Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 18 April 1984

The SPEAKER (Mr Harman) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

PORNOGRAPHY AND VIOLENCE

Video Films: Petition

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Leader of the Opposition) [2.17 p.m.]: I have a petition to present from 729 citizens of Western Australia, and it reads as follows—

> TO:
>
> The Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.
>
> We, the undersigned plead that because it will cause serious harm to the community the Parliament will not legalise the sale, hire or supply of any video tape, video disc, slide or any other recording from a visual image which can be produced, which portrays scenes of explicit sexual relations showing genitalia detail; acts of violence and sex; sexual perversion such as sodomy; mutilation; child pornography; coprophilia; bestiality or the use and effect of illicit drug taking.
>
> Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, and I have certified accordingly.

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

(See petition No. 89.)

GAMBLING: CASINO

Burswood Island: Personal Explanation

MR GRAYDEN (South Perth) [2.19 p.m.]: I seek leave of the House to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr GRAYDEN: Last night when speaking to the Government's amendment to my casino motion, I made the following statement—

> What the Government is suggesting is that the TAB—and TABs are notorious throughout the world for attracting vice and corruption of every kind—should run this casino in Western Australia.

What I had intended to say was this—

> What the Government is suggesting is that the TAB—and casinos are notorious throughout the world for attracting vice and corruption of every kind—should run this casino in Western Australia.

Last night I made a slip of the tongue and said, "TABs are notorious" when I meant to say "casinos are notorious".

This morning's edition of *The West Australian* contains a report on my comment, and that report has compounded and exacerbated the error inasmuch as only a portion of what I said was reported. Therefore the report gives my remarks a completely different meaning. The *Hansard* report is the accurate one, because I have checked the tape. I make it quite clear that when I was speaking yesterday I went out of my way to say that I had the greatest respect for the integrity of all members of the TAB. I said in part—

> I must clarify that by saying I have the greatest respect for those people who currently form the TAB. They are all very good types and no-one would take exception to them.

I made that clarification. I want to make it clear that I have no criticism of the TAB. I hasten to correct my slip of the tongue, but more importantly the serious error in the newspaper report.

BILLS (7): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Soccer Football Pools Bill 1984.
2. Acts Amendment (Soccer Football Pools) Bill 1984.

   Bills introduced, on motions, by Mr Tonkin (Leader of the House) and read a first time.
3. Rural Reconstruction and Rural Adjustment Schemes Amendment Bill 1984.

   Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Evans (Minister for Agriculture), and read a first time.
4. South West Development Authority Bill 1984.

   Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Grill (Minister for Regional Development and the North West with special responsibility for "Bunbury 2000"), and read a first time.

5. Main Roads Amendment Bill 1984.
   Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Grill (Minister for Transport), and read a first time.
6. Totalisator Duty Amendment Bill 1984.
   Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Tonkin (Leader of the House), and read a first time.
7. Parliament (Legislative Council Representation and Elections) Bill 1984.
   Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Stephens, and read a first time.

EASTERN GOLDFIELDS TRANSPORT BOARD BILL 1984

Third Reading

MR GRILL (Esperance-Dundas—Minister for Transport) [2.28 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR LAURANCE (Gascoyne) [2.29 p.m.]: I would like to make a brief comment about the debate which ensued yesterday during the Committee stage when the Opposition supported this measure. We believe the Bill does update the legislation covering the operations of the Eastern Goldfields Transport Board. However, we took the opportunity yesterday to register our protest about the Government's change to the appointment of the chairman of that board.

We moved an amendment to revert the method of the selection of the chairman to that which has pertained since 1947. However, the Government decided that it could not support that amendment, and therefore it intends to press ahead with its change.

The Opposition is disappointed because in a situation where the bureaucracy said one thing and the local community said another, the Minister who had to make the decision decided to come down in favour of the recommendations of the bureaucracy.

That is not necessarily a criticism in itself. It is more a criticism of the Minister who represents part of that area. One would have thought he would come down on the side of the local community, rather than take the advice of his bureaucrats.

Mr I. F. Taylor: He would be a bit more in touch with the local community than you are.

Mr LAURANCE: The option to keep some measure of involvement in the selection of the chairman has been removed from the two local authorities which have a financial commitment to the operations of the board. We are disappointed that the Government has adopted this attitude. We do not believe this legislation should include this provision, and we do not believe it would be right for Governments to take similar action in respect of transport operations in other parts of the State. We take this opportunity to record our disappointment at the way the debate has proceeded on that issue. In all other respects, we support the legislation.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION BILL 1984

Report

Report of Committee adopted.

Third Reading

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the third reading.

MR PEARCE (Armadale—Minister for Education) [2.31 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR CLARKO (Karrinyup) [2.32 p.m.]: I welcome the Minister's agreement to certain amendments to this Bill that I moved on behalf of the Opposition during the Committee stage. I was disappointed that the Minister found himself unable to support the amendment I moved to change the composition of the campus committees from having a majority of staff and student members to a majority of community representatives. A need exists for staff and student representatives to have a strong voice on such bodies, but I believe it should be a minority voice; the majority should be the community voice. When those separate campuses were individual colleges they had boards with a majority of community representatives. There is no doubt in my mind, having been a member of such a board, that the voice of the staff and students was heard and was ably expressed, and usually was successful.

Secondly, I was disappointed, as I have been for some years, that the Government has again promoted compulsory tertiary student unionism. Voluntary unionism is a cornerstone of good unionism—that is, when members are persuaded to join rather than having membership forced on them. I have no doubt unions would flourish in Western Australia if the system were such that people chose voluntarily to join, and when the people who were part of the executive and its equivalent were given the responsibility of presenting their policies and administrative record in such a way that the group of people—in this case teritary

students—found it acceptable, and the level of fees was reasonable.

That might mean it would be necessary to restrain or restrict the overall activities that take place. A certain degree of lack of responsibility exists if the student guild is able to have the whole student populace compulsorily paying fees to the guild and there is no real need to court the membership. There is no potential membership—the whole lot are compulsorily members.

Some miniscule improvement was made last year when the Bills went through another place and that House provided for some measure of opting out. It is very restricted, however, and I think one would find that when people have to pay the same amount of money to get out of union membership as they do to go in, they do not have proper freedom. While I am in this House I will continue to oppose compulsory tertiary student unionism.

The third point I wish to make is that the time-management arrangement for this Bill was unsuccessful; it was far too restrictive. This has nothing to do with the Minister for Education whose approach to the matter was exemplary. We tried to come to a suitable arrangement and we discussed a limit of three hours, with 2½ hours allocated to the second reading and Committee stages and half an hour for the third reading. I felt half an hour might be too short if something blew up during the second reading or Committee stages so I suggested an arrangement of two hours and one hour.

I am not trying to apportion all the blame to the Government. I believe that that amount of time and restraint was inappropriate. I go back to what I said a week or two ago: We could have worked out something more appropriate and more flexible by making an arrangement behind the Chair. As it turned out, the Minister for Education, the member for Narrogin, and myself together with a former Minister for Education who felt the need to get up and speak at one stage, had to race through the legislation. The time was insufficient and at the end I was unable to make a comment about a clause which I called the "religious clause".

I fail to see why it was necessary to insert a clause in this Bill relating to religious restraint. I thought that sort of battle had been won a long time ago.

Mr Pearce: The price of liberty is eternal vigilance.

Mr CLARKO: Yes, but I think it is superfluous. Perhaps the Minister can say whether the clause really is necessary or whether it was put in by a conscientious draftsman. Perhaps it was the same draftsman who inserted the words that said if a person died he could not remain a member of a body. The Minister sensibly agreed to my amendment to delete that matter. I am surprised it is in the Bill. It surprises me when it comes in a week in which the Prime Minister decided to do "God Save the Queen" in the eye.

I was also surprised—particularly in view of the great love some people have for the sexual discrimination Act—that the Bill contains references to "he does" and the masculine is used throughout, in an appropriate way in my view. I find it hard to talk about a "chairperson" instead of a chairman. That is a sort of house management matter; it is not a matter for the Minister.

With the few exceptions I have mentioned, the Opposition very much welcomes this legislation. We believe it should help in the good governance of the Western Australian College of Advanced Education, an organisation we wish well.

MR PEARCE (Armadale—Minister for Education) [2.39 p.m.]: I agree to some extent with the member's remarks about the situation that developed under the time-management motion I moved earlier. Some fine tuning is needed and possibly we need to allow a more global period rather than have an hour by hour arrangement. The member was kind enough to say considerable discussion took place about the limits. They were made more generous than the Opposition originally sought, but it is difficult to forecast the time that will be taken in debate. The member for Karrinyup, in reaching the estimates with me, could not have been aware of the extent to which the member for South Perth and the member for Narrogin would enter the debate.

The principle of time management means that the House has either to face the alternative of legislation by exhaustion, where we sit until three o'clock, four o'clock, or five o'clock in the morning, or to adopt this system. When I came into Parliament, a 3.00 a.m. rising was common. If we are not to have that situation, we must have time management. However, I will certainly discuss the issue with the Leader of the House to ascertain whether we can make the rule a little more flexible to overcome some of the difficulties.

I would make one comment on the remarks of the member for Karrinyup. He made points about the way in which he believes students at these institutions are constrained by some compulsory nature. As a result of the student guilds' legislation which this Government introduced last year, a student at any tertiary institution now has a right not to be a member of a student associ-

ation or guild without having to give any particular reason, but simply by notifying the authorities that he or she is a conscientious objector. There can be no argument about that. In fact, although the member said he saw that as an improvement, I would remind him it was that amendment which I and the Government accepted last year, not just because of the Legislative Council, when he and the Opposition voted against it, in favour of retaining the status quo. As a result, students in tertiary institutions at the beginning of enrolments this year had the right to be conscientious objectors. I had lunch today with the executive and some council members of the University of Western Australian Guild of Undergraduates.

Mr Clarko: You learnt something from them.

Mr PEARCE: I did. They are very supportive of the way in which that legislation is working, and they informed me there has been one conscientious objector in the whole enrolment in the University of Western Australia this year, and that was the President of the Australian Student Liberal Federation. Perhaps he was a genuine conscientious objector, but it is not hard to find a political motivation. There were 13 out of some 3 000 at the WA Institute of Technology. So it is hard to believe that there is a mass desire on the part of students to get away from student organisations to which they are compulsorily required to belong, as was alleged by the member for Karrinyup.

Mr Clarko: That proves my point. I am happy if there is 100 per cent belonging to the student organisation—I have always been a member—but it should be voluntary.

Mr PEARCE: Let me say to the member, and I do not doubt his sincerity, that there is an old saying that actions speak louder than words. The member was Minister for Education as long as I have been. He did not do anything about student guilds in this House.

Mr Clarko: That is false.

Mr PEARCE: There was no legislation or changes previously. The present Government has legislated to strengthen the provisions concerning conscientious objection. If it is now possible to be a conscientious objector, this owes nothing to the member for Karrinyup, but it owes everything to this Government. If the member for Karrinyup continues to discuss that issue, when he returns to the post of Minister for Education—which seems doubtful for a whole range of reasons, least of which being the chances of his party being back in Government in the short term, medium term, or even the long term—he might then move to do something about it.

Nevertheless, I appreciate the support given by members of the Opposition and I thank members for their support of this Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

COUNTRY TOWNS SEWERAGE AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 22 March 1984.

MR MENSAROS (Floreat) [2.47 p.m]: I thank the Minister for having given me the opportunity to consult some of the officers in the department. Most of the matters have been cleared up. One query is remaining, but I will ask the Minister for a statement concerning the way in which that question should be answered.

As was said in the second reading speech, the Bill contains four main provisions, the first of which adds a new purpose for which the rates in a country town sewerage scheme can be calculated; the second allows fees to be charged for services which have hitherto been rendered free of charge; the third introduces infringement notices; and the fourth increases the existing penalties.

The first two provisions greatly concern the Opposition. We cannot support the principle beyond these provisions. That is taking into account what I said only a few days ago in the debate on the Bill which provided for the amalgamation of the two major water authorities. The last two provisions we support; we think they are reasonable.

The first provision adds to the purposes set out in the Act, and for which charges can be levied. There is a statutory limit expressed in cents in the dollar value of the sewerage charge. At any given time, there is a maximum limit of, say, 15c or 9c in the dollar which can be charged either on the net annual value, or lately, as the townships are being revalued, on the gross rental value. This is only a maximum charge.

The Public Works Department ought to charge according to the purposes provided for in section 67 of the principal Act, not indiscriminately the maximum. The purpose is for funds to be provided for the general administration of the Act; in other words, the expenses of administering and maintaining this particular sewerage undertaking. Secondly, funds should be provided to defer expenses incidental to each area which are incurred in the maintenance and management of the sewerage works. That, of course, means physical and engineering maintenance of that particular sewerage undertaking. Thirdly, funds should be

provided to pay the prescribed interest and the sinking fund on the capital costs of such works constructed in this area.

That expresses the fact that the money which has been borrowed by the Public Works Department for the work has to be serviced and the charges should be struck so that the loan servicing cost is covered.

The fourth purpose is the cost of extensions to the scheme.

If we add up the cost of the services, and the charges are less than the maximum cent rate in the dollar value, that is the sewerage charge that is set. If the costs are above that value, no provision exists in the Statute or any of the amendments to charge more than the maximum.

Therefore, people were assured that, even if the sewerage plant was costly—perhaps because at the time the loan was taken out interest rates were high or, as a result of the contour, a pump instead of gravity was required to raise the sewage to the "Imhof" tank where the treatment takes place—once the plant was installed, they would not be charged more than the nine per cent rate.

However, more importantly, they knew also that, as time passed and the loan was repaid—naturally interest and capital instalment are repaid together—they would be required to meet only the administrative and physical running costs. Thus they would enjoy paying a lesser charge than the maximum statutory charge set.

This Bill seeks to add to the provisions which I have enumerated in the original Act, a new provision which indicates that we can also calculate the sewerage charge to provide funds to pay by way of reimbursement to the Consolidated Revenue Fund, an amount agreed with the Treasurer in respect of moneys other than moneys collected by way of rates and charges, but moneys expended in the area in previous years for the purpose of the Act.

That means that, if the sewerage undertaking has been a losing proposition in the early years of its existence so that the maximum charge set at that time did not cover the cost of allowed purposes for which the charge could be struck—that is, administrative costs, physical maintenance, servicing of the loan, and any extensions—then the loss which occurs in the early years—naturally such a loss occurs in the early years when the loan still has to be repaid—can, under this legislation, be calculated in the future. That means the administrators of every sewerage scheme in every town with such a facility will charge the maximum rate.

That is very inequitable and it is precisely what I suggested I feared when I spoke on the amalgamation Bill; that is, country areas are completely ignored and neglected by the Government. Indeed, they are disadvantaged.

Even from a business point of view, once the two authorities are amalgamated—one authority being a Government-owned utility and the other a department which was run with heavy losses and was subsidised to the tune of approximately 50 per cent every year so that the country water and sewerage undertaking charges have only been about 50 per cent of the actual cost involved—the subsidies available previously will be eroded. The tendency will be for the amalgamated authority to aim at self-sufficiency so that the costs of maintaining the services will be met by the charges which are levied. As a result, 50 per cent of the cost of country services which were subsidised previously will have to be met in some way through the charges levied. Of course, that will not be the case initially; when the amalgamation occurs it will occur gradually. Those costs will not be met by country consumers only, but metropolitan consumers will contribute to them in the same way as the $60 million loss by the SEC which occurs in the country is paid for by the overwhelming majority of metropolitan consumers.

The Opposition thinks this is not good enough for country people. One detects some political flavour in that matter, because the present Government does not have a great deal of concern for country areas. Should the proposition for one-vote-one-value ever become a reality, it will result in reduced Labor parliamentary representation for country people. Therefore, the Government feels they can be thrown to the wolves.

What I have predicted will in fact occur. The amalgamation will result in the gradual eradication of the subsidy provided in this area previously and country people will find their services are subsidised no longer. Of course, this provision in the Bill is retrospective. Prior to a sewerage scheme being installed, it is advertised in the *Government Gazette* and people have the opportunity to object to it.

Indeed, recently in the metropolitan area the tendency has been the reverse of what it was 15 to 20 years ago. In a number of districts the majority of people opposed the proposed construction of a sewerage connection. Indeed, the Metropolitan Water Authority has refrained from building backlog sewerage lines in areas where the opposition was too great, and the answers to questions asked in Parliament indicate that.

The authority has now changed its tactics and, instead of carrying out all the engineering design work prior to the proposed works being advertised, objections are called for first so that money is not wasted preparing a scheme which may be rejected. That position applies in the country also. However, I am not aware of a country area which would object to the installation of a sewerage scheme, and many country areas are unsewered. Sewerage schemes are extended firstly to areas where the septic tank solution is not very satisfactory; therefore, people welcome the schemes. Nevertheless, people were given the opportunity to object and had they known in advance that virtually perennially they would be charged the maximum fee, I am sure they would have done so. Under the Bill, by the time the initial cost is reimbursed to the Treasury, the plant will be ready for expansion or major renovation which, of course, implies additional costs will be incurred and, as a result, additional services for which charges can be levied legitimately.

Had people objected, perhaps some of the schemes would not have proceeded as a result of those objections. However, knowing the provisions of the Act, people have not objected, but the Government has changed the position retrospectively.

Under the legislation, people must pay for these loans which were well subsidised by the Government of the day—by the taxpayers. It did not occur to anyone that this subsidy would be recalled and charged to the people later on; in other words, that it would not be a subsidy, but an extended loan. I wonder what the next step will be.

On an examination of the laws it can be seen that under the present legislation, not only will these losses be recouped, but also it will be said that we incurred lost interest as well. Some smart aleck might say that this has cost the Treasury additional money because money costs money. We had to incur interest on the money. The Government is willing to charge interest as well which theoretically accrued since the original losses, and that makes it even more long-stemmed.

Without labouring the point very much, I express tremendous disappointment, objection, and opposition to country people being dealt with in this way, which amounts to nothing less than betrayal of the country; and I hope it will be understood in this way.

Another point is fairly important and I ask the Minister to listen to what I have to say because I would like his undertaking on this matter. I want to know whether the Bill also applies to sewerage schemes under the present 85 per cent subsidy by the Government—the schemes under which local government undertook to raise the amount and local government was in charge of the sewerage scheme. Two days ago I tried to ask this question without notice of the Minister. It is now on the notice paper, but I have not yet received an answer to it.

When we talked to the officers, they said that that subsidised sewerage scheme was under the Health Act, and they were correct because the Health Act refers to this. As I read the provision in clause 4 of this Bill I do not think that, purely from a legal interpretation point of view, one could be sure that that provision refers only to sewerage schemes which have been constructed by the Public Works Department which have nothing to do with the subsidy under which the Government pays 85 per cent of the servicing of capital loans—the loan costs of the sewerage installation—and under which local government borrowed the money and administered the scheme. I would very much like the Minister in his reply to explain this and to say that indeed that provision of retrospective charges for the loss incurred originally will not apply to the 85 per cent subsidised sewerage schemes.

Mr Tonkin: What is the number of that question? Is it the one in which you ask whether the Government-subsidised country towns sewerage schemes would be taken over by the water authority?

Mr MENSAROS: I think it is the one. I do not have the question with me now, but it relates partly to who will administer the subsidised schemes and whether they will be affected by this Bill.

Mr Tonkin: I have the answer here, but it will not give you any assistance.

Mr MENSAROS: The answer to my question, as the Minister said, does not give me any assistance because it says the matter is under consideration, but it does provide some help because, looking at this answer I have just received, I would say that legally the Bill could apply to these schemes. A referendum under the Local Government Act could have been held to discover whether ratepayers should incur these costs and whether the people will be provided with a sewerage scheme which otherwise would not have been constructed. Yet the Bill's retrospective provision could apply to these schemes. This would be contrary to the departmental officer's view at the time we discussed this matter when he said that these are definitely exempt because they come under the Health Act. Of course, at the same

time, they have to be charged and the charges are set according to section 67 of the parent Act, the Country Towns Sewerage Act. According to the Minister's reply, consideration is given to both parts of my question about whether the country town sewerage scheme should continue to be administered by local government after the amalgamation and whether the provisions in clause 4 of this Bill should apply to them; in other words, whether their charges could be raised to the maximum even though the cost would not reach this, and considering that 85 per cent of the loan servicing is subsidised according to an agreement between the Public Works Department and the shire council.

Therefore, the people who went into this agreement having agreed to it in a referendum must feel they are being entirely betrayed. The Government now says a new rule applies to the ball game and not the rule the Government set when it decided to subsidise this scheme. The Government said, "We will make a new rule and we will charge you according to this new rule". I do not know how one can accept such a provision when the Government does not honour the agreements which it makes, even though it might have been the previous Government, the Government of the day, through the Public Works Department, which agreed with local government.

Of course, the views of the Local Government Association and other organisations pertaining to country shires and country local government are very much against this provision. I understand they have written to the Minister explaining their grievance, which indeed is supported by the Opposition. The Opposition feels that this is more than inequitable; it is an entirely unjust provision.

The second provision with which we also disagree, is based on the same principle; namely that it is eroding a subsidy given to country people by charging for services performed hitherto without charges. The Public Works Department performed many services for individuals, to some extent for shires, and managed the sewerage schemes in connection with other water undertakings. The officers for these jobs ranged from the district engineer down to all the employed people whether professionals, tradesmen, skilled and qualified tradesmen, or only employed blue-collar workers; they were there and their job was, as the words "Public Service" imply, to perform a service. Of course, it was part of the subsidy which was extended to the country area in connection with all water undertakings.

This Bill proposes that henceforth a charge will be made for all these services. It does not say how. As I said in my comments on the amalgamation Bill, my country colleagues and I will now have to expect if we ring the Under Secretary for Works in a week's time, on behalf of a constitutent or particularly on behalf of somebody in the country it will cost us, say $8.50 to talk to him for four minutes. After all, the under secretary would receive a decent salary of about $55 000, and if we take into account the time he spent on the telephone answering an inquiry, we realise that will be the charge.

That is an untoward provision despite the fact that the Minister tries to tell us that it should operate in a businesslike manner similar to that which operates in the metropolitan area, but that is not the case. There is a vast difference between the metropolitan area and the country areas of the State. The acknowledgment of this difference and support for the development in country areas—the word "decentralisation" has been used to describe it—prompted successive Governments of both political persuasions to subsidise the country areas.

Will the policy of the present Government be that it will move an amendment to the Education Act to provide that people in the country must pay for schooling? This will be because education costs more in the country.

Mr Tonkin: This is a commercial proposition. This concerns an inquiry from people like real estate agents who are making their money from the information they receive.

Mr MENSAROS: Real estate agents make money by selling houses in the interests of their clients whether those clients are the purchasers or the vendors. That has always been the case. Country people who purchase or sell country properties are still affected by the fact that whatever is done in the country is more expensive. The roads which are constructed in the country are more expensive than those constructed in the metropolitan area. The services of the Department of Agriculture are expensive in the country. Will farmers be charged now for these services? That is what the Minister is saying.

If a farmer is advised that if he manages his farm in a more efficient way he will make more profit, will he be charged for that advice? It is the same principle. One can go on and on referring to all the Government services which do cost more proportionately in the country. Therefore, if these costs are lumped together and compared with the situation applicable in the metropolitan area it is obvious that the aggregate of the taxes covering these costs is not equal in the country and in the city, because they do not cover the country where the same services are more costly.

Mr Tonkin: We are not talking about the full recovery of costs. The subsidy will go on and probably at an enhanced level, but there should be some charge which is only moving towards your philosophy anyway, which is that the user pays.

Mr MENSAROS: That is what I was pointing out. Although I would not put anything beyond the Government, I did not expect that it would withdraw the subsidy from one year to the next. What I expected—and this is precisely what happens—is that the subsidy would be slowly withdrawn, step by step. The first provision is a very drastic step because it ensures that people in the country will pay the maximum charge for sewerage. Therefore, the word "maximum" will lose its meaning, because it will be a standard charge. The second provision means that for the various services they have received gratis so far, the people in the country will pay.

There is no provision in the Bill for estate agents and conveyancing. It is a general provision which covers any service. This would include my telephone calls to the under secretary who can then charge me because he undertook a service for me. This could apply to anyone and anything in the country.

The Opposition does not oppose the other two provisions in the Bill. However, I would like to comment on the infringement notices. It is all right for the Government to introduce this formula because it makes the administration quicker, in most cases it takes away superfluous work, and it makes it easier to prosecute people who appear to have committed offences. These people may have got away from being prosecuted because it may have been too cumbersome for them to be taken to the court for prosecution.

In my opinion, there is a flaw in this provision—clause 7(6)—which allows officers who are entitled to issue the infringement notices to withdraw them. It is always very dangerous when undue power is given to people, and particularly to one person. I would be the last one to reflect on any public servant, but a temptation will exist. The same thing could occur in relation to a traffic infringement, if one officer who is in charge of infringements could withdraw.

The Bill does not give any reason for this. I can see the possible honest intention behind this clause. If a mistake is made or it is proved that an offence has not been committed, instead of the charge proceeding because the alleged offender has not pleaded guilty, there should be provision for the infringement notice to be withdrawn.

In itself, there is nothing wrong with that, but the fact that one person can withdraw it opens up the possibility of bribery and impropriety. I would suggest that the Minister studies this clause and amends the Bill to read that two people—the head of a department and an officer—have the delegated power to withdraw infringement notices.

We know very well that a district engineer or one of his employees will be delegated the power to issue infringement notices. It would not be practical if the under secretary, or his successor, should do that. These people in country areas all know each other and visit the same pub socially, and it would not be very difficult—not because of bribery, but because of friendly connections—for arrangements to be made for infringement notices to be withdrawn. If the opportunity is given for infringement notices to be withdrawn, provision should be made for this to be handled by two officers or perhaps the head of a department with another officer.

A further provision in the Bill increases the penalties which, at first sight, appear to be very harsh. However, we must bear in mind that the penalties have not been changed, not only since the parent Act was introduced in 1948, but also before that. Some of the penalties are increased by 1 000 per cent, which is not very harsh when one considers the changed value of the dollar. Some penalties are to increase from $20 to $200, while others are to increase by 1 250 per cent from $40 to $500. The offences to which the severe increases in penalties relate, are serious, particularly the offence of unlawfully discharging into some town sewerage system, sewerage which might have been taken from septic tank cleaning. Unfortunately, this problem is recurring, particularly in the metropolitan area, and is very grievous. It is quite acceptable that the penalty should be increased to such an extent.

I repeat that we are tremendously concerned about the commencement of withdrawal of the country subsidy found in both the provision to increase charges to the maximum to recoup losses which might have occurred 10 or 15 years previously and in the provision under which charges—albeit smaller in dollar terms—are being levied for services which hitherto have been rendered for nothing.

When, as a result of the politeness of the Minister, I was able to talk to officers involved, they said the subsidy to country schemes would not be covered by this provision. However, my understanding of the Bill is that it does cover the subsidy because even subsidised sewerage schemes have charges according to the provisions of the Bill and the parent Act. If that is so, it would be a gross violation of an agreement made by the Government with a local authority and its rate-

payers. In many cases, those ratepayers express their views through a referendum on whether the local authority should or should not borrow money. This answer from the Minister is vital and I hope the matter will be looked at in another place in accordance with that answer.

MR BRADSHAW (Murray-Wellington) [3.22 p.m.]: As I represent a country electorate, I would like to say a few words on clause 4. This clause contains the catch-up concept on areas where the initial rates charged did not cover the cost of putting in the system. There are many small pockets and towns in country areas where it would probably never be economical for sewerage to be installed. However, because of the nature of the land and the area, it is essential that reticulated sewerage be installed. It appalls me that the Government has the idea of taking away this previously granted subsidy from country areas. In other fields, such as the SEC, drainage, and irrigation, a standard charge is levied throughout the State. Therefore, I cannot see why there should be any difference with regard to sewerage. However, the Government seems to be intent on upping the cost to the country payer, and I do not believe this should happen. We should retain a system where a subsidy of some description is provided.

Mr D. L. Smith: That was certainly not the attitude of your party when in Government.

Mr BRADSHAW: I guess the present Government is carrying on with the same attitude. Country people suffer enough with increasing costs in freight and, as they have larger distances to travel, they pay higher fuel costs. This Government claims to be dedicated to decentralisation. However, if country people are charged at high enough rates for commodities, they will be attracted to the city. Therefore, I oppose the provision for the catch-up rating.

With regard to the charges concerning people who take advantage of the sewerage system, I would like to know who will give out the infringement notices and whether this task will be given to people living in the area. If that is proposed, I do not think it is a good idea. Those people must live in the town, and the situation could be embarrassing in a small community where everyone knows everyone.

Perhaps there should be a different system under which the head of the department or an officer from the Public Works Department could give out infringement notices.

I do not feel that a $50 fine is a great deterrent. People would not worry too much about doing the wrong thing if they knew they would pay a fine of only $50.

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Minister for Water Resources) [3.26 p.m.]: I have double-checked the point the member for Floreat raised because he made the assertion several times that this Bill does not apply to the subsidy schemes which operate under the Health Act. If a Government wanted to alter this, it would have to do so with legislative changes. The situation is that at the moment the Government is saying it is not possible for a charge to be made higher than the break-even point for that year, irrespective of any losses. The general taxpayer may have been paying a heavy subsidy to the schemes for many years and the Government is not quarrelling with that. However, when the amount begins to decrease, perhaps to quite low levels, those people who have been subsidised for many years should not object to fair charges. We are not talking about our removing or decreasing the subsidy; we are declaring what is a fair thing. It must follow logically that if someone is being subsidised, someone else is doing the subsidising. If people have been subsidised in a particular scheme at a high rate for many years, as has happened, when charges are forced down at a later stage—which charges are not fair compared with those not only to people in the metropolitan area, but also to people in many other country areas who, through taxation, are subsidising that cheap scheme and paying higher rates for their own scheme—it can be seen that the users of the first scheme should pay a reasonable rate. They have been carried for many years by other areas. They are not being asked to subsidise anyone. Their scheme has been subsidised for 20 or so years and, therefore, it is fair that they should pay a reasonable return.

Mr Blaikie: Do you apply the same sort of argument to the Metropolitan Transport Trust?

Mr TONKIN: I am not the Minster for Transport.

Mr Blaikie: You are putting forward an argument of philosophy. If it is fair that these people should pay a reasonable price, all people should be expected to pay reasonable prices. If passengers are currently paying an unreasonable price on the MTT, under your suggestion charges would be increased so that they paid more.

Mr TONKIN: There is a very big difference between the two. One of the problems of our putting up prices for transport is that people do not use the transport and we defeat the purpose. I am not qualified to speak on transport.

Although I am speaking philosophically, I am not attempting to give a general philosophy. I am

merely applying a philosophy to this provision. It is unfair that, because of the technicality that this is the first year with a break-even situation, the subsidy for those areas will be ignored. The subsidies have been met by the taxpayers—not just the city ones, but by taxpayers generally. It was never intended that this kind of situation should occur.

As I said in respect of another Bill, if somebody receives a commodity very cheaply, not necessarily through his own efforts, but because he happens to be favoured, or for whatever reason, one should not say to him, "Good luck to you". One should remember that one is saying there should be no subsidy, because the idea of a subsidy is that the people who are better off subsidise those who are less well off. If one says, "Because you live in the country, you will pay only what it costs", the money has to come from somewhere else. The people in difficult situations—they could live in a remote area of the country—would have to bear the cost because the other people were lucky and received their supply at a reduced rate. They are the lucky ones, and the other people will have to bear the full burden. Cross-subsidisation suggests that the people in cheaper areas will still probably benefit from it, but their charges approach a more general level because that is a fair thing.

My advice is—I checked this information twice today and also on other occasions—that the 85 per cent subsidy schemes do not fall under this Act.

The member for Floreat seemed to be opposed to the proposition of charging for all services, with statements of account levelled against the general ratepayer or the general taxpayer.

Mr Mensaros: In the country.

Mr TONKIN: I cannot see that that follows, because the taxpayer or ratepayer in the country will be subsidised as highly as the metropolitan one. In fact, economic theorists on the other side of the House claim that country people produce more wealth. I am not subscribing to that, necessarily, because the question is more complex than that. The fact is that they will be subsidised to a greater extent. I am not saying that in the country, because charges and cost are higher, the full costs will necessarily be borne. What I say is that some of the costs should be borne.

This is not a question dealing with means. I thought this was entrenched in Liberal Party philosophy. If one obtains something for nothing, one does not treasure it. If one can just pick up the telephone and make an inquiry, and it does not cost anything, the tendency is to have one's employee double check it the next day, and so on. I am informed that officers of the Public Works Department spend hours on the telephone providing legitimate information; but their salaries are charged against the ratepayers and, to the extent that the utility runs at a loss, against the general taxpayers as well.

The member for Gascoyne said the other night that he believed in increased efficiency. The Opposition believes in the principle of "user pays", but not necssarily 100 per cent. I accept the comment of the member for Floreat, and I would say, as I said the other night, that under this Government the subsidy to country utilities will continue.

We accept that in country areas utilities are more expensive than in the city, and in some country areas they are much more expensive. We are not saying that all costs will be recovered, but some of them should be.

The inquiries made of PWD officers are largely by real estate agents, and that type of person. I do not object to their obtaining that information, but certainly, if there is no charge, their businesses are being subsidised by the taxpayers. That is because, at present, they can obtain the information for nothing. The user-pays principle is a good one, but the user should not necessarily pay the lot.

The member for Vasse interjected about the MTT; there are complicating matters there.

Mr Rushton: Would you agree that the taxpayers, the Treasury, or the Government should pay the social aspects of it? Would you agree that the pay-for-use system should be related to the commercial activity or to the social service that the Government of the day dishes out?

Mr TONKIN: If I agree with that proposition, it might be perceived that there is a split in the Government, because the Government made certain determinations last year in respect of this matter. It is still to be determined in respect of this year's Budget.

Mr Rushton: It happens more and more in transport. It is something that I worked hard on, and my successor has done something with it.

Mr TONKIN: The social cost should be subsidised by the taxpayers generally. If it is to be borne by a commercial transaction, that should be taken properly into account when assessing the efficiency of it. One cannot say, "Look at that utility. It lost $X million a year. Isn't it inefficient?", if the fact is that part of that so-called inefficiency is because it is providing social services.

We should have a situation of some degree of subsidy by the taxpayers. There should also be

some degree of pay-for-use, and it is inefficient not to do so.

The member for Floreat said that only one person is needed to withdraw infringement notices, and it should be two. He raised the possibility of corruption, using that term in its widest sense. Of course, "corruption" does not consist only of people taking money in bribes. It can also happen, as the member for Floreat intimated, with social pressures. One drinks with a person or plays golf with a person, and there is a certain social pressure placed on one. I concede that that could be a problem; but if an infringement notice was withdrawn, a record would be kept of it so that if it was obvious that someone was doing less, there would be a record of it.

I will look at the question of whether two people should be needed to withdraw infringement notices, and whether adequate records are kept. We do not want someone to have great power in the community by dishing out infringement notices and then withdrawing them over a few beers later on. That is a valid suggestion by the member for Floreat.

I thank members for their comments. I assure them that we are committed to the subsidisation of utilities, and we will continue with that. Of course, I cannot give a guarantee of that because, as members would know, this is a matter for the Cabinet to decide in its Budget considerations. Certainly I assure the House I will be strongly in favour of the subsidies continuing, because the Government believes in decentralisation, and one effective way in which to pursue decentralisation is to minimise costs in the country or to have a degree of equalised costs throughout the State.

I have said about the proposed water authority of Western Australia that a subsidy will be provided for the country, but of course it will be for the Cabinet as a whole to decide the level of that subsidy.

Mr Blaikie: Will you have engineers stationed throughout the country, as is currently the practice under the PWD?

Mr TONKIN: The query hardly relates to this Bill, but the answer is, "Yes".

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Barnett) in the Chair; Mr Tonkin (Minister for Water Resources) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3 put and passed.

Clause 4: Section 67 amended—

Mr MENSAROS: In reply to the second reading debate, the Minister tried to justify his decision, but his argument was fairly weak, as I am sure he will admit. If we subsidise one country area heavily and not another area, there appears to be some inequity. We cannot help that. If we build a new school in one country town and the general taxpayer incurs the repayment of the loan and the servicing of the loan, that country town is being subsidised heavier than is a town in which a school was built 30 or 40 years previously. That is inevitable.

The fact is—and this is finally what the Minister said—that conditions being what they are in Western Australia, we must subsidise the country, whether or not we actually say so, because the costs for any service in the country are so much higher, particularly in certain regions, and without them it would not be viable for anyone to live in and to produce in them. The remote mining companies establish themselves only if they believe the project involved would be viable, and that applies to all companies. Either we survive in the metropolitan area by arranging some of the mines and importing people of different origin and customs who have different needs and can provide the agricultural services to which Australians are accustomed, or we stand on the principle that we pay for use. I do not accept that, but we must realise that the situation is different in country areas. We just cannot argue the way the Minister has done.

When the original settlers came here, they probably looked at a map of Western Australia and thought the whole place would be populated equally, as Britain was at the time. With the time zone, we must understand that a line was struck east of Kalgoorlie to provide for a Western Australian time zone. This has meant that the metropolitan area always has about 34 minutes of daylight saving; and the bulk of the population lives in the south-west of the State, with very few people living to the east of the line.

An enormous difference can be found between the metropolitan area and country areas, and that is the reason we are so apprehensive about this clause. It might have been the result of a departmental officer saying, "Why couldn't we charge more in cases where the original scheme was a losing proposition?" Since 1948, people have become used to the status quo. This is the way people have been charged, but suddenly it is all to be changed to the detriment of the people involved. No matter how we argue, this is a step towards withdrawing country subsidies. The more this subsidy is contracted the more it will disadvantage country people and the less the incentive

will be to them to produce anything in the country, and this will make it harder for us to populate country areas.

For those reasons, I oppose the clause.

Mr TONKIN: We are not talking about withdrawing a subsidy. What we are talking about is the subsidy of one group of sewerage ratepayers in the country by another group of sewerage ratepayers in the country.

Mr Blaikie: Could you give us an example of the towns involved in what you are talking about?

Mr TONKIN: I could not give the member the actual names of towns because over 80 are involved. As members would know from what has already been said, when we get to a break-even point in any one year, no matter what the loss might be in the previous year, we cannot go higher. I put it to members that that is immoral.

Imagine that I had been borrowing from someone year after year and I had been subsidised by him, and then came a year when my costs were less and he approached me and said that as there were all those other people who were still paying more, I should pay more than the amount required this year, which would in no way recover all the amount lost over the previous years, but would go some way towards that. If I were to say, "No, you can go and whistle for that," although I had been carried by him all those years and was now paying very little and nowhere near the cost of the scheme considered as a whole, I would not pay one cent over this year's costs. That is the legal situation in which the department finds itself.

I guess that is great for members who might represent areas which have that advantage. By the same token, members who represent people in the other areas could say, "Just a minute; that is not fair, because my people look like paying far more than that because of the local situation".

Do we believe in subsidies? Do we believe in equalisation throughout the State? Are we to have some kind of absurd lottery for matters not related at all to equity, under which the people in some schemes, because the interest bill at that time was particularly low and because now the cost against the scheme is absurdly low, will not pay their way for all those years when they were being heavily subsidised? I do not believe that ratepayers or residents in Western Australia want that kind of unfair advantage.

Mr Mensaros: I don't think you are right.

Mr TONKIN: What ratepayers in Western Australia want is to pay a reasonable charge. I suppose most of them would say that the majority of the charges are unreasonably high. These people do not want to pay high charges; they want to pay reasonable charges, but by keeping down, because of a legal technicality, the charges in these few and quite capriciously favoured towns, the charges for other people will be increased.

Mr Bradshaw: That is what they call averaging over the whole State the cost of the sewerage scheme.

Mr TONKIN: It is not fair that, because of some financial technicality of a scheme, some people should be paying double the rate paid by others in towns in the same general region of the State. If we look at the town in which this year costs are very low and therefore the charges must be equally low, that may have cost the taxpayer and all other ratepayers in the country and the city, say, $1 million; that $1 million has gone and people next door are paying this elevated cost for some technical reason. It is in the same area of the State; they are getting similar wages and incomes. We say that those two charges should approach one another. That will not mean only that those charges will increase, but also that other charges will decrease. That is more like an averaging system where they will approach one another. At the moment, some are artificially kept low and this is not fair and equitable. Although we cannot blame people in those favoured towns for paying low rates, nevertheless, if the question were put fairly and squarely to them, they would say they want to pay their fair share.

Mr BLAIKIE: I also want to make some remarks and to support the comments that have been made by the member for Floreat. The Minister has gone to great pains to give us a philosophical address and to explain the reasons he believes that fairness needs to be introduced into the system. He believes that all people of the State should be equal and that some people should not have unfair advantages over others, particularly in relation to sewerage charges. By way of interjection, I asked the Minister whether he would explain how he saw the same set of circumstances applying to other groups of people across the State. Let him consider the question of metropolitan transport charges and the subsidies that the Government, through the taxpayers, pays to those people. Does the Minister see those people living at the back of Sandstone, Esperance, or Eucla, wherever the area may be, in the same light in relation to the argument that he is advancing in connection with country sewerage works? The Minister said, "That is a different portfolio and it comes under a different Minister", but if the Minister wants to continue with

the argument he is advancing now, he should explain his attitude and his Government's philosophy and policy in relation to metropolitan transport.

I could go on and raise a host of other related issues. It is my view that what the Minister is proposing and what this amendment will do is to ensure that there will be an increase of costs under country sewerage to all people because the insertion of this amendment will ensure that that takes place. However, in certain country towns there will be dramatic cost increases, the order of which the Minister could not or would not explain. Mr Chairman, you would understand the difficulties I have in putting this argument forward.

The CHAIRMAN: I certainly do. I sympathise with you.

Mr BLAIKIE: I know how understanding you are, Mr Chairman, but unfortunately you cannot really participate in debate on the floor of the Committee. The question I pose to the Minister is this: It is my belief that under his proposal there will be a general increase in all country sewerage costs anyhow, and Cabinet will make that determination when it strikes its Budget. But what will happen in some country towns? They will have a dramatic increase in the rates they are currently being charged for sewerage. This is what the Minister has indicated. He has already said some country towns are more favoured than others. I have asked the Minister to give us some detail of just where those country towns are. I have the annual report of the Public Works Department for 1982-83, and while this public document does not give any information on what I am seeking from the Minister, it does list all those country towns with sewerage schemes. With the Minister's explanation does the Committee now understand that the people of Albany will face a dramatic increase in charges because it is a favoured town about which the Minister is talking? Is the favoured town about which the Minister is talking Denmark, Gnowangerup, or Mt. Barker, or will it be Mayanup? Could it be Bunbury?

A member: Busselton?

Mr BLAIKIE: Possibly it is Busselton.

Mr D. L. Smith: Certainly not Bunbury, because your Government's sewerage rates for Bunbury were astronomical.

Mr BLAIKIE: I think we have already explained to the member for Mitchell how he should speak in this Chamber.

[Demonstration.]

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think that is proper or parliamentary.

Mr BLAIKIE: I do not believe it is either, and I can endorse your comments, Mr Chairman.

Is it the Government's intention that the people of Bunbury will be part of the privileged group which the Minister will determine are not liable to pay the higher rate?

Mr D. L. Smith: As you are looking at me and addressing that question to me, I assure you they were not the favoured people under the previous Government.

Mr BLAIKIE: The question I now ask the Minister is: What will the action of this Government be with its policy and its legislation? I again pose this question to the Minister. He has already indicated that a number of towns are receiving more than fair treatment from the Government because of the current system of charges. The Minister has indicated that the reason he wants those amendments is to change that situation so that in the future they will not have the unfair advantage that he has indicated these people had previously. The Opposition is entitled to ask the Minister that question and to expect from him an explanation of which towns are involved.

One could go on through the list. Will it be the town of Collie? Has that town had an unfair advantage, as far as sewerage systems are concerned? Will that town have a dramatic increase in its rates and charges?

It is just not good enough for the Minister to come to this place and make the wide-reaching comment that the reason he wants this particular clause in the Bill is that certain towns have had an unfair advantage over others and will have to pay in the future. It is the Minister's responsibility to explain to the Committee which are those towns and the amounts concerned.

Recently, I had to deal with the Minister and his department about another matter—country drainage. In all the articles and meetings before that legislation came before the Chamber, all one was given was principles and how they would apply, but examples were never given.

If it is felt that some towns are not paying a high enough rate, and as a result of that the situation will change, what will be the changes? What will be the amounts? It has been a policy of "Wait and see when the charges come out". I believe the argument and the methodology adopted by the Minister and the Government are wrong.

Mr D. L. Smith: They are as a result of a committee you set up. They were the recommendations of that committee.

Mr BLAIKIE: Those rates will be unfairly applied in some districts. It is all very well for the member for Mitchell to make his odd interjections, but I remind him that he was one of those who determined the level at which the rates would apply because he was on that committee. He was able to determine whether his electorate was unfairly disadvantaged or otherwise because he was privy to information before the public were aware of what would happen. The member for Bunbury knew that information also. A certain percentage increase was to apply, and they were privy to that information.

I do not wish Bunbury, Collie, or any other town to be unfairly disadvantaged as a result of the Government's actions. I make the plea to the Minister that he has the responsibility to advise us which country towns are receiving an unfair advantage. I understand the Minister does not have the information before him, but in order that he might obtain it, we should move that the Committee report progress.

The CHAIRMAN: To clarify the position, I indicate to the member that it is not appropriate for him to speak and then move for progress to be reported. That must be done at the commencement of a speech.

Mr TONKIN: I will not facilitate the actions of a member who wishes to stir the parochial pot by naming towns.

Mr Blaikie: You were the one who started this.

Mr TONKIN: I say to the member that the information is available. He can find out which towns are paying a remarkably low rate in the dollar because of a technicality.

We are not asking that these people bear, in any way, an unfair burden. We are asking that they bear a percentage, not the total, of the burden that—not through their own fault, it was not their decision—other people have carried for a long time.

The member for Vasse can work out from the annual report which of these towns is rated fully. He can ask questions on notice in this place to find out the break-even situation and then look at the rate in the dollar of those towns and work out which towns may be paying less. If the member cares to look at the figures, he will note that there is a very unfair discrepancy.

Mr Blaikie: You have said that 100 times over. Why not bring those figures to the Committee?

Mr TONKIN: The figures are in public documents.

Mr Blaikie: Why won't you bring them to this place?

Mr TONKIN: Because people who are fit to be members of Parliament can do their research by asking the Clerk for the tabled report and reading the figures for themselves. I will not suggest that one or two towns are not paying their way. It is not that way at all. It is not their fault; it was a decision of this Parliament which was not consciously taken. It was never meant that this legal technicality would prevent a scheme from paying its way or a reasonable proportion of it. Do not forget that all these schemes are country schemes and all we are asking is that people in various country centres be treated equitably.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 8 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the third reading.

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Minister for Water Resources) [4.10 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR MENSAROS (Floreat) [4.11 p.m.]: I apologise for missing the opportunity to respond to the Minister on clause 4 in the Committee stage. I want to make two comments. The first is that, in all sincerity, I think the Minister is under a misapprehension when he says there is no withdrawal of subsidy. The second point is that he says that under the conditions in clause 4 some people will pay more and they should do so because service costs more. He said it would alleviate the situation of some other people who will pay less. That is simply not so, and if the Minister asks his adviser, he will see it is not so.

It is a withdrawal of subsidy because, if anything, the country towns sewerage scheme is formulated on a pay-for-use basis. That is precisely what section 67 says—charges may be levied but only for certain purposes, which it lists. Charges cannot be levied for anything else except to cover costs. So one pays for what one uses—what it costs for the service. However, it is implied in another part of the Statute that a person shall not pay more than a set maximum. So one pays for use, but not if the cost of use is extremely high; it cuts out at a certain point.

But other country towns sewerage schemes pay the same rate and if this is introduced so that one pays for more than the four purposes listed in the

Act until one reaches the maximum, other country towns sewerage scheme will not pay less. This is where the Minister makes a mistake. Those towns will pay just the same, according to the provisions of section 67; they will pay what it costs. They cannot pay less because other people are paying more.

The other matter with which we did not deal and which is very important pragmatically—more important perhaps than the arguments we had—is that despite the fact that they are paying for use, the charges are set on value. We know that country towns are revalued at irregular periods. In the metropolitan area, a revaluation takes place every three years, at least with gross rental value areas. Some places in the country have not been revalued for 14 years; I think Albany is one. Certainly they go for six, seven, or eight years without revaluation. Values increase as soon as a revaluation takes place, particularly in inflationary times. Given that the cent rate in the dollar remains the same, there is still scope for people to pay four times as much unless the new rates are phased in. The theoretical situation is that the revaluation is a very important aspect and can result in people who were paying the maximum—despite the fact that their cost was higher—suddenly having to pay much more. They still pay for the cost of the service, but they pay much more because the maximum rises automatically upon revaluation. That aggravates the situation because if clause 4 is applied, they can go up to the new maximum. In some cases, that new maximum may be three or four times the previous maximum if the revaluation has not been carried out for a long time.

I wanted to point out that there is no equity in placing this charge on people who may now pay less because it will not mean that other people will also pay less. The other point is that there is a withdrawal of subsidy because the system was designed so that one paid for the cost of the service, but it cuts out at a maximum.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

PODIATRISTS REGISTRATION BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 22 March.

MR GRAYDEN (South Perth) [4.17 p.m.]: I indicate that the Opposition supports this Bill. There can be absolutely no doubt that substantial changes have taken place in the skills involved in the care of feet in the 24 years since the current Act came into being. Chiropodists throughout Western Australia now call themselves podiatrists.

There are only two aspects of the Bill which I query. The first is the power of the Minister to direct the board. In his second reading speech, the Minister said—

> Another provision allows the Minister to direct the board to perform its functions, duties or powers where necessary, and the board is required to give effect to those directions.

Then he went on to clarify that, and he said that the Minister is not able to direct the board to make a particular decision in a particular manner, but he can direct the board to exercise its functions in relation to that matter. That is quite acceptable.

The other point I query is the question of appointment to the board. The Act provides that the board shall consist of six persons appointed by the Governor, one of whom shall be the permanent head or person nominated by the permanent head; one shall be a medical practitioner nominated for appointment by the Minister; one shall be a person nominated for appointment by the Council of the Western Australian Institute of Technology established under the Western Australian Institute of Technology Act 1966; and three shall be persons nominated for appointment by the Minister from a panel of names submitted by the body known as the Australian Podiatry Association (Western Australia).

There is just one aspect of this. This is an association, and a voluntary organisation, and there are registered podiatrists who are not members of that association. While they are probably only 10 per cent of the podiatrists in Western Australia, complaints have been received that, not being members of the association, they are precluded from being on the board. It is difficult, however, to see how that situation can be improved.

I might just point out finally that the Chiropodists' Registration Board has apparently requested the amendments in this Bill, and it is for that reason that the Opposition supports it.

MR HODGE (Melville—Minister for Health) [4.22 p.m.]: I thank the Opposition for supporting the Bill. The member for South Perth raised a couple of issues and I will comment briefly on them. He pointed out that while the Minister will have power to direct the board to implement its functions, he will not have power actually to direct the board on decisions. That power is important because there may be occasions when the

board is not fulfilling its statutory functions. It may, for example, refuse to make a decision on certain matters, so the Minister may be required to direct it to make a decision; but the Minister is not able, and would not wish, to direct the board on what that decision should be. That would defeat the purpose of having the statutory body.

The second point made by the member for South Perth referred to the problem that podiatrists who were not members of the Australian Podiatry Association (Western Australia) would not have a representative on the board. I acknowledge that is a small problem. It is, of course, not different from the situation that has always been the case under the old legislation. Appointments were all made on the nomination of the association, so that has not really altered. I understand that very few podiatrists in practice in Perth are not members of the association. I acknowledge the problem, but I do not think it is a serious impediment in the legislation.

The member for South Perth rightly pointed out that this Bill has been requested by the association. In fact it has been waiting a long time for it. I am very pleased to have the pleasure of steering this new Bill through the Parliament.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the third reading.

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Hodge (Minister for Health), and transmitted to the Council.

PUBLIC WORKS: DEPARTMENT

Mr John Valentine Fagan: Grievance

MR LAURANCE (Gascoyne) [4.24 p.m.]: Grievances give members a chance to raise matters of grave public concern. I have such a matter and I do not raise it lightly. Do I have 15 minutes to speak in this debate?

Mr Bryce: The clock now says 10.

Mr LAURANCE: It is not my intention to blacken anyone's name in the Parliament, but when a member of Parliament has information given to him he has a responsibility to make a decision whether to raise that matter in the public interest or not. That is why members of Parliament have parliamentary privilege extended to them so that they can raise important matters without fear of reprisal. However, there is a responsibility on the part of the member to check as well as he can the facts given to him. In this regard I have checked to the best of my ability the facts I have before raising them in the Parliament.

Mr Barnett: Are they facts or not?

Mr LAURANCE: I believe them to be.

My grievance concerns a man called John Valentine Fagan. Firstly, in April last year, Mr Fagan wrote to the Public Works Department in Perth seeking employment as an unskilled labourer. The Public Works Department replied, informing Mr Fagan no positions were available at that time. Two weeks later, a letter arrived at the Public Works Department from the Minister for Industrial Relations (Mr Des Dans) suggesting that Mr Fagan would be a good employee and that a position should be found for him.

The Public Works Department had made some inquiries into the background of Mr Fagan and had ascertained that he would be an undesirable employee as he had previously been very active in union affairs in a radical way. He had probably been a union stirrer or agitator. In addition he had a history of workers' compensation claims for various injuries, but particularly related to back injuries. On this information, the Public Works Department suggested to the Minister, Mr Dans, that Mr Fagan should not be employed by the Public Works Department.

Two more weeks passed. Then a letter arrived at the Public Works Department from the Premier of Western Australia (Mr Brian Burke) indicating to the PWD that he insisted Mr Fagan be employed. There were no options; the Premier was not asking or requesting as the Minister for Industrial Relations had done; he directed that the PWD employ this man.

Consequently, on 17 May 1983, Mr Fagan was employed—of course, naturally he was—as a labourer. Nearly all of his first day was taken up with induction and familiarisation. On 19 May—I remind members Mr Fagan started work on 17 May when he had the induction course, so he had not really started work yet—he reported to his supervisor that he had injured his back. That was less than 48 hours after Mr Fagan had started work. He is a man with a history of workers' compensation claims and he virtually had only just got through the induction and familiarisation pro-

cedure when he reported he had injured his back on 19 May.

Within a week, on 25 May 1983, Mr Fagan went off work as a result of a back injury. To this day that man has not returned to work. It is nearly a year later and he is still receiving workers' compensation as a result of that bad back.

Mr McIver: Are you quoting from your own notes or from the departmental file?

Mr LAURANCE: I am using my own notes.

It is a serious claim to make that the PWD was directed by the Premier to employ this man and, within a matter of hours of that man being employed, the man reported he had a bad back and went onto workers' compensation. A year later that man is still in that situation.

Mr Fagan has been using his time on workers' compensation in a number of ways, but one in particular brought him to the notice of the courts.

On 18 October 1983, some five months after he had been placed on workers' compensation because of his bad back, Mr Fagan was involved in a fight at a hotel in Beaufort Street next to Trades Hall. Apparently Mr Fagan inflicted quite serious injuries on his victim. I refer to a newspaper article that appeared the day after the incident on 18 October, and which is headed, "Fine goes to victim". It reads, in part, as follows—

> A UNIONIST was fined $300 yesterday after he admitted punching another unionist at the Court Hotel in Perth last October.
>
> John Valentine Fagan (42), builder's labourer, of Central Avenue, Mt Lawley, pleaded guilty in the Perth Magistrate's Court to a charge of assault causing bodily harm to Anthony Vincent Costa on October 18.
>
> Sgt. L. A. McMillan, prosecuting, said that an argument had developed between the two men about union matters in the saloon bar at the hotel.
>
> Fagan had punched Costa in the face and knocked two teeth out, he said.

I raise that issue, because it is appropriate when it is borne in mind that we are discussing a man with a bad back who has not worked for a year after he went on to workers' compensation a couple of days after joining the PWD at the direction of the Premier. To continue—

> Mr G. Droppert, defending, said that Fagan did not recall the details of the incident.
>
> He said that Fagan thought the effects of alcohol might have been exacerbated by pain-killers he was taking at the time for a back injury.

I just mention that, because it provides further background to what I consider to be a very serious situation.

My informant has tried to gain some evidence of these facts. As I said, they are documented very clearly and I have checked them to the best of my ability, but I believe Mr Fagan's personal file was requested by the head office of the PWD and has not been returned. My informant tells me this is the only missing file for a wages employee over a period of something like 10 years. Therefore, it has not been possible to view Mr Fagan's file up to this stage, so I presume that it would be difficult to obtain a copy from the PWD of either the letter from Mr Dans or the letter from the Premier directing that this man be employed.

This is a serious matter and needs to be brought to the attention of the Minister so that he can investigate, check the veracity of the claims, and locate the missing file.

It is said that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, and I believe this is what has happened with the Premier. Quite obviously this is a Government of patronage. The Premier has given this man extraordinary favours at the taxpayers' expense and at the expense of workers' compensation.

Mr Barnett: Where is the proof of this?

Mr LAURANCE: I ask: Why would this man deserve such a favour? What services has he rendered this Government or this Premier that have entitled him to such an extravagant pay-back? Obviously there is something behind this that the Premier would know better than anyone else. This man has obviously rendered service to the Premier personally, or to the Government, and he has been given the pay-off for it at the expense of the taxpayers of this State.

Mr Blaikie: Do you reckon it is a bit like the advisers?

Mr LAURANCE: It is a very sorry affair and it is serious enough on its own—

Mr I. F. Taylor: You had better watch out or we will start looking at some old files.

Mr LAURANCE: I would pursue that, but I have only one minute left to speak.

We have seen the casino indiscretion in recent weeks, jobs for the Premier's media pals—we went into that a little further—and the questionable relationships between the Government and Government departments and radio

station 6PR which all add up to a very sleazy Government.

Some questionable things have occurred. I raise this important and serious matter as a grievance, because that is the appropriate way in which to deal with it. The Minister and the Premier should say why they gave these benefits to this man and what was the purpose and motive for their actions.

MR BRIAN BURKE (Balga—Premier) [4.37 p.m.]: Let me say, firstly, that I have never to my knowledge met Mr Fagan. Secondly, if I can follow the member's argument, he is saying that Mr Fagan was employed at the Public Works Department, that subsequently he failed to report to work on the basis that he had some compensable injury, and that in the period that he had that injury he had a fight in a hotel.

Mr MacKinnon: At a time which happened to be a year later.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: He had the fight when he was off work with an injury.

Mr MacKinnon: A year later.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: This man has not returned to work.

Mr Laurance: It is a year since he went off work with an injury and it was several months later that the fight occurred.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: What I am trying to get straight is that Mr Fagan was employed, he booked off with what he said was a compensable injury, and presumably he supplied some details.

Mr Rushton: He was employed at your request.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: He has not returned to work and in the meantime has had a fight with someone in a pub.

Mr Thompson: But the significant thing is that he was employed after advice was received that he should not be; but he was employed, because the direction was given that he should be.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I shall touch on that in due course; but, as I understand it, that is the logical sequence of events.

Mr Laurance: Yes.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The implication is that Mr Fagan does not have an injury; is that what the member is saying?

Mr Laurance: No; I am saying it was well known that the PWD would not employ him, because of a history of trade union radicalism and a bad back.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: It may well be that Mr Fagan does have a compensable injury.

Mr Laurance: Yes.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: In that case, the man has been employed, he has been injured, and he has booked off work with an injury.

Mr Tubby: Two days after he started!

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: That is the implication. The member is saying this man does not have a compensable injury.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am trying to get down to what the member is saying. He is having two bob each way.

Mr Court: He is not having two bob each way. He explained it in clear detail.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I can understand it. I am trying to pay tribute to what I understand the member really meant; that is, he is saying this employee booked off work and is a malingerer.

Mr Thompson: No. You are dodging the issue. The issue is that he should never have been employed.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: All right, I will deal with that issue, but let me get down to what is being said. He has booked off. He may be suffering from a genuine compensable injury.

Mr Laurance: That is not the question at all.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: That is what the member said. All I am saying is that the member raised the matter that as far as that injury is concerned—the member also said, as I understand it, that it is a matter of some court action—

Mr Laurance: I said he has been involved in a court action which resulted in his being fined $300.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Let me clarify the first point. I will instruct the Minister to in turn instruct the Minister for Industrial Relations to investigate the matter, and if this man does not have a compensable injury, compensation payments should cease forthwith and action should be initiated to recover those compensation payments. That is the instruction I will issue to the Minister in respect of the matters the Opposition has raised.

That still leaves one matter outstanding: The Public Works Department advice that he should not be employed for a number of reasons, one of which is union radicalism and the other that he was compensation prone. I do not believe advice that someone is a union radical is sufficent grounds on which to say he should not be employed. In the same way, I do not believe that the

fact that someone comes to me and says that the member for Gascoyne is a prominent member of the Liberal Party is a reason I should not give him a job.

Mr Rushton: If he has caused constant strikes.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: What the member is saying is that if someone is a union radical or active in a union, he should not be given a job.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: That is what the member said.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: That is what the member said. I have told the Opposition I have never met Mr Fagan. I have never met him!

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Opposition members can not take it. I have just addressed the first part of the problem; that is the "union radical" reason for his not being employed. I have told Opposition members my attitude towards that. I will tell them again. If I get a recommendation from a department tomorrow that says I should not employ someone because he is a union radical or he is a Catholic, a Jew, or a Liberal, I will reject that advice.

If members opposite think we will run the Government according to recommendations that we do not employ people because they are union radicals in the estimation of the person making the assessment—

Several members interjected.

Mr Laurance: Come clean! You instructed this and in the 10 minutes available to you, you have not come to the letter.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I have addressed the two bases on which the member says the letter was written. One was that he was a union radical and the other was that he was compensation prone. That is the criticism the member has made of the letter.

Mr Thompson: Another criticism is you should not use your office to subvert the normal operations of a Government department which is under the guidance of another Minister.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: What the member is saying is that if someone tells me that someone should not be employed because he is a union radical, I should accept that.

Mr Laurance: You wrote the letter.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Then there is the second basis—

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I did not write the letter. I do not have the details here, but I understand—and the Minister can correct me—that it was referred to in a letter the Minister wrote. I did not write any letter, so if Opposition members want to tell lies and mislead Parliament, I say, "Go ahead".

Several members interjected.

Mr Laurance: You have the file.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I have not got the file.

Mr Laurance: The file is missing.

Mr Thompson: You know nothing about the matter?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Of course. I am telling members I do. I will tell members everything I know.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I do not want a police inquiry. I am perfectly happy.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Opposition seems concerned about the time, so I will let the Deputy Premier move for an extension of time to allow me to continue.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Opposition members wanted it!

As to Extension of Time

MR BRYCE (Ascot—Deputy Premier) [4.44 p.m.]: Under Standing Orders I move—

> That the time be extended by 15 minutes in accordance with the Standing Order.

The SPEAKER: I regret to point out to the Deputy Premier that, under the Standing Orders for a grievance debate, on page 60 of the Standing Orders, it is stated—

> Each member including the Leader of the Government or a member deputed by him to reply in 10 minutes provided that with the consent of a majority of the House on a motion moved and determined at once without amendment or debate, a Member may be allowed to continue his speech for a further period not exceeding 15 minutes. This proviso does not apply to a Grievance Debate.

Standing Orders: Suspension

MR BRYCE (Ascot—Deputy Premier) [4.45 p.m.]: On a procedural matter, I move without notice—

That so much of Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to permit a motion to be moved for an extension of time to be granted to the Premier.

The SPEAKER: For this motion to be carried, an absolute majority is needed.

MR THOMPSON (Kalamunda) [4.47 p.m.]: I think it appropriate that the permission to be granted to the Premier for an extension of time should be extended to the Opposition as well. I think it is appropriate that an opportunity be given by the House for another speaker from this side of the House, because what has evolved now is a situation which needs closer scrutiny than can be undertaken in the 10 minutes allocated under the Standing Orders.

MR MacKINNON (Murdoch—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.48 p.m.]: In support of the remarks of the member for Kalamunda, I ask also that consideration be justly given to the Opposition accordingly. What could happen, if this precedent is established with grievances, is that a member from the Government could put his case for 10 minutes and on each occasion he considered it necessary, have the time extended, and therefore gain some form of advantage, when the Opposition had no right to respond.

Mr Bryce: Do you recall who initiated the request for the extension of time? It was not this side of the House; it was your side of the House.

Mr MacKINNON: We might not want to take up that extra time.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Get your act together.

Mr MacKINNON: We may want to do that if we believe the need arises, because we feel the Government has abused the privilege extended to it by the House. We would like to think that fair play is in evidence as is the case now under the Standing Orders which Parliament has previously approved. I hope that courtesy is extended to the Opposition, also.

Question put and passed.

Extension of Time

MR BRYCE (Ascot—Deputy Premier) [4.49 p.m.]: I move—

That the Premier be granted an extension of time of 15 minutes.

Question put and passed.

Debate (on grievances) Resumed

MR BRIAN BURKE (Balga—Premier) [4.50 p.m.]: Thank you, Mr Speaker and members—

Mr Laurance: Saved again!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The member asked for the extension of time.

Mr Laurance: It will be interesting to see whether you cover the matter in the 17 minutes.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The member said, "Saved again", but we have just done what was asked of us.

Several members interjected.

Mr Laurance: You have not answered it.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am answering it. I have another 17 minutes.

Mr Laurance: You got nowhere in the first 10 minutes.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I will go through it again. I would not accept that someone should not be employed on the basis of union radicalism.

The next point I raise—this is why I was supposed to have written a letter—is that I told members opposite that to the best of my knowledge I had not written any such letter. The Minister for Works has just indicated that it was not I who wrote the letter. That answers the question.

Mr Thompson: Wasn't the letter written at your request?

Mr Clarko: How do you know about it?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I will explain that in a moment. I am trying to go through this matter point by point. The recommendation was that Mr Fagan should not be employed because he was a malingerer or a compensation-prone person—is that the other reason?

Mr Clarko: He had a record of it.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: All right, but as far as I am concerned there is a decision to be made as to whether that is true and whether the decision was made.

Mr Thompson: By whom?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The decision was made by the Minister involved, by myself, and, I think, by the Minister for Industrial Relations because what had happened was that we were presented with a situation in which people were able to say, "They will not employ so and so because he is a unionist". They did not say he was a union radical; they said he was a unionist. That is not a basis for rejecting an application for employment.

Mr Clarko: No, it is not, but if he is a serious troublemaker—

Mr BRIAN BURKE: If he is a serious troublemaker or a murderer or something else—

Mr Laurance: He disrupted the work.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The member is saying that he did not disrupt any work—he has not been to work.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: In discussing this matter with the Minister for Works and the Minister for Industrial Relations, the decision was made that we should not reject the application for employment on the grounds recommended.

Mr MacKinnon: But you rejected it on those grounds.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: No, we did not. It was brought to our attention because we were told someone was rejected, based on his union activities. That is what we were told. I did not write any letter, and if members opposite want to tell lies about a letter and mislead the House they can go ahead. I cannot recall writing any letter whatsoever. I suspect the letter was written by one of the other Ministers following our discussion. That is the answer to the question by members opposite.

Let me go through it again. These are the challenges as I see them. Firstly, someone was employed, and in the period since he was employed he has been on compensation consistently, and did not deserve—

Mr Thompson: You are starting in the middle.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: No, I am starting at the end and working back. As of today someone is employed who has been on compensation—we are not saying he is not deserving of compensation, but we are saying that he may not be or that he may be. We are saying he is compensation-prone—that is what members opposite are saying. I am saying that the Minister will be instructed to assess whether or not he is compensable in respect of this injury. If it is found he is malingering, upon application to the court the compensation payments will cease and every effort will be made to recover any payments made during the time he was not suffering a compensable injury.

Secondly, I am supposed to have written a letter instructing that this person be employed. That is what the member said. I cannot recall ever having written that letter; and reference to the Minister confirms that in his view I did not write the letter. I do not have the details in front of me. I do not have any file, and I had no knowledge of the matter. That is the next thing.

Mr Thompson: You had knowledge of the matter.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I told the member that I had knowledge of the matter. The member's claim that I wrote a letter is, to the best of my knowledge, absolutely false—

Mr Rushton: Now that gets you off the hook. You say to the best of your memory, but tomorrow your memory might be quite good.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I do not know of any letter. Does the member for Dale know how many letters he wrote when he was in office?

Mr Thompson: The member conceded when he spoke that the information he had was accurate as far as he was able to determine.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Come on!

Several members interjected.

Mr Bryce: The member for Gascoyne would not be bothered to check it out.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: He revelled in it. That is like saying, "The Speaker murdered 15 people—"

Mr Thompson: He did not.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: "—and he denies it. There are no bodies to be found and no-one is missing".

Mr I. F. Taylor: But to the best of my knowledge it is true!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I do not know of any letter that I have written. Talking about the discussion around the incident, the member named the two bases—union radicalism and compensation malingerer—

Mr Thompson: Let me put this to you. If you were going to employ someone to work for you, bearing in mind there are thousands of people out of jobs at the present time, and you had offering a person who is a known troublemaker and has a history of back injury, would you employ him ahead of all the others?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: If he was a known troublemaker—

Mr Thompson: Because he is a fellow traveller of yours—

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The member for Kalamunda asked me a question. Does he want me to answer or does he want to answer it?

If he were a known troublemaker, I suppose I would have second thoughts about it. However, if he is termed a "union radical-equals-known troublemaker", any rejection of the application on the basis that he is a union radical or active unionist, as someone else may describe it, would open the Government to the most severe criticism that could be made.

Mr Rushton: You are insulting all the unemployed people.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The member for Dale is insulting Parliament with his presence in this House.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Stop squealing. We have a member who has raised a matter without the basis for raising it, and now his fellow member said that he did raise it to the best of his knowledge. "The best of his knowledge" is fairly inefficient.

Mr Thompson: He was strong enough to get you on your feet, instead of the Minister who would normally have dealt with this matter.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I told the Minister for Works that I would handle it.

Mr Thompson: You are the best one to defend it.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Minister for Works could play the member at a break. He makes the Minister for Works look like Einstein. That is how good he is.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Let us get back to the substance. Members opposite accused me of writing a letter and of ducking the issue. I am saying that is a lie, and I did not. Am I ducking the issue now?

Mr Laurance: I will respond in a moment.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I do not know that the member for Gascoyne will respond.

Mr Rushton: That is how fair you are.

Mr Evans: You asked for the extension.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Hang on! I do not think the members opposite know how to spell "Standing", let alone "Order". I have told members opposite that what they said is not right. The member for Gascoyne objected to my saying, "to the best of my knowledge".

Mr Laurance: I think you are wrong and that you know more than you are admitting to the Parliament. The file is missing.

Mr Bryce: Have you got the file?

Several members interjected.

Mr Bryce: You know where you will finish up if you have the file.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: If the member is on the hook, he should not have jumped.

Mr Laurance: The member is not on the hook; you are.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The member also said—

Mr Laurance: It was done at your direction.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am not saying that it was done under my direction.

Mr Laurance: You are aware of the letter and you directed that the man be employed.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I did not deny or acknowledge that I said that following the discussions with the Minister for Works and the Minister for Industrial Relations—taking into account the basis on which members opposite would have rejected the person's employment—it was agreed he should be employed.

Mr Laurance: At your direction.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am not saying that that was the case.

Mr Laurance: You said a moment ago it was a lie and now you are saying it is true.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I did not.

Mr Laurance: That is what you said.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I said that the claim that I wrote a letter instructing that this person be employed was a lie.

Mr Laurance: Do you deny the instruction was given?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Of course I deny that. I have not seen any letter that says so-and-so shall be employed; I do not know what the Minister for Works has written. I know the basis on which discussions took place, but I do not know of the letter which followed the discussion. It did not come from me.

Mr Rushton: You were involved.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Of course I am involved. I do not know how often I can explain the situation.

In any case, the decision to employ this man was made as a result of the rejection of the two bases on which the member said he should not have been employed. We rejected those bases and decided he should be employed. To the best of my knowledge, I did not write any letter. I understand from the Minister for Works that he may have written a letter. I do not think I have seen it. As far as I know he did not write the letter. I am happy to say to the Minister that in future if someone is rejected on the basis of union radicalism, the Minister is directed to say that he shall be employed. Does that suit the members opposite?

Mr Laurance: Tell us about the direction for this man.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am trying to tell the member for Gascoyne, but he will not listen because he has made a blue. If it is said that someone is a unionist, Liberal, or any other sort of pol-

itical radical, he shall not be rejected on that basis. I have now made that instruction public. In addition, I can only say that the Minister concerned will be asked to look at the compensation payment that the member says Mr Fagan is presently receiving.

Mr Rushton: Will you advise the House?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: We will tell the House of the outcome. If the Minister says Mr Fagan is receiving compensation funds on the basis of false claims, the payments will cease immediately, if necessary upon application to the court. If he is receiving funds and has received them on a false basis, every effort will be made to recover the money.

The member for Gascoyne should try to ensure his information is a little more accurate before he raises matters such as this.

As to Extension of Time

MR MacKINNON (Murdoch—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.02 p.m.]: As Standing Orders are suspended, I move—

> That the member for Gascoyne be given a further 10 minutes to respond to the remarks of the Premier.

The SPEAKER: I will not accept that motion. The suspension of Standing Orders was to allow the Premier to continue his remarks.

Standing Orders: Suspension

MR MacKINNON (Murdoch—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.03 p.m.]: I move—

> That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to permit the member for Gascoyne to speak again to his grievance.

The SPEAKER: To be carried, this motion requires an absolute majority.

MR BRYCE (Ascot—Deputy Premier) [5.04 p.m.]: This is an extraordinary proposition. The member for Gascoyne came to the Chamber with a bucket of unsubstantiated bile that he wanted to tip all over an individual outside the Parliament. In the process, he hoped he would be able to flip a little of that bile in different directions aimed at the Minister and the Premier. That was his purpose when he came to this place and knew he had a ten-minute grievance debate. At the beginning of his grievance he stated that this was an opportunity to express matters of "great public importance", to use his words. There are at least two or three other options available to this member if he wants to speak on this subject at great length. However, he deliberately chose this method, and at the beginning of his speech he checked that he had 10 minutes and not 15. It was his deliberate intention to tip a bucket. At the end of his speech, the Premier responded.

Mr McNee: You don't mind tipping buckets, but you don't like getting them back.

Mr BRYCE: I hope *Hansard* recorded that interjection.

Mr Stephen: I am sitting behind the member for Mt. Marshall and I did not hear it. Would the member repeat it?

Mr BRYCE: At the end of the Premier's 10 minutes of reply, the members of the Opposition were so miserable that they asked him to continue.

Mr Laurance: He did not come clean on the issue.

Mr BRYCE: All right, I will put it another way. The Opposition squealed that it wanted the Premier to have a further 15 minutes; it must be masochistic. We are approaching an absolutely absurd situation. At the request of members sitting opposite, the Premier had additional time to explain a position—I have taken the same action in Opposition when it suited my point of view—and the Government accommodated the Opposition, which now wants to extend its period for a right of reply. Presumably if that extension were given, the Premier would be entitled to a further extension, and so on. How damned stupid!

Let us remember who departed from Standing Orders; members opposite wanted the Premier to accommodate them by speaking for an additional period. He spoke for a further 15 minutes, and now the Opposition seeks to introduce this absurd proposition. No doubt, members are getting ready to squeal "unfair", simply because the Government went out of its way to accommodate them.

The Government recognises the absurdity and stupidity of walking down the track that the member for Gascoyne and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition want it to walk. I urge members opposite to reject the proposition to suspend Standing Orders for a further period.

MR LAURANCE (Gascoyne) [5.08 p.m.]: Serious allegations were raised in the first 10 minutes of the grievance debate. The Premier then had 10 minutes to respond and was given an extension of 15 minutes; a total of 25 minutes. In that time, he did not answer the allegations.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Point of Order

Mr EVANS: It appears that the member is addressing the original question and not getting on with the substance of the motion to which he should be speaking at the moment.

The SPEAKER: I have listened closely to the member for Gascoyne, and that point was in my mind. I hope the member will keep to the motion before the Chair.

Debate (on Standing Orders suspension) Resumed

Mr LAURANCE: Because of the matters raised by the Premier when responding during the additional time there should be the opportunity for further comment. I comment briefly on the motion for additional time to respond and for Standing Orders to be suspended to allow me to do so. It is quite obvious that a letter was written.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member cannot debate that point.

Mr LAURANCE: I am trying to put the point about the requirement for additional time, to respond to the Premier. The Premier had additional time and made further information available that should be responded to. I support the motion that Standing Orders be suspended to give me the opportunity to reply. The Premier indicated he did not write a letter but he knows of its existence. Therefore, I ask who did write the letter. The Premier knows that this incident is wrong and he is involved in it up to his neck. He took 25 minutes to get around to the question.

Point of Order

Mr GORDON HILL: The member persists in dealing with the subject matter we were originally discussing, and not with the question before the Chair.

The SPEAKER: Again I ask the member for Gascoyne to keep to the motion before the Chair.

Mr Laurance: Certainly I will.

Debate (on Standing Orders suspension) Resumed

Mr LAURANCE: Obviously, the Premier does not want anybody to respond. That is why the Government is taking these points of order. That is why the Government is seeking not to allow me to respond. This incident stinks. The Premier knows it, and he is trying to score out of it.

The Premier had this man put on wrongly, at his direction. The people of Western Australia should know exactly what this Premier is like, what he has done, and that he has refused to answer the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the member to be seated.

Question put and negatived.

Mr Brian Burke: I inform members that I am happy to take questions now or after tea, but I will not be here after tea. If the Opposition wants questions now, we will take them now. I will not be available for grievances after tea in that case.

Mr Peter Jones: That is all right.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

Sitting suspended from 6.01 to 7.15 p.m.

TRANSPORT: BUSES

Joondalup: Grievance

MRS WATKINS (Joondalup) [7.15 p.m.]: My grievance is with respect to public transport in the northern suburbs and, in particular, in my own electorate of Joondalup.

Joondalup is classified as a dormitory area. It has high density housing, shopping complexes, recreational facilities, and very little industry which, to those in the public transport field, means the demands are mainly for peak period travel on work and school journeys.

School journeys are very well catered for by school buses, but often people who are involved in public transport do not understand the needs of the people, and needs are very often different from demands.

While I realise the demands for peak period travel are essential, serious consideration must be given to the social needs of the traveller in off-peak periods—needs which are not currently catered for in my electorate.

According to mid-1983 figures, the MTT carried 3 500 passengers a day in 107 trips before 8.00 a.m. from the northern suburbs to Perth. For the rest of the day to the last bus which, in many suburbs, is before 6.00 p.m., some 2 000 passengers travelled to Perth in 130 trips.

These figures show the importance of peak period travel. If one lives in Wanneroo and wishes to visit the Whitford City shopping centre, one must either go into Perth and return from Perth to Whitford or take the bus from Wanneroo to Beach Road, from Beach Road to Warwick, and then from Warwick back to Whitford—a journey which can take two hours. That same journey by car takes only 12 minutes.

If one happens to work in my electorate and needs to travel in an east-west direction, unless one has private transport, it is absolutely impossible to get to work on time.

As another example, the suburb of Heathridge is very close to Mullaloo Beach. In fact by car it is only four minutes away. However, if a person does not have a car and wishes to travel to Mullaloo Beach, that person must travel from Heathridge to Whitford and back to Mullaloo—a four-minute journey by car which sometimes takes an hour by bus. It just is not tolerable. If buses are late—everything in respect of timing is crucial—the journey could take even longer than an hour.

If people living in the beach suburbs or, for that matter, any suburb in my electorate, need to get to the State Housing Commission or the social security office in Mirrabooka—plenty of people need to get to those services—they just cannot do it. They would need to travel into Perth and out again. We have no east-west transport. People just cannot get to those essential services. People who live in a beach suburb cannot even get to the Wanneroo Hospital.

I could give many examples, but my time is rather limited. The need to give people greater mobility and access to the community and to work is a sound reason for introducing a pilot scheme for east-west travel. To interconnect local areas with the main trunk line routes operating between 7.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m., bus stops should be flexible enough to enable the passengers to signal the driver at will. They should run on a regular basis and with each journey being no longer than 30 minutes' duration.

As an example, a bus could depart from the Wanneroo townsite, go to Edgewater, from Edgewater to Heathridge, and from Heathridge to Mullaloo. A journey such as that would enable women and children to reach the beach easily. They would also be able to use the recreational and other facilities in those other suburbs. Senior citizens could visit friends, and unemployed youth would be able to use the Community Youth Support Scheme in Wanneroo without having to go into Perth and out again to reach it.

If such a pilot scheme were introduced in off-peak time during the week, and to a lesser degree during the weekend, public transport would be well utilised by the residents of Joondalup because their basic transport needs would be met.

If the Minister should decide to consider introducing such a scheme, advance publicity must be directed towards potential, off-peak users in areas not normally catered for by MTT publicity. In other words we would need to publicise it in places like doctors' surgeries, shopping centres, schools, CES centres, etc.

Joondalup is the second largest State electorate and one of the fastest growing. In December 1982, the population was 30 245. In December 1983 it had increased to 33 215, an increase of some 2 970 people. The population is growing very fast; unfortunately the public transport system is not.

I understand that 23 154 of the current population are over the age of 18 years, so the public transport potential in Joondalup is enormous. Apparently these people are not being effectively catered for in the public transport area.

Excellent facilities are provided in Joondalup; however, those facilities are not fully utilised because of their isolation from the main trunk routes.

My office receives between 20 and 30 calls a day, and at least three of those calls would be specific complaints directed at public transport, or the lack of it, especially the lack of east-west transport.

Senior citizens would probably be my main complainants, followed by unemployed youth and then by mothers with small children. It is extremely difficult for these people to travel from suburb to suburb unless they own cars. One of the horrifying things I have learnt is that, according to the 1981 census figures, only 933 people in the electorate of Joondalup use buses to travel to work. That is 933 people out of a population of a little under 30 000.

It is really time that the issue was addressed. We need decent public transport in an east-west route, and we need it now.

MR GRILL (Esperance-Dundas—Minister for Transport) [7.24 p.m.]: I well appreciate the problems set out so clearly by the member for Joondalup. I congratulate her not only for her speech but also for the way in which she has so ably represented her constituents on transport matters over the months she has been in Parliament. She and her fellow woman member of Parliament (Mrs Pam Beggs) have brought to me more transport problems related to their constituents than almost the rest of the House combined. I think this is recognition that the dormitory suburbs have special transport-related problems.

That is not to say that we do not have a good bus system in the metropolitan area. We do, considering the size of the area involved, the low population densities, and the way our metropolitan area is spread out. We do have a good bus system by any standard, certainly by Australian

standards and I think also by world standards. Nonetheless we do have problems and the member for Joondalup has put her finger on one of the basic and probably one of the most protracted problems of transport in the Perth metropolitan area.

That problem simply is that our bus system, by virtue of the nature of the metropolitan area, is designed on a radial basis. The member was talking about the problems of making non-radial trips on a radial system. She has pointed out the time involved in making these non-radial trips on a radial system. In many instances, a trip might be a few minutes apart from source to destination, but in terms of bus travel, that trip represents a long time.

The problems of the transport system relate not only to densities and populations but also to the fact that over the last two decades our system has become less and less productive. It has become less productive in terms of both the number of passengers carried per bus and passengers carried per bus driver—in fact, less productive by almost every yardstick.

That has led to a situation where the deficit for the public transport system in this State as it relates to the metropolitan area is the highest per head of population in Australia. The problem needs to be addressed in a comprehensive way, and I will get on to that subject in a minute.

As an indication of the problem, if I receive 20 phone calls from individuals about possible improvements to MTT services, we would find that those 20 calls come from 20 different origins; they would be talking about 20 different destinations, and about 20 different time zones. In endeavouring to provide the very good bus service we have today, it is no wonder the public transport deficit within the metropolitan area has blown out, not just under this Government but also under previous Governments. It has been estimated that by the end of this decade the cumulative public transport deficit will be in excess of $1 000 million. That is one estimate we are already well ahead of, so things do not look too good.

At present we have only four truly cross-suburban MTT bus services, and I will enumerate them as follows—

service No. 64, which is the Warwick-Morley via Mirrabooka service;

service No. 345, which is the Morley-Bayswater-Belmont-Kewdale-Victoria Park service;

the Gosnells-Lynwood-Willetton-Garden City-Fremantle service; and

the Willetton-Fremantle via South Street service.

All the rest of the services are the standard radial services.

As I said previously, there is only one way to attack this problem, and that is on a comprehensive basis. This Government has instructed the MTT, for the first time—I emphasise, for the first time—to draw up a long-term plan for its future operations.

Mr Tonkin: What did the previous Government do?

Mr GRILL: The previous Government did not request any long-term plan of any duration to be drawn up, and that was really to that Government's condemnation.

As a start, we have asked the MTT to draw up a five-year plan setting out the possible direction of public transport in Perth during that period. I hope we will see many constructive steps taken as a result of that plan.

For the information of the member for Joondalup and other members, I indicate in some small detail a few of the possibilities being looked at presently. Firstly, with the extension of the Mitchell Freeway to Beach Road, most bus services north of Beach Road will be routed through the Warwick transfer station. This will provide cross-suburban travellers in the area with the convenience of having to travel only as far as Warwick and then changing routes rather than having to go into Perth and back. That appears to be one area in which we can make some improvements.

Secondly, there is the strong possibility that we can join the metropolitan bus transfer stations together with a great circle bus route. I do not know whether members can envisage that, but for instance we could travel from Warwick to Mirrabooka to Morley, to Midland, to Carousel to Booragoon, to Fremantle and back to the coast at Warwick.

I must say that that proposal has great interest to me and I will be encouraging the MTT to look at it. The MTT is examining a different way of serving the needs of shoppers. We could have a shopper feeder service to travel from regional shopping centres in loops rather than in straight lines and in the process could cover greater areas. The MTT could make some impact in those three areas. We would like to see that five-year plan within three or four months.

That plan has been delayed due to the fact that it is a complex plan to put together and also it is a requirement of this Government that there be

consultation with the union movement before such a plan is adopted. We all appreciate what a powerful union the bus operators union is and how we need to consult with it. The union has been destructive in the past, but not of late, and I do not think we want to see similar destruction in the future. It is a good constructive union, and I hope it will benefit from that consultative process in the same way that the MTT will.

There are some real prospects for long-term solutions to the problems put forward by the member for Joondalup.

YORK

Restoration: Grievance

MR PETER JONES (Narrogin) [7.33 p.m.]: I wish to bring a matter to the notice of the Premier and seek his assistance. I have been assured by the Leader of the House that he will make the Premier aware of the matters I raise.

I have been involved in this matter, as has the Minister for Works in his capacity as the member for Avon. He and I have discussed this matter on several occasions, most recently just before the suspension of the sitting for dinner.

During 1982 the Shire of York carried out a further stage of its restoration and rebuilding programme for York, in the context of its historic associations. All members who have been to York would applaud what has been done by the York Shire Council and successive Governments by way of contributions by various Government departments, for restoration work in York. The National Trust of Australia (WA) also has been involved in the restoration work in order to recreate what is an historic town of great significance to the history of Western Australia. York is a unique place.

In 1982, as part of that restoration work, the Shire of York required approval from the appropriate Government departments to redo the main street, Avon Terrace, in York. At that time discussions were held with the Main Roads Department and the State Energy Commission.

The State Energy Commission was involved because of the need to locate underground some of the cabling in the main street. The technical aspects of such work were discussed with various SEC personnel, and the shire endeavoured to reach an arrangement whereby the SEC would pay for the underground cabling, as a contribution towards the restoration of York.

Other Government departments and instrumentalities have made contributions over a long time, so this approach to the SEC could hardly be called a precedent. There are no other towns like York.

The shire requested that this work be done at the expense of the SEC because the shire was involved in considerable expense in its own right. It had to supply new standards and lamps as part of the street lighting.

The cost of the underground cabling was estimated to be $27 000 and that cost could not be met by shire funds. At the operational and technical level within the SEC it was agreed that this work could be undertaken. However, at the top level of the SEC the idea was frowned upon. Therefore, the York Shire Council approached me in my capacity as the then Minister to review this matter.

I reviewed the matter in the course of a visit to the council in February 1983. The council had raised the matter with the member for Avon and other local members, and we discussed the situation in the same way we discussed several other matters of concern to the council.

Because it was necessary to proceed with some planning I considered the matter on the spot and rang the SEC and spoke to the appropriate senior officer. The officer expressed one element of concern—the precedent. On my own assessment of the situation I felt that there was no way a contribution to the restoration of York—which was being pushed by the council and by the local members of Parliament—constituted a precedent of the magnitude the SEC officer thought. If that were being done in some other country town such as Merredin or Moora it could be considered a precedent, but not in York. I am sure the member for Avon and other members would agree with me on that point.

Having satisfied myself that there would be no difficulty at least technically, I advised the council that it could proceed with its planning on the basis that the cabling would be put underground and would represent a contribution by the SEC, without prejudice.

Mr Tonkin: When talking about the precedent are you talking of the cost of putting the cabling underground, or the $27 000 to the shire?

Mr PETER JONES: The shire had approached the Government on the basis that this cost be picked up by Government—in this case, the SEC. The council was seeking a contribution from the SEC towards the restoration of York because the shire was involved in considerable expense of its own as part of the same restoration work.

I reported to the shire that the matter was confirmed. I advised the local members and con-

firmed by minute to the commission that the matter had been confirmed.

As the member for Avon is well aware, following the election the situation changed. The new Minister was approached by the officer concerned in the commission who sought to overturn my decision. The new Minister overturned it. The present Minister has been approached by the member for Avon, me, and the local members concerned; and the Shire of York is now left with a situation not of its seeking at all. The situation which pertains now has been referred to by the present Minister as nothing more than an election gimmick.

Mr Tonkin: When you refer to the new Minister, do you mean Mr Dowding?

Mr PETER JONES: No. The present Minister is Mr Parker and the new Minister was Mr Dowding. The member for Avon is well aware of this matter. I am not trying to embarrass him; it is a situation in which we have been involved for some time. The matter received no publicity prior to the last election. It is ridiculous to suggest it was an election gimmick.

This was purely an administrative decision. It was a clear commitment for the Shire of York to proceed with its planning. We now have a situation where the member for Avon is embarrassed and the council is embarrassed to a considerable degree of cost, because the SEC at a senior level has chosen to welsh on an undertaking which was given.

I ask the Premier to review the situation on behalf of his own local member.

ROAD

Bussell Highway: Grievance

MR D. L. SMITH (Mitchell) [7.48 p.m.]: My remarks are addressed to the Minister for Transport on a matter I have raised with him on a previous occasion and with the South West Development Authority and the other bodies concerned.

I raise this matter again tonight because next weekend is the Easter break and it is an issue which is important to anyone thinking of travelling south at Easter time. It concerns the question of the state of the Bussell highway which extends from Bunbury to Capel.

This section of the road is heavily trafficked with trucks carrying mineral sands from the mines at Capel to the storage and port facilities in Bunbury. In addition, the highway carries regular local commuter traffic between Bunbury and Gelorup and Bunbury and Capel. More importantly the highway supports very heavy traffic at holiday time, with an almost impossible level of tourists and holiday-makers going south or returning from holidays down south. That traffic largely involves the pulling of caravans or trailers. The traffic problem is being compounded by residential development in the area and the resultant increase in the number of roads entering that section of Bussell Highway.

The Cathedral Grammar School is also situated off Bussell Highway and many of the students ride to that school or are transported to it by bus. Capel Golf Course is adjacent to the highway and is used by many Bunbury residents as a second Bunbury course. The Cable Sands company is also in the process of developing a new mine site near Capel and do doubt the entry will be on to the Bussell Highway.

Generally there has been a continuing build-up of traffic and an increase in the number of entry points to the highway itself. That makes the highway very congested and creates an increasing danger when vehicles are leaving the highway or attempting to overtake vehicles that are carting mineral sands or pulling trailers. One has only to use the road as I do every Monday when I travel back from Capel to appreciate that although it is not a winding section of road as are many country roads, it is a very slow stretch and one has to keep to 80 kmh and sit behind vehicles; there is no point in overtaking as there is always another vehicle not far ahead.

There is a reserve on the western side of Bussell Highway for at least half the distance I have mentioned. There is thus no real reason for not widening Bussell Highway or, alternatively, providing overtaking or deceleration lanes in that area. The Main Roads Department has tended to pick at the problem and isolate a property that fronts Bussell Highway and refuse the owner access to the highway. He finds it hard to understand why he has been distinguished from his next door neighbour who may have access. That is just picking at the problem, and deceleration and overtaking lanes are badly needed.

Because of the nature of the traffic, which includes very heavy vehicles, the road itself is constantly in a state of disrepair. That is compounded by the fact that the courteous heavy vehicle drivers who realise there is a line of traffic behind them leave the bitumen and travel on the gravel with only the outside wheels of their vehicle on the bitumen. Unfortunately that damages the verges and a number of edges of the road along the stretch to which I am referring badly need attention and repair, and in some cases total reconstruction.

At the Bunbury end of the highway Hay Park is the centre of recreational facilities in the city. On the opposite side of the highway is a suburb called Crosslands and beyond that is Carey Park and Kinkelly Park. A large number of pedestrians go to Hay Park and at the moment there is nothing on Bussell Highway which allows them to cross in safety. The City of Bunbury has been looking with Main Roads at construction of an underpass or an overpass to provide some safety for pedestrians. As an interim measure, Main Roads ought to be talking to the City of Bunbury about the provision of traffic lights at the corner of Brittain Road and Bussell Highway, which should include lights for pedestrians crossing as well as the normal traffic lights found at intersections.

I hope the Main Roads Department will do some work on that section of Bussell Highway in the near future. It should also seriously consider the need to provide some cycleways in conjunction with road development, either separately from the road surface or on the road surface in a very well defined area by markings on the road as being for use by cyclists. I hope it is constructed in such a way that cyclists feel quite safe travelling in both directions along the cycleway. It should run from Hay Park or thereabouts to the road that leads into the grammar school.

I raise these matters in the full knowledge that the Police Department chose to open its " double-E" Eastern campaign in Bunbury because it recognises that the tourist traffic at Easter can be dangerous to people using the roads. It is unfortunate that the Bussell Highway, especially the section to which I have referred, has been left in this state for so long because it is a positive hazard to people using the road.

MR GRILL (Esperance-Dundas—Minister for Transport) [7.51 p.m.]: The Government is well aware of the importance of the Bussell Highway, in particular to Bunbury, Busselton, Capel, and the heavy mineral sands mining industry, and to the south-west generally.

It is opportune that the member should bring forward this grievance just prior to the Easter holiday, because this section of road will no doubt carry heavy traffic during that period. The road is used by Westrail trucks carting mineral sands between Capel and Bunbury. For that reason it is an important industrial road and a general build-up of traffic has occurred over the last few years.

There is likewise recognition that the road at present is not as it might be. It does not handle the level of traffic as well as it might, and it is in need of some repair. I do not know about deceleration or overtaking lanes, but the Main Roads Department is cognisant of the need for this road to be widened, and it has indicated that widening will receive a clear priority in the 1984-85 Budget. In fact, a six kilometre stretch south from Richardson Road along the Bussell Highway will be upgraded within a few months and the department will then look at the progressive upgrading of the entire highway.

I commend the member for bringing forward this subject at this time.

The SPEAKER: Grievances noted.

RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Tax: Motion

MR PETER JONES (Narrogin) [7.54 p.m.]: I move—

> That this House strongly opposes the introduction of a resources rent tax, and condemns the Government for its failure to—
>
> (1) strongly defend the best interests of all Western Australians by opposing such a tax;
>
> (2) have regard to the representations being made by the energy exploration industry in Western Australia against the introduction of such a damaging tax; and
>
> (3) calls upon the Government to actively and publicly oppose the introduction of this centralist taxation initiative which will have such detrimental effect upon all Western Australians.

The Federal Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy indicated formally today what he has been saying quietly to industry will occur from 1 July. That is, a so-called resources rent tax will apply, and he has designated the two aspects that will govern its introduction—the geographic parameters of the tax and some indication regarding the financial and administrative arrangements. He has said that industry has three weeks to accept or publicly comment to him on one or two matters regarding its administration and application.

I do not propose to dwell upon the very complicated nature of this tax because its final form is not yet determined. This tax has a threshold component under which it will not apply, and there is also a component as yet undetermined in relation to exploration. If industry were to agree with the Minister that the threshold at which the tax would apply was high, it would be able to discuss with him a basis upon which industry did not

receive some exploration support by way of subsidy, or whatever.

If, however, the threshold was low and the tax applied at a lower financial level than would otherwise be the case, the Minister has indicated that there may be some room to discuss assistance for exploration activities. That is entirely understandable, but it is not what I will talk about tonight.

I am referring to the principle of a resources rent tax and its effect on this State and other States. It impinges more on Western Australia in some areas of activity such as the oil and gas industry than on all the other States, apart from Victoria. In the same way, if what is foreshadowed by Senator Walsh comes to pass, in due course it will impinge seriously on coal production in New South Wales and Queensland.

The two Labor Governments in Victoria and New South Wales have been very vocal in putting their views on this tax. Again I am talking about the principle, not the administrative arrangements. They have been vocal in making publicly known their views and, more particularly, in pressing the Federal Minister and the Federal Government to see that certain aspects which were originally foreshadowed do not come to pass. Nearly a year ago Mr Wran made it clear in his capacity as Premier of New South Wales that the Federal Government would have a big fight on its hands if it proceeded in the way it had foreshadowed to introduce this type of tax on the energy industry. In New South Wales, it would apply largely to coal and originally it was to apply to oil, gas, and coal. Mr Wran has been successful in having that original proposal deferred.

Nonetheless, I do not want to talk about that. This motion refers to the fact that this has become formalised. It was not vigorously opposed by the State Government at all until recent times. Now it is too late, unless a massive campaign is mounted very quickly.

The origin of this method of collecting revenue by a Government from industry is very theoretical, very complicated, and highly academic. The authoritative paper, or the particular theory around this tax, is by an adviser to the Federal Government, the principal economic adviser to the Prime Minister, Dr Garnaut. He is the developer, in modern terms, of this taxation principle. He prepared a paper late in the 1970s with an academic colleague of his, Mr Clunies Ross, and that paper is the basis upon which Labor Party policy was developed.

In true academic theory, this principle was embraced for two reasons. Firstly, it appealed to the theoretical socialist ideal that it was dirty to make a profit. The resources industries in general, and the oil industry in particular, were milking cows and could be financially assaulted with a view to fattening the public purse. Here was a smart way of doing it. Secondly, it appealed because it was centralised. It immediately attacked the State Government.

This tax reflects the situation that there will be only one finance-gathering body, and that is the central Government which will hand out to the various State Governments—regardless of their constitutitional right to collect resource revenues now, regardless of any agreement Acts they might have—some of that money. The central Government will collect all royalties and other revenue on this highly theoretical basis. Then it will hand it out on the basis that it thinks fit; in other words, as it suits.

The constitutional and traditional situation that this Government in Western Australia now has, and has continued, as have previous Governments of both political persuasions ever since the development of resources in this State began, will count for nothing.

In fact, this State was not even consulted. I will return to that aspect later. All the constitutional and traditional issues will count for nothing. The centralised regime has started today by formally indicating that this is what will happen. The fact that there are those within the oil industry today who have said, "What has been announced is not quite as bad as it could have been", is neither a defence nor an excuse. It is still a bad centralised, socialist move which is opposed by all States at the present time, regardless of their political persuasion. Yet that has not in any way dissuaded the Federal Government from embarking on this damaging course.

By way of placing it on the record, I indicate that this so-called resources rent tax is supposed to be, to use Mr Garnaut's word, "neutral". What that means is that it will not affect investment. It will be based on what is termed "economic rent". An economic rent is "the return on an investment in excess of what is needed to attract funds to the investment in the first place". If one can understand that, one should not be out trying to explore for minerals; one should be writing papers in a university or something like that, because it has nothing to do with practicalities whatsoever. It is part of the highly theoretical nonsense now being perpetrated. All the State Governments are—belatedly, as far as this State is con-

cerned—opposed to it. Where "neutral" is concerned, it is supposed to be above that threshhold.

In June 1983, Dr Garnaut accompanied the Prime Minister when he visited various places overseas. In New York, he had the temerity to suggest some of his theories at a meeting of bankers. Suffice to say that he was very strongly opposed when he proposed the grounds of the practical application of his theory. Two reasons were advanced to him then, the first being that it is an administrative nightmare. Nowhere in the world has the type of system proposed here been applied safely—I say "safely" quite advisedly—economically, easily, or satisfactorily. The second, again as the Government now has come to appreciate and publicly state, is that it leads to a downturn in investment in exploration, and also to exploitation. Already in this country in the last 12 months a significant downturn in the amount of seismic work of an exploration nature has been experienced, and this, in turn, means that in two or three years' time we will have a further downturn in drilling activity for oil and gas.

Mr Bertram: What sort of reduction?

Mr PETER JONES: If my figures are correct, the seismic activity is down to something in the order of 30 per cent of what it was two or three years ago.

The two reasons which have been highly publicised are, firstly, the administrative difficulties, and, secondly, ALP policy.

During 1983, immediately following the election of the present Federal Government, the new Minister, Senator Walsh, made it clear that the Government would proceed to introduce a resources rent tax, and industry was well aware that this would be the position. Questions were asked in this House. The Government replied by saying that there had been no proposals; that it was not aware of that sort of thing. I will come to that aspect again in a moment.

At the 1982 Federal conference of the Australian Labor Party it was made clear and confirmed that a resources rent tax would replace such taxes as the coal export levy and the Bass Strait oil levy. In fact, when the announcement was published, it included, in brackets, the comment that it would raise about $3.5 billion a year. It also went on to say that this tax would be seen as operating in an economy with an equitable prices and incomes policy to overcome any fluctuation in revenue.

The Labor Party was clearly signalling what it intended to do. Industry knew what the ALP would do, because it was on record then warning about it and making sure all people were made aware of it. With reference to this Government, I point out that in August 1982, a conference on Australian resource politics was held jointly at the University of Western Australia and at Murdoch University. One of the Government's present advisers, Dr Harman, made it clear—and I quote from the paper—as follows—

> Stage 4:
>
> Use of the resource rent tax (RRT) or other form of external revenue collecting; external regulation of industry practices with respect to environments, native peoples, foreign investment further processing, technology transfers etc; no necessary direct internal participation.

What we are talking about in this fair State is this: One may have a situation with major Government or public participation or involvement, not only in terms of equity, but also in terms of management. There might be participation as an owner only, as an owner-manager, but in the fourth stage it was advocated—and this is being pursued by the Federal Government at the present time—that the resources rent tax should be used to control all the matters to which I have referred. The paper goes on—

> Similarly, while in the intermediate stages the state does withhold property rights to some or all minerals from the private sector,—

In other words, private investment in development was refused. To continue—

> —this is a temporary phenomenon and the private sector regains access once the state substitutes direct involvement in the business of development with the resource rent tax as the preferred mechanism for obtaining returns.

There is more about how this tax can be applied and how Governments can cope with some of the problems of management by allowing the private sector to do that. But the resource rent tax, or some alternative, represents the best of both worlds; that is, it captures the optimum of benefits in the form of revenue while leaving the dregs to the private sector. It cannot be made clearer than that.

That is the decision which has now been made. This is quite clearly not to detract in any way from the original intention, although it has softened the weight and the application of the initial thrust, but the principle is still the same. It must be borne in mind that in this House we have often said that the two Governments—our State Government, but more particularly the one in

Canberra—are quite smart, and they are socialistic.

In 1982, Mr Keating, now the Federal Treasurer, made the situation quite clear when he addressed a conference at Surfers Paradise as follows—

> We would be concerned to consult with the States to secure a rationalisation of the various taxation regimes with the ultimate objective of replacing most existing charges with a profits-related mechanism. Agreement would need to be reached with the States for the sharing of the proceeds.
>
> Should such an approach prove unsuccessful, a Commonwealth Government could consider, as a last resort, embarking upon the more direct course of removing the incentive of State mineral taxation. In simple terms, this would involve reducing Commonwealth general revenue grants to individual States by the amount of the mineral taxation in question.

In other words, straightout blackmail. He said, "If you don't like what we are going to do, we will buy your support, because we are going to do it anyway. If you are now collecting $100 million or $300 million from various areas and you don't want to play it our way, we will dock that amount from your grants". It is as simple as that.

Mr Keating went on to say—

> The States would then need to consider whether it is worth maintaining mineral taxes as a source of local revenue, or opt for the more desirable policy of securing a great proportion of Commonwealth receipts, with the clear benefit of providing the industry with a more uniform, predictable and equitable taxation regime.

Throughout all these promises was the definite projection that industry wanted this; that industry thought it would be a more uniform, predictable, and equitable regime. If that is so, why in the hell is industry concerned and why was it publicly waging campaigns against this long before the Government in Western Australia started to get worried about it?

There were any number of examples of this prior to the State and Federal elections. For example, when speaking at Surfers Paradise after Mr Keating made his comments, Mr Willis said, "A Labor Administration would be committed to rationing resources investment". He said that rationing would be a high priority. In other words, by using this method of taxation, a Labor Administration would make it undesirable and unprofitable for the private sector to invest where it wished, to create employment where it wished, and the like.

Those two elections occurred, the two Governments changed, and immediately the new Governments went into action. On 23 March, Senator Walsh, now enshrined in his new Ministry, addressed the petroleum and minerals review conference in Canberra and said—

> A resources rent tax—certain, efficient and fair—should have been the essential component of oil taxing policy.

He went on to say—

> Given our commitments to consult with the industry on matters of detail, and the limited involvement of State government, whether we can introduce the tax for 1983-84 is open to doubt.

So far as this State was concerned, we had the situation where at least one or two people in the new Government started to realise that, whether they liked it or not, they had a fight on their hands with their buddies!

A few days after being sworn in, the Deputy Premier turned up at the Australian petroleum exploration conference in Melbourne. He made it quite clear that, whereas the new State Government in Western Australia would seek to look at the way in which resource revenues were gained—it has been doing that and in fact still is; a body is doing that in this State—as far as the Commonwealth was concerned, it could keep its hands off. The Government here did not intend to allow State revenue to be eroded by the Commonwealth Government.

On 8 March the Deputy Premier made that quite clear in Melbourne, but it was necessary for him to get a little stronger about the matter, so on 28 March, in an interview on "AM" following another speech, he said—

> Western Australian mining operations will not become a target of the Federal Government's proposed tax on mining profits. I've indicated that the State Government of Western Australia has for the last 100 years been overviewing the development of mineral wealth in Western Australia, and that we have a constitutional responsibility and right to collect economic rent from the development of those resources and that the Western Australian Government will not be giving up that right.

That was a very definite statement. There was no equivocating whatsoever. In case there was any doubt about it, the interviewer said—

> So you're saying there's no way you'd hand over your right to levy charges and taxes to the Commonwealth, no way?

Mr Bryce replied—

> Certainly not. There's no reason why those revenues could not be collected by State Governments.

There was more in the same vein.

Senator Walsh jumped straight back into the breach and, on the same day, after being asked about Mr Bryce's statement, he said, "It is obviously absurd". Reference had been made to what had occurred in respect of taxes, the disparity between the States, and the like. Senator Walsh said—

> It is obviously absurd. It has to be cleaned up and we are going to do that and Malcolm Bryce and everybody else with any sense should be supporting that.

Strangely enough, after that statement, this Government went very silent.

There was ample notice of the Government's intentions. Its attitude was being published and talked about. On 3 May last year, *The Bulletin* published a long interview with Senator Walsh in which interview the broad details of the Government's intentions were given. Therefore the position was quite clear.

Industry was having talks with the Minister, but, strangely enough, this Government, having made its initial burst and having established its bridgehead as it were, decided to rest on two matters which were, firstly, a commitment that had been given by the Prime Minister and Senator Walsh that they would talk with the States—they would consult with them—and supposedly that was meant to imply they would reach agreement with the States. Secondly, as a result of lethargy, inexperience, or apathy it adopted the attitude, "It can't happen here. They might talk about doing it, but the States, particularly the Labor States of Victoria and New South Wales, will mount enough of a campaign to make certain that it does not happen". The futility and absurdity of that policy is shown in stark reality, because it has happened.

When Parliament resumed on 2 August last year, I asked the following question of the Minister for Mines—

> In view of the effect the introduction of a resources rent tax would have upon existing and potential resource developments in Western Australia, what protests against such a tax have been made by the Western Australian Government to the Federal ALP Government?

The question then sought information as to when, with whom, etc. The Minister replied—

> The Western Australian Government has had on-going discussions with the Federal Government on the resource rent tax concept.
>
> On May 18, the Minister for Mines, and Fuel and Energy wrote to Senator Walsh pointing out the concerns held by the State in respect to the effects that a resource rent tax could have on some of our State's extractive industries.

The final paragraph reads as follows—

> The Commonwealth Minister, Senator Walsh, has said that in any event a resource rent tax should be seen as a replacement tax; it could be administered and collected by individual States and would not be an additional tax on producers already subject to heavy imposts. It was not intended that such a tax should pre-empt State revenues.

What a load of rubbish! The worst aspect is that the former Minister for Mines in this State (Mr Dowding) was seduced by that kind of gobbledegook from Senator Walsh. I emphasise that answer was given on 2 August.

Bearing in mind that on 2 August I was told there had been ongoing discussions, there were some details, etc, on 3 August the Premier advised this House—that is a day later—by way of answer to a question—

> I understand the Federal Government has not made any firm proposals as to the form of any resource rent tax, but has announced that such a tax would not be introduced prior to the 1984-85 financial year.

The Premier was either not aware of what had occurred in the discussions which took place with his Cabinet colleagues or, more particularly, he did not know about the clear commitments and policy details which had been laid down.

The Premier said in this House that he understood no details had been arrived at, although, as I have shown, details were made clear in general terms and despite the fact that precise detail in respect of the threshold and administrative aspects had not been made public at that time—indeed, some of that information has not been made public yet—the intention and general detail were absolutely clear. It had been clear in policy terms for something like a year prior to the election.

The issue had been confirmed as Labor Party policy at the Federal level. It had been confirmed publicly by Senator Walsh when he took over his Ministry and subsequently in discussions with the petroleum exploration industry and the Australian Mining Industry Council. It was made clear also in public interviews, one of which I have referred to here. Senator Walsh indicated clearly the way in which the Federal Government intended to operate.

However, on Thursday, 4 August, the Deputy Premier, the third man in this triumvirate, who had answered questions on this issue one day after another during that week, said, in answer to a question from me—

> The Commonwealth Government has yet to come forward with details of its proposals for a resource rent tax for oil, gas and coal.

That answer was given by the Minister who, at that time, was responsible for all the agreement Acts relating to resource development projects onshore and offshore in this State. Either he did not know the answer or his advisers advised him incorrectly. It is clear he was not aware of the position and he must take some responsibility for that, because, as the Minister responsible, he confirmed the answers. He must know what is going on within the Government and the departments concerned, particularly the Mines Department. Admittedly the Mines Department was not then under his ministerial control.

The Mines Department has the responsibility to collect royalties, and to act as the administrative body in that regard. Officers of that department had been having discussions on this matter with their Minister. Two days earlier the then Minister for Mines indicated, by way of a lengthy answer to a quesion, what was going on and the discussions which had occurred. However, the man responsible for the agreement Acts, or the officers who were helping to draft the answers to the questions, were not aware of the position and they were the people advising the then Minister who had the greatest responsibility for the administration of the various agreement Acts which produce the State's revenue from resources. However, the Minister says he was not aware of the position, and the Commonwealth Government had not come forward with anything.

Since that time a considerable amount of progress has been made. Repeated questions were asked and I will not take up the time of the House quoting them, because they all told the same story. They indicated the State Government was saying, "We have been having some discussions". Even the Deputy Premier was made aware of that fact after he answered the question to which I have referred; but the Government hung its hat on one aspect which I mentioned earlier. Senator Walsh and the Federal Government had evidently indicated and had committed themselves publicly to the extent that they would have discussions with the States about the matter.

By late last year it was evident the State Government was concerned about the matter, but the Commonwealth had promised there would be no arbitrary introduction of the tax and no arbitrary abrogation of the State's constitutional position. In any case, we must agree. We must have discussions on this matter.

I hope this has been a salutary lesson for the Government. A promise means nothing to members on that side of the House, because that is what happened in this case. We have our new Minister for Minerals and Energy quite clearly making that fact public; and I will come to that in a moment.

On 4 April this year, the present Minister for Minerals and Energy advised me that the State Government had discussed the resources rent tax proposals with the Federal Government on a number of occasions. The State had vigorously opposed any new arrangement that would interfere with the State's rights. Now we are getting back to the kind of statement made in March 1983 by the Deputy Premier, but nothing has happened since then. The Minister went on to indicate how the Commonwealth proposed to confine the resources rent tax to offshore petroleum which is owned by the Commonwealth Government—

> Further discussions regarding an offshore resources rent tax await receipt of specific proposals from the Commonwealth.

That was on 4 April. On 12 April the Minister for Minerals and Energy went public. He had actually gone public one or two days before—I have forgotten when. In delivering an address to a mining group, he ripped into the Federal Government. It is pretty good stuff, but it is a bit "too-little-too-late".

Mr MacKinnon: Hear, hear!

Mr PETER JONES: On 4 April, the Minister said, "Look, things are getting tough, but it is still right. They are now going offshore where they have constitutional responsibility". In a very good, long answer which provided considerable detail and which to me reflected the Minister's concerns, he also said—

> In discussions with the Commonwealth Government the State has insisted that it should not be either administratively or

> financially jeopardised by the introduction of a resource rent tax.

The word "administratively" is very important because until now it has been asserted that the Commonwealth has constitutional responsibility offshore; and we could argue and talk about that case *ad nauseam*. This matter has been argued and taken to the High Court. Indeed, it has been established constitutionally that that may well be so.

Mr Hassell: However wrongly.

Mr PETER JONES: Yes, however wrongly. Perhaps it is to the eternal shame of Prime Minister Gorton that he started us down that track. The main point is exactly as the Minister said, that Western Australia does not want to be jeopardised administratively. He is quite right, because we have a situation where one of the great energy-producing projects in the world is about to start producing revenue for the people of this State from 1 July. That project is controlled by the people of this State through the Parliament by means of an agreement Act passed in the Parliament. We have a range of legislation relating to offshore activities; for example, the Commonwealth Petroleum and Submerged Lands Bill which is complementary to legislation passed by this Parliament. Indeed, after several years of negotiation during the late 1970s and early 1980s, an arrangement was reached, confirmed by this Parliament in 1982, when I brought to this Parliament the complementary legislation which provided that the offshore administrative arrangements would be carried out by the State of Western Australia. We negotiated and enjoyed a unique and privileged position as far as offshore administration was concerned.

The agreement provides for no duplication; it provides for local people to do the work; it provides a situation where the offshore exploration industry that operates in this State has a contact point in the petroleum branch of the Department of Mines, a branch which, Mr Speaker, as you would be well aware, and as the Minister for Transport would be well aware, is staffed by some very capable people, people of whom the industry is very proud, as the State ought to be, and people in whom the industry has every confidence. That is the key part, and that is what the Minister is quite rightly saying in his answer to me. But administratively this State should not be jeopardised, because the moment we are jeopardised, industry is jeopardised. The Minister now knows that, but seemingly it will not apply.

It has been suggested that the North-West Shelf project will not at this stage be brought under the umbrella or under the confines of the tax on 1 July. The same situation applies to Bass Strait. Last week, I understand, the Victorian Government mounted an enormous onslaught against the Federal Government by way of intense private discussions. We know that last Tuesday our Minister announced that he was despatching forthwith an officer to Canberra to speak with the appropriate Commonwealth officer. Quite frankly, that was not good enough. If it was good enough for Victoria to send a high-powered Government group to Canberra to try to preserve the situation, and to try to persuade the Federal Government not to do what it was still intending to do until that time, then it was certainly good enough for this State to do a little more than it did. I am aware that the Minister was leaving for overseas, and I am not suggesting that that plan should in any way have been changed. I am suggesting that it was somewhat unfair for the Government to leave such a heavy burden of responsibility on an officer of the Mines Department or other Government department, no matter how good he was. This was Premier-to-Prime Minister stuff.

The fact that the North-West Shelf project was to be included from 1 July means nothing in the long term, because, as the Minister for Minerals and Energy said last week, the proposals that he received from Senator Walsh were a matter of concern to him. He used that in a voice-piece over the ABC. He was quite right. So much for consultation, so much for discussion with the object of reaching agreement, because what the Federal Minister did was to send over a package of proposals with the attitude, "Here it is. Here is what we are going to do". So much for discussion. In an earlier interview published on 18 January, Senator Walsh said—

> I saw the West Australian Minister last week.

That presumably was about the second week in January. The article continues—

> Next week I will be seeing the Ministers in Queensland, South Australia and Victoria. New South Wales and Tasmania are not presently involved in this and I will have to see the Northern Territory Minister at some later time. The purpose of those meetings will be to endeavour to reach a broad agreement on the States taking a share of a rent tax in lieu of their existing and potential royalty income.

In other words, he is saying, "I am going to meet and talk with these Ministers in the way I talked with the Western Australian Minister last week. I

will tell him that we are going to collect all the money. We are going to put it to you that you will take a share of that money. We will give you a bit back in exchange for your abbrogating your constitutional right to collect this revenue directly yourselves". This Minister even said that in the interview. It is now a matter of history that he did not do that in any positive way. He said, "Here is what we are putting up". When the Minister here last week publicly expressed concern about it, one could see that his disappointment was that perhaps some people had not fought hard enough before he got into the chair.

In the same answer of 4 April to which I have referred, the Minister advised as follows—

> While the State has opposed any Commonwealth tax arrangement that interferes with the State's ability to collect royalty revenue, it has consistently stated that it is prepared to enter into constructive discussions with the Commonwealth regarding offshore resource rent tax arrangements.

That is the weakness in what the Minister said in his reply to me, which in every other respect is magnificent. It is superb, because it clearly says, "We are not going to be prepared to jeopardise our position; we are not going to be prepared to jeopardise the administrative arrangements which are enshrined legislatively and which the previous Government in this State fought so hard to put into place for the sake of the people of this place and particularly to help industry". But right at the very end of his reply, the Minister said, "We are prepared to talk in a constructive way where these arrangements are concerned". That little loophole has let the Commonwealth in, because it has taken advantage of the Government's dilatory approach of last year and the uncoordinated situation with the Minister responsible for the agreement Acts saying, "There has been no arrangement. We don't know what they are doing. They haven't put up a proposal", when the day before, the Minister for Mines publicly told the Parliament about the discussions and what was going on. Saying that the Government is prepared to enter into constructive discussions lets the Commonwealth in.

When the Government finally took up a very strong stance, why did it weaken that stance by saying, "But we will still talk with you about this"? The moment that it agreed to have any sort of discussions, it immediately started to weaken its position. I do not mean it should not talk, but if it talks, it should talk from a position of strength. The position of strength that the State Government has is that the legislation is already in place. The arrangements, both legislative and administrative, are already in place. The moment the State moves from that position, two things will happen. Firstly, our position will be weakened, and, secondly, a loophole will be provided—this has happened—for the Commonwealth to move in.

The Minister for Minerals and Energy gave an address to a mining group, a transcript of which was published on 12 April, some days after the answer to which I referred. He made the situation quite clear as follows—

> The WA Labor Government expressed considerable hostility towards the Resource Rent Tax, particularly the possibility that it could gravely delay State receipts from projects like the North-West Shelf.

This is 12 April. It continues—

> Mr Parker warned that the tax, as the proposals stand, could defer income from the Shelf into the next century.
>
> He said that among the "considerable reservations" that the WA Labor Government had about RRT was the concern that royalties would be deferred and might vary widely.
>
> The State's ability to fund "essential public sector commitments" arising from resource developments would be compromised . . .

He then quoted an example, quite precisely, when he said—

> Mr Parker cited the example of the North-West Shelf, where, depending on the threshold rate—

Those are the figures to which I have already referred and there has been discussion about the level at which it applies. The quotation continued—

> —adopted in the tax calculations, revenue could be deferred for nearly 20 years.

A comment at the end of the article was as follows—

> His message—delivered to a mining audience—seemed to be that he didn't trust a Federal Labor Government any more than a Liberal one and that WA for one, would be opposing RRT.

There is a hell of a lot of truth in that comment. We learned under considerable difficulty—we were chided in this House—that we had problems with the then Federal Government which was supposed to be our political colleague. However, we now have a situation where the present State Labor Government, through the Minister for

Minerals and Energy, has publicly said that it does not trust the Federal Labor Government any more than it would trust a Federal Liberal Government. As far as this State is concerned, how right the Minister is, but it seems he has come to the realisation too late and unfortunately we are in a position where the present Government must move with considerable speed and publicity in the interests of the people of Western Australia.

Certainly, the industries concerned should have been excluded from thinking this Government knew nothing about this resources rent tax. We now know that the Government has been doing some work and making comments behind the scenes and it has put its faith in a man who cannot be trusted. I am not saying he cannot be trusted; I am quoting the Minister for Minerals and Energy who said that his Federal colleague cannot be trusted because he has not played along the lines he said he would and has not entered into discussions, as he said he would. He has forced the Minister in this Parliament to publicly chastise Senator Walsh. He has made it clear in a public statement that he cannot trust the Federal Government. With a situation such as that, what hope has the industry in this State?

Mr Bertram: He did not say the Federal Government; he said the Minister.

Mr PETER JONES: I will repeat what he said, as follows—

> His message—delivered to a mining audience—seemed to be that he didn't trust a Federal Labor Government any more than a Liberal one and that WA for one, would be opposing RRT.

I am agreeing with him because the general thread of everything I have said is that despite the well-known and well-publicised policy of the socialist Labor Government in Canberra before the election, we clearly knew what it would do. After the election of the Hawke Government and the statements made by Senator Walsh about what he would do, this Government was lulled into a sense of false security.

In March last year, the Minister said that we would not have a resources rent tax in this State, and nothing happened. The Government was lulled into a false sense of security by a remote and arrogant socialist Government that even this Minister knows cannot be trusted—he has publicly said so.

That is the situation with which we are faced. I say "we" because collectively and based on public comments that have been made by the Minister and the concern that has been expressed, there is no division whatsoever between the two sides of this Parliament regarding the effect the resources rent tax will have on Western Australia. The Minister, on behalf of his Government, has said the Government is opposed to the tax, and the Opposition is certainly opposed to it.

The point is that the Government has been elected to govern in the interests of all Western Australians. The Western Australian exploration industry, from which benefits flow to all Western Australians, has been sold down the drain by incompetence, complacency, and apathy, and also because it trusted the present Federal Government and that trust, as the Minister for Minerals and Energy has publicly indicated, has been misplaced. We now have to rescue something from the mess.

I might add, by way of advice, that I came across some evidence that Senator Walsh had given to the Industries Assistance Commission hearing in 1977. It has nothing to do with the resources rent tax, but it is something of which the Government might take note. The evidence reads as follows—

> Exemption from that amendment provides us with an inefficient and inequitable form of assistance.

I hope that members like the Minister for Transport and the member for Kalgoorlie might ponder that information.

Mr Grill: Why is it that you Liberals raise this spectre?

Mr PETER JONES: The spectre of a resources rent tax has been around for some time. It was clearly embraced by the Labor Government at a Federal level. I am not talking about the State Labor Party, but in the Federal arena it has been around for some time and the policy was formalised and confirmed.

Mr Grill: For some short time it was a policy embraced by your party at a Federal level.

Mr PETER JONES: I will come to that issue in a moment. The point I am trying to make is that it was known and the policy was formalised in 1982. What I am signalling now is that that policy has been the spectre as far as Senator Walsh is concerned.

Mr I. F. Taylor interjected.

Mr PETER JONES: I cannot answer for what he said. I am quoting from what Senator Walsh said and I have not seen any other Labor Party raise that spectre, nor has any voted against it. However, Senator Walsh is in a position to influence the public because he said—

Exemption from that amendment provides us with an inefficient and inequitable form of assistance.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Now finish what the then Minister for Mines in this State had to say.

Mr PETER JONES: In 1977?

Mr I. F. Taylor: No, I thought you were talking about earlier this year.

Mr PETER JONES: I said that it was Senator Walsh's evidence to the Industries Assistance Commission which considered this matter. I am trying to point out that this is the situation which prevails, and the same thing will occur as far as gold is concerned.

Mr I. F. Taylor: He who never changes his opinion never changes his mistakes.

Mr PETER JONES: I hope he changes his opinion on this subject.

Mr I. F. Taylor: I hope so, too.

Mr PETER JONES: Both the Government and the Opposition should make sure that this change does not occur. With reference to what Senator Walsh has said, from time to time the Premier has made a comment which I am unable to quote word for word. It was reported in *The West Australian* on 31 March this year—it was an interesting situation because Senator Walsh came out and chided the Premier because he was concerned at some comments the Premier was reported to have made in a speech in New York. The Premier was referring to the proposed resources rent tax and he said—

> ...the Federal Labor Government now embraced the concept of a resources rent tax with much less joy than when it was in opposition.

In other words, the Premier was saying that the Government had looked at what it had proposed when in Opposition and the situation did not appear as rosy now. The Premier is quoted as having made that point. He is also quoted as having expressed doubts about the tax being introduced on 1 July this year. However, we now know that it will be introduced. When asked about this comment in Perth, the Premier said—

> ...the Government would have to look closely at the possible impact of any resources tax on exploration programmes—

He then went on to say—

> —but was generally in favour of a resources rent tax to replace all other imposts on resources without actually raising the net level of taxation. He said the Government would be wary of any tax that resulted in a net increase in taxation. Any tax that sought to replace a State tax without reimbursement would worry the Government.

I do not know whether that is a correct report of what the Premier said, but it appeared in *The West Australian* on 31 March, about 18 days ago.

The Premier was reported as saying, at a businessmen's lunch in New York, that he did not like the resources development tax. The Premier was reported as saying that he did not think the Federal Government embraces it as lovingly as it did when it was in Opposition and he did not think the tax would be imposed on 1 July. However, the Premier comes back to Perth and is quoted as saying—

> that the Government would have to look closely at the possible impact of any resources tax on exploration programmes but was generally in favour of a resources rent tax to replace all other imposts on resources without actually raising the net level of taxation. He said the Government would be wary of any tax that resulted in a net increase in taxation. Any tax that sought to replace a State tax without reimbursement would worry the Government.

In fairness to the Premier, I must say that I am sure he was not fully briefed on what was involved. It is not fair to quote from a report of what he said, and I am sure that I was given a far more detailed answer to a question I asked in this Parliament. The Minister for Minerals and Energy supplied that answer and from his public comments it is quite obvious that the Premier is not *au fait* with what the Minister was doing. Notwithstanding that, the Premier made what seemed to me to be a monumental statement; that is, that he felt the Federal Government did not embrace this as lovingly as it did when in Opposition. How wrong that statement has been proved to be.

This motion is trying to rescue a situation. As I have already indicated, we are in a position where the Government has been too trusting and it has not been fully aware of the ruthless determination of advisers and those who are now pulling the strings, with some of the Ministers in Canberra, particularly Senator Walsh, because regardless of the protestations made and the undertakings given we have a situation where a wedge is being driven in. On 1 July this year the wedge goes into certain areas which have been identified geographically. They are areas where the Commonwealth can star without causing a great deal of unrest among the States. It knows all the States are opposed.

Mr Speaker, with your long experience in public life, you would be aware that once this situation starts it will not stop.

The Minister for Transport referred to the policy of the Liberal Party. As I understand it, and I have pursued it somewhat, there was a flirting association with the concept of a resources rent tax some years ago. However, it was discarded.

I know I am reflecting the concern of my colleagues on this side of the House about the comments made by the Federal Opposition shadow Minister for Resources and Energy in his speech to the Australian petroleum exploration industry in Hobart little more than a week ago. On that occasion, he did not make the clear commitment that when in Government the Opposition would remove the resources rent tax if it were in place. Indeed that has also been publicised and I draw attention to it. I quote from an article in *The Australian Financial Review* on 12 April which read as follows—

> However it was a very cautious Opposition spokesman—

That is, Senator Chaney. To continue—

> —who told delegates that although the Liberal Party opposed the introduction of RRT, particularly in its present reduced form, it would not necessarily abandon that tax system if it was in place when the party regained power.

On behalf of my colleagues on this side of the House and those in industry who have expressed concern, I hope the Federal Opposition rethinks its position as far as this matter is concerned. We find it is no position whatsoever to come out and say that the Opposition is opposed to the tax, it does not want it and does not like it, but when we come back into Government, if the tax is in place we might then like it and will not necessarily undertake to get rid of it. We shall be seeking the commitment from the Federal Opposition—and I know the coalition Oppositions in other States will be doing the same—that, just as the Labor Parties and Governments in the States are opposing their Federal colleagues on the introduction of this tax, the kind of airy-fairy statement made in Hobart is changed to a clear statement that the tax will be removed by the Opposition if it is in place when it comes to Government. There is no future for energy exploration and development industries in this country with such a tax; and the ongoing resource development industries in general will be affected by this kind of airy-fairy nonsense. In the past industry has been critical of Federal Governments changing the rules every now and again on the questions of appreciation, investment, FIRB, and such matters. We saw what happened to the exploration industry following the Whitlam years of turning it downhill and turning the tap off. It is a very basic, important, economic question of belief. It is not a matter of some political promise; it is a matter of fundamental belief. It is a question of whether the States have the constitutional, legislative, and administrative responsibility to collect resources revenue. In saying that, I am not forgetting the argument about the constitutional position offshore which has been addressed by this Parliament on two or three occasions in comparatively recent years, with complementary legislation and one agreement Act.

As a result of joint arrangements between Commonwealth and State the position has been defined clearly. The present Government has belatedly acknowledged the present situation and yet the Minister is saying he does not want, and the State will not allow, not only the constitutional but also the administrative arrangements. His Federal colleague has walked right over him, this Government, and other Labor State Governments by proceeding down this path and putting the tip of the wedge into what is clearly an area in which it has no right to be.

From statements publicly made during the last seven or eight days by the Minister responsible for this area, it appears that the Government is now well aware of the mess we all are collectively in. I give credit to the Government for becoming aware and it should now try to rescue the position. I shall be interested to see, however belatedly—the political aspects are now behind us—the effect on industry. The flow-on effect is still to come; but whatever time has been lost the Government should now make up. The Minister has made it publicly clear, and I have supported him publicly, that he has been let down, and that the Government is in the position of having to fight for itself. There is no division between the two sides of this House regarding the seriousness of the situation and our combined and united opposition to the resources rent tax proposal.

We are seeking to make certain that the Government knows it has failed to defend strongly the best interests of all Western Australians. It has not supported the exploration and development industries in this State by coming out strongly on their side. Sufficient publicity has been given to this subject, and enough submissions have been made to the Government.

Referring to part (3) of my motion, the Government must now get its act together; there are signs that it is doing so. It must act as quickly as it can and it must be seen by industry and the

public to be doing everything it can to protect the future. It is not today or, indeed, next year that the effects of this tax will be felt because of the way Senator Walsh is trying to introduce it into geographic areas which will not affect, for example, the North-West Shelf. However, a long-term commitment has been made to a resources rent tax on all resources. The revenue will be collected centrally in Canberra and handed out. On that basis there is no future for Western Australia or for any other State of the Commonwealth. The Government should be seen to be fighting for the exploration and development industries and the jobs of the people involved in those industries.

I commend the motion to the House.

MR MacKINNON (Murdoch—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [9.10 p.m.]: I rise to formally second the motion and speak in support of it.

The State Government has been particularly reticent and restrained in its approach to the resources rent tax which we believe to be a very important issue. The member for Narrogin has indicated many of our concerns clearly. He has also indicated that we in the Opposition parties for some time have been warning the Government about the implications of resources rent tax. Our concern has been justified by this evening's announcement of the decisions by Senator Walsh and the Federal Government in this area. We see another tax, more confusion; and concern in this area has been heightened and highlighted.

My concerns about this tax are in four areas: Firstly, it is a trend towards centralism; secondly, it is creating uncertainty and doubt among those in the industry; thirdly, it is having, and will undoubtedly have, a significant impact on exploration in Western Australia and Australia; and, finally, the impact of those three areas will have an irrevocable and damaging impact on the everyday man in the street—you, Mr Speaker, and me.

Apparently these concerns are not shared by the Government, or have not been until recently. Its attitude seems to have been, and I quote from a statement by one of its Ministers in answer to a question in the Parliament, that, "There is a case for a resources rental tax".

It seems that only just recently the Premier and his Minister have come to share the views we have had for a long time in relation to this question. They have placed their faith in Senator Walsh while we have had our doubts. These doubts have now been clearly expressed by the content of the Senator's decision. In support of my views, I refer to an answer given by the Minister for Mines in reply to a question from the member for Narrogin in August 1983 as follows—

> The Commonwealth Minister, Senator Walsh, has said that in any event a resource rent tax should be seen as a replacement tax;

A "replacement tax"! You, Mr Speaker, and I know that it is a new tax particularly on new oil. He went on to say—

> . . . it could be administered and collected by individual States and would not be an additional tax on producers already subject to heavy imposts. It was not intended that such a tax should pre-empt State revenues.

The then Minister, Mr Dowding, was indicating his great faith in Senator Walsh. I am ashamed that the Senator is a Western Australian.

The question to examine firstly is whether there is a case for a resources rental tax. Why is the Government considering imposing such a tax which will have such detrimental effects? The second point is whether faith should have been placed in Senator Walsh? Did the Government have any reason to justify that faith? Of course, we on this side of the House believe, and have continually said, that there is no case for a resources rental tax. As the then Minister, Mr Dowding, indicated in August 1983, it is an additional tax on producers already subject to heavy imposts.

The tax does not provide any incentive to the industry, which certainly does not need any further burdens. It is clearly designed to bring in more revenue from the Fortescue and Jabiru fields that have been discovered recently, because the Government feels that it is not getting a big enough slice of the cake. There is no demonstration of the significant advantages that will arise from the tax, because there are no advantages. In fact, the "advantages" are all on the down side.

The current system has no problems. In fact, I recently discussed this question with a leading businessman in the oil industry, and I quote from a letter he wrote to me in which he said—

> The current excise system is a known quantity and well understood and has proven satisfactory in terms of simplicity and stability. At a time when government should be attempting to maximise exploration in Australia, it is about to introduce a new taxation system that is at the moment not completely understood, certainly unproven in terms of workability and decidedly disadvantageous in terms of providing less than commercially acceptable rewards and benefits in return for those accepting high risk.

That indicates clearly—in fact, it puts it better than I could—that there is no justifiable case for a resources rental tax.

If that is not enough evidence, I am not aware of any country currently producing oil and gas that has such a tax in place. Surely that in itself should have rung alarm bells when it was first proposed within the party forums and platforms. Now it is proposed by Senator Walsh, and it is being put into effect.

Should we have put our faith in Senator Walsh? It certainly appears not. We heard my colleague, the member for Narrogin, outlining the undertakings Senator Walsh gave previously. In answer to a question last August, we heard how the undertakings given by Senator Walsh to Mr Peter Dowding have been reneged on. What faith can we have in a Minister who makes an announcement today, 18 April, about details that have not been finally worked out? He gives the industry three weeks to make a decision on two proposals—in other words, the devil or the deep blue sea—and the devil or the deep blue sea will be imposed upon the industry by 1 July. Just as the imposition of the financial institutions duty caused chaos among financial institutions in this State, so the resources rent tax will cause confusion in the industry when it is rushed into place in such a manner on 1 July.

I indicated that my concerns fell into four areas: The trend to centralistic processes that the current Federal Government is in the process of implementing; the uncertainty it is breeding in the industry; the effect it is having on exploration; and its impact eventually on the man in the street. I will deal firstly with the trend to centralism.

I am concerned that decisions that were being made by Western Australians about Western Australian industry will now be made by people in Canberra who, traditionally, have very little understanding or idea about the direction in which Western Australia should be heading. Canberra is not the place in which those decisions should be made, and we should resist a resources rental tax for this reason, if no other.

I refer to the editorial in *The Australian* on Monday, 28 March 1983. The editorial writer clearly saw what was behind the resources rental tax, and at the conclusion of his editorial the following appears—

> Senator Walsh's proposals would not have purely economic consequences. They follow an accelerating tendency to take decision making from the grass roots and transfer it to Canberra. It is to be hoped that in the coming debate Australians will not lose sight of this fundamental issue.

Never for one moment did we lose sight of that fundamental issue.

It appears that the Federal Government, given much strength to its arm by the Tasmanian dams decision, is hell-bent on achieving even greater power and control in Canberra. It is clear that the resources rental tax will be but the first step along that road. Of course, the next step will be the establishment of the Federal Government's hydrocarbons corporation.

Uncertainty? Is all of this debate about a resources rental tax causing uncertainty? There is no doubt that it is. Anyone with contact with people in the industry knows that that is the case. We have Walsh talking about a new tax, the details of which nobody knows, and in the next breath he is trying to encourage the same people to go out and take inordinately high risks with their investment funds, not even knowing, at the end of the day, what will be the return on the investment if they discover oil, and what taxation liability they will face.

Members would know that in some cases it costs upwards of $A20 million to drill one offshore oil well. If the people who are to invest that sort of money are not sure what tax they will pay at the end of the day, how can they be encouraged to undertake such an investment? They cannot be. It is unfair to assume that they should know the rules of the game before they start when the new tax could be imposed on top of others already being imposed. It is not as if the industry is not already being taxed. These people are facing all of the charges faced by any other industry in Australia, so in this instance they are facing a supertax above what others are paying.

Will it have an impact on exploration? This is the main point of concern to us all. The effect must be one of discouraging exploration. It is illogical to assume that the Government can impose a brand new tax on an industry and expect it to have no effect or to provide no disincentive in the industry. This new tax will do just that.

Members would be aware that the oil exploration industry, like no other industry in the world, is international in its nature. The money flows where the action is, so to speak. Companies from all around the world are free to spend their money wherever they think the opportunity best arises.

Exploration companies abroad, particularly in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, are talking about rationalisation. Of course, they are facing cost pressures like us all. They will

go where they see the best opportunity to find the oil, and once they find it, to make a reasonable profit. We must consider the prospectivity of finding oil in Australia. If members refer to a chart recently put out by Esso Australia Ltd. Exploration, they will see that Australia ranks very lowly in the international oil exploration field for prospectivity. I quote from that as follows—

> The Australian exploration industry's sensitivity to low prospectivity is compounded by our high cost structure which reflects the remoteness of most operations, high wage structures and union constraints. In 1981, Australia's marine seismic costs were 70 per cent above the world average, onshore drilling costs 60 per cent above those in the USA, and offshore drilling was almost three times as expensive as in the USA.

When we consider all of those factors, and particularly prospectivity, we find that we rank very lowly on the international scale. If we are trying to encourage exploration, we should not be trying to put another barrier in the way of the explorers in carrying out their activities. We should not try to take more taxation when they make discoveries. We should try to encouage reinvestment in this country.

When considering a further chart in the document, there is also great cause for concern that little seismic activity is being concluded. There has been a dramatic decline over the last 18 months in seismic shots throughout Australia. That means that almost inexorably drilling activity will follow that line, when compared with past activities since 1970.

At the moment, the Federal Government should not be taking more tax from an industry that almost certainly will face a decline in the immediate future. It should be trying to do something about reversing the trend, and perhaps giving tax incentives for companies around Australia to make more seismic shots and, in due course, undertake more drilling activity. The companies should find out more about the potential below the ground, and the Government should give them the encouragement to undertake drilling.

What will be the impact of all this on the man in the street? It might not be seen to be very severe, but it will certainly have an impact. As I have indicated already, the resources rental tax will mean a drop in exploration dollars. There will be a loss of the technical data that we would have gained as a result of drilling programmes.

Of course, there will be a loss of jobs, and we heard much about jobs from both the Federal Government and the State Government before they were elected. We hear a lot less about jobs these days; but we will see a significant loss of jobs in this most important area. The loss will not be experienced only in the industry; it will be felt in all other associated areas. The multiplier effect will take place, and there will be a multiplication of loss of jobs throughout the community, in areas associated with exploration activities.

In addition, the Government will lose. There will be a significant loss of Government revenue as a consequence of lost taxation. That will affect us all at the end of the day—not immediately, but not very far down the track. We will have a far greater dependence on imported oil and imported energy sources than we have today, and we would be much more at the beck and call of the international companies and countries with the resources.

These are all factors that the resources rental tax proposal will affect quite definitely, and our community will be the poorer.

What are the positive benefits to be gained from such a proposal? Are there any? On this side of the Parliament, we have continually said that there will be none. The resources rental tax will be nothing more than a greater impost upon that section of the industry in Australia at a time when we should be doing all we can to encourage an industry with great potential, not only to provide great assets for our country, but also many jobs.

We urge the Government to consider carefully its position on this matter. We urge it to come out vocally in total opposition to the Federal Government's proposal. Most importantly, as a demonstration of its attitude, we urge the Government to support the motion so well drafted and moved by the member for Narrogin.

MR GRILL (Esperance-Dundas—Minister for Transport) [9.30 p.m.]: Quite naturally and quite properly, the Government rejects the thrust of this motion where it is critical of the Government. The facts are that the Government—and in particular those Ministers who have been involved with this subject—has performed exceptionally well in fostering the State's case and in defending the State's position.

Mr MacKinnon: Without any impact at all.

Mr GRILL: I will enlarge on that point later.

Not only should this Government be proud, but also the whole of the Parliament should be proud of the way the Ministers have performed, of the results they have achieved so far, and no doubt of the results they will achieve in future.

Firstly, it might be appropriate for me to indicate the Government's position on the substantive matter being debated; namely, a resources rent tax.

The Western Australian Government is not opposed in principle to a resources rent tax. However, the Government is opposed to such a tax if it detracts from or reduces returns from present State royalty payments, if it means that State taxes and related charges must be levied at increased rates to maintain the present level of royalty returns, or—and this is most important—if it imposes an increased or unrealistic tax burden on Western Australian and Australian resource developers.

One or two things need to be borne in mind, and I think the Opposition members should have borne these in mind more effectively when they spoke. A clear distinction must be drawn between offshore petroleum exploration and development, and onshore development.

In respect of offshore development, the Commonwealth has a clear constitutional duty and power. This has been settled by the High Court and I do not see that there can be any doubt about it.

Onshore, the situation is different. There is a shared responsibility in respect of royalties, and that also is acknowledged. The resources rent tax does not apply to onshore development. That in itself represents a major concession by the Federal Government, and a large part of that concession was brought about by the representations made by this Government.

Clearly, from the statements made by the two Opposition speakers so far, and if the reports on television this evening are to be believed, this tax is not the great bogey the Opposition and some of the oil companies have endeavoured to make out. I stress that it is a tax that, if developed in the right way, can be quite beneficial to Western Australians and Australians generally.

The two Opposition speakers, especially the member for Narrogin, spoke at length in relation to certain historic matters concerning the resources rent tax. I certainly do not want to go to that length about the history of the matter, nor do I want to give the sort of diatribe the member for Narrogin went on with about the Australian Labor Party's involvement in the matter. I want to make a couple of statements to set out the present picture.

Presently two types of taxes are imposed on oil and petroleum within Australia. The first is a royalty imposed by the Federal Government on offshore developments. That is between 10 per cent and 12.5 per cent. The second is a levy on old oil—oil discovered prior to September 1975. That is a progressive levy. It starts off at a very low level indeed, almost nil, on small fields, and on medium and large fields it goes right up to a marginal rate of levy of 87 per cent. On top of that the various State Governments have their charges.

The oil levy imposed in Australia today is a centralised tax, and some of the codswallop I have heard tonight is just unbelievable. The present levy was first imposed by a Government of the same ilk as the present Opposition. It was a centralised tax and it was imposed centrally. In round terms, the revenue that comes from that levy and the other royalties in association with that is about $3 500 million per annum. It ranks as only the second or third-largest single source of taxable revenue to the Federal Government. The problem is that it is a self-destructing tax inasmuch as the levy is imposed on old oil. Some of the new fields coming into existence—for instance, the Fortescue field in Bass Strait and the Jabiru field to the north of the State—would be exempt under that levy. I suggest to Opposition members that it would be foolish in the extreme for them to dismiss the proposition that we should collect some form of royalty, some form of taxation on production from those fields and other big offshore fields that may be found along the Australian coast.

This involves certain problems. To defend the present levy system—which the Opposition does by implication—is to ignore those problems. The first of those problems is that the levy is counterproductive inasmuch as it works against the development of small and marginal pools of oil. It is wasteful, and it is not in the best interests of Australians generally to leave small or marginal pools of oil in the ground or to partially develop fields and leave further oil trapped underground which cannot be used. That is not in the best interests of Australia. As such, it is prudent for us to look at another form of tax.

While we do not necessarily embrace the resources rent tax in the form that was first put forward, or necessarily in the form that is put forward today, we do feel that in principle it needs to be looked at and, if adapted properly, it should be embraced.

The other problem with the levy system is that it taxes successful fields and does not allow any deduction to be made by explorers in respect of wells and fields that are developed but are not successful.

The present levy system has these two major drawbacks apart from the overwhelming draw-

back in that it allows for declining taxes. It is a very important tax, but it is a declining one nonetheless. Whichever way we go it is necessary to look at some form of fair and reasonable taxation on the new discoveries of oil.

The resources rent tax put forward today by the Federal Government comes closer to fulfilling the needs of Western Australians and Australians than does the levy system. The people who have studied the proposals put forward today by the Federal Government will understand that the proposed resources rent tax has a much lower rate of tax than envisaged some months ago. Those people would also understand that the rate of return on capital prior to application of the resources rent tax is much higher than first envisaged, and that there is a guaranteed return on capital to any explorer or developer prior to the coming into operation of the resources rent tax.

Two options are set out under the arrangements announced today by the Federal Government. I will not go into detail, because they have been mentioned in passing by the member for Narrogin. I agree with him that they involve technical matters which do not need to be canvassed here to any great extent. The oil industry is to be given a choice of the form of taxation which it may think is the most beneficial to its operations. But let me deal now with the motion itself.

The first point in the motion seeks to criticise the State Government for its failure to strongly defend the best interests of Western Australians by imposing such a tax. In that respect I would like to enlarge on the fact that this Government has every reason to be proud of the way its past and present Ministers for Mines and Fuel and Energy have dealt with this problem.

The Ministers have dealt with our Federal counterparts in a very vocal and effective way in putting forward the State's arguments, not in a strident manner but in a concise and consistent workmanlike manner, so that it is now considered by most people that this State Government has done immeasurably more than any other Government to modify the initial proposals for a resources rent tax. I repeat that this Government, through representations made by its Ministers and through representations made by their departmental officers in discussions with Federal departmental officers, has done immeasurably more than any other Government to modify the Commonwealth stance in relation to this form of tax. The Government may not have been as strident or as belligerent as some other Governments, but it has been far more effective. It has kept up continuous contact with the Federal Government; the Ministers have had a continuing dialogue with the Federal Minister for Resources and Energy; and the departmental officers have had a continuing dialogue with that Minister's staff.

It is very demeaning of the Opposition to endeavour to criticise the efforts of these Ministers. It is very demeaning of the Opposition to endeavour to criticise the very successful efforts made by the departmental officers operating at the State and Federal level.

To outline what has been achieved in Western Australia, I will deal with the dialogue I have just mentioned. The first is that the Commonwealth has dropped plans for the resources rent tax on onshore petroleum developments. That means it has dropped all proposals to levy a Commonwealth tax where the State Government owns the resources.

Secondly, it has decided to exempt petroleum from within the three-mile limit. There is no constitutional obligation upon the Federal Government to make such an exemption, but it has done so at the behest of this Government. I might add that this Government was the only Government to make such a representation to the Federal Government. At the behest of this Government, the petroleum discoverers and developers within three nautical miles of the coast are exempt. That is very important for Western Australia, because that means that the important discoveries around Barrow Island are exempt from the resources tax.

Thirdly, and quite critical for Western Australia, the resources rent tax does not apply to the North-West Shelf. I know that the member for Narrogin endeavoured to throw cold water on this achievement, but this is a major achievement by this Government. It is one which I believe the Opposition should be applauding, not one to throw cold water on. It is a substantial and successful initiative.

The fourth initiative which has been proposed is for exploration subsidies to be granted as an initiative for exploration. As I mentioned previously, this is a defect in the present levying system.

To recap on part (1) of the motion, this Government has not only carried on a consistent and successful dialogue with our Commonwealth counterparts, but it has also, in a less strident way—

Mr MacKinnon: So successful that we have a resources rent tax.

Mr GRILL: They have been far less belligerent and far more effective than the previous Government, and that fact will be acknowledged by most people in the industry. If Opposition members are too small-minded to accept that point, so be it,

but they damn themselves in endeavouring to condemn the real achievements made by the Western Australian Government in this area.

Point (2) of the motion seeks to condemn the State Government for "its failure to have regard for the representations being made by the energy exploration industry in Western Australia against the introduction of such a damaging tax". Many exploration companies welcome a resources rent tax.

Mr MacKinnon: Which ones?

Mr GRILL: Many of the smaller companies.

Mr MacKinnon: Name one of them.

Mr GRILL: If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition knew anything about this area he would know that the thrust of criticism has been from two companies, Esso and BHP.

Mr MacKinnon: What about APEC?

Mr GRILL: At first they were vocal, but recently they have sat on the fence. At times they have vacillated.

Mr MacKinnon: It did not look like they were vacillating to me.

Mr GRILL: I believe they will endorse this resources rent tax.

Mr MacKinnon: You think they will endorse it?

Mr GRILL: I think time will tell. It seemed rather strange to me that this evening, on television, those elements—Esso and BHP—which were most vocal before in their criticism of the Goverment's proposed tax were now saying it is fair and reasonable.

It is no good for this Opposition to present the resources rent tax as some sort of bogey. However, in the way it has been presented today it does appear to be. However, it is not perfect. We would still like to see some changes to it, and with the success we have had in the past in convincing the Federal Government that its proposals need to be changed, I can see we shall have some future successes.

It is shaping up to be a reasonable tax which could be in the interests of not only Australians but also Western Australians, with some degree of certainty of fair returns, without putting off exploration. BHP and Esso are certainly not saying it will hamper exploration in any way.

Mr MacKinnon: Esso did say that.

Mr GRILL: I do not think they will say it now. They have said it in the past, but they have not said it today or tonight.

This is not a damaging tax; it will be far less damaging on small and marginal fields than the levy which was imposed. All of us who know something about this subject appreciate that the levy was damaging. We must applaud the fact that the exploration subsidies are being proposed, in one form or another, by the Federal Government with the introduction of this tax.

If the Opposition wanted to be constructive—which is not their wont these days, they tend to be nothing but whingeing, critical and whining—they would be talking about joining with the Government in convincing the Federal Government that these subsidies should be increased. That is an area in which we could work together, if the Opposition wished to be effective. The most damaging effect of this tax is the hysteria whipped up by some of the companies, Opposition members, and people of their ilk.

I will deal with the third point of the Opposition's motion in which "the Government is condemned for its failure to call upon the Government to actively and publicly oppose the introduction of this centralist taxation initiative which will have such a detrimental effect upon all Western Australians".

It is hypocritical in the extreme for this Opposition to talk about centralist taxation. Members of the Opposition sat by, with hardly a whimper, and allowed the Federal Government to introduce a levy system. That was a centralist tax if ever I have seen one, and there was hardly a whimper from the then Government members.

One of the facts to be acknowledged is whether the State has jurisdiction in respect of onshore fields. The present Opposition is endeavouring to be critical of the Government in respect of its representation to the Federal Government, but let me point out to members that when the present Opposition was in Government, as a result of an administrative or Government error with its negotiations with the Federal Government, it allowed this State's royalty system to be defrauded by something like $13 million a year in respect of the Barrow Island field. If any one of the Opposition members wishes to elucidate on that situation, we would be happy to hear from him. Because of the then Government's administrative errors, this State has lost $13 million per annum.

One of the better features of the resources rent tax is that the Commonwealth intends to share the proceeds of the tax with the States. It will depend on what sort of tax-sharing arrangements are made as to whether we will give our final imprimatur to this resources rent tax. If we can come to a fair tax-sharing arrangement with the Federal Government, in respect of the exploration

subsidy, then we are moving to a fair and acceptable tax for this State.

As it stands now, this tax is not acceptable to this State. If we can make the same improvements we have made in the past, we would be prepared to accept the resources rent tax. I indicate the Government's opposition to the motion moved by the member for Narrogin.

Amendment to Motion

I move an amendment—

Delete all words after the word "House" in line 1, with a view to substituting the following—

> Believes that any changes to Commonwealth and State imposts on the mining industry need to be considered carefully before their implementation to ensure that the position of the States is not disadvantaged and that exploration is not discouraged.
>
> Further, in the light of the announcement by the Commonwealth that a resources rental tax is to be introduced, this House calls on the Government to continue negotiations with the Commonwealth to ensure Western Australia is not disadvantaged.

Mr Laurance: The ghost of R. F. X. O'Connor.

Mr GRILL: If the member knew anything about this tax and had listened to the debate, he would not be saying ridiculous things like that.

The SPEAKER: Order!

MR TRETHOWAN (East Melville) [10.01 p.m.]: The Opposition opposes this amendment for the same reason we moved the original motion. There is a very clear difference between the attitude of the Government and that of the Opposition on this point; that is, we oppose the implementation of a resources rent tax absolutely. We do not believe it is an appropriate and economically sound or advantageous form of raising revenue when the long-term implications are considered.

Mr Grill: What do you want to do instead?

Mr TRETHOWAN: I will come to that aspect, because the Minister failed to grasp the whole argument regarding the implementation of the levy. He completely overlooked the reason the levy was introduced. He seeks to replace it. There is a clear distinction between the Government and the Opposition on this point. We see any introduction of this tax in no matter how small an area of the industry as the beginning of its implementation throughout the industry. The Minister kept saying a resources rental tax has not been imposed on onshore oil exploration, only on offshore oil exploration and not on the fields around Barrow Island. I kept wanting to say that it has not been imposed yet. That is the difference between ourselves and the Government.

Mr Laurance: He is an apologist for Senator Walsh.

Mr TRETHOWAN: Exactly. It is the long-term stated policy to impose a resources rent tax throughout the whole industry. The effect would be disastrous.

Labor Governments appear not to understand certain matters relating to energy and oil. Oil is both an economic and a strategic product. It affects the country in terms of generating economic activity and wealth, and because it is a key to the whole operation of the industrial system in the country it is a strategic product; should supplies not be available it would have a very dramatic effect on the country's capability to defend itself. The key to our security as well as our economic health will be to maintain for this country a long-term ongoing supply of Australian crude.

That will not be achieved from existing discoveries and established fields. The Minister well knows that projections from the 1990s onwards show an increasing gap between Australian production and the level of demand. Unless new large fields come into production that increasing gap will have to be supplied by imported oil. That increases our economic dependence on the price of oil. It also increases our strategic risk in terms of the cessation of that supply. The implementation of a resources rent tax affects the long-term supply of oil within this country.

I do not believe the Government when it says that such a tax will not be a disincentive to exploration. All the people I have talked to in the industry are absolutely vehement that it will affect the risk evaluation that is an intimate part of petroleum exploration. Without that exploration no new supplies of oil and new fields will become available for exploitation. The key is the ratio between the number of holes that have to be drilled and the likelihood of success. In Australia even with the most expert geological surveys, 95 per cent of holes drilled are dry.

Of the five per cent that find oil half are not economic, another quarter do not recover the exploration costs and only 25 per cent have any hope of going into commercial production. That is, one and three quarter per cent—which is a pretty low margin—become commercially viable; it does not mean it is highly profitable.

The Government is seeking with this amendment to sidestep the real issue which relates to the effect that any major downturn in exploration will have on this State and its economy, and the nation. The Minister referred frequently to the implementation of the oil levy. The levy was imposed because of the international situation for petroleum products that pertained at the time. It was just after the OPEC crisis; the world oil market was in turmoil. Price rises on the international scene were occurring rapidly and the effect was widespread. The cost structure in all economies dependent on imported oil was thrown out of balance causing economic disruption.

The levy was imposed on existing fields to prevent windfall profits accruing to producers. It was imposed also to link the price of oil in this country to that which approached the price of oil on the international market at the time. This was done to ensure an economic motivation existed for people to use petroleum products more efficiently and to plan their more efficient use in the long term, and safeguard our limited resources. If that had not been done those resources would have been used very rapidly because they were the cheapest form of energy. If the Minister does not like that argument and believes that situation should not have occurred, let him say so.

Mr Grill: You heard my criticism of the levy, now answer it.

Mr TRETHOWAN: I have just done so. I said it was done in the national interest to maintain Australian oil resources at a relatively constant rate and to improve the efficient use of petroleum products by raising the internal cost of oil to a price which approached that of imported oil.

Mr Grill: I said two things: The first was that it is a centralised tax and I do not think you can deny that.

Mr TRETHOWAN: I do not deny that.

Mr Grill: Secondly, I said it was not the most efficient way of bringing about the things you mentioned.

Mr TRETHOWAN: I totally disagree because it was a time of crisis throughout the western industrialised world from which we may still be recovering.

The other point made by the Minister was that he believed the resources rent tax was the appropriate tax to replace the levy. The levy should not be repleaced because the reason it was introduced is now no longer a major factor. The price of international oil has stabilised and in most cases there is an oversupply on the world market.

Mr Grill: I did not say that. The levy is not being replaced in respect of most of the existing fields. You should appreciate that fact.

Mr TRETHOWAN: The Minister said at one stage that it was more appropriate to replace the oil levy with this form of taxation. I do not say that I like the levy as a form of taxation. It was necessary and responsible when it was introduced because oil is both an economic and a strategic commodity. However, no justification exists for imposing a different form of tax on the industry at present. There is no justification for saying we will replace that form of taxation with another which is less onerous because the circumstances do not apply. There is no justification for a disincentive on petroleum exploration; the stabilising of world prices means less incentive exists to explore because the risks are high.

We still know, because of our long-term consumption and increased supply of Australian crude, we are assured of both our long-term economic position as well as our strategic position in respect of that commodity. Any inhibition on exploration for oil and on finding new fields may become apparent in the year 2000 when we become a significant importing country as far as petroleum products are concerned.

This puts us at the same disadvantage as other countries, such as Japan at the present time, and the Minister will be aware of what happened recently to the international price of gold when the Iranians made an attempt to close the Gulf. He will be well aware what that does to Japan and to the United States economically.

Mr I. F. Taylor: It was good for Kalgoorlie.

Mr TRETHOWAN: There are always some silver linings for every dark cloud, but for the world it becomes serious. We were less affected in Australia because we have a relatively large Australian reserve in relation to our current needs, but in 10 or 15 years' time, if new fields are not brought in, that will not be the case. It is not only for the benefit of Western Australia that a resources rent tax should not be imposed, but it is also for the benefit of the whole country. It has been said on behalf of some companies that this will be a disincentive to exploration. It is an expression of a realistic appraisal of the whole industry.

It is not appropriate that this House accept a watered down apology for opposition to resource rent taxation, and that is what the Government's amendment amounts to. It is not appropriate for this House to agree with the Government, although the thin end of the wedge has come in

now; one section of the industry has been preserved from the rest.

The point I made earlier is, preserved for how long? It might not yet apply to land-based oil exploration, but the policy is that it will be spread. That is a policy commitment, on my understanding. It does not apply at the present time. If it had not been for a unified approach from all the States throughout Australia, it probably would not be there.

Mr Grill: My understanding is that the most effective approach was that taken by the Western Australian Government. I was not involved in it, but I understand from the Press and from the Government departments and people in the industry that they appreciated the less strident approach taken by this Government rather than the more belligerent approach taken by the Governments of the Eastern States.

Mr TRETHOWAN: If Victoria had not had the Bass Strait field under its jurisdiction with a very large number of Federal seats in the lower House upon which the fate of the Government could be determined, how much would the interests of Western Australia in the North-West Shelf have been respected? When Rex Connor was the Federal Minister he paid no regard to the needs of this State, although the Minister says he understands it was just handled from the State's point of view. Those concessions would not have been won if it had not been for the large interests in the industry in the Bass Strait which did the fighting. I am not convinced by the Minister's argument. I believe that the amendment should be rejected. I believe that the original motion was most appropriate for all the points I have outlined.

Mr Grill: Is the member for East Melville going to tell us what he or his Government would be advising the Federal Government to do in respect of taxing new offshore fields of oil and what form of taxation he would introduce in respect of those? He has been very negative tonight.

Mr TRETHOWAN: I have been negative because what resources taxation does is to break new ground in the sense that it is a profit-orientated tax rather than a production-orientated tax. Royalties have been charged on production in the past. The Opposition opposes this measure because of the effects it will have. Industry says it will have a negative effect on exploration. A negative effect on exploration will result in a negative effect on discovery, and that will mean a decrease in the offshore area. Finding those new fields is the only way to assure our economic, long-term strategic security. The Federal Government is moving in the wrong direction. The Opposition has outlined the breadth to which this new tax will be imposed. It is only a question of how long it will be before it is spread much wider. It is wrong for us to accept in this House the version of the amendment that the Minister has moved. I believe it should be opposed.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Mensaros.

House adjourned at 10.20 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

2681. *This question was further postponed.*

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Community Employment Programme: Australian Psychiatric Nurses Association

2881. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Health:

(1) Could he please give details about the ways the $28 444 community employment programme fund to the Western Australian Psychiatric Nurses Association earmarked for "industrial democracy search and implementation" is to be utilised?

(2) How much time will the project take?

(3) How many presently unemployed people will be employed and for what period of time?

Mr HODGE replied:

(1) to (3) This question should be referred to the Minister representing the Minister for Employment.

2928. *This question was further postponed.*

HEALTH: TRONADO MACHINE

Treatment: Cost

2949. Mr CRANE, to the Minister for Health:

(1) Did he, in answering my question on the Tronado machine on Tuesday, 3 April, misinform Parliament, since information received from the administration section of Medicare denies any such measures are to be taken, and patients will still only receive payment for one consultation per day?

(2) As this clearly shows that Medicare is a disadvantage to patients receiving treatment by the VHF (Tronado), machine, despite political propaganda on the virtues of Medicare, can he ensure that the patients receive fair reimbursement for the treatment they receive, as was the case when privately covered?

(3) In view of the obvious demand for the use of this machine, will he arrange for the second Tronado machine presently situated at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, to be immediately up-dated and brought into service as it should have been years ago?

(4) As Medicare is only covering this one consultation fee a day, would it be possible to allow the private health insurance schemes to cover this treatment, as was the case in previous years?

(5) If not, why not.

Mr HODGE replied:

(1) and (2) I did not misinform Parliament. I table a copy of a letter I received from the Commonwealth Department of Health, and in my answer on Tuesday, 3 April 1984 I quoted directly from the letter.

(3) The previous Government, of which the member was a part, was unable to order the reinstatement of Tronado treatment because the Hospitals Act forbids a Minister from ordering treatment. I am similarly bound by the provisions of the Act.

(4) and (5) The member must know, as well as I do, that all questions relating to Medicare and private health insurance schemes are matters for the Commonwealth Government and not the State Government.

The letter was tabled (see paper No. 722).

HEALTH: DENTAL

Subsidy Scheme: Delays

2965. Mr TUBBY, to the Minister for Health:

(1) Referring to the country patients dental subsidy scheme which provides assistance for treatment by private dental practitioners for disadvantaged people, is it a fact that dental treatment, other than emergency treatment, cannot take place until the expenditure is approved by the dental health services?

(2) Is it fact that delays of up to three months are being experienced in Geraldton?

(3) Is it also fact that this puts country patients at a considerable disadvantage compared with their city counterparts?

(4) Would he consider updating the scheduled fees to bring them into line with today's costs and consider change for the type of treatment for which a subsidy is available?

Mr HODGE replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) No. Similar waiting lists are being experienced in the metropolitan area.

(4) Officers of my department are currently negotiating with the Australian Dental Association to review the conditions of the scheme.

HEALTH: DENTAL

Subsidy Scheme: Statistics

2971. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Health:

(1) When did the dental health service dental subsidy scheme commence?

(3) What has been the yearly cost since 1975?

(3) What is the expected time taken for approval of emergency treatment?

(4) What is the anticipated time for approval to be granted to eligible patients seeking dental work, at other than a Government dental clinic?

Mr HODGE replied:

(1) 1969.

(2) 1975-76—$198 000
1976-77—$272 000
1977-78—$373 000
1978-79—$504 000
1979-80—$430 000
1980-81—$467 000
1981-82—$557 000
1982-83—$609 000
(Figures rounded to the nearest thousand dollars)

(3) All dentists participating in the scheme are aware of procedures which will enable emergency treatment to be undertaken without any delay.

(4) Approximately 3 months.

WATER RESOURCES

Dwellingup

2974. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Water Resources:

(1) Referring to his recent visit to Dwellingup to discuss the supply of water to the town and school ovals from local bores, have arrangements been completed for the supply of water to the town oval?

(2) (a) What is the present position;

(b) what conditions have been applied?

(3) Have arrangements been completed to enable the school to use a local bore?

(4) What is the present position?

Mr TONKIN replied:

(1) Arrangements have not been finalised for the supply of water to the town oval as this is dependent on whether the bore to be drilled by Alcoa is successful and on the outcome of investigations into the town's existing surface source.

(2) (a) The drilling of the bore by Alcoa commenced approximately a week ago but was stopped when the bore hole struck rock. It is understood that drilling of another bore is scheduled to start in about a week. In the meantime the town oval is being allowed to use 100 cubic metres per week from the town scheme.

(b) The condition applied to the bore is that the Public Works Department has the right to shut it down if the underground source is required for town water supply purposes. In this event, the department will agree to a maximum of 100 cubic metres per week being made available from the scheme at cost to the council while the scheme has the ability to supply that amount of water.

(3) No arrangements have been made to enable the school to use a local bore.

(4) The present position with supply to the school oval is that the interested parties are awaiting the outcome of the bore being drilled by Alcoa and of investigations by the Public Works Department into improving the existing surface source.

TOURISM

Tourists: Target Figure

2979. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Tourism:

(1) Has the WA Tourism Commission set targets for visitor numbers and spending that it is aiming to achieve in the future?

(2) If so, what are those objectives?

(3) If not, why not?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) and (3) Visitor and sales targets for 1984-85 are currently being set.

LAW REFORM COMMISSION

Inquiries: Preference

2988. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

What are the subject matters to which the Law Reform Commission in Western Australia is giving its highest preference for study in its reports?

Mr GRILL replied:

Justices Act: General Procedures (Project No. 55 Pt. II); Local Courts Acts and Rules (Project No. 16 Pt. 1); Privacy (Project No. 65).

WATER RESOURCES

Dam: Upper Helena River

2989. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

(1) What were the results of the feasibility study, reported to be mentioned to him, regarding building a dam on the Upper Helena River?

(2) At which location and what size dam would be built if needed?

(3) How much privately owned freehold land would be involved in the areas proposed to be flooded and in the catchment areas which would have to be under the Water Authority's sole control: in other words, land which would have to be resumed?

(4) How many owners would be involved?

Mr TONKIN replied:

(1) The study concluded that the construction of a dam would be feasible.

(2) The dam site is located on the Helena River approximately 13 kilometres upstream of Mundaring Weir.

The reservoir would store approximately 250 million cubic metres of water.

(3) No privately owned freehold land would be flooded by the reservoir.

There are about 7 700 hectares of privately owned freehold land within the catchment of this site which are also within the Mundaring Weir catchment. Because the site is within the Mundaring Weir catchment it is uncertain that the development of this site would create any requirement for resumption of catchment land.

(4) There are 12 landholders within the catchment.

3005 and 3006. *These questions were postponed.*

TRAFFIC

Lights: Cameras

3007. Mr I. F. TAYLOR, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

(1) In view of the publicly announced road safety success record of camera-guarded traffic light intersections, is it planned to expand the current scheme?

(2) As the aim is to prevent accidents by discouraging motorists from attempting to "run the lights", would he consider it appropriate that camera-guarded traffic light intersections be signposted to advise motorists that the cameras are so situated, thus allowing motorists to draw the conclusion that to "run the lights" will inevitably lead to prosecution?

Mr CARR replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No.

3008. *This question was postponed.*

PORT: MARINA

Bathers Bay: Dredging

3009. Mr P. J. SMITH, to the Minister for Transport:

(1) Has a decision been made to establish a marina in the Fremantle area between the South Mole and the fishing boat harbour known as Bathers Bay?

(2) If "Yes" to (1)—

(a) is it intended that dredging will take place within the proposed marina area;

(b) will any attempt be made to recover historical artefacts from the ocean floor in the vicinity of old jetties in the area;

(c) will attempts be made to protect the wreck of *Priestman's Dredge*, an historic shipwreck discovered in 1978?

Mr GRILL replied:

(1) No.

(2) (a) to (c) Not applicable.

3010 and 3011. *These questions were postponed.*

EDUCATION: TEACHERS

Wages: Increase

3012. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Education:

(1) Will school teachers' salaries be increased as a result of the latest salaries determination for State employees, handed down by the State Industrial Commission?

(2) If so, what percentage increase would be involved, and what total sum would be required to meet the salary increase?

Mr PEARCE replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) 4.1 per cent.

1983-84—$3 311 900

MINISTER OF THE CROWN

Premier: Mr Colin Mann

3013. Mr PETER JONES, to the Premier:

Adverting to his reply to question 2945 given on Thursday, 12 April 1984, what is the amount of Mr Mann's salary and on-costs which will be reimbursed to the Primary Industry Association referred to in part (2) of his reply?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

As Mr Mann is on secondment and his remuneration is to be reimbursed to the Primary Industry Association, I believe it would be inappropriate to publicly disclose the salary being paid. However, should the member wish to pursue the matter, I am prepared to disclose it to him on a confidential basis.

The on-costs referred to in the answer to question 2945 are related to the employers' superannuation contribution.

3014. *This question was postponed.*

LAND: ABORIGINES

Rights: Inquiry

3015. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister with special responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs:

(1) Adverting to the reply given to question 2887 on Wednesday, 11 April 1984, am I to infer from the reply that officers of the Western Australian Museum are free to publicly project policies, attitudes, and philosophies which they may hold, subject to permission from the director?

(2) If the Press report referred to in the reply was inaccurate, what efforts have been made to correct the impression which has resulted from the publicity?

Mr WILSON replied:

(1) Officers of the Western Australian Museum are generally authorised to make statements to the media on matters of fact with the director's knowledge.

In this particular case staff, including Mr Randolph, were authorised to make comments to the Aboriginal land inquiry on issues which they believed to be important on the basis that—

(i) these were personal comments which were not to be seen as comments by the Museum;

(ii) They did not specifically comment on issues raised in the trustees' submission.

(2) Mr Randolph was interviewed by several sections of the media and attempted to correct the impressions given in the article. No action was taken specifically in respect of *The Australian* itself.

3016 to 3021. *These questions were postponed.*

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL

Roleystone District: Stage 2

3022. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Education:

(1) Does he acknowledge that stage 2 of permanent accommodation for Roleystone District High School is required to house year 10 students at the school as at February 1985?

(2) Is he aware Mr J. Quinn, Director of Planning, has indicated to the school's Parents and Citizens Association that permanent buildings were unlikely to proceed and transportable buildings are all that will be provided for the forseeable future?

(3) Will he please inform me of the Government's timetable for the provision of stage 2 of the permanent accommodation already planned for the Roleystone District High School?

(4) Is the planned stage 2 construction of the Roleystone District High School to commence prior to formal introduction of the 1984-85 State Budget in a similar way to other schools to ensure that disruption to students' studies at the school are minimised?

(5) What buildings in addition to the present accommodation are to be on site at the Roleystone District High School at the beginning of the 1985 school year?

(6) Will he please table plans showing each stage of the Roleystone District High School until the school accommodation is completed?

(7) Relating to item (6), will he indicate the planned time of construction and availability of each stage of the building programme?

Mr PEARCE replied:

(1) and (2) As is the case with all growing schools, temporary classrooms are used prior to the permanent rooms being constructed. The President of the Parents & Citizens' Association was advised recently that this would be the situation in 1985, but as yet there has not been a prediction beyond December of that year.

(3) and (4) All staged developments of schools depend on the availability of capital funds and priorities. These will be determined for 1984-85 later this year.

(5) When enrolment numbers for 1985 are firmly established, the temporary classrooms required will be allocated and these will be so placed on site as to be convenient for student and school use.

(6) and (7) A concept plan was made available widely in 1982 and is subject to modification to meet changing circumstances and conditions as the school establishes its overall programme. No timing has been set for future provision of any of the additional concept details.

EDUCATION

High School: Wagin District

3023. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Education:

(1) Are tenders being called for new bitumen playing areas at the Wagin District High School?

(2) If so, when do tenders close, and when is it anticipated the works will be undertaken?

(3) Is it intended to undertake any much needed repair and renovation work in the forthcoming financial year?

Mr PEARCE replied:

(1) and (2) At present the Public Works Department is preparing details and costings for a new bitumen area to replace the existing area. Decisions about funding and tenders will be taken when this information is available.

(3) This question should be referred to the Minister for Works.

3024. *This question was postponed.*

ROAD

Canning Vale: Maintenance

3025. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Transport:

(1) Who is responsible for the maintenance of the road immediately adjacent to the Canning Vale Primary School in the Canning Vale industrial area?

(2) When will the road be upgraded?

Mr GRILL replied:

(1) Canning City Council.

(2) The question of upgrading of this road would need to be referred to the Canning City Council.

EDUCATION

Primary School: Willagee

3026. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Education:

(1) Has the bike parking area at Willagee Primary School recently been upgraded?

(2) If so, by whom and at what cost?

Mr PEARCE replied:

(1) Existing bicycle racks have been relocated on an area paved with cement slabs.

(2) The minor works committee provided $795 for the project.

3027. *This question was postponed.*

TOURISM: HOTEL

Busselton: Construction

3028. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Regional Development:

(1) When does he expect that construction will begin on the proposed five-star hotel in Busselton, in line with his announcement in Bunbury on December 5?

(2) Who will construct the hotel?

(3) Who will operate the hotel?

Mr GRILL replied:

(1) to (3) No commitment to construction or operation has been made as yet.

TOURISM: HOTEL

Bunbury: Operator

3029. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Regional Development and the North West:

(1) Does the project he referred to in his answer to part (1) of question 2967 of 1984, which has now commenced in Bunbury, include a five-star hotel?

(2) If so, who will operate the hotel?

Mr GRILL replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) I reiterate the answer I gave to this question in the House on 12 April, namely that this is a matter for the developer to decide.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND INSTRUMENTALITIES

Land Sales: Tender

3030. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Lands and Surveys:

(1) Is there any legislation covering the procedures to be followed by Government departments or agencies for the sale of land by tender?

(2) If so, what are those procedures?

Mr McIVER replied:

(1) and (2) Under the provisions of Section 86 of the Land Act 1933 land within a special settlement area may be disposed of in a number of ways, one of which is sale by public tender. The Act does not set down the procedures to be followed in the event of tenders being invited. I am not aware of any formal procedures laid down by any other Act, but inquiries have not been made.

LAND

Resumption: Mandurah

3031. Mr MacKINNON, to the Premier:

Does the Government have any intention of compulsorily resuming land in Mandurah, currently under consideration for canal developments?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

The Government has no proposals before it to compulsorily resume land which is currently proposed for canal development by Parrys Esplanade Ltd. and John Holland (Constructions) Pty. Ltd.

ROTTNEST ISLAND: DEVELOPMENT

Public Submissions: Closing Date

3032. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Tourism:

What is the closing date for public submissions to be made to the Rottnest Island Board on its consultant's report for the future development of the island?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

21 May 1984.

ROTTNEST ISLAND

Hotel and Marina Complex

3033. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Tourism:

(1) When did the Government or Rottnest Island Board make a decision to proceed with a hotel and marina complex on Rottnest Island?

(2) When is it anticipated that the project will commence?

(3) What is the target date for the project's completion?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1) No decision has been made to proceed with a hotel and marina complex on Rottnest Island.

(2) and (3) Not applicable.

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN: STAFF

Mr Ron Smith: Appointment

3034. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Housing:

What payments have been made to date to Mr Ron Smith or Smith Corporation Pty. Ltd. in his or his company's role as a consultant or adviser to the Government?

Mr WILSON replied:

Payments are being made in accordance with Mr Smith's contract.

3035. *This question was postponed.*

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT: HERDSMAN LAKE

Bulletin: Recommendations

3036. Dr DADOUR, to the Minister representing the Minister for Planning:

(1) Would the Minister state on what date he expects the following recommendations, contained in bulletin No. 111, March 1982 of the Department of Conservation and Environment, to be implemented—

Town Planning Scheme No. 30 should be amended to incorporate provisions relating to control, through Council by-laws, of industrial leakage into the drainage system of Herdsman Lake. Further, efforts should be made, through planning initiatives, to site noisy and offensive trades away from the Parks and Recreation Reserve.

There is a need for further consideration of implications of depth and extent of water bodies.

As a condition of the Project proceeding, a study of the hydrology of the catchment and the lake basin should be undertaken.

Such a study should be designed with expert advice, and its results should be used as a basis for future management.

The Research and Monitoring Programme should be modified to enlarge upon or add areas identified by expert advice as necessary for a proper understanding of the wetland and its inputs.

Expert advice should come from a Technical Committee to be set up by the Authority. The central functions of the Technical Committee would be to evaluate the significance of the perceived problems, to examine research and monitoring data and recommend on long-term management of pollutants.

Recognition must be given to the complexity of the management efforts required and the need for appropriate monitoring and control of water quality.

No further excavation on the central wetland area should be countenanced unless research shows it to be necessary for habitat management for broad conservation ends, or for drainage control. In the special case of Herdsman conservation and open space values should be seen to outweigh the value of the relatively small mineral resource. To avoid further pegging for minerals, the Lake and its environs should be declared a Ministerial Temporary Reserve under the Mining Act.

The proponent should place a high priority on its commitment to involve educational and community groups and should undertake to keep the public informed on the progress of the landscaping of the open space.

(2) Is the Minister aware that two years after the release of the Environmental Protection Authority's recommendations contained in bulletin No. 111, several of the recommendations are not yet implemented?

(3) If "Yes" to (2)—

(a) will the Minister initiate action to implement the recommendations;

(b) what procedures are available to him to ensure implementation?

Mr PARKER replied:

(1) Most of the matters referred to and vesting within the Minister for Planning's portfolio have already been dealt with.

(2) Yes.

(3) (a) and (b) The Minister for Planning will review the matter.

3037. *This question was postponed.*

RAILWAYS

Bunbury-Perth: Rapid Railcar Service

3038. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Transport:

(1) What progress has been made towards introduction of the Perth-Bunbury rapid railcar service?

(2) What are the possible arrival and departure times at this stage?

(3) What will be the expected frequency rate of services—i.e., daily, weekly?

(4) What towns between Bunbury and Perth will be the "stopping" points?

(5) Is it expected that there will be any increase in fares with the introduction of the new service?

(6) Will the introduction of its rapid railcar service be expected to cause any existing Bunbury-Perth-Bunbury Westrail road bus services to be abandoned?

Mr GRILL replied:

(1) to (6) I am currently considering a report by the Commissioner of Railways for the introduction of the new Perth-Bunbury rail passenger service in early 1987, and I will be making the type of information sought by the member public as soon as the matter has been considered by the Government.

TRANSPORT

Buses: Regional Towns

3039. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Transport:

(1) What are the criteria to be followed by the Government to improve bus services for regional towns, as undertaken by the "Bunbury 2000" policy document?

(2) What discussion has the Government had with existing operators from regional towns, and on what date did the discussion take place?

(3) What are the regional towns referred to in the policy document?

Mr GRILL replied:

(1) A study has been commissioned through the office of the Commissioner of Transport as part of the Government's blueprint document, "Bunbury 2000 Development Strategy."

With respect to omnibus services, the stated initiative is to "encourage the long term establishment of comprehensive bus services for the 'Greater Bunbury' including district centres".

The Commissioner of Transport is in the final stages of preparation of an interim report for the Government's consideration. I will seriously consider making the report available to the public when it reaches me.

(2) During the course of the study, officers of the Transport Commission consulted with a number of users and providers of omnibus services in the region. No formal record of meeting dates has been kept by the Transport Commission.

On release of the study group's interim report, operators and interested persons or groups will be invited to provide input for consideration in the preparation of the final report.

(3) Although Bunbury is the only regional town involved, the "Greater Bunbury" study area encompasses what is commonly known as the south-west statistical division.

TRANSPORT

Buses: Australind-Bunbury-Eaton-Gelorup

3040. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Transport:

(1) What proposals does the Government have for a comprehensive bus service servicing the Australind-Eaton-Bunbury-Gelorup areas?

(2) How does the Government intend to expand existing services?

Mr GRILL replied:

(1) and (2) The development of bus services for the Australind-Eaton-Bunbury-Gelorup areas has been examined by the Commissioner for Transport in his study under the auspices of the Government's blueprint document, "Bunbury 2000 Development Strategy", and a recommendation will be contained in the interim report soon to be completed and submitted to the Government.

TIMBER

Royalties: Current Rate

3041. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Forests:

(1) What is the current royalty charge for all categories of timber for saw log purposes?

(2) What was the date of the last price increase, and what has been the percentage increase in all categories?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1) Jarrah sawlogs royalty varies from $9.91 per cubic metre to $16.68 per cubic metre.

Karri sawlog royalty varies from $10.45 per cubic metre to $13.10 per cubic metre.

Marri sawlog royalty is $7.79 per cubic metre.

Pine sawlog stumpage varies from $7.19 per cubic metre to $36.71 per cubic metre.

(2) Jarrah, karri, and marri royalties were increased by 9.1 per cent as from 1 January 1984.

Pine stumpages are increased annually at various dates according to tender or sale conditions.

TIMBER

Royalties: Other States

3042. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Forests:

Can he provide rates and charges for saw logs from other States, and if so, what are they?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

Detailed information is not available. A general comparison of rates is carried out from time to time. This indicates that sawlog royalties in Western Australia are generally comparable with those in the other States.

TIMBER

Pine: Private Sources

3043. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Forests:

What is the amount of pine from private sources that has been used for—

(a) chipping;

(b) pulping purposes;

in each year since 1980?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(a) 1980-81—Not available
1981-82—5 904 cubic metres
1982-83—3 740 cubic metres

(b) Nil.

3044. *This question was postponed.*

PASTORAL INDUSTRY: LEASES

Aborigines: Apprentices

3045. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Lands and Surveys:

(1) What pastoral land has been purchased, the location, and at what cost using—

(a) Federal;

(b) State funds;

for use as Aboriginal purposes in each year since January 1980?

(2) What agricultural land in the South-West Land Division has been purchased, the location, at what cost using—

(a) Federal;

(b) State funds;

for use as Aboriginal purposes in each year since 1 January 1980?

(3) Further to (1) and (2), for what purpose was the land originally used and what are current uses?

(4) Has there been any further expenditure of—

(a) Federal;

(b) State funds;

in either category, and if so, would he give amounts, purpose, and other individual details?

Mr McIVER replied:

(1) to (4) Details of State and Federal funding of the purchase of pastoral and agricultural lands for Aboriginal purposes are not usually made known to the Department of Lands and Surveys. To my knowledge, the lands and surveys vote has not been utilised at any time for this purpose. The questions should more correctly by addressed to the Minister with special responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs.

STATE FORESTS

Pine: Markets

3046. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Forests:

(1) What markets are available and what is the price for pine produced currently from Government plantations and/or thinnings with pines at—

(a) 7 years;

(b) 15 years;

(c) 20 years;

(d) 30 years of age?

(2) What is the total amount of pine currently available for sale as in (1) above and in each category?

(3) What is the amount of pine that is expected to be sold as per (1) above and in each category?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1) (a) Nil;

(b) particleboard logs and pine rounds; price varies from $5.53 per cubic metre for particleboard logs to $16.21 per cubic metre for rounds;

(c) particleboard logs and sawlogs; price varies from $5.53 per cubic metre for particleboard logs to $23.94 per cubic metre for sawlogs;

(d) sawlogs and peeler logs; price varies from $11.09 per cubic metre for sawlogs to $43.39 per cubic metre for peeler logs.

(2) (a) Nil;

(b) and (c) 135 000 cubic metres particleboard and pine rounds;

(c) and (d) 42 000 cubic metres sawlogs and peelers.

(3) (a) Nil;

(b) and (c) 360 000 cubic metres particleboard and pine rounds;

(c) and (d) 108 000 cubic metres sawlogs and peelers.

STATE FORESTS

Pine: Prices

3047. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Forests:

(1) What is the current price charged for—

(a) pine;

(b) other species used for—

(i) pulping purposes;

(ii) chipping purposes;

from Forests Department plantations?

(2) What was the last date of price increase and what was the percentage increase?

(3) What was the amount of pine sold in each year since 1980?

(4) Is the price of pine for—

(a) pulping;

(b) chipping;

under review, and when is an announcement expected to be made?

(5) Does the price of pine vary between plantation or age of trees, and if so, would he detail?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1) (a) (i) Nil;

(ii) varies from $5.53 per cubic metre to $6.63 per cubic metre;

(b) (i) nil;

(ii) nil.

(2) 12 January 1984; 33.8 per cent increase under the terms of the agreement.

(3) 1980-81—137 478 cubic metres.
1981-82—124 953 cubic metres.
1982-83—138 747 cubic metres.

(4) (a) and (b) No.

(5) Yes. Prices are as follows—

Plantations north of McLarty—$6.63 per cubic metre
Plantations south of McLarty—$5.53 per cubic metre

There are no variations for age of logs.

PASTORAL INDUSTRY: LEASES

Kimberley: Forfeiture

3048. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Lands and Surveys:

(1) How many Kimberley pastoral leases are—

(a) under notice;

(b) at risk of forfeiture; or

(c) likely to be forfeited in the next six months;

for non-production or non-compliance with pastoral lease conditions?

(2) Is it known how many Kimberley pastoral leases are not in the personal occupancy of their proprietors, and if it is known, what is the number, assuming that in responding he will, if possible, in the case of companies, distinguish between family companies being treated as individual ownership and other companies?

(3) Is the level of production in the Kimberley region satisfactory when compared with its known capacity?

(4) Is there potential for the successful subdivision of some pastoral leases in the region?

Mr McIVER replied:

(1) (a) Nil;

(b) 9;

(c) not known; forfeiture action would depend on how quickly the lessees rectify deficiencies existing, or respond with acceptable proposals to overcome those deficiencies.

(2) There are 93 pastoral properties within the classification of "Kimberley" leases although not all are within the statutory boundaries of the Kimberley Land Division. The pattern of ownership or control is—

(a) Aboriginal communities	11
(b) Owner operators	31
(c) Absentee owners—	
WA based	16
Based elsewhere	35
	93

(3) No. It is generally agreed there is much room for improvement in the productivity of the industry. There is currently in progress an inquiry into the problems and prospects of the Kimberley pastoral industry.

(4) This question is being examined by the Kimberley pastoral industry inquiry and will be addressed in the final report.

3049 and 3050. *These questions were postponed.*

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN

Advisers: Media

3051. Mr HASSELL, to the Premier:

(1) What are the financial arrangements and terms of appointment for the Government's new media adviser, Jane Seymour?

(2) Will he detail her duties statement?

(3) What is the current rate of remuneration for the Government's media consultant, Don Rowe?

(4) Is Mr Rowe provided with any allowances or benefits, such as a Government car, in addition to his remuneration?

(5) When was Mr Rowe appointed?

(6) How much has he been paid since that date?

(7) What specifically are his duties?

(8) What are his normal hours of work for the Government, and are all those hours spent in the Premier's Department?

(9) If not, where else do his duties take him?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1) Ms Seymour is employed as a temporary public servant on a three-month term on a classification in the clerical range.

(2) Ms Seymour has been employed to assist in the review of monitoring facilities which were set up by the previous Government.

(3) Mr Rowe is paid at a rate of $22.50 an hour up to a maximum of 128 hours a month.

(4) No.

(5) 18 July 1983.

(6) $23 916.

(7) Mr Rowe has a general brief to advise the Government on aspects of media operations and developments.

(8) As a consultant, Mr Rowe's hours are dictated by the specific task he is undertaking at any time.

He does not have a specific office in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

(9) Wherever it is necessary for Mr Rowe to accomplish the terms of his employment.

TECHNOLOGY: PARK

Central Administration Building: Cost

3052. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) Have any cost estimates and/or quotes been received for the central administration building in Technology Park?

(2) If so, do such estimates include quotes from private enterprise building contractors and also from Government sources such as the Public Works Department based on day labour?

(3) If answer to (2) is "Yes", would he detail the amount of the lowest private enterprise quote and that of the day labour estimate?

Mr BRYCE replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Quotes were only received from private enterpise building contractors.

The Public Works Department did not provide a tender.

(3) Not applicable.

WATER RESOURCES: METROPOLITAN WATER AUTHORITY

Building: Extension

3053. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

(1) To what extent have the Metropolitan Water Centre extensions to cater for accommodation of the amalgamated Water Authority's staff progressed?

(2) How do the present cost estimates compare with the first announced original ones?

Mr TONKIN replied:

(1) Construction work on extensions to the Metropolitan Water Centre commenced in early April. The extended building is planned to be fully operational by 1 July 1985.

(2) The original cost estimate for the building was $6.4 million in July 1983 prices. The final contract price of $7.365 million including inflation to July 1985 compares favourably with the original estimate.

DRAINAGE

Crawley and Hollywood

3054. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

(1) Have investigations been concluded for drainage requirements in the Crawley and Hollywood areas as requested by the City of Subiaco?

(2) If so, what is the result?

(3) If not, when is the study expected to be concluded?

Mr TONKIN replied:

(1) No.

(2) Not applicable.

(3) June 1984.

WATER RESOURCES

Consumption

3055. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

(1) What was the total draw of water for the Metropolitan Water Authority's consumers during 1982-83 and during the first half of 1983-84 from—

(a) surface reservoirs;

(b) ground water sources?

(2) What is the approximate estimate for the quantity of water drawn from private bores within the Metropolitan Water Authority's area for the same two periods as described in (1) above?

Mr TONKIN replied:

(1) (a) July 82-June 83—109.9 million cubic metres.

July-December 83—59.4 million cubic metres.

(b) July 82-June 83—53.2 million cubic metres.

July-December 83—21.3 million cubic metres.

(2) July 82-June 83—estimated 193 million cubic metres.

July-December 83—estimated 98 million cubic metres.

WATER RESOURCES

Urban Water Balance Study

3056. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

(1) What projects have been researched within the urban water balance study during its first year of activities?

(2) Could he please table these studies?

Mr TONKIN replied:

(1) Activities undertaken in the first year of the urban water balance study include—

(a) a literature search and review of previous world wide studies of urban ground water systems;

(b) collection of water quality and hydrogeological information for the study area;

(c) establishment of a regional monitoring network and associated collection of data for analysis of water quality trends;

(d) development of an upgraded data storage and retrieval system;

(e) development of a conceptual model of the urban ground water system;

(f) investigation of alternative methods for the assessment of net recharge to the ground water.

(2) The information for the activities given in (1) is not presently in a form suitable for publishing.

WATER RESOURCES: METROPOLITAN WATER AUTHORITY

Staff: Number

3057. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

What was the number of wages employees at the Metropolitan Water Authority—

(a) at the end of June 1983;

(b) at the end of September 1983;

(c) at the end of December 1983;

(d) at the end of March 1984?

Mr TONKIN replied:

(a) 2 314;

(b) 2 299;

(c) 2 304;

(d) 2 265.

The figures include apprentices but not students employed on a temporary basis over the summer vacation period.

SEWERAGE

Backlog: Expenditure

3058. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

(1) What were the costs involved in infill backlog sewerage construction including in-house administration costs and wages of the day labour force for each of the last three financial years?

(2) Is it proposed to do less infill sewerage construction in the 1984-85 financial year?

(3) If so, how many workers of the day labour force are proposed to be retrenched?

Mr TONKIN replied:

Since most of the infill backlog sewerage in country towns is carried out by contract, it is presumed that the member's question relates to the metropolitan area only.

(1) The figures quoted for infill sewerage in reply to question 2997 of 17 April 1984 referred to direct costs incurred in the respective capital works programmes.

To cover in-house administrative costs, including design and supervision, these figures should be increased by 30 per cent approximately.

(2) The 1984-85 capital works programme has not yet been finalised.

(3) Not applicable.

DRAINAGE

Osborne Park

3059. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

Considering the complaints by local residents regarding the drainage system in Osborne Park, could he please say to what extent can and will the Metropolitan Water Authority accommodate the requests of these residents pertaining to

the drain, particularly in regard to covering it?

Mr TONKIN replied:

It is understood that the question refers to the section of the Osborne Park branch drain in the vicinity of Telford Crescent.

The drain is already fenced for safety purposes and the MWA is negotiating with the Stirling City Council to share the cost of either having the drain placed into twin 1 050 mm diameter pipes—estimated total cost $190 000—or to incorporate the drain as a watercourse feature in a landscaped development for the adjacent public open space—estimated cost of $123 000—similar to that adopted in other parts of the metropolitan area.

SEWERAGE

Country Towns: Administration

3060. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

(1) Will the Government-subsidised country towns sewerage schemes, constructed by local authorities under the Health Act, be continued to be administered by the respective local authorities after the coming into operation of the Water Authority of Western Australia, or will they be administered by the authority?

(2) Should the latter be the case, will rates increase compared with the present subsidised situation?

Mr TONKIN replied:

(1) and (2) The future of the subsidised country towns sewerage scheme is still under consideration.

SEWERAGE

"Envirocycle"

3061. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

(1) Does he know about a private sewerage disposal system manufactured by a company called Envirocycle, apparently available with the blessing of both the water and health authorities in New South Wales?

(2) If "Yes", is this system purifying waste water from non-sewered properties for garden use an acceptable one?

(3) What are the prospects of its availability in Western Australia?

Mr TONKIN replied:

(1) No.

(2) and (3) See (1) above.

SINGAPORE AGENCY

Establishment: Cost

3062. Mr COURT, to the Premier:

(1) What studies, inquiries, and cost estimates have been made relative to the establishment of a Government representative office in Singapore?

(2) Further to the Government's announcement that representative offices were being considered in several South-East Asian locations, what other cities are being considered in addition to Singapore and Hong Kong?

(3) What estimates have been made relating to the cost and provision of appropriate housing associated with staff for a representative office in Singapore?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1) to (3) As indicated in my answer to question 2643, the options for representation in various locations are still being examined.

MEDIA MONITORING

Advisers

3063. Mr COURT, to the Premier:

Will the Government's media monitoring expansion take any Government business from existing private media monitoring operations?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

The Government is currently reviewing whether monitoring services used by Government departments may be satisfied by existing resources within the media monitoring unit established by the previous Government.

3064. *This question was postponed.*

STATE FINANCE

Financial Institutions Duty: Receipts

3065. Mr COURT, to the Treasurer:

What are the monthly financial institution duty receipts for January, February, and March?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

Collections in respect of transactions undertaken in January and February were $3 524 674 and $3 099 379 respectively. Collections in respect of March transactions have not yet been finalised.

3066. *This question was postponed.*

STATE FINANCE

Financial Institutions Duty: Short-term Dealings

3067. Mr COURT, to the Treasurer:

Has the State Taxation Department advised financial institutions on how to calculate financial institutions duty on short-term dealings with respect to the balance of a call account entering or leaving the threshold of $50 000?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

No general advice has been given to financial institutions on this matter. However, guidance has been provided to particular financial institutions when sought.

STATE FINANCE

Financial Institutions Duty: Double Imposition

3068. Mr COURT, to the Treasurer:

Is financial institutions duty paid twice when interest is credited to an investors account by a financial institution and the proceeds then withdrawn upon maturity and banked by the investor?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

The Act defines a receipt to include the crediting of an account. Accordingly, if in the example given two separate credits to accounts are made, duty would be payable on each transaction.

STATE FINANCE: FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS DUTY

Building Societies: Daily Credits

3069. Mr COURT, to the Treasurer:

When a building society operates a cheque account for customers, are they liable to pay financial institutions duty when a credit is raised on a daily basis for the aggregate value of cheque withdrawals in the building societies general ledger bank account?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

There are exemptions provided under the Act for credits to internal accounts of financial institutions, but I would require more specific information on the nature of the transactions in order to answer the question. If the member could supply that information, I would be happy to give him a written reply.

STATE FINANCE

Financial Institutions Duty: Cash Collection Companies

3070. Mr COURT, to the Treasurer:

Do businesses using the services of "cash collection" companies have to pay financial institutions duty twice on these funds?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

This would depend on the circumstances of each particular case. Whether or not cash collection companies pass on FID payments to their customers is dependent on the nature of the contractual arrangements between the companies and their customers and the extent to which these companies bank the money they collect.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

PORNOGRAPHY AND VIOLENCE: VIDEO FILMS

Distribution: Control

744. Mr HASSELL, to the Premier:

Will he advise the House whether his proposed action in relation to the flood of pornographic video material now available in Perth includes action in relation to the approximately 322 decisions made following the new procedures operating from 1 February 1984? In other words, can he assure the House that the Government's proposed course of action will operate against the offensive material which has already been released under the new system?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

I am not sure whether the course of action, I suggest requested, but perhaps implied by the Leader of the Opposition, is open to the Government. I do not know the legality of retrospectivity. Of

course, that is action that the Leader of the Opposition has always opposed.

Mr Hassell: I am talking about hire material, of course.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: It does not fall just into the category of hire material. It falls into a number of categories, one of which is hire material.

If the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting that hire material but not purchasable material can, in a retrospective fashion, be declared illegal, I do not know the legality of that.

Mr Hassell: I am obviously not suggesting you start raiding people's homes to take back what they have purchased. You can understand I am not suggesting that. I am talking about the stuff already approved and in the shops. That is what is causing the concern.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: In the hire shops?

Mr Hassell: Yes.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Presumably, some of this material is on sale and some is in the shops for hire. I can see problems in making fish of one and fowl of another—preventing a shop from hiring something but permitting it to sell the same thing.

If the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting that we should retrospectively declare illegal those items that are for sale, that would involve questions of compensation to the people selling them. It would not eliminate the problem, because obviously all of those items for sale would still be allowed to be sold; so the Leader of the Opposition poses a difficult question.

All I can say is that the Government is firmly committed to the proposition that much of the material presently categorised by the Commonwealth and available for sale or hire is not acceptable material for distribution within the community. I have already started negotiations or discussions with the Minister involved, with a view to ensuring that, at the very least, a line is drawn on the sort of material that can be admitted.

I will take up with the Minister the Leader of the Opposition's suggestion and see whether it is possible and desirable that such suggestion be implemented retrospectively.

WAGES: FIXING

Decentralisation: Opposition's Proposal

745. Mrs BEGGS, to the Premier:

Is the Premier aware of the policy to decentralise wage fixing announced by the Leader of the Opposition in his weekend manifesto?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

I am aware of the announcement. The Leader of the Opposition, as I have already explained to the House, is keen to embrace the outmoded and divisive policies of conservative "Thatcherism".

The decentralised wage fixing system which he favours has been discredited because it sets up divisions in the community.

An industry-based wage fixing system favours the more powerful employee groups. It brings about benefits for few sectors of the work force only. It breaks up and divides the work force into unequal groups. It creates envy and dissatisfaction and encourages industrial unrest.

My Government, on the other hand, is committed to a decent living for all Western Australians. We wish to ensure equal benefits flow to all members of the community from growth in real output in our economy.

A centralised wage fixing system ensures an equitable and fair approach to wage fixing and promotes industrial harmony.

I am also aware that the Federal Opposition recently agreed in principle to a centralised wage fixing model.

It is apparent that in his desire to embrace conservative industrial relations policies the Leader of the Opposition appears to have turned his back on his own party and added to the confusion the electorate faces in assessing the true colours of the Liberal Party.

PUBLIC SERVICE

Reduction: Government Policy

746. Mr HASSELL, to the Premier:

Does he anticipate that, by the end of the financial year, the Government will have achieved its policy objectives in re-

spect of the size of the Government service?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

The question, apart from being, with due respect to you, Sir, inadmissable, is one that is not capable of definitive answer. All I can say is that we are certainly hoping, trying, and intending to achieve our objective.

LAND

Gidgegannup

747. Mr TROY, to the Minister for Lands and Surveys:

(1) Would the Minister please advise the progress on changes to a vesting order involving the Swan Shire Council and that council's consideration towards leasing land to the Gidgegannup Recreation Club?

(2) Would the Minister consider expediting the processes, recognising the urgency of the recreational needs of the Gidgegannup residents and that community's concern for the environmental aspects of the area?

Mr McIVER replied:

(1) Reserve No. 2145 is vested in the Shire of Swan without power to lease. The shire, with assistance from the Department of Conservation and Environment, is currently preparing a management plan for the total reserve area. Until this plan is received and I agree with its contents, the vesting order will not be altered.

(2) I am well aware of the Gidgegannup community's concern in this matter. However, further progress depends on the submission of the management plan referred to in (1).

RECREATION: YACHTING

"Australia II": Tobacco Advertisement

748. Dr DADOUR, to the Minister for Health:

(1) Is he aware that the yacht *Australia II* is to be displayed in Perth for 10 days on the Esplanade, and that it will be accompanied by a 60 ft. by 100 ft. Winfield cigarette advertisement?

(2) What are his views on this?

(3) Is he also aware that at the Perth City Council meeting last Monday night, 16 April, some councillors objected to the advertisement and they were advised that the yacht would not be displayed without the Winfield advertisement; hence they agreed to the advertisement, saying that the tobacco company was blackmailing the council and holding a gun at its head?

Mr HODGE replied:

(1) to (3) I advise the member that the Liberal Party in the upper House rejected the Government's anti-tobacco advertising legislation. It was the member's former colleagues in the upper House who, by the narrow margin of two votes, threw out the legislation that would have prevented—

Mr Peter Jones: And the public.

Mr HODGE: —this form of obnoxious advertising.

ELECTORAL: COMMISSIONERS

Accusation by Hon. H. W. Gayfer

749. Mr D. L. SMITH, to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform:

Is there any truth in the accusation made by the Hon. H. W. Gayfer—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member cannot ask questions like that.

COMMUNICATIONS

Bases: Closure

750. Mr COURT, to the Deputy Premier:

Does the State Government support State Labor Party moves to ban United States communication bases from Western Australia?

Mr BRYCE replied:

The member for Nedlands seems to have a very poor memory.

Mr Blaikie: He has a very good memory.

Mr BRYCE: The Government has answered this question from the Leader of the Opposition on a number of occasions and it seems that the poor old member for Nedlands does not seem to understand the ways and the workings of the Labor Party, because the Premier has indicated to the Parliament that the State Govern-

ment supports the Federal Minister for Defence in the position that he has outlined on this question. We also support the right of the State branch of the Labor Party to have conferences, and a debate, and to have that debate open to the Press—so even the member for Nedlands can find out what is going on inside the councils of the Labor Party—and for that branch to make a decision and carry that decision for its delegates to debate at a national conference which is coming up. If the member seeks to stick his nose into the affairs of another political party, he should ensure he understands the process by which that party works.

TRANSPORT: BUSES

Relief Drivers

751. Mrs BUCHANAN, to the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is the Minister aware that certain long distance bus operators carry a relief driver in a special compartment at the rear of the bus?

(2) Does the Minister feel that this is a safe practice and, if not, what action does he intend to take on the matter?

Mr GRILL replied:

(1) and (2) I thank the member for notice of this question.

At present I am unaware of any proof—one way or the other—that the carriage of a relief driver on the vehicle creates any safety hazard. However, I shall ask the Transport Commissioner to report. For practical reasons it may be necessary for relief drivers to be carried on services between Port Hedland and the Northern Territory border due to lack of suitable staff and accommodation in some remote areas.

I point out that omnibus licences can be conditioned to restrict such practices for intrastate routes, if such action was thought appropriate. However this restriction would not apply to a number of operators who provide east-west services, as they do not require licences under the Transport Act.

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN: ADVISER

Mr Ron Smith: Payment

752. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Housing:

Why does the Minister refuse to provide the Opposition with details of payments made to Mr Ron Smith of Smith Corporation Pty. Ltd. in his or his company's role as a consultant or adviser to the Government?

Mr WILSON replied:

The member has placed a question on notice and it has been answered. I just wonder, as the Premier has indicated in the past, why the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, in particular, continues to indulge in some sort of hate campaign against Mr Smith. It concerns me that a person in his position should take advantage of his position in Parliament to indulge in such a personalised campaign—

Mr Laurance: They are public funds.

Mr WILSON: —against a person who has been appointed by the Government to carry out a responsible task. We can wonder about that and we can pose some answers for ourselves. One of them would be—and it seems the most likely one—that this Opposition has never really come to terms with being in Opposition.

Mr Bertram: Very true.

Mr Thompson interjected.

Mr WILSON: It continues to have illusions of grandeur—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Point of Order

Mr MENSAROS: Mr Speaker, with the utmost respect to you, we all know a Minister of the Crown is not necessarily compelled to answer a question. At the same time, we know that question time does not allow him to make statements which have nothing to do with the question, which is the case here.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. In my view, the Minister is not making a statement in the sense that he is reading a statement. He is speaking off-the-cuff.

Mr Davies: He can answer the question in any way he likes.

Questions Without Notice Resumed

Mr WILSON: To take up the point made by the member for Floreat, I am addressing the question, because the question contains implications which he and his colleagues choose to try to hide from.

Mr MacKinnon: You are hiding the facts, not us.

Mr WILSON: They are serious implications and they should be laid bare, and the campaign—

Mr MacKinnon: Answer the question.

Mr WILSON: —that this member seeks—

Mr Thompson interjected.

Mr Mensaros: You haven't got the courage to say you are not answering the question. That is what it is. You have not got the courage.

Mr WILSON: If it is a question of courage, let us face up to that because—

Mr Mensaros: No Standing Order gives you the right to not answer a question. If you had courage you would answer the question.

Mr Thompson: That is right. I hope you never get promoted to the position of God.

Mr WILSON: I do not dodge that issue and I do not dodge the unheard interjections from the back bench of the Opposition.

Mr Thompson: I will say it again: I hope you never get promoted to the position of God because, as a former minister of religion, you carry some real hate.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr I. F. Taylor: You are pathetic; what an absolutely pathetic comment.

Mr Old: Nasty!

A Government member: Spot on.

Mr WILSON: I conclude by saying that, in view of the vacuous interjections from the Opposition, I do not intend to respond to a campaign of hate against this man who is acting on behalf of the Government in the public interest.

Mr MacKinnon: I am merely asking questions in the public interest.

Mr WILSON: I advise the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to desist from that course. I understand his chagrin; I understand the sour grapes; and I understand the fact that members opposite consider that a man with his background and with his position is perhaps betraying certain principles of the Opposition, to the effect that people from the private sector should not indulge in giving advice to this Government. Believe me, we have had good advice from this man and we do not want him pilloried inside or outside this Parliament by the irresponsible questioning emanating from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

ELECTORAL: COMMISSIONERS

Accusation by Hon. H. W. Gayfer

753. Mr D. L. SMITH, to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform:

(1) Could the Minister comment on the accusation made by the Hon. H. W. Gayfer that he has cast disrepute on the electoral commissioners?

(2) Is there any need for the apology which he has also requested?

Mr Clarko: That wouldn't be a Dorothy Dix!

Mr TONKIN replied:

(1) and (2) I am sorry to be placed in this position but the evidence presented by *Hansard* of the Legislative Council debate of Wednesday evening . . .

Point of Order

Mr THOMPSON: On a point of order, it seems to me that the member seeks from the Minister an expression of opinion and I believe that to be out of order.

Mr I. F. Taylor: You haven't got a wig on now.

The SPEAKER: No; originally, I agree that when the member for Mitchell first raised his question he was obviously seeking an opinion; but the way the question has now been asked I cannot agree with the point of order.

Questions Without Notice resumed

Mr TONKIN: The evidence presented by *Hansard* of the Legislative Council debate of Wednesday evening, 11 April 1984 points strongly to the need for an apology.

Mr Blaikie: That is an opinion.

Mr TONKIN: As Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform I would like to apologise to the people of Western Australia, to the electoral com-

missioners, and to all the members of both Houses who have had to suffer the embarrassment of hearing two senior Opposition councillors vocalise their lack of comprehension of two crucial Acts of this Parliament.

By their comments, the Hon. H. W. Gayfer and Hon. V. J. Ferry show that they are not yet aware of the contents of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act and the Electoral Districts Act.

The misunderstanding apparently held by the councillors is the failure to distinguish between statutory boundaries and commissioners' boundaries.

Statutory boundaries are the boundaries of the metropolitan area and the agricultural, mining and pastoral area, and also the internal district boundaries of the north-west-Murchison-Eyre area. These statutory boundaries have been drawn by as yet unnamed agents of the Liberal and National Country Parties. Politicians did get their grubby little fingers on the crayon and did draw the most disgracefully self-seeking boundaries on the electoral maps of this State. I make no apology whatsoever for pointing the finger at the present members of the Opposition. It was they who shamelessly drew the crooked statutory boundaries without any consultation whatsoever and in the face of vehement protest. There is no doubt in my mind that the malapportionment and gerrymander perpetrated by the Liberal party in 1981 is one of the important reasons that it is now the Opposition.

Under the present unfair Acts, once statutory boundaries and the number of districts and provinces within each zone have been set by Parliament, the electoral commissioners may then begin their work. The Hon. H. W. Gayfer and Hon. V. J. Ferry can check the truth of this two-stage process for themselves by reference to the two Acts I have mentioned. Commissioners draw only those boundaries that are within the metropolitan and AMP areas.

The confidence of the Government in the capacity of the electoral commissioners is clearly demonstrated in the substance of the revised electoral reform proposals announced on Tuesday, 10 April 1984. We say all boundaries should be drawn by the independent commissioners. Unlike the Opposition which wanted to draw a few crucial defining boundaries itself, the Government believes that only the genuinely independent and respected commissioners should carry out this task. It is a tribute to the people of Western Australia who understand that no blame for the shocking electoral system here can be placed with the electoral commissioners. Everyone, except the two councillors it seems, realises that our commissioners must toil under the yoke of the most undemocratic electoral laws in Australia.

I would like to make this point: I said—and I repeat—that no politician should put his grubby fingers on an electoral map. The two members concerned from the upper House said I should apologise to the electoral commissioners. I did not say "electoral commissioners"; I said that politicians should not have their fingers on the crayon. All the boundaries should be drawn by the electoral commissioners.

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN

Advisers: Media

754. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Housing:

This question follows the answer to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's question. I ask—

(1) Is the Minister aware that in question 3051 on the Notice Paper today the Premier was asked how much had been paid to Mr Don Rowe, one of the Government's advisers? The Premier gave the figure of the amount paid as well as the rate of remuneration and the hours worked.

(2) What distinction does the Minister draw between the Premier answering that question and the Minister's refusal to answer a similar question in relation to Mr Ron Smith which was equally and legitimately asked requesting details of expenditure of public funds?

Mr WILSON replied:

(1) and (2) I am not averse to giving those details. However, I also have a responsibility to see that the process of victimisation to which Mr Smith has been subjected by the member for Murdoch is

not one that is perpetuated in this Parliament.

I believe it has been a deliberate campaign against a person and that the Opposition, and particularly this member, is taking advantage of Parliamentary privilege to pursue that campaign.

Earlier a member spoke of hatred and lack of courage. Let me say that all the questions coming from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, irrespective of his pious denials to the contrary, indicate that there is such a campaign. I am concerned about the use of Parliament to conduct that sort of campaign.

I am not averse to giving details about payments being made and I am prepared to give further consideration to providing that information if I can get some sort of dinkum and sincere undertaking from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that he will not continue to indulge in his personalised campaign against this person who has been appointed in good faith by the Government.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Advertising Campaign: Technological Development

755. Mr I. F. TAYLOR, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

Why has the Government decided to emphasise technological development in the Department of Industrial Development advertising campaign which was launched this week?

Mr BRYCE replied:

The Government is concerned to ensure that Western Australia is in the forefront of technological development in the next decade. This is vital in terms of our economic well-being.

The world economy is changing rapidly and we have to change in order to cope with it. Part of that change is the need for the general community to be made aware of the need to change, to stimulate the future awareness of the future potential in Western Australian industry.

This campaign draws on the strength of the Western Australian population and promotes them unashamedly as things which we can all be proud of in this State.

The "Go-for-it" campaign was put on the back-burner while the Government assessed the resources that had been committed to it and evaluated the options that were available as far as the future was concerned. The Government discovered that the "Birthmark" campaign was of 12 years' standing and it figured that it had done a very sound job by the time it came to the process of review earlier last year.

Mr MacKinnon: Isn't it true that we had set in place a review?

Mr BRYCE: There is no doubt about this poor old sour grapes former Minister. Scarcely a thing happens in this State at the moment that he does not somehow or other dream that he was responsible for some 18 months ago. It seems that it does not matter how long we stay in Government; what was in his mind's eye perhaps 18 years ago will become something that he had in mind or had begun to set in train.

I suggest to the member that he become accustomed to the idea that he did not have a mortgage on worthwhile objectives and that he did not, in fact, put in place everything that the Government is doing at the present time. The answer is "No".

The member has lost track of the fact that when he was in Government the Department of Industrial Development frequently measured the effect of that campaign to see whether it could gauge the extent to which the advertising was producing an increase in the sale of WA-made goods. It was in place and it was a mechanism that was some years old. I know the Deputy Leader of the Opposition does not want to divert my attention from the detail of this answer.

The "Go-for-it" campaign was placed on the back-burner and the Government decided upon a new direction. I am pleased to say that the inspiration for the new direction of this advertising campaign did not come from the member for Murdoch.

Mr Court: It came from the critical mass.

Mr BRYCE: It came from the existing Government. I would be delighted to be likened to the critical mass because the

member for Nedlands' grandchildren will look back and say, "What a marvellous contribution that was". Anyone capable of being described as the one and only "critical mass" in this particular field would certainly be very happy with that sort of accolade. I would be delighted if the member for Nedlands would be good enough to spread that rumour.

The basis of this campaign is to demystify technology in the mind of the community, business, industry and commerce, and Government.

It is hoped that as a result of the campaign, key people in commerce and industry in particular, the trade union movement, and the community at large will accept the importance to our survival of innovation, being creative, and modernising our industry, because at the basis of it all rests our profitability.

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

Volunteer Sea Search and Rescue Association: Financial Assistance

756. Mr THOMPSON to the Premier:

(1) Is he aware that continuity of the valuable work performed by the Volunteer Sea Search and Rescue Association of Western Australia is in jeopardy because of lack of funds?

(2) Is the Government prepared to assist the association by—

(a) providing financial assistance immediately; and

(b) meeting representatives of the association in an endeavour to establish a long-term solution to the problem?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1) and (2) I am aware of the problem to which the member refers. I regard it as a serious problem and one which if left unresolved might well result in the Government's being forced to provide substantially more funds to maintain the service that is presently available on a largely voluntary basis to an extent that the Government could not afford. I am aware of the problem because I saw, firstly, a report in the Sunday Press about a letter to be sent to me this week. I do not know that the letter has arrived; I certainly have not seen it. I saw also in the same Press report reference to previous letters, but it was unclear whether they were sent to me or to the Minister with responsibility for this area. I am prepared to seriously consider the proposition put by the group involved.

With these matters it is difficult to satisfy all the worthwhile requests that are made. People always want balanced budgets and smaller government at the same time as they want more money. It is hard to know where more money will come from unless there is bigger government or more taxes.

Mr Thompson: Or fewer advisers.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Yes, certainly I suppose that if one eliminated all the advisers the extra money might provide one three-thousandth of what the member is seeking. That is not an answer to a problem that has been acknowledged by previous Governments. We take the request seriously. I meet almost all those people who seek an appointment with me. I am not known to be uncooperative in these matters or unwilling to talk about them. We will do our best to help. I cannot make promises because I do not know that we can afford to satisfy every worthwhile request made to us.

HEALTH

Fitness Programmes

757. Mrs WATKINS, to the Minister for Health:

(1) Is it correct that the fitness programmes for the elderly have proved so successful that the Public Health Department is experiencing difficulty in keeping up with the demand?

(2) Can he indicate the extent of these programmes and what steps, if any, are being taken to expand the service?

Mr HODGE replied:

(1) and (2) A simple but effective physical activities programme for the elderly is reducing the incidence of hospitalisation among the Western Australian aged.

The programme is proving so successful that it has attracted national and international attention with the principal physiotherapist at the Public Health De-

partment recently being invited to attend a physiotherapy conference at Dunedin, New Zealand to present a workshop on the WA programme.

The programme is now conducted by 65 different groups in Perth and a further 20 in country areas and reaches more than 1 000 elderly Western Australians.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Is it true that two-thirds of the Opposition attend?

Mr HODGE: The exercise programme consists of walking, simple exercises, and ball games; and a measure of its success can be gauged by the fact that a recent subjective survey answered by 600 participants showed that only 13 had been in hospital over the preceding 12 months.

One of the problems being experienced is that because of the popularity of the programme some of the groups now have more than 40 participants and the senior physiotherapist co-ordinating the programme has had to conduct classes herself.

I am pleased to advise the member that I have just initiated action which will enable six new classes to be started and the two currently conducted by the co-ordinator to be taken over.

AGRICULTURE

Projects: Libya

758. Mr STEPHENS, to the Premier:

In view of the problem with Libya arising out of the siege of the Libyan Embassy in London I ask—

(1) How many Western Australians are currently employed on agricultural projects in Libya?

(2) Has the Premier sought assurances on their safety and if not, why not?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1) I do not know how many Western Australians are employed in Libya.

(2) I have not sought assurances but I will certainly consider the matter and if it is appropriate I will move as quickly as possible to seek such assurances.

STATE FORESTS

Forests Department: Change of Name

759. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Forests:

Is it a fact that letterheads have been printed which are already in use in the Forests Department with the denomination "Department of Land Resource Management" or words to that effect on them before any announcement has been made, let alone parliamentary action by way of introducing a Bill has been taken by the Government?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

I do not know that that is the case; I would be very surprised if it were. Letterheads may have been printed in respect of the committee that carried out the inquiry which led to the suggestion of the new department being formed. The words used by the member are not those which comprise the name of the new department. I know he said "words to that effect". I understand the latest recommendation is that the department should be called something in addition to the title the member mentioned. I would not think that that has been done. If it has been done it is a presumptuous thing to do. If the member places the question on the Notice Paper I will have it thoroughly investigated.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Playhouse Theatre

760. Mr BURKETT, to the Minister for the Arts:

Will the problems experienced at the Playhouse Theatre this year have an adverse effect on the employment opportunities of Western Australian actors?

Mr DAVIES replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question, the answer to which is as follows—

Until the middle of February this year the Playhouse was operated by the National Theatre Inc.

That organisation faced financial difficulties and as a result is no longer operating the theatre. It has cancelled its proposed programme for the year.

I was able to take the initiative and appoint a four-person committee to be responsible for programming the Playhouse for the remainder of this year and to advise me on longer-term proposals to keep the theatre operating. I must say I am very pleased with the manner in which the committee has approached its task.

Three weeks after being formed, the committee was able to come forward with a programme for the rest of 1984 which is innovative, exciting, mainly Australian-written, and will provide more work for local actors than the programme proposed by the National Theatre.

The programme of plays will give local writers an opportunity; it will allow commercial entrepreneurs a chance to co-operate with the funded body; it will cover plays in the school curriculum, and this will all be done within a budget that will be smaller than that available to the previous company.

In fact with the move of the Hole in the Wall Theatre to the Subiaco City Hall, as a result of a grant from the State Government, there will no doubt be more work than usual available to local actors from that source. The Winter Theatre plans a vigorous programme of plays in Fremantle.

Far from being a year of unemployment for local actors, I have heard it stated as a genuine concern by some people in the theatre community in Western Australia that it is possible we may be faced with a shortage of professional actors available to fill all the roles.

PUBLIC WORKS

Department: Mr John Valentine Fagan

761. Mr LAURANCE, to the Premier:

Did the Premier write a letter or direct that a letter be written or in any other way influence the Public Works Department to employ Mr John Valentine Fagan?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

To the best of my knowledge I did not write such a letter.

I did not direct that such a letter be written.

In discussions with the Ministers involved I concluded, as they did, that the basis for rejecting the application for employment of a person who was "a union radical and a compensation malingerer" were not sufficent. If that was the basis for rejecting his employment, it was not sufficient.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOLS AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Electronic Surveillance System

762. Mr READ, to the Minister for Works:

(1) In regard to the article that appeared in *The West Australian* on 28 March, could he please advise whether an electronic surveillance system for State schools was developed by the Public Works Department or the private sector?

(2) What is the estimated reduction in cost damages caused by vandalism and theft, etc., as a result of the introduction of the new surveillance system?

Mr McIVER replied:

(1) The system comprises a surveillance package developed by the private sector. However, the architectural division of the Public Works Department furnished technical advice and guidance in relation to its installation in schools. The division also co-ordinated the purchase and installation of equipment in the control centre.

(2) As stated in the newspaper article, vandalism, arson, and theft in school buildings cost in excess of $1 million each year. At this early stage, it is not possible to predict exact savings but undoubtedly they will more than offset the cost of the system. In addition, disruption to school activities will be substantially reduced.

I might add that arson was attempted in the weekend, but due to the surveillance system the culprits were quickly apprehended.

HEALTH: DENTAL

Subsidy Scheme: Delays

763. Mr TUBBY, to the Minister for Health:

I refer to question 2965 in which I asked a question concerning the dental health subsidy scheme. I asked the Minister whether he realised there was a three-month delay, and he indicated that he did. I now ask—

Would the Minister please explain to the House the reasons for the three-month delay?

Mr HODGE replied:

I do not recall the question on today's Notice Paper; it may have been on yesterday's. The reason for the three-month delay is quite simple. More people apply for subsidies under the scheme than the Government can afford. We have a sum of approximately $30 000 per month available for subsidies of this type. Applications received by the Public Health Department would cost about $75 000 a month, so we can not afford to fund all the applications received, and a waiting list has developed. Unfortunately I can see no solution this year. Talks have been held with the Australian Dental Association and we are currently looking at ways and means of trying to improve the system so that these long lists will not develop.

Mr Blaikie: Why do you not allocate more money?

Mr HODGE: I have no more to allocate.

Several members interjected.

Mr HODGE: Persons requiring urgent dental treatment will have priority; no delays will occur in those cases. Although it is unfortunate there is a waiting list of some two or three months, this is in no way more disadvantageous to country people than it is to people in the city. There are similar waiting lists at all dental clinics operated in the metropolitan area.

LAND

South West Land Resource Task Force: Recommendations

764. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Lands and Surveys:

(1) What recommendation is contained in the task force reports on land management?

(2) What does the Government hope for?

(3) What is the Government's timetabling on this matter?

Mr McIVER replied:

(1) to (3) This matter is still under consideration and has not yet been determined.

NATURAL DISASTER

Drought: Rural Adjustment Funds

765. Mr TOM JONES, to the Minister for Agriculture:

Has the Federal Minister for Primary Industry responded to the Western Australian Government's request for rural adjustment funds not needed by other States to be made available to drought-affected farmers in Western Australia?

Mr EVANS replied:

I am happy to be able to inform the member for Collie that the Federal Minister recently informed me that New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania will not require a total of $3.3 million in rural adjustment funds this financial year. This sum has been reallocated for use in Western Australia. Just fortuitously, I have a copy of the Minister for Primary Industry's letter close by. It is very brief, only two short paragraphs. I think it would be of great interest to members of this House. The substance is as follows—

> Further to our previous correspondence regarding the special needs Western Australia is experiencing this year for Rural Adjustment funds, I am pleased to be able to inform you that four States have agreed to transfer part of their 1983/84 allocations to Western Australia.
>
> NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania have advised that they will not require a total of $3.3 million. I have made the necessary

formal determination in accordance with clause 11(3) of the Rural Adjustment Agreement to re-allocate this sum to Western Australia.

That means that this Government has in place something of the order of $40 million by way of drought relief funding, rural adjustment funds, and recycled rural adjustment scheme funds. This is a total for the area of $40 million, which means at least that the vast majority of farmers eligible will be able to plant a crop in the forthcoming season.

BANKS

"Offshore" Banking: Inquiry

766. Mr COURT, to the Treasurer:

Is Western Australia represented on the Federal Government's inquiry into offshore banking?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

We have made representations asking to be granted a position on the inquiry. We have not, as I understand it, received a reply to that request, and I do not know that the personnel of the inquiry have been finalised. I have not been informed that decisions have been made about the composition of the group looking at offshore banking facilities.

We have asked that we be permitted to be represented, but as far as I know we have not received a reply to that request. I do not know of any finalisation of the personnel of the group involved.

RADIO AND TELEVISION

Country Areas

767. Mr BRIDGE, to the Minister for Regional Development and the North West:

(1) What steps is the Western Australian Government initiating to ensure that country people obtain adequate television and radio coverage?

(2) What steps are being taken to maintain local control in any new arrangements?

Mr GRILL replied:

(1) and (2) The Western Australian Government has taken a number of initiatives to ensure people in remote communities obtain TV and radio services comparable to those obtained in Perth and the larger regional centres.

The introduction of the Australian communications satellite system, with the first launching in July 1985, opens up new technology and opportunities for provision of radio and TV services. These services fall within the domain of the Federal Minister for Communications, but the WA Government has—

Emphasised the need for an expanded remote and under-serviced communities scheme to ensure Australian Broadcasting Commission reception for the smaller communities;

made submissions to both the Federal Minister and the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal emphasising the need for improved TV and radio services for remote communities;

had discussions with a number of commercial operators to provide a commercial equivalent of HACBSS; these discussions are continuing;

invited the Federal Minister for Communications to visit Western Australia for discussions on a number of communication issues; and,

made representations to the Federal Minister on behalf of specific communities.

Our discussions with the Federal Minister have emphasised the need for local ownership and control of WA television and radio broadcast licences. Local ownership would ensure that local areas and community affairs would be fully covered.