Commission was tabled in this Parliament, and this is the one I am holding. The only section of the Peel Inlet Management Authority report to be changed was paragraph (e) which contained the criticism of the Minister. It is absolutely intolerable that a Minister can use his office to lean very heavily on public servants and intimidate them to the extent that they withdraw their criticism of a Minister. What would happen if such a principle were taken to its logical extreme? What if a Minister reads a report which, although it does not criticise him, contains certain statements which he does not want made public? Statutory authorities such as the one involved here are obliged to make annual reports. But if the situation to which I have referred is allowed to continue, any Minister, before tabling such reports, will be able to use intimidation to have removed any section he does not like.

Mr Blaikie: Did you get your copy of the report on the same day as the Leader of the Opposition?

Mr BARNETT: I ask the Premier again: Will he allow the Minister to get away with this action? Will the Premier allow other Ministers to take out of reports sections they do not like?

Mr O'Connor: You should know very well the Minister did not take that out. He referred it back to the committee, and the members of the committee decided to take it out, as you well know.

Mr Brain Burke: If he had not referred it back, do you think they would have taken it out?

Mr O'Connor: It is his job to refer it back if there are inaccuracies in a report and no-one notices.

Mr Brian Burke: But the inaccuracies are not objective. It is not a matter of black is black and white is white. It is an opinion, and you are saying the Minister's opinion is always right.

Mr O'Connor: No, I am saying that the Minister has a duty to refer it back if he sees an inaccuracy.

Mr BARNETT: I think I will make a little interjection here. I am trying to say that if the Premier allows a Minister to use intimidation to have withdrawn criticism of himself, what is his intention in respect of other Ministers in the future?

Mr O'Connor: To act within the law, as the Minister has done.

Mr BARNETT: The Premier is saying, in effect, that in the future if a Minister does not agree with some section of a report, he will allow that Minister to have it removed.

Mr O'Connor: I did not say that at all. I said they must act within the law, and that is what they ought to do.

Mr BARNETT: The Premier is saying that this Minister acted within the law by using intimidatory tactics.

Mr O'Connor: I did not say he used intimidatory tactics, and you do not know that he did either.

Mr Brian Burke: According to your example there would be nothing that is outside the law. Give me an example of something.

Mr O'Connor: Say, for instance, a Minister brought back something from overseas without paying duty—that would be outside the law.

Mr BARNETT: Let me just—

Mr MacKinnon: Have another interjection—you are better at them.

Mr BARNETT: —inform the Premier of the way this Minister has administered his portfolio during the time he has been in office. Ten different drafts of the System 6 report were prepared because he did not agree with them. There has been a 20 per cent reduction in the senior staff of his department, and I certainly hope that that situation does not continue under the present Minister.

When the former Minister took office, the first instruction he issued to his senior staff was that they were not to answer my telephone calls or my letters. That was an intimidatory tactic so that the Opposition and the public of Western Australia would not know what was going on.

Mr Old: Who gave that instruction?

Mr BARNETT: The former Minister.

Mr Old: Did the same thing happen in regard to the Fisheries and Wildlife portfolio?

Mr BARNETT: No it did not.

Mr Old: I wonder why.

Mr BARNETT: I was able to get replies to my questions and phone calls from the Department of

Fisheries and Wildlife, but nothing from the Department of Conservation and Environment. I shall give an example: One of the letters I wrote to the Director of the Department of Conservation and Environment was to ask for information about Penguin Island. I asked what information the department had and I received back a half-page letter from the Minister saying that he thought penguins inhabited the island on some occasions. That was all the information I could obtain and yet this island is of interest to a great many of my constituents. That is the way the former Minister treated his department.

His treatment of the Waterways Commission has been no different. He leaned on his senior staff to such an extent that 20 per cent of them resigned. They left in droves because they could no longer work with him. In the future will Ministers be allowed to have withdrawn parts of reports with which they do not agree? This Government should be absolutely ashamed that it is too frightened to allow the public of Western Australia to know precisely what it is doing.

Mr Blaikie: I would still like to know what day you received your report?

Mr BARNETT: They are scared witless.

MR LAURANCE (Gascoyne—Minister for Conservation and the Environment) [5.28 p.m.]: I oppose this motion. I want to make it clear Parliament should be considering only one report and that is the report that was tabled in this House. Everyone here knows, and certainly the Leader of the Opposition and his lackeys know, that this is where these reports end up—on the Table of the House.

Mr Bryce: You are getting nasty. It is not becoming.

Mr LAURANCE: It has been a custom and a courtesy to make a copy of a report available to the Leader of the Opposition before copies are made available to members to enable him to ask questions about it if necessary. But what did the Leader of the Opposition do on this occasion? He took a grubby photocopy of a draft report—

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: —before it was tabled in this House.

Mr Tonkin: Tell the truth.

Mr Bryce: You are an excuse for a Minister. Tell the truth, you grubby excuse for a Minister.

Mr LAURANCE: It is not surprising that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition became upset when I referred to a grubby photocopy, because we know that he has had the same accusation directed at him.

Mr Bryce: Have you the guts unequivocally to say in this House that that was a draft report?

Mr LAURANCE: I wonder whether he had this photocopy delivered to the meter box of his home, because that is what happened before—

Several members interjected.

Mr Bryce: Come on! Why don't you grow up?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The interjections will cease.

Mr LAURANCE: Recently the shocking revelation was made in this House that a Government servant was given leave to knock off early so that he could go to football training and, on the way, drop off a report in the member for Ascot's meter box—

Point of Order

Mr BATEMAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker—

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat. A member is trying to take a point of order. Before I deal with that, I indicate I will do my level best to retain order in this place, but I suggest that a little less provocation by the Minister would help me greatly.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Mr BATEMAN: I do not think I need to take my point of order now, because of what you have just said, Sir. My point of order was that the Minister has not yet spoken to the motion.

The SPEAKER: Order! Having given the Minister a rather fair indication as to what I think he ought to do, I also say to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that, if he would desist from interjecting at the rate and level he has been, we would get a long way further.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

Mr LAURANCE: In this motion we are talking about the traditions of this Parliament. The critical point at issue is that reports are tabled in this House. That is the proper procedure to follow and any discussions on such material should relate to the report tabled in this House.

Mr Tonkin: Rubbish!

Mr LAURANCE: If we are going to have respect for the traditions of Parliament—

Mr Tonkin: Why don't you look at the Act?

Mr LAURANCE: The public report was the one that was tabled.

Mr Tonkin: It was not. Read the Act! You don't know what is in the Act. You should read it.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Morley to desist from interjecting.

Mr Bryce: He thinks it is a big joke.

Mr LAURANCE: If the member opposite wants to refer to the Act, I shall point out that, under two sections—one which was quoted by his colleague and the other from which his colleague conveniently forgot to quote and which our Premier brought to the attention of the House—the Minister is instructed to take the action which he in fact took. This report was brought forward in the proper way and it was tabled within nine sitting days of the House. Indeed, it was tabled on 18 March, the opening day of Parliament, which was the first sitting day after the report became available.

If we are to have respect for the institution of Parliament, we should be discussing the report which was tabled here, not a photocopy of a report which was obtained by the Leader of the Opposition. This Leader of the Opposition should not be shown any courtesy. On this occasion, he has betrayed the courtesy he has been shown and we are beginning to expect that sort of behaviour from him. The Leader of the Opposition is absolutely grubby! We want a decent Leader of the Opposition who is a man of principle—somebody who can lead the Opposition of this State with respect.

We want somebody like John Tonkin as Leader of the Opposition. Why cannot the Opposition produce a leader of a better calibre than the grubby pretence of a leader which it has now? However, the Opposition chooses its leader and perhaps, in this case, the result of the vote which chose the leader was 50 per cent plus one.

Mr Brian Burke: You are starting to sound more like the Opposition every day.

Mr LAURANCE: The former Minister was doing his job. Section 43 (2) of the Act indicates that the original draft report would have been *ultra vires* the Act and I shall refer to the Act as the Premier did. Section 43 (2) of the Act says—

“...except in so far as the reference is commendatory...”

That means, unless the reference commends. It goes on to say—

“...no particulars relating to any individual business shall be disclosed.”

If the report had been tabled in the House in its original form, a motion could have been moved condemning the Minister for failing to have the reference removed. That indicates how silly the present motion is.

Under the Act, the Minister was required to refer the report back to the commission indicating it was not commendatory. Under the relevant section of the Act, if the material is not commendatory, it should not be in the report. The Minister was doing his duty and I emphasise that to the House.

I make it clear that the previous Minister drew the commission's attention to a reference which criticised a confidential Cabinet briefing. The Minister told the commission that that type of statement should not be included in an annual report. He also drew the commission's attention to section 43 (2) of the Act. The Minister said that he considered the comment to be improper in terms of that particular section of the Act and he referred it back to the Chairman and commissioners of the Waterways Commission. They considered the position, agreed with the Minister, and removed the reference. That was a conscious decision of the commission and it was not taken as a result of pressure by the former Minister. The Minister did not make that decision; the Waterways Commission made it when the matter quite properly was drawn to its attention. The Minister was doing his job as the Parliament would expect him to do it.

The Minister acted fairly in the matter. A confidential Cabinet briefing took place and Ministers were very interested in it.

Mr Bryce: You all fell asleep one after the other. You showed disinterest.

Mr LAURANCE: All the Ministers were interested and, indeed, after the financial year 1980-81 which was after the period under review in this report—

Mr Brian Burke: Could you answer me one question?

Mr LAURANCE: No.

Mr Brian Burke: How many Ministers were at that Cabinet briefing?

Mr LAURANCE: It was decided a total of \$478 000 would be appropriated for use in this area over the following three years and that occurred as a direct result of the Cabinet briefing to which I referred.

Mr Barnett: There was no Cabinet briefing at all.

Mr LAURANCE: The Cabinet briefing took place. The end of the financial year came and the report was prepared by the Peel Inlet Management Authority and forwarded for inclusion in the Waterways Commission report. After 30 June 1980, Cabinet considered

recommendations put before it and it was decided \$478 000 would be allocated to this area.

Mr Pearce: When was the money allocated?

Mr LAURANCE: The allocation of \$478 000—that is, almost half a million dollars—followed hot on the heels of an initial allocation of \$500 000 which resulted in a study of the Peel and Harvey estuaries performed by Dr Ernest Hodgkin who made certain recommendations in his report and they were the subject of the particular briefing to which I have referred. Those recommendations were accepted and, on top of the \$500 000 allocated initially, a further \$478 000 was allocated. That is the largest single amount that has ever been appropriated to any environmental project by a Western Australian Government.

We should have a commendatory motion before the House, rather than this poor excuse for a motion which has been used to dredge up material about a previous Minister who should be commended for his actions in this regard.

Most of the \$1 million referred to has been appropriated already and the balance will be allocated over the next three years to assist to work out solutions to solve the problems set out by Dr Ernest Hodgkin in his report. This is a very complex problem and Dr Hodgkinson indicated it would be foolhardy to rush in and spend vast sums of money over the following three years, because he and his researchers must be given time to produce the right solutions to the problems. Therefore, time must be taken to ensure that, when we proceed with the selected options, the right steps are taken.

The State Government is committed to finding solutions to the problem of algal blooms in the Peel-Harvey estuarine system. Our actions in this regard speak for themselves, particularly when one bears in mind the sums allocated to that area already.

Mr Shalders: How much did the Tonkin Government spend, do you remember? It spent nothing.

Mr LAURANCE: It spent absolutely nothing.

Mr Bryce: What about the Scaddan Government? The world has changed since you were born, brother!

Mr Shalders: Why didn't you spend some money on Peel Inlet?

Mr Bryce: When did they discover the problems down there?

Mr LAURANCE: This Government has accepted its responsibilities in terms of the Peel-Harvey estuarine system. It has committed vast

sums of money to solving the problems there. Research is being conducted by the best people available and the Government is committed to finding solutions to the problems. No Government can do more than that.

In addition, we are endeavouring to solve some of the immediate problems in the area. We have doubled our activities for the removal of algae from the beaches at Novara and Coodanup. I have been down to that area with the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing and we have given the people working there additional equipment in an endeavour to solve the immediate and long-term problems in the area. We shall continue to provide resources in order that the problems which are affecting the people in the area might be overcome. We know the condition of the beaches is not very pleasant and huge amounts of weed have been washed ashore. This problem began when the region was first farmed and it has built up over a long period. For the first time ever, this Government has said, "We will find solutions to the problems." No Government has done that before.

Mr Bryce: That has nothing to do with the motion.

Mr LAURANCE: It suits the Opposition to move this motion at this time, because it has no feeling for agriculture or agricultural people. This is a matter which relates to country regions and the Opposition has very few members who represent such areas. Therefore, members opposite do not have a feeling for the agricultural scene in this State. It is no wonder they could not appreciate the position when they were in Government. All members opposite can do now is criticise, but this Government appreciates the problems and is trying to find solutions. That is the sort of approach this Government has adopted to all the problems faced in this State.

Mr Tonkin: Falsifying documents! Inaccurate reports!

Mr LAURANCE: This Government identifies problems and finds solutions. It is adopting that course not only in this matter, but also in all other areas.

Mr Bryce: Are you prepared to state unequivocally in this House that that report was a draft?

Mr LAURANCE: Yes; I want to come to that point, because the draft obtained by the Leader of the Opposition was given to him in good faith. This occurred because the staff made a simple error when they overlooked the fact that Parliament was not sitting at that time.

Mr Tonkin: In January!

Mr LAURANCE: Yes; the staff concerned did not understand that. The officer who delivered those documents—

Mr Tonkin: You are insulting them.

Mr LAURANCE: —to Parliament House believed they would be tabled.

Mr Tonkin: You are being very insulting to the staff.

Mr LAURANCE: The particular officer concerned felt he should adopt the normal courtesies extended in this sort of matter and provide the Leader of the Opposition with a copy of the report, because he believed it would become public knowledge within a day or two.

Mr Brian Burke: Why was he distributing a draft if it was going to be tabled in the House?

Mr LAURANCE: Any copy of a report that has not been tabled in this House is a draft.

Mr Bryce: You fool!

Mr Tonkin: Look at the Act!

Mr Bryce: You ought to resign!

Mr Tonkin: Look at the Act!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LAURANCE: It may suit members of the Opposition to ignore the traditions of this House—

Mr Tonkin: But we read the Act.

Mr LAURANCE: —however, under the Act, it is required that reports be tabled in this Parliament. Therefore, the official report of the Waterways Commission was the one that must be tabled here and any report which circulated prior to that was not an official document.

The officer concerned in good faith delivered a copy of the report to the Leader of the Opposition. It was subsequently realised that the Parliament would not be sitting for a long time and the Minister drew to the attention of the Waterways Commission the fact that part of the report was probably *ultra vires* the Act. As a result, the Leader of the Opposition was contacted and asked to return the copy of the report which had been given to him. I ask members: Did the Leader of the Opposition give back that copy of the report which had been given to him in good faith? He knew he would receive another copy when the report was tabled, but the Leader of the Opposition got his grubby clerk to take a photocopy of the document. He did not give it back; he kept it.

The Leader of the Opposition did not observe the courtesy that the Government and its officers were good enough to observe as far as he was concerned. Therefore, that courtesy should be

withdrawn from this grubby Leader of the Opposition if that is the sort of action this State can expect from him. We have seen Leaders of the Opposition come and go rather rapidly and it would not be a bad time to have another run around now in order to get another Leader of the Opposition who might act more properly than the present one.

The Leader of the Opposition might have said, "If it is given in good faith I will give it back in good faith, but let me have another one in good faith when the final one is prepared"; but no, he said, "We will rush around the corner to the photocopier." I only hope that the person who took the photocopy did not get his thumb caught in the machine like the last bloke who did things like that for the Opposition and who was fined and lost his job. This issue is the only one the Opposition can bring before the Parliament; the Opposition does not bring properly presented documents to the Parliament. The Waterways Commission report was properly presented and tabled on 18 March.

In defence of my predecessor I can say he did much in the field of conservation and environment in his time. The very fact that money was allocated to problems in that field speaks volumes for that Minister and for the amount he cared for those problems in this State. He is the one who has acted properly. If anyone has acted improperly he is the Leader of the Opposition. I oppose the motion.

MR PEARCE (Gosnells) [5.46 p.m.]: I could say I was astounded by the speech of the Minister who has just resumed his seat. However, I was not surprised because as his speech showed he is a particularly sleazy representative of a sleazy Government.

I will explain to the House exactly what has been improper in this whole affair which has become more scandalous as it has gone on. The Minister's actions clearly have been improper.

The Government could have said that this act of impropriety was a once only, but the current Minister for Conservation and the Environment clearly said that this improper behaviour was Government practice because any authority which reports to Parliament through a Minister can expect to have the appropriate Minister go through the report to remove any critical paragraphs. Such conduct is totally improper, and for anyone to say it is proper represents a misreading of the Act.

It is totally improper for all statutory authorities to find that their reports to the Parliament through their respective Ministers are

censored as a matter of course by those Ministers. From what the Minister for Conservation and the Environment has said, this appears to be the practice, but in regard to the report in question an officer of the Government sent out a copy of the report before it was censored. If the Premier were here he could answer this question: Is it a fact that all reports of statutory authorities for this Parliament are censored before they get to this Parliament? He could answer also whether it is a fact that in this case the report managed to slip the net.

The report was not a draft. It was compiled, printed, and distributed for everybody, and, in fact, it went out as a distribution—it was not a departmental draft. It was not a draft for the Minister's consideration; it was a report for the Parliament and for the people, but it was censored, and that censorship was a grossly improper act by the Minister. Section 43 of the Waterways Conservation Act—

Mr Laurance: I told the House that a courtesy copy was delivered to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr PEARCE: What the Minister told the House was not the truth in this matter.

Point of Order

Mr LAURANCE: Mr Speaker, on a point of order—

Mr Bryce: Isn't he sensitive?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! The Minister for Conservation and the Environment.

Mr LAURANCE: I ask that the person who was on his feet withdraw his comment.

Mr Bryce: You can't take it, but you can dish it out.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Bryce: You are a spineless coward, that's what you are!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Bryce: You are a coward.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting or I will name him.

My attention was distracted temporarily by a member who sought my advice on a matter. Frankly, I did not hear the words to which the Minister has taken offence. It is appropriate in the circumstances that, rather than run the risk of

having some words repeated that I may ultimately rule as unparliamentary, I leave the Chair until the ringing of the bells and ask the *Hansard* reporter to come to my office to discuss the matter with me.

Sitting suspended from 5.49 to 6.08 p.m.

Speaker's Ruling

The SPEAKER: I have now had an opportunity to look at the *Hansard* record of the passage of the debate which led the Minister for Conservation and the Environment to ask me to rule certain words to be unparliamentary; that is, the words that have been spoken by the member for Gosnells.

Before I deal with that particular aspect, let me say something about the general reason for moderate language to be used in debate. It is not intended that people be denied the opportunity to bring to the Parliament a matter that is of importance and a matter that may be controversial. The whole intention of the convention with respect to language in the Parliament is to ensure that personal injury is not done by one party to another because although we all have our very firm views and ideas we must operate within this parliamentary institution. It would be intolerable if language were to be used freely, and that language could hurt those to whom it is directed.

During the debate thus far there have been some examples of harsh language being said by one side which has prompted equally harsh words from the other side.

I say that to members of this House not because I want to be seen to be restrictive in the matter, but because I want to ensure that there is a reasonable standard of behaviour applied in the debates in this Chamber, and having read the words spoken by the member for Gosnells, I can accept that the Minister believes he has been accused of lying. Therefore I would ask that the member for Gosnells withdraw that passage in which he said what the Minister said was not the truth in this matter.

Mr PEARCE: I do not wish to debate your ruling, Sir, and if you ask me to withdraw, I will. It has been a tradition in this House which is that if one were to suggest that an assertion made by a member is not the truth, that is not unparliamentary. The ruling normally has been made on the motive behind the language. Therefore, the word "lie" has been ruled unparliamentary because a person has been accused of not only not telling the truth, but also knowingly not telling the truth; whereas the words such as those used by the Minister may not, under

the circumstances, be factual, but it may not be deliberately not telling the truth. That does not imply an improper motive.

I will be pleased to withdraw, but I would ask that you reconsider that ruling in the cold light of morning because it is going to reflect on the rights of members to even dispute factual or unfactual assertions made by members.

The SPEAKER: I realise the point the member is making and I certainly do not want to create a situation where a member cannot say that something which is tendered to the House by another is not true. You are entitled to say "That is not true", but in this particular case the member for Gosnells has said specifically that what the Minister told the House was not the truth of the matter and the Minister can reasonably take that as meaning that what he has said is not true. In the circumstances I ask the member for Gosnells to withdraw.

Points of Order

Mr EVANS: Is there any precedent where exception can be taken to a member querying the truth of a particular statement? I do not believe there is.

Mr LAURANCE: On the same point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I will hear the Minister in a moment. In response to the member for Warren: This House has a very good record of precedents and there have been a number of occasions when similar assertions and statements have been required by the Chair to be withdrawn.

Mr LAURANCE: On the same point of order, the previous speaker raised a point that the member for Gosnells may have been raising a query as to the truth or not of a statement made.

Mr Pearce: I was saying it was not the truth because it was not the truth.

The SPEAKER: Order! I feel in the circumstances that the ruling I have given is appropriate and I ask the member for Gosnells to withdraw.

Mr PEARCE: I withdraw.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

Mr PEARCE: It is perfectly clear—in fact, I assert confidently and with the knowledge of the accuracy and truth of what I say—that the document was not a draft report and that the copy sent to the Leader of the Opposition was not a unique copy, sent to him as a matter of courtesy and information. If was, in fact, a fully finished report distributed to a number of persons, before

one of the reports hit the desk of the Minister's officers and led to the Minister's ordering the withdrawal of all the reports which previously had been distributed—including the report which had found its way to the office of the Leader of the Opposition. So, there was nothing draft about the report; it was the report of the Waterways Commission which the commission intended should go before Parliament.

Mr Laurance: The report of the commission was tabled on 18 March this year; that was the official report. Any report before that is not official.

Mr PEARCE: That raises an interesting matter—

Mr Laurance: Under the Act, the commission is required to table its report, and it did so on opening night.

Mr PEARCE: In fact, it is not a requirement of the Act that the commission shall table its report in Parliament. The requirement is that the commission shall present its report to the Minister, and the responsibility for tabling the report is placed on the Minister.

Mr Laurance: That is exactly what happened.

Mr PEARCE: Section 43 (1) of the Waterways Conservation Act, in part, states—

.... the Minister shall cause the report to be laid before each House of Parliament within nine sitting days of the House after the receipt of the report by the Minister.

Mr Laurance: That is exactly what he did.

Mr PEARCE: It is not exactly what he did, at all. When the Minister received the report, his statutory duty was to lay it before the House at the first available opportunity.

Mr Laurance: Read the next part of the section.

Mr PEARCE: I will come to that in a moment. It is a statutory requirement on the Minister when he receives a report to cause it to be laid before the House within nine sitting days after the receipt of the report. The Minister has no statutory right under the Act to refer the report back to the commission, or to change it in any way.

Mr Laurance: You are clutching at straws.

Mr PEARCE: The simple requirement on the Minister is to table the report. The Act lays out as a matter of courtesy that the commission shall report to the Minister before it reports to the House. For the Minister to seek to interfere with that report is a grossly improper misuse of his responsibilities. Subsection (2) of section 43

shows how grossly improper the actions of the then Minister for Conservation and the Environment have been in regard to this matter. Subsection (2) is an injunction not to the Minister, but, in fact, to the commission relating to the sorts of things it should not include in its report. The statutory injunction on the commission in relation to the contents of its reports is as follows—

(2) Except in so far as the reference is commendatory, no particulars relating to any individual business shall be disclosed in the report of the proceedings of the Commission laid before Parliament.

I am prepared to accept that the word "commendatory" means "not critical".

Mr Laurance: End of argument. Sit down and save the House 39 minutes.

Mr PEARCE: It is not the end of the argument at all; the Minister does not understand the term. In a whole range of statutory provisions on various bodies, there is a stipulation that private negotiations involving business concerns should not be laid before Parliament in such a way as to give a business advantage to the competitors of the person whose financial affairs were laid before the House. So, in so far as the Waterways Commission might involve itself with some private entrepreneur, the private business and commercial details of the venture must not be mentioned in the commission's report.

Suppose, for example, that a company by the name of "Acme Algae Clearance" were to enter into a deal with the Waterways Commission to do what the Government cannot do; namely, remove the algae from Peel Inlet. Suppose that some form of arrangement were made whereby the company used some specific procedure to get rid of the algae, in return for which it was paid certain sums by the commission. The company concerned may well have competitors using different systems on a different costing basis. The company known as "Acme Algae Clearance" shall not be disadvantaged by the Waterways Commission including in its report to Parliament the details of the commercial arrangements entered into between the Waterways Commission and the company. The only exception is that the commission may report in a general sense on what is happening. For example, it may say that the commission has entered into a deal with "Acme Algae Clearance" company which bids fair to see an end to the algae problem in the Peel Inlet. That is the sort of commendatory reference which may be made to that sort of business arrangement in an annual report.

Section 43 does not give the Minister the right to remove from the report anything which is critical of anybody, including Government Ministers. For the Government or the Minister to seek to remove such references is grossly improper.

I go further: For the Minister to suggest that, as a matter of procedure, any Minister has the right to go through the report of an authority for which he has responsibility, and remove any critical reference also is grossly improper. It would not be tolerated in many Parliaments, other than in this one. If it were to happen in the House of Commons, the Minister who effected the deletion would have to resign not only his Ministry, but also his seat.

During the suspension of the sitting for tea, I was reminded by one of my colleagues about the resignation of Lord Carrington from a very important position in the British Government, not because he had held any personal responsibility for what had happened, but because things had gone astray in an area for which he held responsibility. Rather than shove off the responsibility to public servants, Lord Carrington chose to resign.

However, in the situation under discussion today, the then Minister for Conservation and the Environment is not prepared to take that course of action. Rather, the present Minister for Conservation and the Environment took the totally improper step of referring to one of his own officers as "a grubby public servant". The word "grubby" occurred many times in the Minister's speech. I thought it was grossly improper for the Minister to use that kind of language consistently throughout one of the grubbiest speeches through which this Parliament has had the misfortune to sit.

Mr Barnett: He used the term "grubby clerk".

Mr PEARCE: He also used the term "grubby public servant".

Mr Laurance: You were the one who directed that he photocopy the document.

Mr PEARCE: The Minister said that the report was sent to the office of the Leader of the Opposition by a grubby public servant; it is quite likely the public servant is aware of to whom that description applies. In the Parliament of England, that phrase alone would have cost the Minister his job.

Mr Tonkin: Yes, they have a sense of pride over there. There is no pride here.

Mr PEARCE: It is a pity the standards which apply in the mother of Parliaments do not apply

here. It is no reflection on the Parliament itself, but on the Government, which is able to enforce its sleazy standards on us by virtue of the fact it has the numbers in this place—although that is soon to change.

Mr Laurance: That sort of language is unbecoming.

Mr PEARCE: The Minister is the last one to talk; his speech was another Year of the Tree affair. He could not keep a straight face while he hauled out his clichés. He is a total disgrace to this place. The parliamentary standards have slipped greatly during this session, with the accession of the new leader and with the elevation to the Ministry of new members—although it represented a demotion in terms of portfolios.

Mr Tonkin: One tells lies and the other cannot tell the truth.

Point of Order

Mr RUSHTON: Mr Speaker, I object to the implication by the member for Morley that somebody has told lies.

Mr Tonkin: Who said that?

The SPEAKER: Order! Did the Minister say the member for Morley interjected to that effect?

Mr RUSHTON: Yes, the member for Morley interjected and said that a Minister of this Government was telling lies, and I ask that he withdraw.

The SPEAKER: I heard no such interjection. However, if the Minister asserts that such an interjection was made, I must first ask the member for Morley whether he made the interjection. If so, I ask him to withdraw.

Mr TONKIN: I withdraw.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

Mr Parker: You are narrowing it down somewhat; I thought they all told lies.

Mr PEARCE: I think it is time—

Mr Laurance interjected.

Mr Tonkin: Come on, you grubby little Minister!

Mr PEARCE: I think it is time this Parliament recognised that not only in this State, but also throughout the nation, the people are demanding that members of Parliament raise their levels of propriety. What is happening in Canberra at present is a very clear indication of that fact. The people no longer are prepared to accept the sorts of levels of propriety which are becoming only too acceptable to Governments, both in this State and in Canberra. They are starting to look to a return

to some of the traditions of the mother of Parliaments. I think the people of Western Australia, particularly, would like to see a return to those traditions.

Mr MacKinnon: You would be the last people to talk in this place about tradition.

Mr PEARCE: We are exactly the right people to talk about propriety. We would never countenance a situation where any Minister thought he could alter a report from an authority for which he had responsibility in order to disguise the fact that authority had made criticism of the Government or the Minister.

I wish to end on this note: The suggestion by the Premier and the Minister that what happened was that the Waterways Commission included a mistake of fact in its report and the Minister, discovering this so-called mistake of fact, took the trouble to gather up all the reports which had been distributed and send them back to the Waterways Commission with a letter stating, "I have detected a mistake of fact, and I ask you to consider correcting it."

In fact the so-called mistake of fact was the opinion of the Chairman of the Peel Inlet Management Authority that when he met with a Minister or a group of Ministers, they showed no interest in the problems of Peel Inlet; they yawned, slept, did not ask questions, or, perhaps, show signs of overindulgence before they turned up for the meeting. Whatever the reason, the chairman was of the firm belief that the Minister or Ministers to whom he spoke had no interest in the matter before him, and he included that opinion in his report.

Mr Sibson: You know it is not correct.

Mr PEARCE: How can it be incorrect? The man was at the meeting; that was his opinion. An opinion cannot be incorrect, in that sense. The Government may feel his opinion is unjustified; however, that is a totally different matter from its being incorrect. We are not discussing a matter of fact. It is one man's criticism of what happened, and that criticism cannot properly be deleted from the report.

If it had happened in the House of Commons, the report would have been tabled in its pristine form, and the Government would have made a statement to argue against the opinion contained in the report. That is the proper course of procedure. The authority's report should have been tabled in its original form, and the Government could have used the forum of this House by way of ministerial statement criticising the report; or, it could have put out Press releases to that effect. However, the Government should

not try to censure the chairman or to pretend the real report in fact was a draft report, or that the reports sent to the office of the Leader of the Opposition and to other places were feloniously obtained photocopies of a draft report.

The cover-up in this matter is more improper than the original improper act. It is about time that the Parliament of this State and the people of this State asked for a few standards of decency from the Government and members of Parliament. Firstly, they can make that demand of the previous Minister for Conservation and the Environment; and they can, more rightly, and perhaps with more justice, make the same demand of the present Minister.

MR STEPHENS (Stirling) [7.46 p.m.]: The reason that this motion is put forward is quite clear. Of course, the original issue was the impropriety or otherwise of the Minister's directing or exerting pressure on the Chairman of the Waterways Commission to alter a report. Since the debate has been initiated tonight, it is quite clear that either the Leader of the Opposition or the present Minister for Conservation and the Environment is inadvertently or deliberately trying to mislead this House.

Mr Brian Burke: Well, I'm not. I'll make that guarantee to you.

Mr STEPHENS: Two problems arise out of the motion—

Mr Laurance: Do you disagree that a report which is published—

Mr STEPHENS: If the Minister listens to me, he will hear what I am going to say.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr STEPHENS: The member for Morley can make his own speech later. I am trying to make mine, and I am not seeking any support from the member for Morley.

In his speech, the Leader of the Opposition stated categorically that the report that finished on his desk was the report, and not a draft report. In no way was there any reference to a draft report—

Mr Brian Burke: Could I just interrupt there to say that the Minister himself confirmed that in this morning's Press when he said that I had the first copies of the report; and I heard him on television tonight confirming it again.

Mr STEPHENS: What I am saying is that the Leader of the Opposition said categorically that it was a report, and in no way was it a draft report. When the present Minister for Conservation and the Environment spoke, he made reference to the

fact that it was a draft report—one that, out of courtesy, had been forwarded to the Leader of the Opposition—

Mr Laurance: Ahead of the tabling.

Mr STEPHENS: The Minister is incorrect in this, because the department is not required to table the report. The Minister said that the department was required to table the report; and out of courtesy the department had sent a copy to the Leader of the Opposition. Section 43 of the Waterways Conservation Act is quite specific. It reads—

43. (1) The Commission shall as soon as practicable after the thirtieth day of June in each year make to the Minister a report of the proceedings of the Commission during the year ending on that day, and the Minister shall cause the report to be laid before each House of Parliament within nine sitting days of the House after the receipt of the report by the Minister.

It states categorically that it is the Minister who tables the report. I feel, therefore, that if the officers of the Minister's department are sending a report to the Leader of the Opposition, it would be reasonable to assume that it was the report, and not a draft. If it was a draft, why was it not indicated clearly to be a draft?

The point I am making—and it is very serious—is that the Leader of the Opposition is trying to mislead the House, or the Minister for Conservation and the Environment is trying to mislead the House.

Mr Sibson: You are having two bob each way.

Mr STEPHENS: I am not. The member for Bunbury can say what he likes. We know he is one who does not have two bob; but at the same time he does what the Government tells him. He is merely the back-bench voting fodder.

This is a serious issue, and I do not know how we can resolve it. It is a serious situation when a Minister exerts influence on a chairman to change his report.

Mr Barnett: He used intimidatory tactics.

Mr STEPHENS: I am not a lawyer, but in the law, it is my understanding that judges do not take much notice of hearsay evidence. They must have factual evidence.

Mr Sibson interjected.

Mr STEPHENS: I agree with the member for Bunbury. If we are in agreement on that point, I am sure he will agree with what I am leading up to.

Judges do not take cognisance of hearsay evidence, but in this Parliament we are being asked to make judgments based on hearsay evidence. In order to overcome that problem, it is my intention to move an amendment to delete all the words after the word "House" in line 1. In order that the House may have some understanding of what I propose, I indicate that if my amendment is successful I would then move to insert after the word "House" the words "requests of the Legislative Council that the Council shall give leave to the Minister for Labour and Industry, and Immigration in order that he may be examined before the Bar of the Legislative Assembly concerning the alleged alterations of a report of the Waterways Commission".

Mr Bryce: Hear, hear!

Mr Laurance: What a stunt!

Mr Sibson: Look at the Press!

Mr STEPHENS: The Press can do what they like. The Press can laugh, and the member for Bunbury can laugh, but I see this as a right and proper action.

Members will note that the amendment refers to the Minister for Labour and Industry, and Immigration; but of course it relates to the former Minister for Conservation and the Environment. Before we make a judgment here, it would be only right and proper for that gentleman to be called before the Bar of this House so that we have the opportunity of hearing at first hand exactly what went on.

Amendment to Motion

Mr STEPHENS: For those reasons, I move an amendment—

Delete all words after the word "House" in line 1 with a view to inserting other words.

Mr COWAN: I second the amendment.

Point of Order

Mr RUSHTON: I raise the issue of the authenticity of this amendment. I ask you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Watt), to examine it and rule as to its propriety as an amendment to the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Davies: Of course it is. You can delete any words you like. Think back to some of the amendments you moved from that side of the House.

Mr Harman: They don't know where to go and what to do.

Acting Speaker's Ruling

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Watt): For the information of the House, I indicate that the amendment is in order. It is covered by Standing Order No. 394 which I will read so that the House has a better understanding of what is happening. That Standing Order reads as follows—

394. When the attendance of a Member of the Council, or any Officer of that House, is desired, to be examined by the House or any Committee thereof (not being a Committee on a Private Bill), a Message shall be sent to the Council to request that the Council give leave to such Member or Officer to attend, in order to his being examined accordingly upon the matters stated in such Message.

Mr Rushton: Thank you for your ruling.

Debate (on amendment to motion) Resumed

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Deputy Premier) [7.54 p.m.]: Of course, this is a very cheap stunt and one unbecoming the conduct of this House. We have heard a deplorable presentation relating to this item.

The Minister in question has done no wrong. In fact, he has carried out his duty.

Mr Tonkin: He should be out in the street by now, and if you had any sense, you would have seen to that.

Mr RUSHTON: The situation has been stated clearly by the Premier and by the Minister for Conservation and the Environment. No case has been made by members on the other side relating to the conduct of the Minister. In fact, when one examines and thinks about the matter in great detail, one realises that this is basically a stunt to take advantage of things happening in other places.

Mr Barnett: Rubbish!

Mr RUSHTON: As far as I am concerned, it highlights what has been going on in this place for some weeks. The Opposition has been presenting very weak innuendo and questioning the Government without any substance, and not on fact. Those deplorable innuendo and doubts have never been substantiated.

The Government believes that there is no case to answer in relation to the amendment moved by the member for Stirling, and opposes it strongly.

MR TONKIN (Morley) [7.55 p.m.]: I am appalled at the comments made by the Deputy Premier who used the term "innuendo" as though it were some kind of condemnation of the motion and of the amendment. We have made no innuendo, and neither has the member for

Stirling, because the use of the word "innuendo" suggests that some kind of hint is given, as though there were some kind of indirect aspersion cast. We cast no innuendo. We make a direct assertion that something improper has occurred.

Before the Deputy Premier sought to impress this Chamber with the use of words like "innuendo" he should have used a dictionary to find out what they meant. Certainly we are not indulging in innuendo. We are making a bland assertion that the Minister acted improperly by requiring the Waterways Commission to alter its report before it was presented to the Parliament.

I am absolutely appalled that the Minister for Conservation and the Environment does not know the Act which he is required to administer. Obviously he has not looked at section 43 of the Act, which states that the commission has a duty to present a report to the Minister. He said that it was only a draft report until it was laid on the Table of this House. In fact, the Act does not state that.

The Act requires the commission to present a report to the Minister—not a draft report. It does not say anything about a report not being a proper report until it is laid on the Table of the House. The requirement is that the commission present a report to the Minister; and the Minister shall—he has no discretion in this matter—lay that report, not another report which he has substituted for political convenience, on the Table of the House.

Here we have a situation in which the Minister received a report, did not like it because it criticised him and his ministerial colleagues, and decided that the report had to be changed. I have no doubt that the Minister put very heavy pressure upon the chairman of the commission and upon other members of the commission, because the members of the commission would realise that the Government had the numbers in both Houses of the Parliament and it could alter the Act to cripple the commission and replace its members with other people if they did not toe the line.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Watt): Would the member for Morley endeavour to confine his remarks to the amendment. I will not stop him from taking the course that he is but he must relate it in the appropriate manner. We are debating an amendment moved by the member for Stirling. The amendment seeks to bring the Minister to the Bar of this House. It is proper to debate that particular matter. I am of the view that the remarks the member for Morley is

making at present are connected more closely with the original motion.

Mr TONKIN: I thank you for your guidance. I am quite happy to move on to the substance of the amendment moved by the member for Stirling.

When I was our spokesman on conservation and the environment, I moved a motion in this House requiring that certain people be brought to the Bar of the House. That set a precedent and caused the Speaker of the time and his Clerks to refer to the Standing Orders because they had not been aware, so I was told, of this requirement.

I would be the last to quarrel with the concept of our bringing a person to the Bar of the House for examination. That has not yet occurred and it is about time this House asserted its superiority over the Legislative Council. We know what kind of place the Legislative Council is. We know that it is gerrymandered to a much greater extent than is this House. I was quite refreshed to read that in the 1930s the Assembly refused to accept certain amendments from the Council because they were an interference with the undoubted superiority of this House with respect to money Bills. Since the conservatives in this place have buckled at the knees to the Council in recent years, no-one opposite seems to question the equality of the Legislative Council with this Chamber.

This Chamber is the Chamber of Government. I quite agree with the member for Stirling that this House should assert its fundamental role, as the House of Commons did a long time ago with the House of Lords. This Chamber should assert that it is superior to the Legislative Council, as the Assembly is the House of Government and the House that has a special responsibility for the raising of finance, without which no Government can function. For those reasons it would be very interesting and quite entertaining to have before the Bar of this House the former Minister for Conservation and the Environment to explain how he defends, in a society that at least claims to be democratic, an action which says that there must be no criticism of the Government.

We are not talking about legalities; we are concerned with the Westminster system. That system is that a Government of a State which claims to be democratic should be prepared to accept criticism. Recently we have seen the very high standard in the British Parliament, where Lord Carrington resigned, not because he was caught telling an untruth and not because he was caught trying to alter a report, but because the policies he had followed had not been successful and had been criticised. If we had that situation, a former Premier of this State would have resigned

because of his energy policies with regard to coal and oil. We see in the Westminster system, as practised in Britain, a much higher standard than that which we have here. It is also my belief that we have in the Australian Parliament a much higher standard than that which we have here.

I would like to see the position reached in this State where Ministers of the Crown accept their responsibilities much more seriously than they do now. Then we would not have the spectacle of the present Minister for Conservation and the Environment coming to this place and delivering what I dare not call an untruth, but a statement to the effect that it was a draft report when, in fact, it was a proper printed report with photographs. I have never heard of a report which is printed, bound, with photographs, and which is delivered, which is not a true report. The present Minister for Conservation and the Environment knows this himself. He sits in silence now, but said before that it was a draft report when he knows it was a proper report.

Mr Laurance: A proper report is tabled in the House.

Mr TONKIN: Then the Minister is saying that an improper report was circulated to various places including the office of the Leader of the Opposition. I suggest that one of the first jobs the Minister has as a Minister of the Crown is to read the Statutes which he is required to administer.

Mr Laurance: I read them to you when I spoke.

Mr TONKIN: The Minister did not read section 43.

Mr Laurance: Yes I did.

Mr TONKIN: That section states that the commission shall present to the Minister a report. Not a draft report.

Mr Laurance: The one that is tabled. The same as all others tabled here.

Mr TONKIN: Why is the Minister so dishonest as to ignore the first few lines of that section?

Point of Order

Mr LAURANCE: The member used the term "dishonest", which he knows is offensive. It is unbecoming of him and of any member to use that term, and I ask that he withdraw it.

Mr Brian Burke: You are acting more like the Opposition every day.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Watt): In a debate of this type, as was mentioned before the suspension of the sitting for dinner, it is obvious that provocation will be levelled by one side of the House against the other. The use of the word

"dishonest" has been the subject of many opinions in this Parliament. Generally members—especially those who have been here some years, know or should know by now what words they can use and what words they cannot use. The word "dishonest" has been ruled against in a number of rulings given by various Speakers. I ask members to be more constrained in the language they use and to try to conduct the debate in the manner they know to be acceptable in this House. The word "dishonest" is not acceptable and I ask that the member for Morley withdraw it.

Mr TONKIN: I withdraw that word.

Debate (on amendment to motion) Resumed

Mr TONKIN: The Minister who is so shocked by that term used the term "grubby" when speaking of a person who is not a member of this House and who cannot defend himself. What does that make the Minister when he talks like that about a person who is doing his job? The Minister for Conservation and the Environment was so cowardly as to comment like that about a person who is not a member of this House and who is unable to defend himself. How does the Minister feel? Does he feel brave?

Mr Laurance: Very unbecoming.

Mr TONKIN: The Minister used that term when speaking about a person who is doing his job.

Mr Laurance: Ordered by the temporary Leader of the Opposition.

Mr TONKIN: The Minister is a brave man to attack a person who cannot defend himself! That is the Minister's standard.

Mr Laurance: The Leader of the Opposition can tell the House who photocopied the report.

Mr Brian Burke: Not only did I not photocopy it, but I was unaware it had been photocopied until some weeks afterwards.

Mr Laurance: Is it a standing order in your office?

Mr TONKIN: We can see the kind of Minister we have here. He will attack people who are not in the Chamber and who cannot defend themselves, but as soon as he is attacked he squeals and jumps to his feet and demands a withdrawal. What kind of a creature is he? What kind of a Minister is he? Then he is hurt because I call him a coward.

Mr Laurance: This is unbecoming of you.

Mr TONKIN: He objects to the word "dishonest" because during his speech he ignored interjection after interjection about the first four lines of section 43 of the Waterways Conservation

Act. If the Minister is prepared to look at the last few lines of that section while ignoring the first few lines, would you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Watt), call that dishonest?

Mr Pearce: He would not recognise the truth if he encountered it on the road to Damascus.

Mr TONKIN: The Minister keeps saying that the report has to be tabled in the House, ignoring the first four lines of that section of the Act. I will leave it to members to decide whether or not that is dishonest.

Quite clearly a Government which cannot accept criticism has no right to be a Government in what claims to be a democratic society.

MR COWAN (Merredin) [8.10 p.m.]: The amendment moved by my colleague the member for Stirling was designed to get some accuracy into what has taken place tonight. As the Deputy Premier has said, this debate has been full of innuendo. This is a golden opportunity for this Parliament to get rid of this innuendo and to obtain the facts. The facts are that the Peel Inlet Management Authority is, under the terms of the Waterways Conservation Act, required to deliver a report to the Minister. The Minister, in turn, is required to have it laid on the Table of the House. I can see nothing in section 43 of the Act giving the Minister the right to demand that the section of the report be withdrawn. Even if the report were withdrawn, there are several other areas where the same sort of argument could be presented, where perhaps the Minister could have said that those particular passages should be withdrawn. I refer to the comments about the financial affairs of the Peel Inlet Management Authority where the chairman states quite clearly that the authority was disappointed with the total lack of support by the supply of funds in order to carry out the necessary work. Section 43 (2) states that "Except in so far as the reference is commendatory, no particulars relating to any individual business shall be disclosed in the report of the proceedings of the Commission laid before Parliament."

Mr Laurance interjected.

Mr COWAN: I do not see the difference. I cannot see how the Minister can claim that an apparent lack of interest is a discussion of individual business.

Mr Pearce: Of course you cannot.

Mr COWAN: If the Minister is to take exception to things like that and then use those powers as a Minister to demand they be withdrawn, he should be prepared to accept the consequences. He should be prepared to allow the Parliament to get to the facts.

The Deputy Premier has already said that we have been debating a lot of innuendos. The member for Morley spoke about this place being the House of Government. That is true; but I ask the question: To whom is the Government responsible? The answer is: Two bodies; that is, the public and this Parliament.

Surely, if it is not satisfied with the actions of the Government or a Minister of the Government, this Parliament has the right to make some demands which are quite within the Standing Orders. That is precisely what this amendment does. The Deputy Premier has tacitly agreed with us inasmuch as he has said that there have been too many innuendos. Unfortunately he is not prepared to allow us to obtain the facts from the horse's mouth.

Mr Pearce: The "horse" could well be unparliamentary these days.

Mr COWAN: Similarly, the Deputy Premier has claimed that the Government no longer is responsible to this Parliament.

Mr Rushton: I did not claim that.

Mr COWAN: The Deputy Premier did.

Mr Rushton: You are not always accurate.

Mr COWAN: As parliamentarians, we in the National Party are not prepared to allow the tail to wag the dog. We would like to know precisely what is behind these allegations.

I do not accept for one moment the comment of the Minister that we are discussing a draft report. It was a report the authority was required to send to the Minister, and the Minister in his turn was required to have it tabled. Because he found something he did not particularly like, he set out to do his utmost to have it withdrawn. He latched onto a subsection in section 43, which, to my way of thinking, has a very tenuous explanation.

Mr Laurance: What you ought to remember is the Minister did not have it withdrawn.

Mr COWAN: Why did not someone say that? No-one who has been speaking on this debate, on this side of the House—and that includes the present Minister for Conservation and the Environment—has said the previous Minister did not have that particular item in the report withdrawn. If the Minister wishes to say so now he may do so by way of interjection.

Mr Laurance: Certainly. The Premier and I said it referred to the Waterways Commission and section 43 (2) of the Act. The Commission said it is not right under the section and were going to remove that paragraph.

Mr COWAN: The Minister is saying that is not a demand by a Minister?

Several members interjected.

Mr Laurance: He referred it back to them.

Several members interjected.

Mr COWAN: The Minister is saying that was not a demand by a Minister.

Mr Laurance: Certainly not. How can it be so construed? Have you read section 43 (2)? It was *ultra vires* the Act.

Mr COWAN: The whole question before the House deals with that particular problem and we have to decide whether it was *ultra vires* the Act. The Minister has decided it was *ultra vires*.

Mr Laurance interjected.

Mr COWAN: All the Minister is saying to me, in a slightly changed way, is that the Minister directed that it be withdrawn because he believed it to be *ultra vires* the Act.

Several members interjected.

Mr COWAN: To my way of thinking that is a very thinly veiled way of saying the previous Minister directed the authority to withdraw that particular phrase. I rather think that the reputation of the Minister in this place is such that the words of any other person would be more acceptable than the words of the Minister.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Mr Laurance: You may regret that.

Mr COWAN: That is not a comment I make very lightly. Members would be aware that I do not make too many derogatory comments.

Several members interjected.

Mr COWAN: Is the Minister telling me he will violate his ministerial oath in the future.

Mr Laurance: Would you like to repeat that?

Mr COWAN: As far as I am concerned I would like to hear the Minister repeat that oath. I think members of this Parliament would like to hear the facts of the matter, as they were brought about, from the person who instigated this action; that is, the previous Minister.

If we support this amendment we can do that. All I am saying to this House is that the Government is responsible to the Parliament and if the Parliament wishes to exercise its responsibility it will support this amendment.

MR BRIAN BURKE (Balcatta—Leader of the Opposition) [8.20 p.m.]: The Opposition is not highly excited by the amendment moved by the National Party; nevertheless it has no objection to it and intends to support it, if only on the basis that it is one way in which we can arrive at what is the truth.

We have seen the Minister flee to the refuge of his interpretation of a particular section of the Act and to a reference to what was deleted from that paragraph of the report. We have heard the Minister say, time and time again, that it was an obligation on his predecessor to refer to the authority the fact that it was a confidential Cabinet discussion and that it had no rightful place in the report. I will quote one of the paragraphs that was deleted. It states—

Dr Hodgkin visited the authority on several occasions during the year to inform members of the progress of the study and once again the authority wishes to express its gratitude to Dr Hodgkin for his continuing contact.

How does that disclose anything about a confidential Cabinet briefing? Of course it does not.

Mr Cowan: Where is it derogatory?

Mr Laurance: It has nothing to do with that.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: One of the deletions most certainly does not comply with the criteria laid down by the Minister himself, and not only that, the Minister in trying to accuse me of misleading the House, also has failed fundamentally to understand what the Statute says. It does not say that a draft report, upon tabling in this House, becomes a report. It says that the authority shall report to the Minister, and that is what was done.

Mr Laurance: It is not a report to the public until it is tabled.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I remind the Minister that I have the right of reply and I will deal with him in due course. I wish to speak briefly to the amendment now before us and to vote to support that amendment.

I will re-emphasise what I have said. The statement speaks about a report being made to the Minister—not a submission being made to the Minister that becomes a report when it is tabled; not a draft being made to the Minister that becomes a report when it is tabled; and not a document being lodged with the Minister that becomes a report when it is tabled, but a report that is a report upon its receipt by the Minister. This Minister's predecessor understands that only too well because in this morning's paper he was quoted as saying, "When I saw the first copies of the report . . ." and on television tonight he said, "When I received the report . . .".

He did not say, "When I received a draft", "When I received a document," or, "When I received a submission" it would become a report

when it was tabled. He said, "When I received the report . . ." So, that defence is not available to the Minister and if the Minister wishes to use other defences or recourse then they do not apply to that paragraph I have read which was one that was deleted from the report.

If the Minister wishes to maintain that it is a draft report, I cannot convince him he is wrong. I can tell members in this place that I am telling the truth and the photocopy that was taken of the page of the report in question shows very clearly the spiralex binding that was the same binding on the report that was tabled in this House on 18 March.

Mr MacKinnon: With your knowledge of the fact that it was taken.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I had no knowledge of the photocopy being taken until a considerable number of weeks after it had been done.

Mr MacKinnon: Rubbish!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am not interested whether the Minister believes me—it is the truth. I am more interested in hearing the Minister's substantial defence to what is proving to be a highly improper action on the part of the previous Minister.

A lot of what has been said about the former Minister has been at the behest of the Minister and if the Minister in this place is so sure that they are telling the truth then let him call the previous Minister to the Bar of the House and let him tell the truth.

Mr Trethowan: Do you support the principle of bringing a Minister from one House to explain his action before the Bar of the other House?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am perfectly prepared to support the Standing Orders in this Chamber and would suggest to the member for East Melville that if he does not agree with them he should move to change them. I remind him that Standing Orders provide for what is proposed by the National Party so I do not take objection at all to the proposition that is in this amendment. I do take objection to Ministers such as the Minister for Conservation and the Environment being afraid to face up to what is the truth and being only too willing to attempt to mislead people in this place and then to vote against an occurrence which will prove whether he is telling the truth.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

	Ayes 20
Mr Barnett	Mr Jamieson
Mr Bertram	Mr McIver
Mr Brian Burke	Mr Parker
Mr Carr	Mr Pearce
Mr Cowan	Mr Stephens
Mr Davies	Mr A. D. Taylor
Mr Evans	Mr I. F. Taylor
Mr Harman	Mr Tonkin
Mr Gordon Hill	Mr Wilson
Mr Hodge	Mr Bateman

(Teller)

	Noes 25
Mr Blaikie	Mr McPharlin
Mr Clarko	Mr Mensaros
Mr Court	Mr Rushton
Mr Coyne	Mr Sibson
Mrs Craig	Mr Sodeman
Mr Crane	Mr Spriggs
Mr Grayden	Mr Trethowan
Mr Grewar	Mr Tubby
Mr Hassell	Mr Watt
Mr Herzfeld	Mr Williams
Mr P. V. Jones	Mr Young
Mr Laurance	Mr Nanovich
Mr MacKinnon	

(Teller)

	Pairs	
		Noes
Mr T. H. Jones	Mr O'Connor	
Mr Terry Burke	Mr Old	
Mr Bridge	Mr Shalders	
Mr Bryce	Dr Dadour	

Amendment thus negatived.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park) [8.29 p.m.]: I am surprised that the Government did not take the opportunity to let the Parliament hear exactly what has gone on with this rather unusual business. The Government has adopted the classic tactic of not trying to answer the debate.

Mr Cowan: You could not have that.

Mr DAVIES: Instead of replying to the debate the Government has been prepared to besmirch the character of any person who is in any way associated with the handling of this report. Government members have been trying to blackguard the people in the office of the Leader of the Opposition and I would not be surprised if they tried to censor anything that is photocopied in this House.

This is a situation that we are coming to expect with the way this Government handles the business of the Parliament which it wants to keep away from the Parliament. We have every right to move the motion tonight and we would expect that the Premier, young in the office as he is, would be prepared to say that he fully supports all the principles of the Westminster system and to say that there was not going to be any hanky panky with any of his Ministers. We did not get

any of our questions answered. It is a matter of great concern to us.

The Government has tried to cloud the issue by making various statements which seem contradictory to me. The Minister's first reply was that the section was withdrawn from the report because it was a Cabinet decision following a Cabinet discussion and therefore was confidential. Had that been so, we might have accepted it, but, of course, we found out that it was not so. It was a briefing of Ministers and those Ministers showed amazing lack of interest and, as a result of that, the Chairman of the Peel Inlet Management Authority felt obliged to say so in his annual report.

If the Government were in the clear and its hands were not dirty in this matter, one would think it would easily be able to prove it. It could say how many of the original copies of the report were printed and their cost. It would be able to tell us how many copies were distributed and how many had been distributed before the Government decided it would ask for them to be returned.

For the Minister to claim that a document is not public until it is tabled in the House is sheer and utter nonsense because, as he and all Government members would know, from time to time we have complained that documents have not been made available to the Opposition until they have been made public or until a complaint has been raised. Obviously, the Government has decided on this issue. It knows the instruction that has been issued about our getting a copy of reports. As soon as it was decided to make it public we received our copy.

We did not receive a copy of the Dixon report until after we read about it in the newspaper. We should have received copies of other similar reports which we did not. By the same token, there are many other occasions when we have received reports at the same time as they have been made public. It is sheer and utter nonsense—

Mr Hassell: Which Dixon report are you talking about?

Mr DAVIES:—and a lamentable excuse.

Mr Hassell: Which Dixon report?

Mr DAVIES: The one on prostitution.

Mr Hassell: It was delivered to the Leader of the Opposition—

Mr DAVIES: I am sorry about that. I thought from the rather odd comment that the Minister made at the time—

Mr Hassell: —on the day it was published.

Mr DAVIES: —when he claimed that the Leader of the Opposition had criticised the Dixon report without reading it that—

Mr Hassell: He did.

Mr DAVIES: I took it for granted that we did not have a copy of the report.

Mr Hassell: You got a copy of the report when it was tabled.

Mr DAVIES: Of course, the criticism of that report could have been written before the inquiry was held.

Mr Hassell: No doubt it was! You gave that one away!

Mr DAVIES: It was done accurately. It was the simplest thing in the world to forecast what the findings of that committee would be.

That is getting away from the point about the Waterways Commission. The Government has done nothing to tell us what procedure was followed or when it discovered the paragraph in the report that it did not like. I should imagine that this report which was written by the chairman (Mr O. H. Tuckey) would have been considered by every member of the committee. I won't state all the stars of that committee because the cast is quite lengthy. I would have thought the committee would look at the report before the chairman submitted his final copy to the Chairman of the Waterways Commission.

I remind the House that it is a report of the Waterways Commission, the Leschenault Estuary Management Committee, the Peel Inlet Management Authority, and the Swan River Management Authority. It is the combined reports of those three authorities. There is also an overriding report from the Chairman of the Waterways Commission.

The part about which we are complaining and which was fiddled with related to the Peel Inlet Management Authority. Before that report was published in its final form it would have gone through the hands of many people. It is London to a brick on that all members of the Peel Inlet Management Authority had the report before it was submitted to the Waterways Commission. They had not taken umbrage at anything that was in it and would have been quite happy to see it published because they thought it was a proper report of the activities of the commission and an accurate finding on the reaction of the Government Ministers—the Minister for Conservation and the Environment in particular—to the findings involving a very important part of their area of jurisdiction.

A lot of work had been put into that aspect of their studies in relation to the Peel Inlet management programme; indeed, it is one of the most vital sections of the authority's work. Surely, the name itself indicates that the Peel Inlet management programme would be the most vital part of the authority's work. It would have been okayed by each and every member of the committee, irrespective of who read the report, and it would have been passed on to the Waterways Commission. I am certain that before it was published in its final form it would have been read by each member of the commission and it would have gone through to the Department of Conservation and Environment in its completed form. I point out that it was addressed to the then Minister although the Minister may not even have seen it until it came out in the "first edition".

He would have received it. Neither he nor the department has to vet it. The authority vets it. Subsequently, the commission vets the report and it is sent to the Minister because the Act demands that each year the authority must report on its activities to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment. The Minister probably got it roughly at the same time as it was released to everybody else and said, "My goodness! This is not good enough for me. They have had the temerity to criticise me in it." He then asked for the report to be withdrawn so it could be corrected.

There is not the slightest doubt that the first edition of the report was exactly the same as the second edition except that it had the paragraph marked "(e)" from the report of the Peel Inlet Management Authority deleted from it and all subsequent paragraphs had been renumbered. It was as simple as that.

All we ask is: Who asked for that report to be taken out? Who asked for that very important, indeed crucial, portion of the report to be taken out? We are asking the Premier. At this stage we are not attacking the Minister. Will the Premier give us any undertakings in regard to it?

In the first paragraph, the motion expresses alarm at the actions of a Minister of the Crown in causing the alteration of a report to Parliament to prevent public criticism of him by one of the statutory authorities for which he was responsible.

There is not the slightest doubt that that authority was quite happy to criticise the Minister because it was perturbed with the subcommittee of Cabinet Ministers, or Government—call it what one likes—which showed such little interest in its major work for the year. That upset them. The people concerned were so upset about it that

they felt it was time they mentioned it and they did so.

Other people must have vetted it, if the usual procedure was followed, and when it was presented to the Minister, he decided he was not going to take it. He took a very unusual step. I have never heard of its being done before. He withdrew a report that already had been made public. If someone was given a report and then asked for it back, one would wonder what was wrong with it and why it was wanted back again. It was a properly bound report with coloured photographs and took the same form as the second edition. One wonders why it was recalled. I can never remember its being done before. I can recall papers being adjusted after they have been tabled, followed always by public outcry. I do not think that has been done for many years.

When the Leader of the Opposition's office received the request for the report to be sent back, any clerk with a bit of sense would say, "I will take a copy of this because they must be wanting it for some particular reason." Of course, now we know what the reason was. Someone in the Minister's office had had time to read the report and did not like what he read, even if it was the truth.

We have expressed our concern and have asked the Premier to state where he stands in this matter and whether he supports the Westminster system and believes that Ministers should have the right to demand that work presented to them by a proper authority—an autonomous body—should in any way be fiddled with to save him embarrassment.

I wonder who the other Ministers were who were or were not at the briefing and who have been obliquely criticised in paragraph "(e)". We will never know that. The Government has not offered to tell us. It has made no excuses and does not feel it is able to give us any information. The best we can get from it is innuendos and half-baked truths. I cannot say it is telling lies, but the Government is certainly giving us half-baked truths. I have received so many from the Government over the past several years that I have come to expect them. There is not the slightest doubt that on this occasion the Government is running for cover.

Would it not have been the decent thing for the Premier to say, "Look, he has made a blue here. I do not know why he did it. He is an experienced Minister, but I will see it does not happen again", and the whole matter could have finished there and then? Instead of that, the Government denies it ever happened.

Why does the Government not tell us how many copies of the first edition were printed, what the cost of them was, or to whom they were distributed? These are the things that could very quickly put our minds at ease, but our minds are at anything but ease at the present time. We have had no answers whatsoever from the Premier and we have received no answer from the present Minister or any of his supporters. Surely, it must be a matter of embarrassment to them. Surely they would want to put the record right. Is it trying to turn itself into a Canberra Parliament? According to the radio programme "AM" this morning, there are in that Government 17 Ministers who have been under some kind of question mark since Mr Fraser took office. Seventeen is a very good record. Are we trying to outdo it in this Parliament? Are we suggesting that that is another record we want to break? I certainly hope not.

This is a simple motion that should be supported right through the Parliament because we are concerned that autonomous bodies, when they feel it incumbent on them to make statements about Ministers who may have been insensitive at the time, as they certainly were on this occasion, should do so when they are sincere about those statements.

I want to congratulate the staff who picked up the fiddling that went on in this report. It is not the kind of thing with which this Parliament wants to be associated, and yet it is being endorsed by the present Minister for Conservation and the Environment, the Premier, and the Deputy Premier, who has not in any sensible way attempted to answer the questions put to him.

Let these people tell us what was the procedure. Let them give us answers to the questions I have raised. If they can do all that, I am quite certain we will ask for the motion to be withdrawn; but until we get some answers to those questions, until we get an assurance from the Government and especially from the Premier that Ministers fiddling with the reports of autonomous bodies just to save Ministers from embarrassment or for any reason whatsoever will not be tolerated, we will support wholeheartedly the motion before the House.

MR BRIAN BURKE (Balcatta—Leader of the Opposition) [8.46 p.m.]: This Parliament has turned into something of a shambles, and if members want any extra evidence of that fact, let them consider the Government's attitude towards tonight's debate. The Premier stayed for five minutes—

Mr Rushton: You know very well what the Premier is doing. Do not start your old tricks again.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: —to confront what can be seen only as a censure motion on his Government. After a shambling sort of reply he took his leave and we have not seen him since.

I will tell the Deputy Premier what the Premier is doing. I will be only too happy to do that because I was supposed to be at the same place. However, in view of the fact that a virtual censure motion was being moved here, I thought that this was more properly my place to be tonight rather than at the official opening of some building. That is where the Premier is, so the Deputy Premier should not tell me not to start my tricks.

Mr Rushton: That is what you are doing.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I have just told members what I believe is the right and proper place for the Premier at a time that his Government is under censure.

Mr MacKinnon: Oh cut it out.

Mr Pearce: Sir Charles Court would have been sitting in that chair.

Mr Young: Ridiculous!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: We had a shambling five minute reply from the Premier who then took his leave and has not returned.

Mr MacKinnon: Because it is a matter of no importance.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Then, in reply to the amendment moved by the National Party, we saw the Deputy Premier at his very worst.

Mr Rushton: You did not expect any more than a short reply.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: He uttered about seven sentences, and the ones that had nouns did not have verbs and the ones that had verbs lacked nouns. That is par for the course for the Deputy Premier.

Mr Barnett: Some did not have either!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: A shambling, sorry apology for a reply was given by the Deputy Premier and it lasted for three minutes.

Mr Blaikie: What about making a speech.

Mr Rushton: Personal abuse—that is all you do.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: After a poor old reply from the Premier, we had a speech from the Minister for Conservation and the Environment. That was the worst speech we have heard in this place for many years. I have been here for nine years, and I have never heard a Minister involve

himself in the personal denigration of public servants in the way that this Minister did tonight.

Mr MacKinnon: How often have you heard a Leader of the Opposition do that?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Minister referred to a grubby clerk. I know that as soon as he said it he could have bitten his tongue.

Mr Laurance: Not at all.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I could see from the expression on his face that he was sorry he said it—

Mr Laurance: He was carrying out your instructions.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: —but that is no excuse. The Minister may well squirm, but he said it. He said that a grubby clerk—

Mr Laurance: You have 42 minutes.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: He attacked a man who is not here to defend himself. I have not previously seen any Minister in this place mount an attack upon a public servant who is not here to defend himself or herself. If that is not enough evidence of the sort of person this Minister is, we then heard the comments of the member for Merredin. I do not believe any member would deny that the member for Merredin never indulges in personal abuse. No-one could say honestly that the member for Merredin indulges in personal vilification.

Mr MacKinnon: You could not say that about the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Tonight we heard the member for Merredin say that had the words that were spoken come from anybody else's mouth in this Chamber, they might be believed, but coming from this Minister's mouth, there was not one chance in the world that they could or should be believed.

Mr Laurance: Completely improper abuse.

Mr Wilson: Squirm.

Mr Laurance: You have 41 minutes to explain your actions.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Is it not strange how the wheel turns? We on this side of the House are confronted increasingly by what appears to be an ineffective opposition. I am not referring so much to the back-bench Government members, but if the Ministers look at themselves and the way in which they are comforting themselves, they will see they are beginning to act as though they are an Opposition. I have never seen such behaviour before.

Mr MacKinnon: We could never do it as well as you.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I would like members to cast their minds back a few days to the same Minister's speech when he referred to trees. In a larrikinish sort of way, he looked around and smiled to see if everybody thought he was smart. Tonight he was looking for the approbation of his fellows.

Mr Clarko: You are the slickest smiler ever.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Minister made a half-smart observation, and he then looked around to see if members realised how smart he was.

Mr Wilson: While reading from his Press release.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I have never seen another Minister acting in that fashion. I have seen the Deputy Premier bumble along, not making much sense, but I have never seen the Deputy Premier attempt consistently to demonstrate to his fellows that he is being a smart boy. It is of passing interest to point out that the smartness of this Minister could have been tolerated if he had not been so nasty, and so ungracious towards a public servant, a member of the Premier's Department. This gentleman has served not only the Leaders of the Opposition, Messrs. Tonkin, Davies, Jamieson, and Burke, but also the former Premier, (Sir Charles Court), and he is a man about whom no-one has previously had cause to level criticism or to lay complaint.

Tonight, in the first incident of its kind, we heard this Minister call that public servant a grubby clerk. It is absolutely disgraceful. When I first heard the Minister speaking, I thought two things. Firstly, I thought he was absolutely devoid of anything to say, and as the Speaker said so rightly at the time, if he were to carry on in that manner, control of the House would be difficult to exercise. Secondly, I thought that there was not much point in my being angry with this Minister because he was really acting in a superficial smart-aleck way.

Mr Clarko: That is how you act all the time.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Opposition does not retreat one inch from the motion which has been moved and which reads as follows—

That this House expresses its alarm at the actions of a Minister of the Crown in causing the alteration of a report to Parliament to prevent public criticism of him by one of the statutory authorities for which he was responsible.

Further, this House calls on the Premier to condemn the Minister's actions and to affirm that it is his government's policy that it is

unacceptable behaviour for a Minister to direct statutory authorities to suppress criticism of the performance of a government or a Minister.

That is a sensible motion. It reflects accurately what has happened, and apart from saying that I hope members realise that if they vote against it they vote against one of the traditions of the House, I want to briefly answer one or two of the points raised that not much sense has been made.

If members cast their minds back to the arguments of the Minister for Conservation and the Environment they will recall that he said that because something was *ultra vires* the Act the former Minister was bound to take certain action and then a moment later he said that the Minister did not cause the alterations to be made. Another moment later he said it was a draft report anyway, and it was the former Minister's job to cause the alterations to be made if the report was wrong. A moment or two after that he said that the former Minister, his predecessor, really had not done anything except what he was obliged to do under the Act.

The Minister's arguments were full of contradictions. The former Minister either caused the alterations or he did not. If he caused the alterations either he was justified in doing so, morally or legally, or he was not. It was either a draft report or it was not a draft report. On those three bases the argument used by the Minister for Conservation and the Environment does not make sense.

When the former Minister for Conservation and the Environment was questioned, he said it was not a draft report, so where does this Minister get off by saying it was? In the Press this morning the former Minister said, "When I saw the first copy of the report," and yet this Minister wants to say it was a draft report. Who is telling the truth—the former Minister or the present Minister?

Mr Laurance: Your last speaker called it a first edition. You can call it what you like.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The time for evasion is past. Who is telling the truth—the former Minister who says it was not a draft or the present Minister who says it is?

Mr Young: You are not telling the truth.

Point of Order

Mr PEARCE: On a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Watt), I hope you heard that interjection.

Mr Blaikie: What is your point of order?

Mr PEARCE: Do you require assistance from the member over there, Mr Acting Speaker?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Watt): No, I do not require assistance.

Mr PEARCE: The Speaker has already ruled tonight about parliamentary language. When the Leader of the Opposition asked who was telling the truth, the Minister for Health said that the Leader of the Opposition was not telling the truth.

Mr Young: I said I knew he wasn't.

Mr PEARCE: That does not matter; that is tantamount to calling someone a liar. In accordance with a ruling given in this House just a few hours ago, Mr Acting Speaker, I believe a withdrawal from the Minister for Health would be in order.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I rule that the use of the expression that somebody is not telling the truth does not warrant a point of order.

Mr Pearce: Let us have the real Speaker back then.

Withdrawal of Remark

The ACTING SPEAKER: I ask the member for Gosnells to withdraw that remark.

Mr PEARCE: Mr Acting Speaker—

The ACTING SPEAKER: I ask the member for Gosnells to withdraw the remark.

Mr PEARCE: There needs to be some consistency in rulings.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I have asked the member for Gosnells to withdraw the remark, and he must do so without qualification.

Mr PEARCE: I withdraw the remark; nevertheless there must be some consistency of rulings. The Speaker has ruled out of order the comment that you said was in order, but if that comment was wrong on the earlier occasion, surely it is wrong now. Because the person in the Chair has changed, surely that does not mean we can change rulings.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Brian Burke: It is easy—

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Just before the member for Gosnells resumes his seat, if we are to get down to what I consider to be nit-picking in terms of words which may or may not be used—

Mr Pearce: I agree with that.

The ACTING SPEAKER: —the tenor of the place will become intolerable.

Mr Pearce: We all agree.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I was not in the Chamber when the earlier ruling was given, but I understand that the Speaker also admonished the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for interjecting while he was on his feet and I take the same attitude. As far as I am concerned, it is quite acceptable for somebody to use the expression, "You have not told the truth", and as I understand it that is what the member for Gosnells is asserting the Minister for Health has said. To accuse somebody of dishonesty has been ruled to be unacceptable, and I agree with that. The use of the words "liar" or "lie" is unacceptable, and I agree with that. However, if we are to rule against every conceivable word of this nature, we will never get anywhere.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

Mr BRIAN BURKE: It would be advisable for you, Sir, to check what was said by your superior, the Speaker, because it appears that you are at odds.

Mr Clarko: Interestingly the member for Gosnells had the same argument and the same view.

Mr Pearce: I agree with that.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The member for Karrinyup is quite right, but he fails to appreciate that the member for Gosnells was pointing out the contradictory nature of the way in which the Standing Orders were being applied.

Mr Clarko: I appreciate that, but I am making the point that you are so good at making.

Mr Young interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The remark by the Minister for Health worries me not one whit, but it is symptomatic of the way in which this Government seems to be losing its grip.

Mr Young: You have been raving all night. You have not made one single point. After about four hours you are now floundering desperately and you object to the fact that, once, I made the comment that you cannot lie straight in bed. Now, fair crack of the whip!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: If I am floundering so badly, I wonder why the Minister for Health does not continue to permit me to do so, because that would seem to me to be the greatest conviction were I to be guilty. Nevertheless, the Minister for Health did not contribute to the debate and he has his hands full with the shadow Minister, as always. The Minister for Conservation and the Environment did contribute and we heard him contradict his successor, because the previous Minister said it was not a draft report and this Minister said that it was. Now, who is telling the truth? That is all I ask.

Mr Laurance: The correct report was the one that was tabled.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: It is now a "correct report." Are we talking about a draft report or a correct report? Does the Minister still maintain it was a draft? No, he does not.

Mr Laurance: The member for Victoria Park called it a "first edition." If he wants to call it a "first edition," I will agree with that.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I suppose we can ask this Minister whether he has now changed his stance from labelling it a "draft" to a "first edition".

Mr Laurance: I am saying you could give any of those names to any document which has not been tabled in this Parliament.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I do not know how this Minister can continue to stay in this Chamber and look people in the eye.

Mr Young: I do not think you have done very well tonight.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: It is absolutely unbelievable to see the way in which the Minister for Conservation and the Environment has attempted to twist and evade being hoist with his own petard, because he cannot blame anyone but himself for the things he has said.

Mr Laurance: This little episode has tainted your charisma.

Mr Young: He never had any! If he did, it has certainly gone now.

Mr Laurance: You are in trouble!

Mr Young: Everyone knows it except he!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Remarks such as those being made by the Minister remind me of people who telephone others and threaten to shoot them. I always wonder why they make the threat, rather than go ahead and shoot the person. The Minister for Conservation and the Environment and the Minister for Health, in their constant attempts somehow or other to chip into the debate—in the case of the Minister for Health, without his rising from his backside—make me wonder what they have to fear.

Mr Young: I think we are seeing the beginning of the collapse. We have seen it coming for a while. You are really opening wide. Just because you are paranoid does not mean they are not going to get you!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I have never seen a member like the Minister who lives his paranoia.

Mr Pearce: The "Minister for High-rise"!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: We have said that, as far as we are concerned, we do not retreat one step from the motion we have moved. The

Government's performance has been less than appropriate in that the Premier stayed for five minutes and then deserted the House.

Mr Laurance: You have said that.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I do not know whether the Minister listens—

Mr Laurance: That is tedious repetition.

Mr BRIAN BURKE:—but I point out that I said previously I intended to re-emphasise one or two points. I can keep doing that, if the Minister keeps interjecting.

Mr Laurance: That is tedious repetition.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Deputy Premier, in a five-minute rejection of the motion, provided his usual sterling effort which was far from what was appropriate. However, that sort of performance indicates the way in which the Premier and the Deputy Premier see the conduct of this House.

The really disgraceful situation tonight was the way in which the Minister for Conservation and the Environment stooped so low as to insult and degrade a public servant who was not here, who could not defend himself, and whom the Minister took the liberty to label a "grubby clerk." I say again that, when the Minister made that remark, I could see from his expression that he wished he had not made it, but the fact is that it was made and the Minister's regret does not relieve him of the burden of his having done such a disgraceful thing.

The Opposition urges members to support the motion.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 20

Mr Barnett	Mr Jamieson
Mr Bertram	Mr McIver
Mr Brian Burke	Mr Parker
Mr Carr	Mr Pearce
Mr Cowan	Mr Stephens
Mr Davies	Mr A. D. Taylor
Mr Evans	Mr I. F. Taylor
Mr Harman	Mr Tonkin
Mr Gordon Hill	Mr Wilson
Mr Hodge	Mr Bateman

(Teller)

Noes 25

Mr Blaikie	Mr McPharlin
Mr Clarko	Mr Mensaros
Mr Court	Mr Rushton
Mr Coyne	Mr Sibson
Mrs Craig	Mr Sodeman
Mr Crane	Mr Spriggs
Mr Grayden	Mr Trethowan
Mr Grewar	Mr Tubby
Mr Hassell	Mr Watt
Mr Herzfeld	Mr Williams
Mr P. V. Jones	Mr Young
Mr Laurance	Mr Nanovich
Mr MacKinnon	

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes
Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Terry Burke
Mr Bridge
Mr Bryce

Noes

Mr O'Connor
Mr Old
Mr Shalders
Dr Dadour

Question thus negatived.

Motion defeated.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

STAMP AMENDMENT BILL

Assent

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Bill.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: TENTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed from 8 April.

MR STEPHENS (Stirling) [9.29 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to welcome the member for Nedlands and the member for Swan to this House. I trust that they will find their time here rewarding and that they will apply themselves to the interests of the people they represent.

I acknowledge the contribution Sir Charles Court made to this State. As my colleague said the other day, history will be the final arbiter of what that contribution was; it is not for me to stand in judgment. However, I refer briefly to one area in which I believe he made errors.

As the Minister for Industrial Development, Sir Charles Court would have to take his share of the responsibility for the development of the Pilbara. As early as 1964 before any contribution had commenced, a proposal was put to the Government for a single trunk railway line, to service the iron ore mines, terminating at the coast. This entire concept would have had the effect of reducing operating expenses and enabling freight rates to Japan and Europe to be considerably reduced. However, apparently the proposal was not acceptable because in the meantime we have seen the development of many railways, and three or four ports. I can only guess at the added capital cost of that diversification of ports, and the extra railway track laid.

In about 1970 a firm proposal was put forward for a downhill railway through the Fortescue Valley with a new port to be developed at Ronsard Island. Such a port would have enabled loads of up to 250 000 tonnes to be exported. I have it on reasonable authority that if we had ships of that capacity operating now, we could

reduce freight rates by \$4 per tonne to Japan and \$8 per tonne to Europe. On a 250 000 tonne shipment, that works out at a saving of about \$1 million per shipment to Japan and \$2 million per shipment to Europe. This would have the effect of putting our iron ore industry in a much more competitive position than it is in today and also would reduce our reliance on the Japanese market.

I know the hour is late, but I hope it is not too late for this Government to direct its energies and attention to developing that concept so that we can take advantage of the reduced energy consumption in getting the ore to the coast in the first instance, and also in a reduction of shipping costs. I hope the Premier and the Minister for Mines will give urgent consideration to this concept.

I congratulate the new Premier, and wish him well. He has taken over at a very difficult time for the Government, and for the Liberal Party. The political pendulum is swinging against the Liberal Party not only in Western Australia, but also throughout the country. If the results of recent elections and by-elections in the Eastern States, and of opinion polls, are anything to go by, the political pendulum has swung right against the Liberal Party. It will take great initiative and courageous action by the Premier to correct that swing.

One of the reasons for the lack of public support is that the Federal Government, and Liberal State Governments, have tended to lack responsiveness to the attitude of the public. After all, politicians and Governments are put into power by the people, and if we fail to be responsive to their attitudes and feelings, it is only natural there will be a reaction against the Government of the day.

If the present Premier is prepared to allow this Parliament to work more along the lines that it should, it would go a long way towards correcting that swing. I suggest the Premier take notice of the opinions advanced by the National Party and, even, by the Opposition and, in this way, allow Parliament to function as it was originally intended to function; namely, as a consensus of views of those people elected to represent the various electorates within the State. We should stop regarding Parliament purely and simply as a rubber stamp for the Executive—an Executive which tends to get out of touch with the people even more quickly than the ordinary, elected member of Parliament.

In saying that, I am not being ultracritical of the Executive. I realise that in this day and age,

with the complexity and sophistication of modern life, Ministers must get through a considerable amount of paper work each day and they may develop tunnel vision, be subject to their advisers, and get out of touch with the public.

What I am trying to say is that members of Parliament should stop playing party politics, and start governing in the interests of the State. The Liberal Party must recognise that all wisdom does not emanate from its ranks, and that if a person has a point of view contrary to that of the Liberal Party he is not necessarily wrong. Members should make their own decisions, and vote on the various issues as they see them. If that means a member finishes up on the same side of the House as another party, it does not mean he is necessarily voting with that party; it means he is making a decision on a particular issue before the House, in the interests of the people he represents and, hopefully, in the interests of the State.

One area where I believe party politics have been to the fore is that of industrial relations. Industrial disputation has a great impact on our society and has the effect of increasing costs and disrupting services, to the inconvenience of the public. The two major political parties in this House tend to adopt polarised views on this matter. That, in itself, is not in the interests of resolving the problem. We must acknowledge that unions play an important role in our society, and will continue to play an important role. However, unions should direct their attention more to protecting the wages and conditions of their members; they should never attempt to usurp the power of an elected Government. It is this abuse of power which is of such concern to the public and which, in itself, can create industrial relations problems.

In recent years, we have seen instances of unions abusing their power, with great impact on different sections of our society. We have seen unions attempt to defy the laws of supply and demand by suggesting we should not export live sheep. I admit that particular union organisation had a right in the interests of its members to put forward its point of view. However, having put it forward for consideration, it did not then have the right to take unilateral action against the interests of another section of the community. The same could be said about the grain bans, and the attitude of unions towards the export of uranium. These are areas in which unions are endeavouring to take away the rights of the elected Governments and of sections of the community. There is no question that because of those attitudes, the majority of the public is concerned at the excessive use of union power.

I believe the Liberal Government is aware of the public's concern. However, it has not vigorously tried to get to the root cause of the problem, and overcome it. Rather, it has used the problem at election time for short-term political gain.

Mr Bertram: Hear, hear!

Mr STEPHENS: After seven years of Federal Liberal Government and eight years of State Liberal Government, we still have a serious problem in industrial relations.

Mr Parker: It is worse after that period.

Mr STEPHENS: I do not intend to try to make a judgment on that; however, we would all acknowledge it remains a serious problem. We do not seem to have achieved much in that time.

The previous Premier (Sir Charles Court) was quoted in *The West Australian* of 23 March 1981 under the headline "Premier calls for changes". The article stated—

Ideas for changes to the industrial-relations system were outlined by the Premier, Sir Charles Court, last night.

"The present industrial-relations scheme does not work and there is a rising tide of public support for improvement," Sir Charles said.

One of the major points he made was the need for a full-scale independent inquiry into industrial relations. The National Party was very pleased to read those remarks, because such an inquiry had formed part of National Party policy for some time.

An article in the *News Weekly* of 10 February 1982 quoted remarks made by Mr Viner, in the following terms—

The Federal Government's announcement that it will radically re-shape the legal structure of Australia's industrial relations system, while resulting from an understandable frustration at long-standing industrial disorder, is unlikely to yield its anticipated result.

The article went on to say—

The administration proposes three basic reforms:

- * To encourage industry unions . . .
- * To guarantee "voluntary unionism" by withholding the power of the Arbitration Commission to include union preference clauses in industrial awards; and
- * To enable employers to stand down workers, unable to be employed in the event of any industrial dispute, without the

necessity to seek the insertion of a stand-down order in the award.

I believe all three of those aims are admirable. The matter of voluntary unionism recently has been raised in this State. In fact, only recently the member for South Perth highlighted the fact that voluntary unionism had been a failure in the building industry in Perth.

Even in a small town like Albany where, with its low population, industrial relations generally are very amicable, a situation arose several years ago where a firm told two girls on its staff that unless they joined the union, they would be required to take their severance pay. The owner of the firm was an active member of the Liberal Party, yet he was prepared to break the law of the land in that way. So, our passing legislation in itself is not of much benefit unless the Government which introduced the legislation is prepared to see that it is policed.

The *Sunday Times* of 4 April 1982 under the heading "Strikes are manageable" contained the following statement—

During the week the Federal Minister for Industrial Relations, Mr Viner, revealed that almost a quarter of Australia's industrial disputes last year were caused by managerial policy.

Indeed, managerial policy rated second only to wages as a cause of industrial dispute. Yet I have not heard of any action the Government contemplates taking to try to improve the managerial situation which is causing all those strikes. That was a Liberal Minister for Industrial Relations making those comments.

One must come to the conclusion that the policies of the Federal and State Liberal Governments in the field of industrial relations have failed. This claim is borne out by people who, possibly, are independent of Government. In *The West Australian* of 3 January 1981 under the heading "Court chief sees chinks in industrial role of Government" the following appears—

On the eve of his retirement, Chief Industrial Commissioner B. M. O'Sullivan has criticised the WA Government's handling of industrial relations and aspects of its Industrial Arbitration Act.

That was the retiring chief of the Industrial Commission, who was critical of the lack of proper handling in the industrial relations field.

In the *News Weekly* of 24 March 1982, under a headline "Arbitration system has collapsed", the following appeared—

Mr Justice Robinson of the Arbitration Commission last week demolished some of the shibboleths of industrial relations, saying that Governments had failed to enforce awards, arbitral bodies and unions could not control their "rogue elephants", and no blueprints were available to create industry unions to deal with the problem of demarcation disputes.

Mr Justice Robinson was speaking at a conference in Adelaide. The article went on—

On the question of union amalgamations, Mr Justice Robinson said, "Although there is a general consensus that industry unionism is one of Australia's more pressing needs, no blueprints are available to show how the 31 unions in the oil industry can be reduced to one or two."

It said also—

Mr Justice Robinson said that the Federal Government "talked tough" on industrial relations.

But its reluctance to do more than "speak shrilly while carrying a twig" meant that compulsory arbitration in Australia would remain a myth.

Here we have men who are independent of the Government, and who have come out and indicated the failures in our arbitration system. I am not far wrong in saying that our industrial relations system has failed. To overcome the problem, it needs a bi-partisan approach.

I urge the Government to recognise that if the Federal Government will not do it, the State Government should do it. It should embark upon a full-scale Royal Commission to diagnose the problem. By a full-scale Royal Commission, I mean that the terms of reference should be wide. It should not have one commissioner, but perhaps five commissioners. A research unit should be attached to the commission so that all aspects of unions, union management, employer organisations and management, industrial training, and worker participation could be examined fully. Hopefully the Royal Commission would come up with a blueprint for a fresh start in this very important field.

I do not want the Government to jump in and say that it is not going to be guilty of government by Royal Commissions, as the Premier stated recently on another topic. I refer to a news release on 2 April 1982, as follows—

The Premier, Mr Ray O'Connor, said today that the public was growing tired of attempts by the Leader of the Opposition,

Mr Burke, to reduce democracy to a process of government by Royal Commission.

My point is that there is nothing wrong with Royal Commissions and inquiries. Before any member of the Parliament makes a decision, he should have before him all the facts that it is possible to obtain. Then he could make a sound judgment. That is all we are asking for in our call for a Royal Commission.

The public and everybody in this House are becoming aware of the need to do something. I read an article in *The National Times* on 11 April 1982 under the heading "Business: What's gone wrong?" Among other things, the article contained the following—

... for the first time in Australian history income per capita in Japan will climb above income per capita in Australia.

It went on to say—

And there are other Asian nations on the way. If current growth rates in Singapore and Hong Kong are maintained, by the year 2000 income per capita in both of these countries will be markedly higher than income per capita in Australia.

I am not suggesting for one moment that industrial relations are the sole cause of our problems. However, I am saying industrial relations are a major aspect. In comparisons of our income *per capita* with that of other countries, one can see that we are sliding down the scale. It is important that we get to and do something about it.

I turn to another topic which had an effect on one of my constituents who, until recently, was a shire councillor. The problem highlights the double standards that we adopt in this Parliament. We saw a move to have members of Parliament declare their interests and a suggestion that we should have a declaration of pecuniary interests. That was resisted by at least one section of the House.

Quite frankly, I am prepared to declare my interests. I have nothing to hide. However, in this Parliament we are in a better position to use to our personal advantage knowledge that has been gained than shire councillors would be. Nevertheless, while this Parliament is not prepared to say that members must declare their pecuniary interests, we have passed legislation which requires that particular aspect of local government councils.

Section 174 (1) of the Local Government Act provides—

174. (1) For the purposes of this section, a person shall be regarded as having an interest in a matter if he has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in that matter other than an interest shared in common with the public or the ratepayers of the municipality or the inhabitants of the district of the municipality.

A lot of other subsections qualify that. Quite clearly the Parliament has seen fit to include in the Local Government Act a section which requires councillors to declare their interests in issues before them; yet we in the Parliament are not required to make any such declaration.

In the recent past, this provision of the Act led to a councillor being taken to court by the Local Government Department. I am sorry that the Minister for Local Government is not in her seat, because we had the situation in which the councillor was before the court for five or six alleged offences because he had taken a decision in which it was claimed he had a pecuniary interest. At the time, the councillor was the licensee of a hotel—

Mr Parker: That was not the Federal member for O'Connor, was it?

Mr STEPHENS: No. I point out that this man was not a councillor at the time the licence was granted for the erection of a bottle shop. Most of the problems arose out of the construction of the bottle shop and the closure of a road at one stage, for safety reasons. This led to the councillor's being charged.

Fortunately, the charge was not upheld. It would be fair to say that it was dismissed on a technicality.

Mr Bertram: Most illegal cases are. The law is to do with technicalities.

Mr STEPHENS: When the decisions were made, not one councillor present was unaware that this man was the licensee. He was hiding nothing.

I will go through the various charges laid against the councillor. He was charged with moving for the temporary closure of the street during the construction of the bottle department. The council considered this a necessity because of the amount of building materials that would be in the street during the construction of the building. This was done in the best interests of all concerned. A public interest was involved, because of the safety factor. I can see nothing wrong with the councillor's moving that the street should be closed temporarily; yet that was regarded as an offence under the Act.

On another occasion, the councillor was involved in a committee investigating the purchase of a lot in Denmark by the Totalisator Agency Board. The committee was looking at it with a view to providing additional parking facilities for the town, but certainly it was not to be used as a hotel.

Mr Bertram: Who initiated the prosecution?

Mr STEPHENS: The Local Government Department.

The councillor was a member of that committee; and after investigating the matter, the committee considered such a thing not to be a viable proposition, and recommended to the council accordingly. The councillor actually recommended against the proposal; but that did not alter the situation.

Mrs Craig: I hope you are not suggesting that the department investigated without a formal complaint?

Mr STEPHENS: I am not suggesting that at all. I am not criticising the Minister for not being here earlier. I appreciate she cannot be in the House all the time.

I was making the point with regard to the pecuniary interests of members of Parliament, when local government officers are required to make such declarations.

Mrs Craig: He was required only to declare an interest, which is quite separate from pecuniary interests.

Mr STEPHENS: I will not weary the House by going through all of the charges. I believe that in each instance it could have been held that the interest shared in common with the public or the ratepayers of the municipality, or the inhabitants of the district of the municipality, was a factor. In instance the safety factor that was involved. Surely that was in the interest of the public.

If the Local Government Department wanted to make an issue or hold somebody up as an example, it should have chosen a case other than this one. I for one pleased that the issue was thrown out of court.

Mrs Craig: I think the matter under consideration is whether—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I suggest that the Minister, in assisting the member for Stirling, address the Chair because it will enable the *Hansard* reporter to ensure that her comments are recorded properly.

Mr STEPHENS: The point is that it was most unfortunate. I have raised that as an example of the double standards of this place. We require councillors to declare their interests; but members

of Parliament do not have to declare theirs. Here we have an example which was carried to the extreme—a man who, in the knowledge of all other councillors that he was the licensee of the hotel, did nothing underhand. Most of his actions were in the public interest inasmuch as a safety factor was involved; and yet he was taken to court. It cost the ex-councillor a considerable amount of money. It cannot be said for one moment that he made any personal gain out of it. I reiterate that the licence for the bottle shop had been granted prior to this man becoming a councillor.

Several years ago, in either the Address-in-Reply or the Budget debate I called upon the Government to take action to set up a tribunal to facilitate the correction of false advertising during election campaigns. I made reference to the fact that it was rather peculiar that we had legislation regarding false advertising of goods, but there was no legislation regarding the performance of politicians with respect to false advertising in their election campaigns.

Mr Parker: It would be an even better idea if you could take back the product if you did not like it—return it to the complaints department.

Mr STEPHENS: Rather than have to go through the process of litigation, I called for the establishment of a tribunal which could be approached by any member or party who felt offended by advertising during the campaign. The aggrieved person could go quickly to the tribunal and a decision could be made. If it was held that the advertising was false, a correction would be made in an identical place very quickly. Such a tribunal would tend to prevent people from trying to take advantage of false advertising.

I am sorry that the Government has not taken any notice of that suggestion. Since I made it, we have seen several instances in which, if such a provision was available, we could have overcome problems quite easily.

The first instance to which I refer is one that applied to the National Party in the last State election, when the Minister for Agriculture made reference to the fact that the National Party had defected to the Opposition. That was blatantly false. In the newspaper report, the word "Opposition" had a capital letter. If members check with any reputable authority on this subject they will understand that the official Opposition party is referred to in this way. The advertisement was blatantly false.

We could take no action other than to go through the judicial process. It was eventually held that there was no case to answer. But this

was not on the ground of whether the allegations were right or wrong; it was purely and simply on the fact that we were unable to prove that the Minister for Agriculture actually said those words.

It is a funny situation when those words can come through a telex machine with the identification mark of the National Country Party, be accepted by the journalists of *The West Australian* newspaper that they were from the National Country Party, and in line with statements the Minister for Agriculture had often made in this House, yet when they appeared in the paper it was not enough to prove that the Minister had actually said those words.

Had we had a tribunal the matter could have been quickly resolved without any need for expensive litigation. It could have been resolved to the benefit of the aggrieved parties.

Mr Parker: It is a pity there are no members of the National Country Party to hear this.

Mr STEPHENS: There are no members of the National Country Party in the Parliament. They are merely masquerading as National Country Party members; they are really Liberals.

The same situation was apparent in the last Federal election campaign when the Liberals, apparently quite successfully, ran advertisements claiming that the Democrats always voted with the Labor Party and so a vote for the Democrats was a vote for the Labor Party.

Mr Clarko: They did not say that.

Mr STEPHENS: What did they say?

Mr Clarko: You said they always voted with the Labor Party. It was never claimed that the Democrats always voted with the Labor Party.

Mr STEPHENS: I was not wanting to mislead anyone; I was merely paraphrasing the advertisement. My colleague informs me that the advertisement said that a vote for the Democrats was a vote for the Labor Party.

Mr Clarko: There is a big difference.

Mr STEPHENS: It was grossly misleading.

Mr Cowan: A vote for the Democrats is a vote for the Democrats.

Mr STEPHENS: The advertisements led to litigation, but the case was thrown out of the court, not because there was false advertising, but because under the Act there was no provision to correct the situation. Notwithstanding that, the Liberal Party claimed that the result proved it was right.

In an editorial in *The West Australian* on Wednesday, 25 March 1981, members of the

Liberal Party were taken to task. I quote as follows—

The WA branch president of the Liberal Party, Mr Warner, says that the High Court's ruling vindicates Liberal advertising during last year's Federal election campaign.

I remind members that *The West Australian* is regarded usually as being Liberal-oriented. To continue—

Their comments are as misleading as some of their party's election advertisements were.

If politicians and Parliaments are to have any credibility at all, and if we are to have elections based on honest advertising, it is essential that we move to establish a form of tribunal that quickly can overcome and rectify these sorts of problems which frequently crop up during elections.

Mr Sibson: What about the things you said about pre-schools?

Mr STEPHENS: The member for Bunbury has just woken up.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I suggest the member for Stirling addresses the Chair.

Mr STEPHENS: I will continue to do that and the member for Bunbury can continue to sleep; it will save me from having to listen to his inane interjections.

During this debate several members have referred to decentralisation or, as my colleague has said, the lack of it. It is a subject on which most politicians and political parties have been strong on talk and weak on action. During the remarks made by the member for Albany he mentioned this subject and asked the Government to initiate an inquiry into the costs of establishing communities of perhaps 100 000 in country areas rather than increasing the size of Perth by that number. No such inquiry is necessary as information supporting the idea is well known. Much work of this sort was done in the Eastern States about 12 or 13 years ago.

One of the first speeches I made in this House during my first term in Parliament between 1971 and 1974 referred to research into this subject. Certainly as the city grows the public sector costs grow enormously. We should try to spend money and actively encourage decentralisation rather than spend money providing services which become very costly as the city grows.

If we are to have genuine decentralisation it is essential that the Government should provide far better incentives than it does at present. The \$2 million which is going down the drain on regional administration would be more fruitfully used as

an incentive to encourage industry to country areas.

I remember speaking in a debate and making reference to a malting factory built in Kewdale. In opening that factory the Minister had said that 90 per cent of the production would be exported to Japan. I am interested in the southern part of the State. Albany is the outlet for barley, the prime ingredient of malting, yet that factory was not encouraged to establish in Albany, and this at a time when there was regular shipping from Albany to Japan.

Mr Sibson interjected.

Mr STEPHENS: The member for Bunbury should not bring in red herrings about particle board.

By way of interjection the Minister said that there was good reason for the factory to be built in Kewdale and indicated that the Government could not direct where people should establish factories. By and large I agree with that, but the Government always can offer inducements so that people will establish their factories in country areas to the benefit of the State as a whole.

The same Government and Minister who have said that they cannot direct factories to be established in any particular place are quite happy to stop farmers in my area from clearing land in the interests of the State. So we have a double standard.

Mr MacKinnon: Do you think we should not?

Mr STEPHENS: Perhaps there is need for some control or regulation. However, in one instance the Government says it cannot direct industry to go somewhere, but in the next instance it says it can direct farmers to stop clearing land. Why the double standard?

Mr MacKinnon: They are different issues.

Mr STEPHENS: They are not; they are one of direction.

I question the Government's sincerity on the subject of decentralisation, especially in view of an article in the *Sunday Times* in which reference was made to a silicon plant in Western Australia. I quote as follows—

The State Government will consider a multi million dollar plan to establish a "silicon valley" adjacent to the Western Australian Institute of Technology.

If there is one industry that can be established in the country it is the high technology industry, where the freight factor is very small in relation to the cost of the goods. However, I do not see the Government doing any work or research to get this industry established in the country. Once

again, the industry has been plonked in the city. If the Government were genuine about decentralisation and spreading the population around the State, here is one area to which it would pay more attention.

Mr MacKinnon: Are you going to mention how much money we do give to the Albany area?

Mr STEPHENS: I will tell the Minister something about business in Albany. The Eclipse battery factory, as it is now known, was successful in getting a Government tender. In no small part this was due to my own endeavours. After the first year the contract was relet and it went to an Eastern States firm. Unfortunately, the Eclipse factory was forced to move from Albany to Perth, but that does not alter what I am about to say.

Notwithstanding that this Government has a big campaign to "buy local", within its own tendering system it gives contracts to Eastern States suppliers. That Eastern States supplier submitted a price which can be regarded only as a "dumped" price. So we have the State Government urging people to support local industry while it turns around and gives a Government contract to an Eastern States firm which has offered goods at a "dumped" price. That company has factories in the Eastern States and it supplies goods to the New South Wales Government at a price higher than that for which it supplies goods to the Western Australian Government, which is 2 000-odd miles away, involving extra transport costs. Therefore, it would be difficult to say the price was not a "dumped" price.

I took this matter up with the then Premier and the reply I received was that private companies make their own decisions for reasons best known to themselves. One of the reasons for that company's decision was to break a little Western Australian company. It behoves this Government to give the local companies a contract for the supply of batteries to Western Australian Government departments.

Mr Parker: It refused to get the wool from the Albany Woollen Mills Ltd. for the Education Department.

Mr STEPHENS: With those remarks I support the motion.

MR SODEMAN (Pilbara) [10.12 p.m.]: I realise the hour is moving on, but having returned from a four-week study tour I want to utilise the Address-in-Reply debate to comment briefly on several matters. First of all, I want to thank the Government and the Opposition for making it possible for me to take leave from Parliament. This is the first time I have been to Queensland,

to northern New South Wales, and to New Zealand. It was an eye opener. Being a Western Australian, one of the first things I noticed was the quantity of water those people have, which we do not, and the agricultural potential.

Mr Parker: Did you bring some back?

Mr SODEMAN: I have discovered a few drips on my return!

Although those areas are vastly different climatically and geographically from the Pilbara, there are certain similarities, particularly in the case of northern Queensland. I refer to such things as freight costs, sales tax charged on freight, housing shortages in developing areas, the dissatisfaction and frustration caused by public servants and others being taxed on district allowances, the need for more realistic zone allowances, and so on.

One of the most surprising things was the condition of the Bruce Highway. When I considered the population there and the traffic that travels from Brisbane to Cairns and further north, it amazed me that a bitumen road felt like a gravel road. The impression it left me with is that we are very well served in the north of Western Australia by our major road network.

Secondly, on behalf of Pilbara residents—past, present, and future—I want to pay a tribute to Sir Charles Court. If I were asked what was the greatest thing that I derived from being a member of Parliament, apart from representing a rather unique part of the State, I would say it would be the experience and privilege of working with a person of his calibre.

Whether it was education, health, housing, culture, welfare, interest in church groups, major development, or simply the basic needs of the individual in the street, he had a real knowledge and a very genuine interest. He had an overall in-depth understanding, not only of this State, but also of Australia itself and its role in world affairs and trade.

Sir Charles long will be remembered as one of the greatest ambassadors Western Australia has ever had, as he will be for his unrelenting positive attitudes and vision of what we could be and do, if we all work together.

He and Lady Court gave of themselves unselfishly and I convey my best wishes to them both for a well deserved and enjoyable retirement.

I also convey my best wishes to Sir Charles Court's successor as Premier, the Hon. R. J. O'Connor. No doubt he will carry on in the same high standard that Sir Charles set when he was Premier. From what I have heard since I have

been back, I gather he has already made a favourable impact throughout the State and in my electorate. He seems to be a person very much up with current affairs and he is doing the job.

I would like to convey congratulations to the new member for Nedlands and also to the newly elected member for Swan. The former I wish a long and successful stay in Parliament; with regard to the latter, perhaps if his stay is short-lived I will not be all that disappointed.

A major event to take place last week was the completion in Japan of the North Rankin No. 1 platform jacket. Something in the vicinity of 50 000 tonnes of fabricated steel was placed together in 1½ days outside the scheduled construction period of two years. It took approximately 26 hours to slip onto the barges and is virtually ready to leave for the north-west coast.

It is a major achievement not only in engineering, but also in management. Perhaps it is something from which we could take a lesson here in Australia because our situation is such that we are battling these days to complete a project of a month's duration on time because of our industrial disputes. We leave a lot to be desired and perhaps we should learn a little from the Japanese industry.

It is a pity there is so much negative comment surrounding the North-West Shelf gas project. Having been in the Eastern States for some weeks, I note there is a more positive attitude there about this project, than there is in Western Australia. No doubt the Opposition realises that it can take much of the blame for the negativism when it claims that "the Government is overstating the project and its benefits to the State."

Mr Parker interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat. If the member for Fremantle wishes to take over the role of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition he may do so, but I suggest if he desires to make a comment he should make it from his own seat.

Mr SODEMAN: When he is in Parliament a little longer, the member for Fremantle may appreciate that when it comes to overstating the project and making outlandish statements, a previous Leader of the Labor Party—he was the Premier for three years—spent a great deal of his time attracting headlines which indicated that the North-West Shelf and associated projects would be off the ground in a matter of six to 12 months. I think the North-West Shelf gas project was projected to be an investment of \$8 billion at one

stage and that was what a Leader of the Labor Party saw fit to portray to the State at that time.

Of course, that did not eventuate and it was only after a change of Government federally that something was done. It is improper and hypocritical for members of the Labor Party to say that the project is overstated and for them to criticise it.

Another matter I wish to raise concerns the official opening of the \$3 million Karratha College last Friday.

I wish to pay tribute to those involved in that project; namely Bev Bayliss, the chairman of the voluntary interim council, and each of the members for their consistent and unselfish efforts; the Director, Dr Walkington, whose knowledge of the State education system and needs of the Karratha area contributed in a major way to the end product and its completion; and the officers of WAPSEC for their dedication of purpose and unwavering support and help.

The college will prove to be a great asset to the Karratha area. When a family member in the Pilbara area reaches high school age the family has been faced with the question as to whether it should send that member away and split the family up, or all leave the area. Now, children will be able to receive further education without the family having to be split. This will enhance family stability and there is no doubt that families in the region in general will benefit.

Time does not permit me to cover the many things of a specific electoral nature I intended to raise, but there is one matter that is on the lips of virtually every Australian involved in finance of any sort, whether it be for a home, a motorcar, or the purchase of any other item; and that is, interest rates. It is probably impracticable, but the sort of thing we should be looking at is a lower overall rate very soon, or possibly we should peg the rate to that set at the time of borrowing. We should be looking at this sort of thing because Australians will be in a great deal more trouble than we are at the present time if something is not done.

The point I wish to emphasise about interest rates is that in high cost areas such as the north of Western Australia and in similar areas such as Northern Queensland where we have a high interest rate factor and where we have an on-cost of approximately 100 per cent, people have to borrow a lot more to build homes and to operate businesses. The upper limit of the borrowing which is set by bankers and other financial institutions quite often prohibits the negotiation of a loan.

Other members in the House have no doubt spoken about the industrial scene as it exists in Australia at present. There is great play made by both sides of the political spectrum when Governments have a deteriorating industrial record. It is claimed of course that it is the fault of the Government of the day and I guess, in part, that might be true. However, today, it is a criticism that should not be singularly levied, whether it be Liberal or Labor at the helm. We have the same denominator, as far as the problem is concerned. New South Wales has its problems and it looks as though that State will be crippled by industrial action in the State Energy Commission area. Travelling throughout New South Wales and speaking to the residents, one notes that many individuals feel like they are standing in the shadows of buildings about to collapse. In that State the power supply and changes for basic services have not kept up with demand and increasing cost of operation, so it will be interesting to see what happens in New South Wales in the near future.

Unfortunately our industrial record in the Pilbara is far from good and industry has again incurred a major stoppage. The Opposition, which would be the first to admit its association and link with the unions—having been mothered by the union movement—should be playing a much greater reconciliatory role. However, Opposition members sit back mute, blaming the Government for the steps it takes when in fact they make no move to become involved.

Mr Parker: That simply is untrue. We have put forward a number of policies—

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SODEMAN: I am told that the present Leader of the Opposition can thank certain individuals in the union movement in this State for his position.

Mr Parker: That simply is untrue.

Mr SODEMAN: That is true.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Watt): Order! The member will resume his seat. I must remind the member for Fremantle of the ruling given a few moments ago by the Deputy Speaker that he is not permitted to speak when he is not sitting in his own seat. I must ask him to abide by that ruling.

Several members interjected.

Mr SODEMAN: And if that is so, he should undoubtedly act by using his new office and his newly found contacts to improve industrial relations. If he is prepared to sit there moribund it is unlikely that the Leader of the Opposition will

ever become Premier of this State. His inaction indicates he is supportive of the disruption that is taking place. The chickens no doubt will come home to roost at the appropriate time.

Mr Evans: You sound like a bird brain.

Mr SODEMAN: It is good to see that 57 per cent of the total contracts let for the North-West Shelf gas project have been carried out in WA; that is, some \$399 million of a total to date of \$704 million.

I do not intend to prolong my comments and I can see a smile on the face of the Whip and the Deputy Premier, and no doubt the member for Fremantle will be pleased also.

Mr Parker interjected.

Mr SODEMAN: I note that we have one more member on the Opposition side, listening to my speech.

Mr Parker: He did not know what was going on.

Mr SODEMAN: Hopefully, the present situation as far as the overall financial and industrial scene is concerned will improve. I hope something can be done about the high interest rates. If we are to maintain our standard of living—and that is what we are here for—it is our prime function to fulfil our responsibility to our constituents. I support the motion.

Question put and passed; the Address-in-Reply thus adopted.

ACTS AMENDMENT (SOIL CONSERVATION) BILL

Second Reading

MR P. V. JONES (Narrogin—Minister for Resources Development) [10.29 p.m.]: On behalf of the Minister for Agriculture, I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Not long ago, many Western Australians regarded soil and water salinity, wind and water erosion, and other land degradation problems as the inevitable price we must pay for agricultural expansion and prosperity. But these problems have been magnified during the last decade following the 1960s increase in land clearing, compounded by our worst series of droughts. Fortunately these problems have not prevented agricultural production maintaining its massive contribution to Western Australia's economy. In 1981, our agricultural production was worth more than \$1.5 billion. This reinforces the fact that Western Australia's prosperity depends very much on a prosperous, productive agricultural sector. Any threat to this sector is of great

concern to the Government. This is why the increasing problems of salinity and erosion have been regarded so seriously. Over the last few years many actions aimed at reducing or eliminating these problems have been implemented. In particular, the Research Co-ordinating Committee which reviews all salinity research in Western Australia has been established. It ensures that the best use is made of resources from Government and elsewhere as they are brought to bear on these pressing problems.

The Government also established a Cabinet subcommittee to investigate salinity and soil conservation. This committee reviewed the problem in the agricultural areas and established a high level interdepartmental committee to examine the problems in detail.

This committee, as a matter of urgency, was charged with reviewing the areas needing research, and looking for any other actions the Government could take to arrest the increasing problems associated with land degradation.

Many of the committee's recommendations have been implemented already. These include a large increase in State funding of research into land degradation problems.

Another major recommendation was for a review of the soil conservation legislation. The Soil Conservation Amendment Bill is being presented to the House as a result of this review.

The proposed amendments to the Act have not been undertaken hastily. The weaknesses in the existing legislation were identified by a wide range of groups and individuals concerned with and interested in soil conservation and agriculture generally. This means that the proposals recommended in these amendments have been discussed with most organisations and individuals interested in seeing a prosperous and stable agricultural system continue in Western Australia.

The current legislation was basically a response to wind erosion problems associated with the continuous crop-fallow system that prevailed in the wheatbelt during the 1930s and 1940s. As a result it did not cover, in a logical manner, the problems associated with salinity, flooding or water-logging, or vegetation degradation.

Our purpose now is to broaden the scope of the existing legislation and to title the Act the "Soil and Land Conservation Act".

The term "soil conservation" has been defined in the legislation to mean "the application to land of cultural vegetational and land management measures, either singularly, or in combination, to attain and maintain an appropriate level of land

use and stability of that land in perpetuity, and includes the use of measures to prevent or mitigate the effects of land degradation". Because of the nature of this definition, the proposed amendments deal with the processes of land degradation rather than with the more narrow concept of soil erosion. This land degradation includes wind and water erosion, salinity, flooding, and the removal or deterioration of vegetation.

The Government has given a lot of thought as to where the responsibility for soil conservation legislation should lie. Land degradation problems in the rural area can be solved generally by improved farm management systems. These improved systems require not only research to develop better agricultural production techniques, but also their willing adoption by the farming community. Consequently it is seen as desirable to leave the responsibility for soil conservation under the Minister responsible for agricultural production. If we are to have a stable agricultural system it is essential that both these areas progress in unison. Consequently, the responsibility for soil and land conservation will remain with the Minister for Agriculture.

The current legislation provides for a State Soil Conservation Advisory Committee whose job is to advise the Commissioner of Soil Conservation on land conservation policy issues. In the past this committee has been criticised because it has comprised mainly representatives of Government departments and authorities. This representation has a historical base, but it is considered that it is not an appropriate structure to deal with today's problems. Consequently, the composition of the Soil Conservation Advisory Committee has been reviewed. As a result, it will now comprise 10 people, half of whom will be representatives of rural land users. Four of the other members will be from Government departments involved with soil conservation issues. The fifth will be the Commissioner of Soil Conservation. It is expected that the Soil Conservation Advisory Committee will take an active role in developing solutions to the problems of land degradation.

A major aim of the Bill is to put the responsibility for soil conservation issues firmly on the communities involved. This is why the concept of soil conservation districts, which exist in the current legislation, has been expanded and improved. Where a specific soil conservation or land degradation problem exists, it will be possible to declare a soil conservation district. Following such a declaration, a regionally-based soil conservation district advisory committee can be formed, again composed predominantly of

local land users. This committee will have the charter to examine the particular soil conservation problems within each district and to advise on approaches that can be taken to overcome the problems.

The composition of the Soil Conservation Advisory Committee will vary with the particular problems being tackled. Where coastal erosion is a problem, obviously it is inappropriate to have rural-based land users involved. Similarly, in the agricultural areas, the representatives on the committee will come mainly from among local agricultural producers.

On the recommendation of a district advisory committee, it will be possible to establish a soil conservation district fund. This fund can be established for the specific purpose of combating land degradation within the particular soil conservation district. The fund primarily will be contributed to by land users, but has the potential to attract contributions from Federal and State Governments and other groups involved in land degradation problems, as well as from the individual farmers within the district.

Contributions from individual farmers or land users within a soil conservation district will be raised by a soil conservation rate, for which the amendments provide. This rate will be invoked only on the recommendation of the district advisory committee and will contribute to the soil conservation fund specifically for the solution of the particular land degradation problems in the district.

The provisions suggest that an involved shire council may collect the rate if it wishes. However, there is no compulsion for shires to be involved in such a collection. Should a particular shire not wish to collect the rate, the Minister will make alternative arrangements.

I believe that such a soil conservation fund, comprising contributions from various parties—depending on the size and nature of the problem—will be useful particularly in helping to solve district problems such as those associated with drainage of saltland, restoration of sand dunes and other beachfront land, or revegetation of land to prevent wind erosion or salinity.

Currently, the Commissioner of Soil Conservation has the authority to serve orders that can instruct a landowner to take action to prevent or reduce a land degradation problem. Unfortunately, this system was difficult to operate effectively. It must be recognised that the solution to soil conservation problems generally requires the co-operation of the community, and a desire by all land users to maintain land stability.

However, as in every aspect of life, there are always some who continue to act in a manner detrimental to the rest of the community. Therefore, the provisions for serving soil conservation notices have been streamlined so that the Government can take quick action where necessary, both to prevent land degradation problems from occurring, and to allow solutions to be implemented. The amendments include the right of appeal by any person who objects to a soil conservation notice served on him. This appeal must go to the Minister, who then refers it to an independent committee for advice. The Minister also can consider appeals that relate to the failure to lift a notice when the landowner feels that he has complied with the conditions. Again the Minister will refer the appeal to an independent committee for its advice.

The penalties under the current soil conservation legislation have not been changed for some years. In many cases, they have not reflected the serious damage that can be caused to land by inappropriate actions. Hence, under the proposed amendments, the penalties have been brought more into line with the seriousness of the problem.

Other changes suggested in the amendments are aimed at streamlining other aspects of the legislation. In many cases these are relatively minor changes. One major change is that sections 40 and 41 have been removed. Section 41 gave the Minister the authority to prevent clearing of land when soil erosion was likely to occur. I consider that this section now more appropriately is covered under the general provisions of notices, and that the ability to react to prevent destruction of vegetation has been improved.

I wish to make it clear that the amendments to the Soil Conservation Act are not to be considered solutions to the problems of land degradation that we have in Western Australia. The solutions will require increased research and increased action by farmers and the community in general. The purpose of this legislation is to facilitate these other actions in the cause of Western Australia's future agricultural prosperity.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Evans.

ACTS AMENDMENT (COUNTRY WATER AND SEWERAGE) BILL

Second Reading

MR MENSAROS (Floreat—Minister for Water Resources) [10.40 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill seeks to amend sections of three Acts; namely—

the Country Areas Water Supply Act,
the Water Boards Act, and
the Country Towns Sewerage Act.

The need for amendments at this time arises from several causes. The first of these is the emerging trend towards high density development in country towns, especially the larger coastal towns, bringing about a significant increase in the demand for water and sewerage services in certain concentrated areas.

There is an urgent need to clarify the power of the Public Works Department and the country water boards to raise the necessary developmental charges and to expend expeditiously the money received on the required upgrading of water schemes. This power is already available to the Metropolitan Water Board.

The second cause is a consequence of the recommendations of a working party comprising representatives of various business interests, which I convened late in 1981 to consider and advise on alternatives to land valuation based rating. The working party made recommendations for both long-term and interim measures to reduce the severe impact of valuation increases.

Separate legislation will be introduced during this session to empower the Metropolitan Water Board to implement certain interim measures for the 1982-83 rating year. To enable similar measures to apply in country districts, it is necessary to make several amendments which are contained in this Bill. In addition several minor amendments are required to update the three Acts in certain areas to meet the needs for clarification or modification which have arisen in the evolving course of operations.

I will now deal with the amendments in the order in which they appear in the Bill.

Part II covers amendments of the Country Areas Water Supply Act. Clauses 4, 5, 7, and 8 in that part all relate to the need to remove from the Act, the requirement that catchments and water works must be situated in constituted country water areas and, in particular, may not be within the metropolitan area. Increasingly, it is being found necessary to establish source works at a considerable distance from the area in which the water is to be supplied. Consequently, it is necessary to constitute water areas far bigger than the actual supply area in order to embrace the source works and supply mains.

This restriction creates a particular problem if the department uses sources which are in the metropolitan area. An example is the lower

Helena Dam and pumping station which are situated in the metropolitan area, and are used to supplement the supply to Mundaring Weir. With the expansion of the metropolitan area further situations of this nature could occur. Recently, agreement was reached on the integration of the use of major water storage dams by the metropolitan and country schemes. The proposed amendment will facilitate the operation of the integrated policy. However, the amendment will not permit the provisions of the Country Areas Water Supply Act relating to the supply of water and the rating of land to apply within an area where supply is controlled by the Metropolitan Water Board.

Clause 6 of the Bill widens the scope of section 10 of the Act empowering the Governor to declare any land in a country water area to be exempt from rating. The Bill now proposes that the Minister be granted power to declare temporary exemptions from rating for periods not exceeding two years.

This provision is considered necessary to cope with situations where, because of a main extension or the subdivision or changed use of land, or the inadequacy of the supply of water, the department is unable or unwilling to supply water, or the rating of the land would cause hardship. Longer term exemptions would still require action by the Governor.

The next new provision in the Bill is the proposed amendment of section 33 of the principal Act to permit reduction in the flow of water through a service by discing or other means as an alternative to disconnection. This follows the insertion of a similar provision in the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act last year and is now proposed for the same purpose. The section is further amended to permit disconnection or restriction of a service to be used as a means of enforcing the provisions of another proposed amendment relating to section 35B with which I will deal later.

The provisions of the Bill relating to amendment of section 35A and addition of sections 35B and 35C all introduce powers now available to the Metropolitan Water Board for the collection of subdivision or development charges and the use of the money collected.

In 1978 section 35A was added to the Country Areas Water Supply Act to empower the raising of lot charges to cover the cost of upgrading local distribution works in cases where land is subdivided to create additional lots. However, this section made no provision for the extra water requirements which may be imposed by high

density building on existing lots. New section 35B proposed by this Bill provides the power to raise charges on high density development comparable with those raised on a subdivision. The level of charges raised will be related to the additional water requirements imposed on the scheme by the development of land to a higher density or potential water use than that used as a basis for the design of the existing water scheme.

Money collected from these charges is intended to be available to finance work on any part of the water system in the general interest of maintaining an adequate supply. There will be cases when work will have been done in advance of the water requirement, which accounts for the need to amend section 35A by the insertion of the words "existing or proposed works".

The purpose of new section 35C is to enable the funds collected for the specific purpose of guaranteeing a supply to subdividers and developers to be set aside in a trust fund for use as required. Without this provision, these funds would have to be paid into consolidated revenue and would not be available without appropriation by Parliament. As this normally occurs only once a year the use of the funds for their specific purpose is delayed and inhibited.

A trust account will assist in the expeditious use of the funds and in forward planning for the most economical construction of works. The Bill provides for the Treasurer to approve of guidelines for the management of funds in the account.

A minor amendment of section 37 removes the obligation of the Minister to raise charges against the appropriate fire control authority for the cost of installing or maintaining fire hydrants. Most hydrants are now provided by subdividers or developers and a charge for installation no longer is appropriate. Also, much of the checking and minor repairing of hydrants is carried out in the course of other duties and the small cost does not justify the time involved in keeping separate costing records and sending accounts. It is therefore proposed that charging should become discretionary rather than mandatory.

A further minor amendment to section 63A updates the description of vacant land for the purpose of rating classification. The present term "unoccupied rateable land" has been found to be ambiguous when used in certain contexts.

The proposed amendment of section 65 of the principal Act is one of the moves towards adoption of a recommendation by the McCusker committee of inquiry supported by the findings of the working party, that the dependence on land

valuation as a base for water and sewerage rating should be reduced. Because the Minister does not have the power to prescribe a minimum rate for each class or purpose of use, he is constrained to set the minimum at a level appropriate to vacant land.

Such a level is not appropriate to improved properties with water connected. Some increase at this level will offset partly the cost of measures to reduce the impact of large increases caused by periodic revaluations and make for a more equitable distribution of charges.

Another of the recommendations of the working party is given effect by the proposed substitution of a new section 80 dealing with the granting of realistic discounts to early payers, the provision of an option to pay rates by instalments, and the power to charge a penalty for late payment.

Current high interest rates have increased the tendency for many consumers to delay payment and thereby obtain an indirect subsidy at the expense of early payers. This cross-subsidy can be rendered ineffective by a well-conceived plan to offset the effect of delaying payment by appropriate penalty charges with the object of equalising the true monetary value of the payment irrespective of when it is made.

Proper implementation of this provision will be dependent on the introduction of a computerised billing and collection system currently being designed for the Public Works Department.

The final two amendments in this part are minor ones. Section 104 is to be amended to correct an obvious printing error. Section 105 is amended by the addition of two new paragraphs. One is to empower the Minister to make by-laws to protect meters and charge the cost of damage or unauthorised removal. The other is to support the provisions of the proposed new section 80 relating to discounts and penalties.

Part III of the Bill deals with the Water Boards Act.

The first amendment in this part is a minor one to update the value of any transaction which a board member can enter into with the board without having to obtain the approval of the Minister. The existing level of \$500 was set in 1978, but is now considered by the boards to have become too low for practical administrative purposes.

The next two amendments of sections 59 and 60 incorporate into the Water Boards Act the same powers as were added to the Country Areas Water Supply Act in 1981 or are proposed for that Act in the current Bill.

The new powers in section 59 relate to right of a consumer to request a meter test, the circumstances in which the consumer may be required to pay the cost of the test, and the procedure for assessing the amount of water consumed if the meter is found to be out of order. The new provisions of section 60 relate to the power to disconnect meters and to use the restriction or disconnection of supply as a means of enforcing compliance with the requirements of new section 62B.

The proposals for amendment of section 62A and addition of new section 62B are identical with those proposed for sections 35A and 35B of the Country Areas Water Supply Act which I have explained previously.

Water boards control the supply of water in the towns of Bunbury, Busselton, and Harvey. The problems emerging in towns controlled by the Public Works Department are no less applicable to those towns controlled by boards. It is therefore considered essential that the boards should have powers similar to those of the department to enable them to deal with those problems.

Finally, I turn to part IV of the Bill affecting the Country Towns Sewerage Act.

A new section 23A is proposed for this Act enabling the Minister to extend sewerage works to developments on land not rated by the Department. This power exists already in the Country Areas Water Supply Act and the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act. There has been an increase in the private development and subdivision of land in or adjacent to country towns and in the willingness of private developers to pay the cost of connection. It has therefore become necessary to provide the Minister with the necessary power to agree to a request for the connection of unrated land whenever it is expedient to do so.

The proposed amendments to section 40 are consequential to the proposed addition of a new section 46B which I will explain later. The increased penalties provide a more realistic deterrent for persons who might otherwise proceed with the development of land without due regard for the requirements of the Act relating to the provision of adequate sewerage facilities.

The proposed amendment of section 46A and the addition of new sections 46B and 46C of the Country Towns Sewerage Act serve exactly the same purpose as the new provisions for subdivision and development charges in the Country Areas Water Supply Act.

The charges to be collected under these new provisions are an essential source of funds for the

construction work necessary to make sewerage services available to meet the needs of increasing development in country towns.

The remaining three provisions of this part of the Bill all have counterparts in part II and in a similar manner they arise from recommendations of the McCusker committee and the working party.

New section 66A gives the Minister the power, already in the Country Areas Water Supply Act, to classify land by purpose of use for rating purposes. This makes possible the implementation of the amendment to section 68 empowering the prescribing of different minimum sewerage rates for different classes of rated property.

This will enable a more realistic minimum rate to be applied to improved domestic or commercial properties which enjoy sewerage services, but which attract only a very low rate because of low or outdated valuations.

A further amendment of section 68 empowers the Minister to prescribe maximum rates and to limit, by way of a percentage, the increase in rates from year to year arising from a revaluation.

The addition of new section 73A incorporates into the Act the same provisions as are proposed for the Country Areas Water Supply Act relating to discounts for early payment and penalties for late payment. In most cases, the rates for water and sewerage appear on the one account. It is therefore logical that the provisions for discounts and penalties should be identical.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Parker.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Deputy Premier)
[10.59 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971—to which I shall refer as “the Act”—which came into force on 12 May 1972 and created the office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations—commonly known as the State Ombudsman—has nearly reached its 10th birthday and has been amended once only—by Act No. 68 of 1976.

The Bill has three main objects as follows—

- (1) To provide for the statutory office of a deputy Parliamentary Commissioner.

- (2) To bring up to date and to add certain statutory instrumentalities to the schedule to the Act, which schedule lists the various instrumentalities which come within the Parliamentary Commissioner's jurisdiction; that is, those which he is empowered to investigate.

- (3) To exclude the judges of the Family Court of Western Australia and certain of its officers and those of other courts from the Parliamentary Commissioner's jurisdiction.

I will deal with the principal amending clauses separately. I believe they are reasonably self-explanatory.

Clauses 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the Bill in particular seek to amend the stated sections of the Act to define, create, and state the duties of the deputy Parliamentary Commissioner—to whom I shall refer as “the deputy”.

It is proposed that he be appointed, and indeed removed, in the same way as the Parliamentary Commissioner—namely, by His Excellency the Governor—and shall hold office, as does the Parliamentary Commissioner, in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

I do not believe it is necessary for me to detail such provisions.

The principal reason for the creation of the deputy is to provide immediate “cover”, so to speak, when the Parliamentary Commissioner is absent from duty or from the State, in which event it is proposed that the deputy automatically should act in the office with all the Parliamentary Commissioner's powers, thus facilitating continuity of work—which often is of an urgent nature—and increased efficiency in a busy office.

At present, only a duly appointed Acting Parliamentary Commissioner can perform the Parliamentary Commissioner's principal functions in his absence, and the appointment of an Acting Parliamentary Commissioner, under the provisions of section 7 of the Act and rule 6 of the Parliamentary Commissioner's rules 1972, involves a time-consuming and cumbersome procedure, which is quite inappropriate to deal with short or unexpected absences from duty of the Parliamentary Commissioner on account of, for example, accident, sickness, or interstate visits.

The procedure involves reference to and approval by the Honourable the Speaker and the Honourable the President of the Council, the drafting and submission of Executive Council minutes, consideration of the proposed

appointment by the Executive Council, appointment by His Excellency the Governor, and gazettal.

All that will be avoided if the Act is amended as proposed in this respect.

As will be apparent, a host of minor consequential amendments will be required, but none should cause any difficulty or contention.

Perhaps it is relevant to mention that both the Commonwealth and the State of New South Wales have statutory offices of Deputy Ombudsmen.

It is proposed to retain section 7 of the Act, which empowers His Excellency to appoint an Acting Parliamentary Commissioner—who could well be the deputy—because it is envisaged that such an appointment may be made when it is known that the Parliamentary Commissioner will be absent for an extended period, due, for example, to serious illness or when on leave for any extended period, or to his being suspended for misconduct or incapacity, when it may be expedient to appoint an Acting Parliamentary Commissioner rather than have the deputy performing his functions, and the Acting Parliamentary Commissioner could well be a person other than the deputy.

Clause 12 of the Bill seeks to delete and replace the schedule to the Act, really by way of a "cleaning-up" operation, and also to add further boards and instrumentalities to the schedule.

Apart from a few additions made to the schedule in late 1976 by rule of Parliament, the schedule has remained unchanged since the Act became operative, and a number of the originally-specified instrumentalities have become defunct or have had their names changed by amendments to or by the repeal and replacement of the various Acts constituting the instrumentalities, which should now be referred to by their correct current names.

Further, the opportunity now is sought to add more instrumentalities to the schedule and thus bring them within the Parliamentary Commissioner's jurisdiction.

It would be tedious, I believe, to occupy the time of the House by going through the proposed new schedule in detail, and members will have had the opportunity to study it and they are, of course, at liberty to query it.

The additions to the schedule now proposed follow consultation with the relevant Ministers.

Clause 9 of the Bill seeks to amend section 13(2) (a) and to repeal and replace section 13(2) (b) of the Act to exclude from the Parliamentary

Commissioner's jurisdiction the Family Court of Western Australia and its judges and registrars; likewise the registrars of the Supreme Court.

Of course, the Family Court was constituted by the Family Court Act 1975; that is, after the Parliamentary Commissioner Act came into operation in 1972.

If the amendments concerning the deputy and the new schedule are approved by the House, rules 6 and 7 of the Parliamentary Commissioner's rules 1972 will become redundant, and I will move that they be repealed.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr I. F. Taylor.

FIRE BRIGADES AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Minister for Police and Prisons) [11.05 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill proposes changes to the Fire Brigades Act to alter the management of the fire brigades, to make the board responsible to the Minister, and to empower the chief officer to take actions which are considered necessary in particular circumstances to maintain safety in public buildings.

The proposed amendments are not extensive, but they are significant, although in a sense of an interim nature.

There is no doubt that since the Fire Brigades Act of 1942 the size and responsibilities of the fire brigades have changed substantially.

It is clear that in a number of areas amendment of the Act and changes to the management which occurs under the Act are needed.

Work has been undertaken over a period of time towards the development of new replacement legislation. However, that work is far from complete and it was decided that the amendments now proposed should proceed as a first step.

It is proposed that the primary management responsibility should devolve upon a full-time executive chairman of the Western Australian Fire Brigades Board, and it is expected that the executive chairman initially appointed would become closely involved in the further work of legislative and administrative change which I have foreshadowed.

The full-time executive chairman proposed to be appointed would replace the part-time president who currently heads the board, and the

chief executive officer who is responsible for the administration of the fire brigades.

Under existing legislation the Fire Brigades Board has 10 members, two of whom are appointed by the Governor. One of those appointees is designated president of the board.

The position proposed is that the president become executive chairman under a full-time term appointment.

Another change also is proposed in relation to the structure of the board; that is, to increase the number of members of the board to 11 by including the chief fire officer as a full member of the board.

Presently it is the practice for the chief officer to attend most meetings of the board, but he is not a voting member of the board.

It is the view of the Government that the chief officer, as the head of the operational side of the fire brigades, and the man recognised by firemen as their chief, and the man who is responsible for discipline and leadership in relation to the firemen, should be a member of the board by virtue of the office he holds.

In line with Government policy in a number of areas the Fire Brigades Board is proposed to be made responsible to the Government and the Parliament through its Minister.

There would be an employee of the board to be known as the secretary who would exercise the executive authority of the executive chairman in his absence. A member of the board designated as deputy chairman would be chairman of the board in the absence of the executive chairman.

It is proposed that both the executive chairman and the chief officer should in future be appointed by the Governor-in-Council.

It is a matter of public record that for some time I have been concerned about advice I have received from the fire brigades as to the limitation of the powers of the chief officer in the event of a breach of regulations designed to ensure ready access to exits and ready exit for the public from public buildings in the event of fire.

Although present regulatory provisions provide that the obstruction of exits and the locking of exits are offences, prosecutions do not always provide the immediate remedy which is necessary to ensure safety.

There is also a lack of continuity of penalty so as to provide a deterrent to those prepared to risk reasonable safety for the sake of convenience or commercial gain.

Therefore, measures included in the Bill would allow the chief officer to cause blocked safety

exits in public buildings to be cleared and locked exits to be opened.

Where no other action is effective the chief officer would be able to close a public building for up to 48 hours. Other provisions would enable him to extend that period if a court is satisfied that the perceived danger cannot be alleviated except by a continuation of the closure.

Significant penalties for a continuing breach of regulatory requirements and any action taken to defeat the remedial measures of the chief officer are included.

In relation to the measures for public safety an interdepartmental committee has been established because of the involvement of several departments in the relevant issues.

The committee will continue to review overall requirements in the light of experience gained if the current proposals are adopted. Any further changes recommended will be considered by the Government when necessary.

Notwithstanding these new requirements there will remain a need for the proprietors, occupiers, and tenants of public buildings to recognise their clear responsibility to maintain safety for the protection of those using the buildings. It is a sad reflection on some people and their lack of a sense of responsibility that it is necessary for the Government to propose these additional powers for the chief officer.

In conclusion I pay tribute to the President of the Fire Brigades Board (Mr L. S. Turnbull) and the Chief Executive Officer (Mr F. W. Bertram).

Mr Turnbull joined the board as representative of the Council of the City of Perth in January 1970 and became president on 8 November 1978. Over these years Mr Turnbull has given of his time and talents in full measure, and the efficient organisation he heads is evidence of his success. He has indicated that he wishes to retire at the Government's convenience subsequent to the appointment of the executive chairman.

Mr Bertram joined the staff of the fire service on 3 March 1952 as assistant secretary and was promoted to his present position in 1964. Mr Bertram's contribution to the organisation cannot be over-emphasised. His loyal and efficient service has been of great value over the years.

His present position would change following the appointment of the executive chairman, but his knowledge and experience would certainly be availed of, especially during the implementation phase of the reorganisation.

I have discussed with the president of the board the need for Mr Bertram to be dealt with fairly

and properly in the course of the changeover proposed in this legislation.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Bateman.

BILLS (3); MESSAGES

Appropriations

Messages from the Governor received and read recommending appropriations for the purposes of the following Bills—

1. Acts Amendment (Soil Conservation) Bill.
2. Parliamentary Commissioner Amendment Bill.
3. Fire Brigades Amendment Bill.

House adjourned at 11.12 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

LAND: AGRICULTURAL

Release

498. Mr EVANS, to the Minister for Lands:

Will he table a map of the South-West Land Division of Western Australia showing the areas which it was intended to release for agriculture in 1981 and 1982?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

During 1981-82 land release activity has been centred around Esperance and Ravensthorpe, with the majority of areas being considered falling in the Eucla Division.

I table a map of portions of the Eucla and South-West Land Divisions showing the land currently being investigated.

The paper was tabled (see Paper No. 167).

HOUSING

State Energy Commission

502. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

With respect to State Energy Commission housing occupied by SEC employees—

- (1) How many SEC employees currently occupy SEC owned housing at each of the following locations—

- (a) Kununurra;
- (b) Wyndham;
- (c) Halls Creek;
- (d) Derby;
- (d) Broome;

- (f) Port Hedland;
- (g) Karratha;
- (h) Exmouth;
- (i) Carnarvon;
- (j) Meekatharra;
- (k) Gascoyne Junction;
- (l) Wiluna;
- (m) Geraldton;
- (n) Three Springs;
- (o) Moora;
- (p) Northam;
- (q) Merredin;
- (r) Southern Cross;
- (s) Koorda;
- (t) Waroona;
- (u) Collie;
- (v) Bunbury;
- (w) Margaret River;
- (x) Bridgetown;
- (y) Narrogin;
- (z) Wagin;
- (aa) Katanning;
- (bb) Albany;
- (cc) Esperance;
- (dd) Kalgoorlie;
- (ee) other locations?

- (2) Has the State Energy Commission in the past advertised positions at these locations indicating that housing was available at a specified nominal rental?
- (3) Has the State Energy Commission had any difficulty in attracting a sufficient number of properly qualified personnel to these locations?
- (4) (a) Has the State Energy Commission advised the Government against increasing the rentals to Government Employees' Housing Authority parity;
- (b) if so, what reasons did it put forward in support of such advice?
- (5) Do many of the existing tenants have tenancy agreements which do not make provision for rental increases to GEHA parity?
- (6) Have any of the existing tenants indicated that they are not prepared to agree to the proposed rental increases?
- (7) Has the State Energy Commission prepared a proposed new tenancy agreement which includes the following clauses—

- (i) I agree that the Commission may at any time at the discretion of the Commission vary the rental;
 - (ii) I agree that during the terms of this agreement, the Commission shall have the absolute right to deduct the rental hereby reserved, increased rental or other moneys made payable to the Commission from my wage or salary?
- (8) If "Yes" to (7), is the Government aware of any other tenancy agreements which give the property owner absolute power to increase rentals without notice or discussion with the tenant, and to recover such increased rentals from the tenant's wage or salary?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

(1) (a) Kununurra	10
(b) Wyndham	5
(c) Halls Creek	1
(d) Derby	8
(e) Broome	8
(f) Port Hedland	42
(g) Karratha	5
(h) Exmouth	—
(i) Carnarvon	5
(j) Meekatharra	2
(k) Gascoyne Junction	—
(l) Wiluna	—
(m) Geraldton	10
(n) Three Springs	3
(o) Moora	3
(p) Northam	5
(q) Merredin	5
(r) Southern Cross	2
(s) Koorda	2
(t) Waroona	3
(u) Collie	74
(v) Bunbury	9
(w) Margaret River	2
(x) Bridgetown	1
(y) Narrogin	3
(z) Wagin	3
(aa) Katanning	3
(bb) Albany	7
(cc) Esperance	13
(dd) Kalgoorlie	5
(ee) other locations	16

(2) No.

(3) No.

- (4) (a) and (b) The State Energy Commission is represented on the co-ordinating committee responsible to the Minister for Housing for matters relating to the housing of all Government employees. Any views expressed by the State Energy Commission representative, or any other member, would be within that committee.

(5) 82.

(6) Not to my knowledge.

(7) and (8) The draft agreement includes the clauses mentioned. The wording of this agreement is presently being considered by the chief manager, personnel and industrial relations. Should the conditions be considered too onerous, satisfactory alterations will be made.

FUEL AND ENERGY: GAS

North-West Shelf: Purchase by SEC

503. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) What is the date upon which the State Energy Commission is obligated to commence purchase of gas from the North-West Shelf project?
- (2) Is the SEC's obligation contractual?
- (3) If "Yes" to (2)—
 - (a) on what date was the contract signed;
 - (b) who are the signatories to the contract;
 - (c) in each of the first ten years, what is the annual quantity of gas that the SEC is required to purchase under the terms of the contract;
 - (d) what is the purchase price of the gas by the SEC in each year under the terms of the contract;
 - (e) are any provisions contained in the contract that permit the SEC to defer to a later date the commencement of purchase of gas;
 - (f) what annual quantity of gas, if any, may the SEC defer from purchase under the terms of the contract;
 - (g) under what conditions, if any, can the SEC withdraw from purchasing the contracted quantities of gas;

- (h) what measures are contained in terms of the contract to prevent the SEC from withdrawing from or substantially reducing the quantity of gas purchased in—
- (i) the first year of production of North-West Shelf gas;
 - (ii) the first five years of production;
 - (iii) the first ten years of production;
- (i) what would be the costs of the SEC's reducing substantially the quantity of gas to be purchased under the terms of the contract?
- (4) For each of the first ten years of gas production, what annual quantity of North-West Shelf gas purchased by the SEC will be sold to—
- (a) domestic consumers;
 - (b) industrial consumers?
- (5) Of the quantity of North-West Shelf gas to be sold to industrial consumers in each of the first ten years, what quantity in each year is to be sold under contracts already signed between the SEC and the industrial consumers?
- (6) What is the number of industrial consumers with which the SEC—
- (a) has signed contracts for the sale of North-West Shelf gas to the industrial consumer;
 - (b) is yet to sign contracts for the sale of North-West Shelf gas to the industrial consumer?
- (7) What are the names of the companies identified in (a) and (b) of (6) above?
- (8) In the first ten years of production what is the annual amount of North-West Shelf gas to be sold to—
- (a) companies identified in (a) of question (6);
 - (b) companies identified in (b) of question (6)?
- (9) What is the contracted annual quantity of gas for each company identified in (a) of question (6) in the first ten years of production of North-West Shelf gas?
- (10) What are the dates upon which each company identified in part (a) of question (6) is contracted to commence purchase of the North-West Shelf gas from the SEC?
- (11) What is the number of companies identified in question (6) (a) whose contracts with the SEC provide for the deferment of the contracted quantity of purchase?
- (12) What is the current price of gas for—
- (a) domestic consumers;
 - (b) industrial consumers?
- (13) What is the estimated price of gas supplied from the North-West Shelf through the SEC in the first year of production to—
- (a) domestic consumers;
 - (b) industrial consumers?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (13) The contract for the purchase of natural gas from the North-West Shelf project was formally signed on 30 September 1980 by the commission and each of the participants.

The contract price for gas purchases, to commence on 1 April 1985, and various quantities, have been identified over the 20-year life of the agreement, leading to 10.9 million cubic metres of gas per day.

The purchase prices, together with the other negotiable details within the contract, are commercially confidential to the participants, their bankers, and the State Energy Commission.

The domestic market for gas has been estimated at 0.75 million cubic metres per day in 1985, rising to 1.26 million cubic metres in 1993. The remainder of the product is to be utilised by industrial and commercial users, with whom discussions are currently being held, and the Leader of the Opposition is already aware that these discussions are matters of commercial confidence.

Where price is concerned, however, the final negotiated price level will depend on several factors, including the total quantity involved, and the tariff option selected.

The domestic customer tariff is already given in the commission's gas tariff schedules A3 or B3.

FUEL AND ENERGY: GAS

North-West Shelf: Commencement, and Annual Production

504. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Resources Development:

- (1) What is the latest estimated date of commencement for production of gas from the North-West Shelf?
- (2) What is the estimated quantity of annual production in each year for the first ten years of the project?
- (3) In each of the first ten years, what quantity of annual production will be—
 - (a) exported;
 - (b) available for domestic markets?
- (4) In each of the first ten years, to what organisations is the gas to be—
 - (a) exported;
 - (b) made available in domestic markets?
- (5) For each of the first ten years of the project, what organisations identified in (4) have signed contracts to purchase gas from the North-West Shelf—
 - (a) in the first year of production;
 - (b) at a later date?
- (6) For each of the first ten years of the project, what is the annual quantity of gas to be sold to each of the companies identified in (a) and (b) of (4)?
- (7) Further to (6), what is the date upon which each company identified in (a) and (b) of (4) is required to commence purchase of the gas?
- (8) For each of the first ten years of production, what is the total quantity of annual production to be sold under contracts—
 - (a) currently signed by the organisations involved with the purchase of gas;
 - (b) yet to be signed by organisations with which negotiations have been conducted?
- (9) For each of the first ten years of production, what quantity of annual production is not committed to being purchased by contract or another form of binding agreement at this time?

- (10) How many organisations with which contracts or another form of binding agreement have been signed have the option to defer the contracted quantity of purchase under the terms of the contract or agreement?
- (11) What are the names of the organisations identified in (10)?
- (12) Further to (10), how many organisations with which contracts have been signed do not have an option to defer the contracted quantity of purchase under the terms of the contract?
- (13) What is the name or names of the organisations identified in (12)?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (13) Estimated first gas supply for domestic gas is October 1984; and the target date for first shipment of LNG export gas is May-June 1987.
Annual projections for the first 10 years of the project will depend upon commercial arrangements made and, as yet, these have not been finalised.
The eight power utilities in Japan have signed a memorandum of intent with the joint venturers, and details of a sales and purchase agreement are currently being negotiated.
As the Leader of the Opposition has already been advised, specific contractual details are commercially confidential with the customers concerned.

FUEL AND ENERGY: GAS

Demand: Forecasts

505. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) What was the State Energy Commission's January 1979 forecast for the demand for gas in 1990?
- (2) What is the SEC's latest forecast for the demand for gas in 1990 in the context of the existing glut and falling prices of oil in world markets?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) I am advised that marketing studies carried out for the Energy Commission during 1979 by PA Consulting Services estimated the forecast gas demand in 1990 to be 11 million cubic metres per day.

A recently completed market study by W. D. Scott estimated the forecast demand in 1990 to be 9.7 million cubic metres per day.

FUEL AND ENERGY: ELECTRICITY

South-west Grid System

506. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

With respect to the State Energy Commission's Western Australian south-west grid system—

- (1) What is the total megawatt capacity of the grid system?
- (2) Taking into account generating units which are currently out of commission, what is the total available megawatt capacity of the State's grid system at present?
- (3) (a) What plant is out of commission at each power generating station;
(b) when is it expected to be back in service?
- (4) What is the generating capacity of each item out of commission at each plant identified in (a) of part (3)?
- (5) On average, what percentage of installed capacity has been out of commission at each station in each week since 1 February 1982?
- (6) Is the power station maintenance programme up to date?
- (7) If "No" to (6), by how much is it behind schedule at each station?
- (8) For what percentage of the time since commissioning have unit No. 5 and unit No. 6 at Muja been available for power generation at maximum capacity?
- (9) What is the total cost of maintenance on units Nos. 5 and 6 at Muja power station since the first of these units was installed?
- (10) What has been the net cost of generation by alternative means required as a result of lack of availability of maximum generating capacity on the Nos. 5 and 6 units?
- (11) Are there shortcomings in the design specifications and manufacture of the equipment which have caused particular maintenance and availability problems in relation to units Nos. 5 and 6 at Muja power station?
- (12) If "Yes" to (11)—
 - (a) what are the shortcomings;
 - (b) what additional maintenance procedures are required;
 - (c) why were the shortcomings accepted at the time the equipment was installed?
- (13) Have units Nos. 5 and 6 at Muja power station the availability of back-up auxiliary plant to the same degree as similar units at Kwinana power station?
- (14) Has there been an increase in electrical and mechanical maintenance tradesmen at Muja power station to cope with additional maintenance requirements since the commissioning of units 5 and 6?
- (15) What was the last occasion on which an "A"-class overhaul was carried out at each station?
- (16) Have routine maintenance overhauls been shortened in recent years and, if so, why?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (16) The total installed generating capacity within the State Energy Commission system is a name plate reading of 1 780 megawatts, with 1 425 megawatts of capacity being used at present. Some 340 megawatts of generating capacity is currently out of commission for various reasons, but will be all back in service by October 1982; and some capacity is being gradually re-introduced at the present time.

The current power station programme is on schedule, although some performance shortfalls have been experienced with both induced draft fans and boiler feed pumps, as had already been indicated; and additional maintenance and downtime over and above normal requirements is involved with Muja 5 and 6 because of these factors.

When Muja 5 and 6 were ordered by the former Electricity Commission and approved by the Tonkin Government, the design specifications were considered appropriate at that time, but circumstances have subsequently demonstrated deficiencies in this area.

Maintenance procedures associated with the induced draft fan blading have centred around the location and installation of suitable wear resistant blade facing materials to improve operational availability. The bulk of this work has considerable technical content, and has been handled by technical staff. The maintenance procedures associated with replacement of hard facing materials are considered to be routine for power station maintenance workers.

Maintenance procedures associated with Stage "C" boiler feed pumps have centred upon the contractor, Sulzer, as the plant is still within its warranty period. The major area of concern with respect to the boiler feed pumps is considered to be a highly complex vibrational problem, which is seen to rest with the manufacturers. Current progress on rectifying the problem is encouraging.

Shortcomings referred to above did not become obvious until the plant was placed in service. It is normal practice for contractors to be given an opportunity to correct such faults as do occur within the warranty period. The boiler feed pump manufacturers have not yet been released from their warranty obligations.

I am advised that there has been an increase in electrical and mechanical maintenance tradesmen at Muja to cope with the additional maintenance requirements since the commissioning of units 5 and 6. "A"-class overhauls, as recommended by the manufacturers, are only effected when machinery supervisory equipment indicate a necessity for such action.

FUEL AND ENERGY: STATE ENERGY COMMISSION

Employees: Number

507. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

What was the total number of employees employed under the conditions of each award in the State Energy Commission in December of each of the years 1975 to 1981?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975
Engine Drivers (SEC) Award No. 15 of 1977	398	430	402	398	383	371	376
Engine Drivers Country Power Station (SEC) 19 of 1975	82	62	52	56	58	54	49
Engineering Trades (SEC) Consolidated Award No. 1 of 1969	2 197	2 204	2 194	2 092	2 177	2 105	1 968
Building Trades (SEC) Consolidated Award No. 1 of 1959	183	186	197	184	228	216	269
Transport Workers (SEC) Award 1965	64	56	50	50	49	44	41
Storemen (SEC) Award No. 4 of 1971	104	103	95	96	93	92	91
Caretaker Watchmen (SEC) Award No. 3 of 1967	14	14	20	23	25	28	30
Gas Workers (SEC) Agreement 1978	180	191	198	188	202	198	177
Tea Attendants and Canteen Workers (SEC) Award No. 27 of 1974	28	29	29	29	33	32	32
State Energy Commission Construction Award	6	7	8	37	42	43	58
Municipal Officers (SEC Western Australia—Salaried Officers) Award 1978	1 703	1 641	1 537	1 525	1 733	1 688	1 658
Professional Engineers (SEC of Western Australia) Award 1978	322	290	259	245	(Split not available)		
TOTALS:	5 281	5 213	5 041	4 923	5 023	4 871	4 749

FUEL AND ENERGY: GAS

North-West Shelf: SEC Commitment

508. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

What effect will the State Energy Commission's commitment to the North-West Shelf have on—

(a) tariff levels to existing consumers;

(b) the financial capacity of the State Energy Commission to operate and maintain existing power stations without jeopardising supplies to consumers as is occurring in New South Wales and Victoria; and

(c) staff levels of the State Energy Commission?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (a) to (c) The purport of the question is not understood. The member has already been advised that domestic customers will not pay more for energy than would otherwise be the case because of the introduction of North-West Shelf gas.

The State Energy Commission's staff levels will increase to operate the Dampier-Perth pipeline project, and in support of general growth in the total system.

FUEL AND ENERGY: GAS

North-West Shelf: Alternative Sources

509. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) What investigations have been conducted by the State Energy Commission into alternative cheaper supplies of natural gas?
- (2) What are the alternative sources of natural gas to the North-West Shelf capable of supplying industrial and domestic consumers in the south of Western Australia with gas at or below the prices of North-West Shelf gas?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) The State Energy Commission is currently working with the operators of the Woodada gas reserve to establish the extent of this prospective resource. Testing of Woodada gas will proceed over the next three to six months.

There are no proven commercial alternative sources of natural gas known to the Western Australian Government which are capable of supplying the present or forecast south-west gas demand.

FUEL AND ENERGY: GAS

North-West Shelf: Dampier-Perth Pipeline

510. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) In relation to the construction of the Dampier-Perth pipeline, how many workers are estimated to be employed in each year of the pipeline project?
- (2) How many jobs created by the pipeline project will be permanent in the post-construction period?
- (3) What is the nature and estimated value, of each tender on the pipeline—
 - (a) already let;
 - (b) currently open;
 - (c) that remain to be let?
- (4) What are the names of each company identified in (3) (a) to which a tender has been let?
- (5) What is the name of each company to which a tender has been let that is resident in Western Australia with—
 - (a) its headquarters and the majority of shareholders based outside Australia;
 - (b) no headquarters and shareholders outside Australia?
- (6) What is the value of each tender let to each company identified in (a) and (b) of question (5)?
- (7) What is the estimated value of piping to be used in the construction and installation of the pipeline?
- (8) What is the estimated value of the piping to be used in the pipeline that will be manufactured—
 - (a) in Western Australia;
 - (b) in Australia;
 - (c) overseas?
- (9) Could the piping for the pipeline be manufactured in—
 - (a) Western Australia;
 - (b) Australia?
- (10) If "Yes" to (9) (a) or (b), what would be the estimated minimum cost to the State Energy Commission of piping for the complete pipeline manufactured in—
 - (a) Western Australia;
 - (b) Australia?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (10) I am advised that some 970 persons could be involved in the construction of the Dampier-Perth natural gas pipeline by the end of 1982, with some 1 500 being the maximum number involved by early 1984. Approximately 100 persons in total could be involved in the operation of the pipeline following completion of construction.

The nature, value, and details of each tender involved are very detailed, and if the member has a specific inquiry on one or more tenders, I would be happy to provide more definite details.

The major tenders already let, however, involve the purchase of line pipe from Japanese, Australian, and Italian suppliers, together with the supply of valves, ancillary pipe, compressors, and a communication system. Tenders for construction and ancillary services and equipment still remain to be let.

The steel plate to be rolled for the line pipe could not be produced in Western Australia and only one firm, Steel Mains, submitted a tender proposal using some steel plate sourced within Australia for rolling at Kwinana. The tender was far from competitive and a tender has been let for line pipe at Kwinana by Steel Mains, using imported steel plate. In this way, maximum Western Australian involvement in the preparation of line pipe has been achieved.

FUEL AND ENERGY: STATE ENERGY COMMISSION

Kewdale

511. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

With respect to the SEC operations at Kewdale—

- (1) What was the cost of building and equipping the SEC's concrete and metal fabrication shop at Kewdale?
- (2) When was the work identified in (1) completed?
- (3) How many SEC employees are employed in the shops?
- (4) Does the SEC plan to cease production in the Kewdale shops?

- (5) If "Yes" to (4)—

- (a) who will perform work normally undertaken by the shops;
- (b) will the work be subject to comparative cost assessment;
- (c) what work will be available with the SEC for existing employees engaged on that production?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

(1) Concrete Shop	\$92 000
Metal Fabrication Shop	\$1 468 000
	<hr/>
	\$1 560 000

- (2) Concrete Shop completed April 1980; Metal Fabrication Shop completed April 1980
- (3) Concrete Shop 6;
Metal Fabrication Shop 76.
- (4) No.
- (5) Not applicable.

FUEL AND ENERGY: STATE ENERGY COMMISSION

Belmont

512. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

With respect to the SEC's operations at Belmont—

- (1) What changes are proposed in—

- (a) operations;
- (b) staffing?

for

- (i) country undertakings group;
- (ii) the transport and plant group;
- (iii) stores section;
- (iv) the meters shop group?

- (2) Upon what date are the proposed changes to take effect?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) Nil.

**FUEL AND ENERGY:
ELECTRICITY**

Power Station: East Perth

513. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) With respect to the East Perth power station depot, what is the number of staff currently employed at the depot?
- (2) What was the number of staff employed in December 1980?
- (3) What changes are anticipated in future staffing requirements?
- (4) How many staff from the power station have been redeployed since December 1980?
- (5) (a) What is the existing staff ceiling within the SEC;
(b) what rate of growth, if any, is to apply to the staff ceilings in each year over the next three years?
- (6) Have there been any reductions in staff ceilings of any metropolitan SEC supply depot?
- (7) If "Yes" to (6)—
(a) at what depots;
(b) for what reasons?
- (8) Has the imposition of staff ceilings within the SEC led to contractors being used in order to overcome delays in completion of work caused by inadequate staffing?
- (9) If "Yes" to (8)—
(a) what is the nature of the work performed by contractors; and
(b) what is the value of work performed by contractors?
- (10) What guarantees of continued permanent employment without relocation is the Government prepared to give to the existing SEC employees?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) 18 Salary; 100 Wages—Does not include apprentices and canteen staff.
- (2) 33 Salary; 181 Wages—Does not include apprentices and canteen staff.

(3) I am advised that wages staff will be progressively transferred to Kewdale as facilities become available. Salaried staff will be transferred, as necessary, to cover wages staff supervision, or as other facilities become available and the East Perth site is vacated.

(4) 8 salaried day staff (includes retirements and transfers to head office and promotions)

7 operating salaried staff

24 operating wages staff

57 day wages staff (includes natural wastage, transfers to Kewdale and Belmont)

(5) (a) The manpower establishment for the State Energy Commission is regularly reviewed in the light of existing and known future commitments, and staffing levels are adjusted accordingly;

(b) not applicable.

(6) Yes.

(7) (a) Balcatta and Forrestfield;

(b) staff adjustments in accordance with work load. Total energy supply staff levels have not been altered.

(8) No.

(9) (a) and (b) Not applicable.

(10) Prospective employees, when interviewed for positions within the commission, are queried as to whether they are prepared to be transferred within the commission. The usual answer is, "Yes".

**FUEL AND ENERGY:
STATE ENERGY COMMISSION**

Employees: Switchyard Construction

514. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

(1) How many existing SEC employees are currently engaged in switchyard construction?

(2) Has the SEC decided to have all future switchyard construction undertaken by contractors?

(3) In the future, on what work will the SEC employees currently utilised on switchyard construction be employed?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

(1) Total number at 9 April 1982—209 (includes people in workshop)

(2) No.

- (3) Switchyard construction, if necessary, otherwise maintenance and repairs associated with switchgear and power stations.

FUEL AND ENERGY: STATE ENERGY COMMISSION

Contract Work: Tenders

515. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Are tenders called for all contracted work for the SEC?
- (2) What is the total value of each contract let by the SEC for work for each year in
 - (a) 1975-76;
 - (b) 1976-77;
 - (c) 1977-78;
 - (d) 1978-79;
 - (e) 1979-80;
 - (f) 1980-81;
 - (g) 1981-82 (est)?
- (3) Are SEC contractors required to place their names on a register?
- (4) If "Yes" to (3), what is the procedure and criteria used to select a contractor from the register for any job?
- (5) Are contracting staff required to work in accordance with SEC safety standards?
- (6) If "Yes", are there examples of these standards not being adhered to?
- (7) Have contracting staff made use of SEC facilities and materials?
- (8) If "Yes" to (7), on what basis?
- (9) Have any contractors failed to complete any work for which they were engaged?
- (10) If "Yes" to (9), what was that work and what was the cost to the SEC of completing that work?
- (11) Have there been any examples of sub-standard work by contractors requiring correction by SEC employees?
- (12) If "Yes" to (11), what was the work and what was the cost to the SEC?
- (13) Is the cost of inspection and corrective work taken into account in assessing the total cost of contract work?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (13) It is normal practice for competitive tenders to be called for all contracted work to be undertaken by the State Energy Commission.

Information regarding each contract let in recent years is too detailed and time consuming to obtain; but if the member has a specific question or requirement relative to a particular tender, I would provide that information.

It is usual practice for tenders to be advertised, and all parties, whether performing contracted work or work carried out internally by State Energy Commission staff, are required to meet safety standards as laid down by the appropriate regulations.

The provision of materials would be incorporated into the tender specifications at the time of tendering, although materials could be supplied where it is considered advantageous, or where the use of the commission's purchasing arrangements would either guarantee supply, or provide financial savings.

The failure by a contractor to complete any work is a rare occurrence. I am advised that the only recent example was for electrical work on Muja stage 'C' some 18 months ago, when the original contractor was declared bankrupt during the period of the contract, and the work involved was of a nature that could not be carried out by internal State Energy Commission staff.

Work being carried out by contractors is monitored by State Energy Commission staff during the contract period; and, in determining the total costs involved in any project, all costs that can be defined during the planning period are included.

FUEL AND ENERGY: STATE ENERGY COMMISSION

Management Practices and Policies: W. D. Scott and Associates

516. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) With respect to the State Energy Commission's management practices and policies relating to the use of contractors, what was the cost to the SEC of engaging consultants W. D. Scott & Co. Pty. Ltd. in 1981 to conduct a review of the SEC's management and operations?

- (2) (a) Will he table a copy of the SEC report prepared by W. D. Scott & Associates;
(b) if not, why not?
- (3) What changes in the management and operations of the SEC have occurred or will occur as a result of the recommendations contained in the report of W. D. Scott & Co. Pty. Ltd.?
- (4) Is it a fact that the Scott report on the SEC states—

Concern has been expressed by operational management that the engagement of contractors may not be the most cost-effective method of proceeding with all projects. It would appear in fact that no detailed study of the alternatives has been conducted, and that this situation exemplifies the apparent contradiction in two of the 'perceived' Commission's policies, i.e. that the Commission should utilise contractors where practicable, and that the Commission should perform in the most cost-effective manner. Consequently, the manpower review team recommends that further consideration is given to the question of the use of contractors.?

- (5) If "Yes" to (4), is a study to be undertaken of the comparative cost-effectiveness of the use of contractors as opposed to the use of SEC staff?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) The cost of the W. D. Scott & Co. Pty. Ltd. consulting services in 1981 for the services provided and finalised in the report entitled "Review of Management Practices—Phase II—Final Report", relating to the complete review of the State Energy Commission's management practices and policies, was \$84 565, plus expenses.
- (2) (a) and (b) The W. D. Scott & Co. Pty. Ltd. report has already been tabled, and is now a matter of public information. A copy was forwarded to the Leader of the Opposition on the same day as it was tabled. Copies are available to members on request.

- (3) The W. D. Scott & Co. Pty. Ltd. report makes recommendations in a number of areas of the commission. The commission's organisational structure has been changed, and a complete review of the recommendations has resulted in a number of major changes. It is recommended that the report be studied for reference to specific changes. A number of the major changes and recommendations which have been implemented are—

- (a) the structure of the board of commissioners has been changed to embrace 5 voting members, three from outside the commission, the commissioners, and the deputy commissioner;
- (b) the commissioner now delegates the day-to-day running of the business, personnel, finance, and administrative functions to the deputy commissioner; this move was made to enable the commissioner to concentrate on matters of policy, forward planning, and major contractual matters;
- (c) three assistant commissioners report to the deputy commissioner as the chief operating executive and chief business officer of the commission; a corporate affairs executive has been appointed to support the commissioner directly in his internal and external responsibilities;
- (d) a new energy policy and planning function has been created under the chief manager, reporting directly to the deputy commissioner on a day-to-day basis, whilst retaining a strong technical link direct to the commissioner;
- (e) the earlier resources and planning group has been split into four groups—energy planning, energy research, resource contracts, and marketing;
- (f) the areas of the three assistant commissioners—being development, operations, and finance and administration—have been re-organised, and currently the assistant commissioners are reviewing and implementing detailed recommendations made in the W. D. Scott report;

(g) the report is wide ranging and also has made recommendations concerning committees, vehicles, telephones, administration, engineering standards, and finance; these recommendations are in the process of being implemented.

- (4) and (5) The W. D. Scott report has considered the question of the commission's requirement to minimise the costs in various areas, and therefore the trade-off between the use of contractors, where practicable, and the increase in SEC staff has been reviewed.

The quote is not direct and can be misinterpreted. However, the conclusion regarding the need to consider the question of contractors has been a commission consideration for some time. The commission's approach has been to consider cost effective comparison studies of alternatives for its decision making; and this practice is to continue. Each case is evaluated on its particular merits, based on studies of the cost effectiveness of the use of contractors as compared to the use of SEC staff. The commission has, for some time, used contractors to overcome the problems associated with peaks in work load. A great number of the contractors used are small businessmen. I assume the member is not implying that such contractors should not be used from time to time.

Commission policies are not in conflict with the need to undertake activities on a most cost-effective basis, and page 150 of the W. D. Scott report reviews and expands this matter—

Use of Consultants and Contractors

The final area of concern in the Manpower Planning Section is the definition of a role for the Branch in determining Commission policy with regard to outside services. There are a number of areas in which consultants or contractors are used, on specific projects, in loading for peaks, and in general operating areas where the economics would appear to justify external as opposed to SEC resources being used. One of the difficulties facing any organisation that is attempting to control

manpower levels is that the staff numbers become the sole criterion for performance instead of overall cost. As discussed elsewhere there is a need in the present political and economic environment to monitor and control the use of consultants and contractors. The overall costs and benefits of each approach need to be identified so that effective decisions can be made and control maintained. Personnel should be involved both with the Manager Project Services (for consultants) and with the Workshops Engineer and Manager Operational Services (for contractors) to ensure that an overall perspective is achieved.

FUEL AND ENERGY: GAS

North-West Shelf:

Dampier-Perth Pipeline

517. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) What is the latest estimate of the cost of constructing and installing the natural gas pipeline from the point of supply in the north to its final point of delivery in the south?
- (2) What is the latest estimate of the cost of the pipeline which the State Energy Commission is liable to pay?
- (3) Is the SEC's liability contractual?
- (4) If "Yes" to (3)—
 - (a) When was the contract for the pipeline signed;
 - (b) who are the signatories to the contract;
 - (c) what is the estimated completion date of the pipeline;
 - (d) what is the estimated amount of borrowings that the SEC will undertake to pay for the pipeline;
 - (e) what is the planned borrowing programme in terms of—
 - (i) the amounts to be borrowed in each year;
 - (ii) the sources of the loans;
 - (iii) the rate of interest on and the term of each borrowing;

- (f) what is the total estimated annual repayments of SEC borrowings over the life of the loans raised for the pipeline construction and installation;
- (g) what amount of the expenditure on the pipeline will be financed from the SEC's internal sources;
- (h) what are the "internal sources", if any, referred to in answer to part (g);
- (i) what is the estimated additional net revenue per year required by the SEC to meet the total cost of loan repayments on borrowings for the pipeline?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (4) As has been published, the estimated cost of the Dampier to Perth natural gas pipeline is \$670 million in July 1981 currency values, including estimated capitalised interest payments up to the programmed date of completion of the project.

At this stage, the project is running within the budgeted estimates, and is being constructed through a considerable number of separate contracts, co-ordinated by the principal financial and management consultants. These contracts are progressively considered and determined, and decisions are made having regard for advice from the project managers, Fluor/Maunsell, and the financial advisers, the Orion Royal Bank and the Royal Bank of Canada.

The project is timed to be completed in September 1984, and to date loans totalling some \$270 million Australian equivalents have been raised. Additional borrowings will be finalised in future as work requirements proceed, and the terms, repayments and revenue requirements to meet loans cannot be determined until construction and financing has been finalised.

FUEL AND ENERGY: GAS

North-West Shelf:

Cost of Project

518. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Resources Development:

- (1) What is the latest estimate of the cost of the North-West Shelf natural gas project?

- (2) What are the latest estimates of the major cost components of the project?
- (3) If not identified in (2), what is the total estimated infrastructure costs associated with the project?
- (4) What is the latest estimate of final expenditure on infrastructure by—
 - (a) The State Government;
 - (b) State semi-government authorities?
- (5) What is the estimated expenditure for each major item of infrastructure in (4) (a) and (b)?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) \$11 000 million in dollars of the day.

- (2) Phase 1—\$2 200 million
Phase 2—\$8 800 million

Phase 1 of the project includes platform A, submarine pipeline, dredging, the domestic gas plant and associated works.

Phase 2 of the project includes platform B, LNG plant, cooling water system, LNG ships, product jetty, dredging and associated works.

The infrastructure provisions by the joint venturers for roads, housing, supply base, water supply, construction camp, etc., and contributions to the State and the Shire of Roebourne included in the above figures are—

Phase 1—\$200 million

Phase 2—\$300 million

Within these amounts the joint venturers have contributed \$9.95 million towards the cost of upgrading of the West Pilbara Water Supply Scheme.

Also included is the joint venturers' contribution of \$7.929 million towards the cost of permanent school, hospital and police facilities consequent upon the project and in lieu of the joint venturers providing their own temporary facilities.

The joint venturers have also offered to contribute \$7.138 million in 1982 dollars to the Shire of Roebourne for community facilities and the upgrading of Karratha Airport. Of this amount \$2.506 million in 1982 dollars is conditional on phase 2 of the project proceeding.

- (3) and (4) The joint venturers' provisions for infrastructure have been included in (2).

In respect to State Government and State semi-government authority infrastructure, it is not possible to be precise as to the final cost of providing all social and industrial infrastructure over the life of the project.

Indicative State Loan Council infrastructure borrowings associated with the project, and approved in principle, total \$698 million in June 1981 dollars.

- (5) Social infrastructure \$7.7 million.
State semi-government commercial undertakings—

SEC natural gas pipeline—\$683 million

Industrial Lands Development at Jervoise Bay—\$7.3 million

**MINISTER OF THE CROWN:
MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT**

*Royal Commissions and
Committees of Inquiry*

521. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What is the number of committees of inquiry, Royal Commissions and other forms of major public inquiry conducted into matters and affairs within his administrative responsibilities in each of the following years:

- (a) 1974;
- (b) 1975;
- (c) 1976;
- (d) 1977;
- (e) 1978;
- (f) 1979;
- (g) 1980;
- (h) 1981?

- (2) What is the subject and name of each inquiry identified in (a) to (h) above?
- (3) On what date was the report of each inquiry identified in (2) released to the public?
- (4) What are the names of the reports of the inquiries, if any, that he or the Government has not released to the public?
- (5) Why has he withheld each report, if any, identified in (4)?

- (6) When does he expect that the reports identified in (4), if any, will be released to the public?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) to (6) An identical question to this has been asked of a number of Ministers. The Premier will respond to the member in due course.

WATER RESOURCES

Groundwater: Australind

523. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Has there been a change in the source of ground water supplied to consumers in the locality of Australind over the last 12 months?
- (2) If "Yes"—
- (a) What was the former supply source;
 - (b) what is the current source of supply;
 - (c) what was the date on which the source of supply was changed?
- (3) How frequently is the level of total dissolved salts monitored for each of the sources of supply identified in (2) (a) and (b)?
- (4) What authorities conducted the tests identified in (3)?
- (5) What was the last level of total dissolved salts recorded in the source of supply identified in (2) (a)?
- (6) What are the levels of total dissolved salts recorded for each test conducted on the source for water supply identified in (2) (b) since the supply source to Australind was changed?
- (7) What are the levels of salt recorded for each test identified in (5)?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) Bores at Eaton.
(b) Bore 1/77 at North Australind.
(c) The source was initially changed on 14 January 1982. However, due to operational problems with pumping, the Eaton source was used again from 22 January to 25 January. The Eaton source was also used from 12 February to 2 March so that a chlorinator could be installed to overcome odour problems.

- (3) Weekly tests are normally carried out locally by the Public Works Department on samples from the reticulation for total dissolved salts. At six-monthly intervals a sample is sent from the source to the Government Chemical Laboratories for detailed analysis.
- (4) Answered by 3.
- (5) 330 milligrams per litre.
- (6) Levels of total dissolved salts in milligrams per litre on reticulation samples tested by the Public Works Department at Australind were—

Date	Result
19 January 1982	964
26 January 1982	961
2 February 1982	928
23 February 1982	336
2 March 1982	331
9 March 1982	838
15 March 1982	869
23 March 1982	953
30 March 1982	809

compared to a 1 000 milligrams per litre from the only test taken from the Australind source on 19 January 1982 which was tested by the Government Chemical Laboratories.

- (7) These range from 316 to 330 milligrams per litre.

RAILWAYS: FREIGHT

Joint Venture: Tonnage

530. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Can he confirm that the joint venturers in the first year of operations are expected to carry 320 000 tonnes of freight previously carried by Westrail?
- (2) Can he also confirm that the tonnage of freight handled by the Kewdale freight terminal last year was approximately one million tonnes?
- (3) What is the nature and type of the remaining 689 000 tonnes of freight that will not be handled by the joint venturers?
- (4) How will it be handled and who will transport it?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) In 1980-81 Westrail carried 325 000 tonnes of the type of traffics which could potentially be contributed to the joint venture company. The actual tonnage the joint venture company carries in its first year of operations will depend upon its ability to retain and attract traffic when the general freight market is deregulated.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Container, piggyback and crane road traffics and general traffic in wagon load consignments.
- (4) Westrail will continue to handle and transport a major share of the traffic involved provided its price and service are competitive.

ABATTOIR: ROBB JETTY

Killing Fees

532. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) How many increases in killing fees have been approved or recommended for the Western Australian Meat Commission—Robb Jetty abattoirs—by him or the Department of Agriculture since December 1974?
- (2) (a) What were the killing fees for beef, veal, sheep and lambs in 1974; and
(b) what are the current killing fees?
- (3) What has been the percentage increase for killing fees since 1974 for each type of animal?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) 7.
- (2) (a) As from 22 July 1974 the following rates applied—

Local	On dressed weight up to and including	Minimum charge/head	Charge for each kg over limit	
	kg	\$		c
Cattle	125	13.50		3
Calves	50	6.90		8
Sheep	18	2.18		5.6
Lambs	16	2.12		7.8
Export				
Cattle	150	14.10		2.5
Calves	70	8.05		7.5
Sheep	18	1.82		5.1
Lambs	16	1.72		7.8

(b) The following rates apply at present—

Local & Export	On dressed weight up to and including kg	Minimum charge/head \$	Charge for each kg over limit c
Cattle	125	28.60	6.34
Calves	40	13.71	18.33

Sheep/ Lambs — Standard charge \$5.03/head

(3)

		1974 \$/head	Current \$/head	% increase
Cattle	(Av. wt. 175 kg)			
Local		15.00	31.70	107.8
Export		14.73	31.70	111.7
Calves	(Av. wt. 70 kg)			
Local		8.50	19.21	126.0
Export		8.05	19.21	138.6
Sheep	(Av. wt. 20 kg)			
Local		2.29	5.03	93.8
Export		1.92	5.03	161.7
Lambs	(Av. wt. 13.5 kg)			
Local		2.12	5.03	137.3
Export		1.72	5.03	192.4

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT: PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Liberal Party Committee

534. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) Has the Attorney General finished his work with a Liberal Party committee on the subject of pecuniary interests of members of Parliament?
- (2) If "Yes", has a report been produced?
- (3) If "Yes" to (2), will he table it?
- (4) If the committee has finished its study, when did it complete its work?
- (5) If the committee has not completed its study, when will it do so?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) to (5) When the committee has completed its work, the subject will be considered by the Government. It would not be normal practice to make public documents prepared by a party committee.

TRANSPORT: BUSES

MTT: Conductresses

535. Mr PARKER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What is the position of conductresses employed by the Metropolitan Transport Trust at the Fremantle depot with regard to continued employment at that depot and/or transfer elsewhere within the MTT?
- (2) What is the purpose of encouraging conductresses to resign as evident in the "Staff Manager's" circular of 12 January 1978?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Continuity of employment is assured for all MTT conducting staff at Fremantle depot. It is trust policy not to retrench staff.
- (2) The requirement for conductors on buses has substantially reduced in recent years resulting in an adjustment to the number of conducting staff.

COMMUNITY WELFARE

Distressed Persons' Relief Trust: Future Operation

539. Mr WILSON, to the Deputy Premier:

- (1) Is there any time limit to the future operation of the Distressed Persons' Relief Trust?
- (2) What avenue for increasing the financial resources of the trust have been explored in the past year?
- (3) What consideration, if any, has been given to the possibility of extending the scope of the trust in the past year, and with what results?
- (4) What plans exist for the future extension of the trust's services?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) The trust is financed predominantly through State Treasury, the Lotteries Commission and Commonwealth grants. The financial arrangements are reviewed each year.
- (3) and (4) The trust is satisfactorily performing its functions as provided for under the Act. There are no plans to extend its activities.

LAW REFORM COMMISSION

Debts: Recommendations

541. Mr WILSON, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) Can the Attorney General confirm that the Law Reform Commission made recommendations three years ago to the effect that imprisonment for non-payment of a debt be abolished?
- (2) If "Yes", what action has the Government taken on this recommendation?
- (3) Does the Government approve of action such as that proposed by Mutual Acceptance Insurance Ltd., to insist on the gaoling of an invalid pensioner, the father of four children, two of whom have serious health problems, for a debt, including court costs, of \$105?
- (4) If "No" to (3), when will the Government act to ensure that such situations are not allowed to arise?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) and (2) The Commonwealth Law Reform Commission has published a working paper on enforcement of judgment debts, and has tentatively recommended that there should be no imprisonment for non-payment of debt. The commission has not yet published its report.
- (3) and (4) There is, of course, no such thing as "imprisonment for debt". A term of imprisonment may be ordered (and invoked at the request of the judgment creditor) where an order for payment is made by the court after examination of the debtor as to his capacity to pay, and is not complied with by the judgment debtor. Imprisonment in these circumstances is for contempt of an order of the court, not an alternative to payment, such as may be applicable in default of payment of a fine.

Ample recourse is available under the Local Courts Act and rules for a review of any such order where the circumstances of the debtor have changed since the order was made.

TRAFFIC: LIGHTS

Alexander Drive-Yirrigan Drive Intersection

543. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Transport:

Referring to the answer given to question 438 of 21 August 1980, in which he advised that traffic signals would be installed at the intersection of Alexander Drive and Yirrigan Drive after the City of Stirling had completed necessary alterations to the intersection, since these alterations were completed several months ago, when will these traffic signals now be installed?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

It is anticipated that lights will be installed towards the end of this financial year.

WATER RESOURCES: DAM

Lake Argyle

544. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) As Lake Argyle is at its greatest capacity since being completed, does the dammed water now extend into the Northern Territory?
- (2) If the surface water now does extend to the Northern Territory, along which water courses does this occur?
- (3) What is the estimated maximum overflow per day that has occurred through the spillway?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Matilda Creek
Hicks Creek
Bobtail Creek.
- (3) 60 million cubic metres—via spillway-cut north-east of main dam.

CEMETERIES ACT

Review Committee

545. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Has the Cemeteries Act review committee yet made its report?
- (2) If so, to whom was the report made, and is it her intention to table the report in Parliament?

- (3) If the report has not been completed, when is it expected that it will be?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The report, which was submitted to me last month, is still under study and has not yet been submitted to Cabinet.
- (3) Answered by (1) and (2).

CLOTHING MACHINISTS

Training Course

546. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Are courses for clothing machinists being conducted in this State?
- (2) If so, how many trainees are there at the present time?
- (3) What is the duration of the course?
- (4) Is there a shortage of clothing machinists in this State?
- (5) If so, to what extent?
- (6) What qualifications are obtained by graduates of the course?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) Not to the knowledge of the Department of Labour and Industry.
- (5) Not applicable.
- (6) A course for clothing machinists was conducted by the Western Australian clothing industry training committee in 1981. The course comprised four weeks' training in a technical college conducted by the technical education division followed by four weeks' training with employers. Certificates were issued to the successful graduates by the aforementioned organisations.

APPRENTICES

Group Schemes

547. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) How many group apprenticeship schemes are in operation in Western Australia at the present time?
- (2) How many apprentices are undertaking training in the Master Builders' Association scheme?

- (3) What are the various trades for which training is being undertaken?
- (4) When was the first group apprenticeship scheme inaugurated in Western Australia?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) One.
- (2) 71 apprentices.
- (3) Bricklaying.
Carpentry and joinery.
Painting and decorating.
Cabinetmaking.
- (4) 13 August 1980.

LAND: NATIONAL PARKS

Yanchep: Entry Fee

548. Mr CRANE, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Is there a charge of \$2 per vehicle on entry to the Yanchep National Park?
- (2) If "Yes", are there any exceptions to this charge and who is exempt from paying?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) Yes, for motor cars, utility trucks and wagons.
- (2) A \$10 annual entrance permit may be purchased if desired. The exceptions on the \$2 charge for vehicle entry are motor cycles 50c, buses up to 24 passengers \$4, buses more than 24 passengers \$8.
The entry fee is waived by prior arrangement for buses containing pensioners, invalid people and school children.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOLS

Free Bus Travel

549. Mr BERTRAM, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Education:

Is it not a fact that his predecessor and departmental officers undertook that "free" bus travel to senior high schools would be provided for all junior high school students displaced by his Government's policy of establishing a senior college by liquidating junior high schools?

Mr CLARKO replied:

An undertaking was made to provide free bus travel for 1982 and 1983 for students displaced by the phasing in of the senior colleges. This free travel would be provided to students travelling to schools designated for their region. Students electing to attend a school other than that designated for their region would not be provided with free travel.

WASTE DISPOSAL: LIQUID

Kalamunda, Mundaring, and Swan Shires

550. Mr GORDON HILL, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Will he list the liquid waste disposal sites in the Swan, Mundaring and Kalamunda Shires that are being investigated for possible future use?
- (2) Is it a fact that hazardous, non-biodegradable liquid waste may be deposited at any of those sites?
- (3) If "Yes" to (2), which sites may be used for that purpose?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Midland Abattoir Lagoons. Hazelmere Rifle Range, Midland Road, Helena Valley. Adjacent to Brand Road, Forrestfield.
- (2) No.
- (3) Not applicable.

WATER RESOURCES

Rating System: Swan Valley

551. Mr GORDON HILL, to the Minister for Water Resources:

Will he outline what steps are being taken to alleviate the burden of the water rating system as it affects grape growers within the Swan Valley where their water rates are proportionate to the market value of their property?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

I refer the member to my answer to his question without notice 62 on 30 March, 1982, and add that, in order to avoid repetition of steep increases associated with triennial valuation reviews, it has been well publicised that legislation will be introduced to phase-in all property revaluations over a period of three years,

together with provisions to limit resulting rates increases to 40 per cent in any one year. Also, provision will be included for more convenient payment options.

EDUCATION: NON-TEACHING STAFF

Number: Reduction

552. Mr GORDON HILL, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Education:

- (1) Further to question 239 of 1982 in which he indicated that 467 schools have had reductions in ancillary staff, how many of those schools have had a revision of their particular case, following protests by the schools or parents and citizens' associations?
- (2) Which schools have had all or some part of the working time of their ancillary staff restored?

Mr CLARKO replied:

- (1) 62.
- (2) Albany Primary School
Albany Senior High School
Amaroo Primary School
Applecross Senior High School
Ashfield Primary School
Balga Senior High School
Bambara Primary School
Bayswater Primary School
Beaconsfield Primary School
Bentley Junior Primary School
Bentley Senior High School
Boyup Brook District High School
Cannington Senior High School
Carine Primary School
Castletown Primary School
Churchlands Senior High School
Dalwallinu District High School
Derby District High School
Donnybrook District High School
East Carnarvon Primary School
East Fremantle Primary School
Graylands Primary School
Hamilton Hill Senior High School
Hampton Senior High School
Hillcrest Primary School
Hollywood Senior High School
John Curtin Senior High School
Jolimont Primary School
Kellerberrin District High School
Lathlain Primary School
Lockridge Junior Primary School

Maddington Primary School
 Mandurah Senior High School
 Middle Swan Primary School
 Morawa District High School
 Morley Senior High School
 Mt. Hawthorn Junior Primary School
 Mt. Lawley Senior High School
 Mt. Magnet Primary School
 Neerigen Brook Primary School
 Norseman District High School
 Northam Senior High School
 Northampton District High School
 North Parmelia Primary School
 North Perth Junior Primary School
 Queens Park Primary School
 Rockingham Senior High School
 Roebourne Primary School
 Rossmoyne Primary School
 Rossmoyne Senior High School
 Safety Bay High School
 Scarborough Senior High School
 Spencer Park Primary School
 Swanbourne Primary School
 Toodyay District High School
 Victoria Park Primary School
 West Lynwood Primary School
 West Morley Primary School
 White Gum Valley Primary School
 Willetton Senior High School
 Wirrabirra Primary School
 Wyndham District High School.

HEALTH: DISABLED PERSONS

Extended Care Services

553. Mr GORDON HILL, to the Minister for Health:

Is it a fact that Government policy on extended care services for the disabled is that the provision of one nursing sister only, without facilities, is sufficient to constitute such a service?

Mr YOUNG replied:

No. The level of provision of extended care services in any area depends upon an assessment of need and the availability of resources to meet that need.

Extended care services have been established on a flexible basis according to the needs of each local community.

MINISTER OF THE CROWN: MINISTER FOR HEALTH

Royal Commissions and Committees of Inquiry

554. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What were the number of committees of inquiry, Royal Commissions and other forms of major public inquiry conducted into matters and affairs within his administrative responsibilities in each of the following years—
 - (a) 1974;
 - (b) 1975;
 - (c) 1976;
 - (d) 1977;
 - (e) 1978;
 - (f) 1979;
 - (g) 1980;
 - (h) 1981?
- (2) What is the subject and name of each inquiry identified in (a) to (h) above?
- (3) On what date was the report of each inquiry identified in (2) released to the public?
- (4) What are the names of the reports of the inquiries, if any, that he or the Government has not released to the public?
- (5) Why has he withheld each report, if any, identified in (4)?
- (6) When does he expect that the reports identified in (4), if any, will be released to the public?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) to (6) An identical question to this has been asked of a number of Ministers. The Premier will respond to the member in due course.

MINISTER OF THE CROWN: HONORARY MINISTER ASSISTING THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

Royal Commissions and Committees of Inquiry

555. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Education:

- (1) What were the number of committees of inquiry, Royal Commissions and other

forms of major public inquiry conducted into matters and affairs within his administrative responsibilities in each of the following years—

- (a) 1974;
 - (b) 1975;
 - (c) 1976;
 - (d) 1977;
 - (e) 1978;
 - (f) 1979;
 - (g) 1980;
 - (h) 1981?
- (2) What is the subject and name of each inquiry identified in (a) to (h) above?
 - (3) On what date was the report of each inquiry identified in (2) released to the public?
 - (4) What are the names of the reports of the inquiries, if any, that he or the Government has not released to the public?
 - (5) Why has he withheld each report, if any, identified in (4)?
 - (6) When does he expect that the reports identified in (4), if any, will be released to the public?

Mr CLARKO replied:

- (1) to (6) An identical question to this has been asked of a number of Ministers. The Premier will respond to the member in due course.

556. *This question was postponed.*

MINISTER OF THE CROWN: CHIEF SECRETARY

Royal Commissions and Committees of Inquiry

557. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

- (1) What were the number of committees of inquiry, Royal Commissions and other forms of major public inquiry conducted into matters and affairs within his administrative responsibilities in each of the following years—
 - (a) 1974;
 - (b) 1975;
 - (c) 1976;
 - (d) 1977;
 - (e) 1978;
 - (f) 1979;
 - (g) 1980;
 - (h) 1981?

- (2) What is the subject and name of each inquiry identified in (a) to (h) above?
- (3) On what date was the report of each inquiry identified in (2) released to the public?
- (4) What are the names of the reports of the inquiries, if any, that he or the Government has not released to the public?
- (5) Why has he withheld each report, if any, identified in (4)?
- (6) When does he expect that the reports identified in (4), if any, will be released to the public?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) to (6) An identical question to this has been asked of a number of Ministers and the Premier will respond to the member in due course.

MINISTER OF THE CROWN: MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMMERCE

Royal Commissions and Committees of Inquiry

558. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Industrial Development and Commerce:

- (1) What were the number of committees of inquiry, Royal Commissions and other forms of major public inquiry conducted into matters and affairs within his administrative responsibilities in each of the following years—
 - (a) 1974;
 - (b) 1975;
 - (c) 1976;
 - (d) 1977;
 - (e) 1978;
 - (f) 1979;
 - (g) 1980;
 - (h) 1981?
- (2) What is the subject and name of each inquiry identified in (a) to (h) above?
- (3) On what date was the report of each inquiry identified in (2) released to the public?
- (4) What are the names of the reports of the inquiries, if any, that he or the Government has not released to the public?
- (5) Why has he withheld each report, if any, identified in (4)?

- (6) When does he expect that the reports identified in (4), if any, will be released to the public?

Mr MacKINNON replied:

- (1) to (6) An identical question to this has been asked of a number of Ministers. The Premier will respond to the member in due course.

**MINISTER OF THE CROWN:
MINISTER FOR LABOUR
AND INDUSTRY**

Royal Commissions and Committees of Inquiry

559. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) What were the number of committees of inquiry, Royal Commissions and other forms of major public inquiry conducted into matters and affairs within his administrative responsibilities in each of the following years—

- (a) 1974;
- (b) 1975;
- (c) 1976;
- (d) 1977;
- (e) 1978;
- (f) 1979;
- (g) 1980;
- (h) 1981?

- (2) What is the subject and name of each inquiry identified in (a) to (h) above?

- (3) On what date was the report of each inquiry identified in (2) released to the public?

- (4) What are the names of the reports of the inquiries, if any, that he or the Government has not released to the public?

- (5) Why has he withheld each report, if any, identified in (4)?

- (6) When does he expect that the reports identified in (4), if any, will be released to the public?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) to (6) An identical question to this has been asked of a number of Ministers. The Premier will respond to the member in due course.

**MINISTER OF THE CROWN:
MINISTER FOR RESOURCES
DEVELOPMENT**

Royal Commissions and Committees of Inquiry

560. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Resources Development:

- (1) What were the number of committees of inquiry, Royal Commissions and other forms of major public inquiry conducted into matters and affairs within his administrative responsibilities in each of the following years—

- (a) 1974;
- (b) 1975;
- (c) 1976;
- (d) 1977;
- (e) 1978;
- (f) 1979;
- (g) 1980;
- (h) 1981?

- (2) What is the subject and name of each inquiry identified in (a) to (h) above?

- (3) On what date was the report of each inquiry identified in (2) released to the public?

- (4) What are the names of the reports of the inquiries, if any, that he or the Government has not released to the public?

- (5) Why has he withheld each report, if any, identified in (4)?

- (6) When does he expect that the reports identified in (4), if any, will be released to the public?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (6) An identical question to this has been asked of a number of Ministers. The Premier will respond to the member in due course.

**MINISTER OF THE CROWN:
MINISTER FOR WORKS**

Royal Commissions and Committees of Inquiry

561. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) What were the number of committees of inquiry, Royal Commissions and other forms of major public inquiry conducted into matters and affairs within his administrative responsibilities in each of the following years—

- (a) 1974;
- (b) 1975;
- (c) 1976;

- (d) 1977;
- (e) 1978;
- (f) 1979;
- (g) 1980;
- (h) 1981?

- (2) What is the subject and name of each inquiry identified in (a) to (h) above?
- (3) On what date was the report of each inquiry identified in (2) released to the public?
- (4) What are the names of the reports of the inquiries, if any, that he or the Government has not released to the public?
- (5) Why has he withheld each report, if any, identified in (4)?
- (6) When does he expect that the reports identified in (4), if any, will be released to the public?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) to (6) An identical question to this has been asked of a number of Ministers. The Premier will respond to the member in due course.

RAILWAYS: PARCELS OFFICE

Kalgoorlie

562. Mr I. F. TAYLOR, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) With reference to question 465 of 1982, how many persons are employed at the parcels office in Kalgoorlie?
- (2) Why will the office be of no further use if the proposed joint venture company is established?
- (3) What alternative, if any, will be provided for current users of the parcels office?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Three.
- (2) The office will be of no further use because Westrail will not be accepting freight or parcels in less-than-wagon-load consignments.
- (3) With deregulation of the general freight market, current users of Westrail's Kalgoorlie parcels office will be free to select from the services offered by the joint venture or any other transport operator who accepts the type of traffic involved.

RAILWAYS: FREIGHT

Joint Venture: Redundancies

563. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Further to question 47 of 1982 relating to increased activities in country areas generating greater employment and improving export potential, will he be more specific in defining where the loss of railway personnel in the country areas through the joint venture will be balanced by the benefits arising from the joint venture?
- (2) Does the reference to export mean that producers can expect more favourable rail freight rates for grain, etc.?
- (3) Does he still claim that the joint venture will benefit the consumer by cheaper freight rates, when past experience in the closure of the Boddington and Meekatharra lines where, when the road costs approximated half the rail costs, the benefits were not passed on to the consumer?
- (4) Will he elaborate how the joint venture will bring cheaper freights to the consumer?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) As indicated in my answer to question 47, restraint on transport prices as a result of competition will benefit the community at large. It is not possible to identify in advance the benefits which might be realised in specific country areas.
- (2) Grain traffic will continue to be regulated to rail and hauled at contract rates negotiated between Westrail and the grain industry.
- (3) It should be understood that savings in transport costs are not always readily transferable to the price of individual products being sold to the consumer. Often the considerable range of goods is such that any savings when related to an individual package are so small as to make it impossible to necessarily reflect a price change. It would depend upon that individual retailer and the range of products he supplied as to any retailer's ability to pass on savings in transport costs.

However, I think the member will agree that as the joint venture company will function at a lesser cost using about half the staff as the old methods and be subject to competition from other transporters, it follows that average prices and services will improve.

- (4) The joint venture company will be one of a number of freight forwarders and transport operators offering services. It is anticipated cheaper freight rates will result from the competition between these operators.

RAILWAYS: WESTRAIL

Marketing Manager

564. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Why has Westrail's newly appointed marketing manager been provided with a vehicle, when his predecessor made use of a pool vehicle which was available whenever required?
- (2) Is this action not contrary to the Government's policy on vehicle utilisation for public servants?
- (3) If "No" to (2), would he state his reasons?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) I am advised that because of the new environment in which Westrail will function there was a need to change the policy in regard to the use of motor vehicles.

To improve the mobility of several senior officers a permanent allocation from the vehicle pool was made to the people concerned. No additional vehicles have been acquired by Westrail.

With regard to the marketing director, it is essential that he pursues a more active role in terms of client/customer relationships and the use of a vehicle on a regular basis is necessary to do this.

- (2) No.
- (3) Senior managers and other employees in Government departments who, by the nature of their duties, require to use a vehicle regularly and at short notice are allocated one in order for them to work effectively and efficiently. Issues are kept to a minimum consistent with the requirements of the department concerned.

RAILWAYS: FREIGHT

Joint Venture: Board Membership

565. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) In connection with the Westrail joint venture, what is the composition of this private company board?
- (2) Who are the members?
- (3) Who is the chairman?
- (4) Who is the banker?
- (5) Who will perform the auditing?
- (6) What is the working capital and how will it be provided?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) It is proposed that the board of the company will have six directors—three from Westrail and three from Mayne Nickless Ltd.
- (2) to (6) These matters are being negotiated and are still to be finalised.

RAILWAYS: FREIGHT

Joint Venture: Expertise

566. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

With reference to the commissioner's recent talkback radio programme where he stated, "Westrail was not expert in the handling of smalls and this was one of the reasons for requiring a private partner to inject this expertise", does his department accept that statement and, if so, would he state why?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

I am advised that a check of the recording made of the programme has confirmed that the Commissioner of Railways did not make the statement the member has attributed to him.

However, the commissioner did make the following remarks which are on similar lines to the attributed statement—

"We are not handling it very efficiently because it is being done an old way."

"We're entering into a new transport market which will be able to employ flexibly both modes. It will do the job with about half the resources that are currently being used so the community as a whole will benefit substantially out of this."

RAILWAYS: FREIGHT

Joint Venture: Rental of Facilities

567. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) In connection with the Westrail joint venture, what are the rentals which Westrail will receive from the joint venture for the use of its facilities including goods sheds?
- (2) What is the location of the facilities and the rental of each?
- (3) What vehicles, cranes, forklifts, etc., were accepted by the successful tenderer and what was the financial benefit to Westrail?
- (4) How many Westrail staff did the successful tenderer agree to accept?
- (5) What amount will Westrail receive from the joint venture for performing accounting functions?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) My advice is that rentals for Westrail fixed assets were the subject of commercial negotiation between Westrail and Mayne Nickless Ltd. and are confidential to the parties concerned. However, the member may be assured that Westrail established the current market values of the facilities as a basis for negotiating the rentals.
- (2) In the metropolitan area, the joint venture will lease Westrail facilities at Kewdale, Robbs Jetty, Subiaco, Guildford and in the city. Requirements for country facilities will be dependent upon freight volumes and the final decision will be made by the management of the joint venture company.
- (3) The joint venture company will take over all of the movable assets which were listed in the Westrail invitation for offers to form the company. The assets will be taken into the books of the joint venture company at values to be determined by an independent assessor. Westrail's return on these assets will depend on the profitability of the joint venture company.

- (4) Up to 250, the final number being dependent upon the freight volume which the company handles and the number of Westrail staff who wish to transfer.
- (5) The accounting services to be performed by Westrail and the charges to be raised are the subject of ongoing negotiations.

RAILWAYS: FREIGHT

Joint Venture: Staff

568. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

When the joint venture is formed, will Westrail staff be canvassing for the joint venture?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

Westrail staff would not canvass for the joint venture company.

RAILWAYS: FREIGHT

Joint Venture: Staff

569. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) How many staff, and at what level of seniority, have been seconded to the joint venture?
- (2) How much salary and wages will be charged against the joint venture for their services?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) One member of Westrail's staff, at assistant head of branch level, has been seconded to the joint venture.
- (2) The joint venture will be charged for salary, wages and related costs for staff seconded to the company as from the commencement of its operations.

RAILWAYS: FREIGHT

Joint Venture: Overheads

570. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

What proportion of overheads will be charged against the joint venture?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

The joint venture will be a separate entity and therefore not any of Westrail's overheads will be charged directly against the company.

RAILWAYS: FREIGHT

Joint Venture: Staff

571. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

What is the number of volunteers who will be transferred to the joint venture in the—

- (a) Kewdale and metropolitan area;
- (b) country?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (a) and (b) It is envisaged that positions for 250 Westrail people will be available with the joint venture company. However, the number who will volunteer to transfer to the company is not known as yet.

The people involved will have the opportunity of a 12-month secondment before they make the decision to transfer to the company.

TRANSPORT

Management Services Branch

572. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What will be the annual cost of operating the management service branch under the following headings:

- (a) Staff;
- (b) facilities including computer and other aids;
- (c) proportion of building space occupied, etc.?

- (2) What types of management services will be provided to the commissioner and his other branches?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Projected costs for the 1981-82 year are—

- (a) \$1.18 million;
- (b) \$0.76 million;
- (c) Approximately six per cent of Westrail Centre.

- (2) Computing services.
Economic planning and evaluation.
Operations and cost research.

RAILWAYS

Marketing Staff

573. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is he aware of discontent amongst Westrail staff at the appointment of additional high level marketing staff particularly when careers are possibly in jeopardy as a result of the joint venture?

- (2) Will he provide details of—

- (a) the new position;
- (b) the relevant salaries and the duties?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Two new senior positions in the marketing branch have been created to improve Westrail's competitive stance in a deregulated transportation environment.

The Commissioner for Railways advises he is unaware of any discontent. Such would be surprising as the positions give opportunity for future advancement within the organisation.

- (2) (a) and (b) Market research and planning manager. Salary of approximately \$28 500 per annum.

In addition to providing support to sales officers and undertaking duties on a day-to-day basis the person concerned will be responsible for the preparation of a marketing plan, the establishment of a marketing information system, market research and analysis and financial planning for the branch.

Materials Handling Engineer. Salary of approximately \$29 000 per annum.

A materials handling engineer in the area of marketing will provide expertise which has not previously been directly available to clients. The engineer concerned will also be responsible for development of better freight handling and securing methods.

RAILWAYS: FREIGHT

Joint Venture: Government Policy

574. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

As the joint venture will be a private commercial organisation in competition with the public sector, will he say—

- (a) If the Government will direct or influence the joint venturer in matters of service, rate setting, etc.;
- (b) if the Government will permit Government departments to canvass transport organisations to obtain the best quote in what now is a protected Westrail environment?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (a) The Government will not directly influence the day-to-day operations of the joint venture company.
- (b) The existing policy on use of Government transport services by other Government departments and instrumentalities will remain unchanged where Westrail and State Shipping Service services are appropriate.

RAILWAYS: FREIGHT

Joint Venture: Definition of "Wagon Load"

575. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is it a fact that tenderers for the Westrail joint venture were advised that with the forming of the joint venture Westrail would accept only wagon loads and the joint venture would be the receiver of lower-than-cart loads?
- (2) If "Yes", why in answer to question 301 of 1982 did he say that Westrail would accept small consignments?
- (3) In response to the same question he defined wagon loads as low as 2.5 tonnes. Does this mean that Westrail in its own right will accept wagon loads as low as 2.5 tonnes?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Tenderers for the joint venture were advised that it was Westrail's intention to continue to compete for general freight in wagon-load consignments but would not accept traffic in less-than-wagon-load consignments. The joint venture, in common with all other transport operators, will be free to compete for general traffic in consignments of any size.
- (2) It would appear that the member is referring to question 302. In my answer to that question I indicated that Westrail accepts wagon-load consignments down to a minimum of 2.5 tonnes. That is the current practice. When the joint venture becomes operational Westrail will accept wagon-load consignments with particular minimum charges which are currently under consideration.
- (3) As indicated in (2), when the joint venture company commences operations, Westrail will make wagons available to clients at specified minimum charges based on the carrying capacity of the wagon. Having paid the minimum charge the client will be free to load whatever tonnage he chooses in the wagon, up to the wagon's capacity.

WASTE DISPOSAL: LIQUID AND
SANITARY LAND FILL*Sites*

576. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many liquid waste disposal sites are there in the metropolitan region and precisely where are they located?
- (2) How many sanitary landfill sites are there in the metropolitan region and precisely where are they located?
- (3) What instrumentalities are responsible for monitoring of ground water adjacent to these sites?
- (4) Is the dumping of environmentally hazardous chemicals permitted at—
 - (a) liquid waste disposal sites;
 - (b) sanitary landfill sites?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) There are seven liquid waste disposal sites in the metropolitan region, located as follows—

Thomas Road, Kwinana
South Terrace, Fremantle

Johnston Road, Canning Vale
Beasley Road, Leeming
Newburn Road, Newburn
Gnangara Road, Gnangara
Kelvin Road, Wattle Grove

- (2) There are 19 sanitary landfill sites in the metropolitan region, located as follows—

Phoenix Road, Spearwood
South Terrace, Fremantle
Beasley Road, Leeming
Bannister Road, Canning Vale
Thomas Road, Kwinana
Emms Road, Rockingham
Brockway Road, Graylands
Toodyay Road, Red Hill
Daly Street, Belmont
First Avenue, Midland
Mathieson Road, Chidlow
Reservoir Road, Chidlow
Mayo Road, Woorooloo
Coppin Road, Parkerville
Alexander Drive, Yirrigan
Pinjar Road, Wanneroo
Hopkinson Road, Armadale
Kelvin Road, Wattle Grove
Dawson Avenue, Forrestfield

- (3) Groundwater is monitored adjacent to liquid waste disposal sites and sanitary landfill sites by the Department of Mines, the Metropolitan Water Board and the Public Health Department, depending on the particular circumstances.
- (4) (a) Yes, at some sites, but only after appropriate treatment;
(b) yes, at some sites, but only after appropriate treatment.

Details are contained in a Public Health Department sheet regarding disposal of hazardous waste, which is tabled.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 137).

COMMUNITY WELFARE: SOCIAL WORKER

Cockburn City Council

577. Mr HODGE, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Is he aware that a decision has been made to terminate funding to the City of

Cockburn for the employment of a social worker under the provisions of the WA family support services scheme?

- (2) Is he aware that if the funds mentioned above are terminated, the City of Cockburn will be left without a social worker?
- (3) Is it not essential that the people of Coolbellup and other low income areas of Cockburn should have ready access to the services of a qualified social worker?
- (4) Is he prepared to make representations to the Federal Minister, Senator Chaney, over this issue and request him to reconsider his decision to terminate funding to the City of Cockburn?
- (5) Is he also aware of why the decision was made not to renew funding for the City of Cockburn when most other organisations had their funding renewed for a further three years?

Mr SHALDERS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No. Employment of a social worker by the City of Cockburn is for the decision of that authority.
- (3) The people of Coolbellup and all areas within Cockburn will continue to receive the full range of services provided by the Department for Community Welfare.
- (4) and (5) A State-Commonwealth management committee of officers, with representation from the non-government sector, provides advice on the operation of the scheme and in respect to priorities of funding, for the consideration of both the State Minister for Community Welfare and the Commonwealth Minister for Social Security. The final decisions within this scheme are made on a joint basis by these Ministers.

An expenditure ceiling of \$1.24 million was set by the Commonwealth Government for the period until December 1984.

It was within this financial constraint that priorities were finally determined.

HOSPITALS

Debt Collection

578. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) On what basis are the Mercantile Collection Association and the College Mercantile Agency Pty. Ltd. remunerated for their services as debt collectors for Government hospitals?
- (2) What is the total remuneration received to date by the two debt collection agencies mentioned above?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) (a) The Mercantile Collection Association is paid a percentage of collections after a 10 day initial commission free period following the issue of agency demand letters. Commission is payable at 7.5 per cent for individual collections \$0-\$500, and five per cent for amounts over \$500.
- (b) College Mercantile Agency Pty. Ltd. initial agency demand letters are commission free. Accounts requiring further follow up by agency are subject to five per cent commission.
- (2) Nil.

HOUSING

Norseman

579. Mr GRILL, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many families or individuals are currently on the waiting list for accommodation at Norseman?
- (2) How many four-bedroomed State Housing Commission homes are there in Norseman?
- (3) What is the State Housing Commission policy for provision of four-bedroomed homes?

Mr SHALDERS replied:

- (1) One family.
- (2) One.

- (3) The commission endeavours to provide four-bedroomed accommodation where demand exists dependent on available funds.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

BRIDGE

Shelley

134. Mr WILLIAMS, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that the Shelley Bridge on Leach Highway is still not illuminated at night?
- (2) Have moneys been allocated to have this project completed?
- (3) If so, when were they allocated?
- (4) If not, why not?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) Previous investigations did not show the need for lighting. However, I am arranging for a further review.

TOWN PLANNING: DEPARTMENT

Aerial Tours

135. Mr PARKER, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that, because of an apparent flushness of funds, the Town Planning Department is using some of those funds to organise sky tours of Perth for departmental officers in order that they might see the lie of the land and have a better idea of how Perth looks from the air from charter aeroplanes?
- (2) Is the Minister responsible for the decision to undertake this programme?
- (3) If not, will she have the matter investigated?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) to (3) I know that it has long been the custom for the Minister and some officers to undertake an aerial tour of the metropolitan region at least once a year. It is of great benefit and it is one way in which the planning of the region may be placed in perspective. It also enables people to understand the whole planning situation in relation to the city.

The member referred to a "series of tours in chartered aircraft". I am not aware of a "series of tours". Obviously the tours would have to be by chartered aircraft, because the Town Planning Department does not own a plane. However, if the member provides a more precise question, I shall give him the necessary details.

RAILWAYS

Boyup Brook

136. Mr EVANS, to the Minister for Transport:

I regret the amount of notice I was able to give the Minister was not as great as I would have liked. My question is as follows—

- (1) How many married Westrail workers at Boyup Brook are being transferred?
- (2) Have all been notified of the town to which they will be sent?
- (3) Will all have accommodation provided for them?
- (4) How many have not been notified and when can they expect to be, bearing in mind that the transfers are supposed to be effected as from 1 June?
- (5) Will there be any officers without accommodation provided at their new places of work?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

The question just recited by the member differed slightly from the one which was furnished to me. However, the answer to the question provided is as follows—

- (1) Two.
- (2) and (4) One person has been notified of his transfer to Collie. The second person has not yet been transferred, but presently is being considered for a vacant position for which he has made application.

- (3) and (5) I am advised that Westrail will endeavour to provide departmental accommodation for the people concerned.

HOSPITAL: ROYAL PERTH

Employees Payment

137. Mr PARKER, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that employees of Royal Perth Hospital recently have been told that, in order to facilitate their new method of payment which will be by bank transfer, they are all required to open accounts with the National Bank of Australasia?
- (2) Was the Minister aware of this decision and was any consideration given to suggesting that, if this needed to be done, the Rural & Industries Bank be used or that a choice of banks be given to these employees, as occurs in many other cases?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) and (2) I am not aware of the matter to which the member for Fremantle refers. It would, of course, be a managerial decision by the board of Royal Perth Hospital. However, if the member puts the question on notice, I shall make inquiries and inform myself as to the position.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOLS AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Label Collection Scheme.

138. Mr PEARCE, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is the Honorary Minister aware that the label collection scheme currently operated by Colgate Palmolive Pty. Ltd. in Western Australian schools is illegal under the Trading Stamp Act?
- (2) What action is the Honorary Minister taking to prevent teachers and/or students involved in this scheme being subject to legal prosecutions because of that?

Mr CLARKO replied:

(1) and (2) In answer to the member—

Mr Hodge: He has lost his script.

Mr CLARKO: —I thought he might ask me a further question on this matter but I cannot quickly locate the answer I prepared.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Give it off the top of your head.

Mr CLARKO: Many people are able to do that. I say emphatically that as far as the department and I are concerned, we made it clear in discussions we had with representatives of Colgate-Palmolive Pty. Ltd. that Western Australia, unlike most other States, would not allow our schools to be part of a label collection scheme, meaning the provision of deposit boxes in schools and advising parents and children that our schools would be centres for the collection of these labels. We specifically refused to allow that to happen, and as far as I know not one other State has done this. So, my view is that we are not participating in the collection of these labels for this particular company. The Labor spokesman for education said on a radio talk-back programme the other day—

Mr Pearce interjected.

Mr CLARKO: I ask the member to allow me to answer his question before he interjects.

We refused to allow collection boxes to be placed at our schools, and we stated that individual principals would decide the extent to which their schools would participate in the scheme. The question of whether an illegality has occurred is not of interest to us in the sense that we are not part of any collection scheme. In fact, a collection scheme within our schools has been specifically debarred. We did say to principals, "If you want to participate in this particular programme which involves the children of all the States of Australia—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr CLARKO: Members of the Opposition will have an opportunity to make their points after I have made mine.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Well, make your point.

Mr CLARKO: We believe it is good that children are participating in these

Pacific games. Children from all States of Australia and its Territories, children from Canada, New Zealand, Fiji and other islands in the Pacific will participate in sporting competition involving athletics and swimming, which we think is most desirable. It is commendable that Colgate-Palmolive Pty. Ltd. will provide the money for the air fares. By the time the scheme came to Western Australia every other State and Territory in Australia, as far as I know, had agreed to the scheme, and if we had not participated there would not have been a truly national representation at the games; however, we said specifically that the company could not have a label collection service in our schools. As far as we were aware not one other State of Australia has prevented its schools from collecting these tabs.

It was proposed to us, but rejected, that our schools participate in a competition against each other. The monetary value of the tabs was to be totalled and the school with the highest amount would win \$750 of sporting equipment, but we expressly forbade the company from having collection boxes at schools, and the competition. So, the member has far outreached himself as usual in his attempt to assert that the Education Department is involved in the scheme.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order, and I ask the Minister if he would kindly bring his answer to a conclusion.

Mr CLARKO: So our schools are able to be involved in the scheme if principals choose to do so by way of arranging for children to participate in the sports programme, but there is no need to be involved in the collection of labels or tabs. Therefore there is no question of whether we are doing something illegal.

WOMEN'S INTERESTS

Committee

139. Mr DAVIES, to the Deputy Premier:

I heard on the news tonight that the Government will appoint a committee to look into various aspects of women's interests. In the absence of the Premier, can the Deputy Premier tell us the areas

from which the membership of the committee will be drawn?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

The matter is under consideration at this very moment. I undertake to obtain a full answer for the member, or he may place the question on the notice paper.

EDUCATION: DEPARTMENT

New Building: Fire Hazard

140. Mr PEARCE, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Education:

I will give him another chance, although on another subject. Can he explain why the Education Department building, built at massive expense to taxpayers, is a fire hazard and does not conform to the fire regulations of this State to the extent that people working in that building are in grave jeopardy should there be a fire in that building? Can he outline the steps being taken to correct that situation, and, perhaps, give us rough outline of the cost of the building?

Mr Young: Are you aware it was built by the Superannuation Board?

Mr CLARKO replied:

The member said the building which cost approximately \$20 million was built at fantastic cost to taxpayers. Taxpayers have made no contribution at all to the construction of that building. It is not uncommon that the member is totally lacking in knowledge, and in this case that is certainly so.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Where do you think the Superannuation Board gets the funds from?

Mr CLARKO: The Superannuation Board owns the building and the Education Department is a tenant of the board.

Mr I. F. Taylor: The money comes from the public.

Mr CLARKO: It would take me too much time at this moment to correct the member's interjection. The department is a tenant of the board. The building was constructed under the guidance of Cameron Chisholm & Nicol as the architects, and I am not competent—

Mr I. F. Taylor: That's for sure.

Mr Bertram: You can say that again.

Mr CLARKO: —to assess the situation. These interjections are about as cheap as the member for Kalgoorlie is long. I am not competent—

Mr Bertram: Hear, hear!

Mr CLARKO: —to determine the fire requirements of any building. As usual members opposite are interested only in causing conflagrations—they are great at lighting fires, and that is all. The fire requirements of the building in question will be determined by the appropriate authorities; they are not a matter on which I will have the power to make a decision.

I am sure difficulties will be worked out. Members who read this evening's edition of the *Daily News* no doubt noted the comments of the people associated with the construction of this building, and that they have said some matters have been greatly exaggerated although some matters require attention. Members of the Opposition should direct their questions not to me in this place. As usual their questions are inaccurate.

LOTTERIES COMMISSION

Liberal Party Raffle

141. Mr GORDON HILL, to the Minister for Police and Prisons:

I refer to a reply from the Premier on 7 April. He said of a letter I gave to him about a recently conducted Liberal Party raffle—

Following receipt of the letter I referred this matter... to the Minister for Police and Prisons for the necessary attention.

I refer also to the Minister's reply to a question from me on Tuesday, 8 April, about what he had done in response to the Premier's referring the matter to him. He replied that the matter fell within the jurisdiction of the Chief Secretary and that I should direct my request to the Chief Secretary.

What action has the Minister for Police and Prisons taken on the Premier's reference to him of the matter? Has he decided on his own authority that instructions such as this from the Premier can be ignored? If that is the

case, will he tell me now what, if anything, he has done about my complaint, and the Premier's instruction to him to take necessary action on the matter?

Mr HASSELL replied:

I have answered this question already. I repeat that the matter is one which falls within the responsibility of the Chief Secretary.

Mr Gordon Hill: The letter was given to you.

Mr Carr: Have you given it to the Chief Secretary?

Mr HASSELL: If the member for Swan wants some matter to be pursued in relation to the matter he has raised then as I have previously suggested to him he should bring the matter to the attention of the Minister responsible. If he puts the question on notice to the Chief Secretary it will be answered by me on behalf of the Chief Secretary as is the practice of the House.

EDUCATION: DEPARTMENT

New Building: Private Lift

142. Mr PEARCE, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Education:

Perhaps it will be third time lucky for the Honorary Minister. Is it a fact that in the building for which taxpayers are paying a massive amount a private-key

operated lift express from the ground floor to the fourth floor has been installed for ministerial use? Is it true that only the Honorary Minister for Education has a key for that lift, and therefore nobody else can use it?

Mr CLARKO replied:

Of course this matter is of particular educational importance!

Several members interjected.

Mr CLARKO: As usual the member's question lacks accuracy. He referred to a lift to the fourth floor, but where my office is situated a fourth floor does not exist; so he would be up in the air if he went to the fourth floor to get to my office. I think we could say he would be on cloud four.

It is true that a lift commencing in the basement area can be used by the Minister for Education and people associated with the part of the building to which that lift goes. At present the lift is open to all, but it is the intention as was decided long before I took up this position that a private key be made available for the operation of this lift.

Mr Pearce: The answer is, "Yes", in fact.

Mr CLARKO: My office is on the second floor and this gentleman seeks to go to the fourth floor; that is appropriate for him in any two-storied building.