

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 2 August 1984

THE SPEAKER (Mr Harman) took the Chair at 10.45 a.m., and read prayers.

PORNOGRAPHY: VIDEO FILMS

Banning: Petition

MR CLARKO (Karrinyup) [10.46 a.m.]: I have a petition to present to the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled. 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 which a visual image 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 bears 110 signatures, and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 26.)

HOSPITAL: MARTINDALE

Closure: Petition

MR TRETHOWAN (East Melville) [10.47 a.m.]: I have a petition to present to the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled. 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 wish to save Martindale Hospital in Applecross from closure. Closure can only be prevented by the Hospital being re-categorised.

Please will you help us.

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 bears 572 signatures, and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 27.)

STATE ENGINEERING WORKS BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Tonkin (Leader of the House), and read a first time.

HERD IMPROVEMENT SERVICE BILL

Second Reading

MR EVANS (Warren—Minister for Agriculture) [10.50 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On 30 October 1983, Cabinet approved the amalgamation of the Artificial Breeding Board and the Department of Agriculture's dairy herd recording scheme to form the herd improvement service.

Estimates based on the 1982-83 Budget out-turn show that this reorganisation will result in a saving of approximately \$130 000 in annual operating costs.

The herd improvement service will be an autonomous statutory authority and will be located at Bunbury.

The Herd Improvement Service Bill provides for the establishment of the herd improvement service and repeal of the Artificial Breeding Board Act 1965-68.

The broad provisions of the Bill are—

- to establish the herd improvement service as a corporate body;
- to create a five-member board of management;
- to define the functions of the new organisation;
- to provide for the appointment of staff;
- to define the financial arrangements for the herd improvement service; and

to specify the transitional arrangements as the artificial breeding board is dissolved and the new organisation is created.

Establishment of herd improvement service: The Bill establishes the herd improvement service as an autonomous corporate body which is not an agent of the Crown in right of the State. The new organisation, therefore, will assume the responsibilities of a corporation and also will be liable for payment of sales taxation and other Government imposts.

Board of management: The corporation will have a board of management, with the following composition—

- one Department of Agriculture officer nominated by the Minister, to be a member and chairman;

- two persons appointed by the Minister from a panel of names submitted by the Primary Industry Association;

- one person appointed by the Minister from a panel of names submitted by the United Dairy Cattle Breeders' Association;

- one person who has commercial expertise which is relevant to the functions of the corporation.

The composition and size of the board will provide effective representation of the major industry groups which will be using the corporation's services, while avoiding the unnecessary expense of a larger, unwieldy board.

Functions of herd improvement service: The functions of the herd improvement service will be to provide those services which have been offered by the Artificial Breeding Board of WA and the Department of Agriculture's dairy herd recording scheme. In essence, these are—

- to organise the sale and distribution to farmers of semen, ova, and other materials used for artificial breeding;

- to maintain field services to provide for the artificial breeding of stock, and the production recording of stock. This technology is now widely used throughout the dairy industry and is a major factor in improving efficiency of production and, ultimately, reducing costs to the consumer. The integration and rationalisation of these activities offers the potential to contain production costs in the future; and

- to promote genetic improvement within the State's livestock industries, and to initiate and encourage appropriate research and training in this field. It is anticipated that the new organisation will work in close liaison with

the Department of Agriculture and will call upon some resources such as the Animal Breeding and Research Institute at Katanning.

The corporation will derive its income mainly from the sale of semen and the fees charged for testing cows—herd recording—and also from the provision of other related services, such as training courses.

Under the new arrangement, the Department of Agriculture will continue to provide the milk testing facilities at the Bunbury herd recording laboratory. The herd improvement service will charge herd recording fees, and at the end of each quarter will reimburse the Department of Agriculture for the laboratory costs.

Staff: The board of management may, with the approval of the Minister, appoint such staff as are required for the corporation to carry out its functions. The Bill also provides for the herd improvement service to utilise the services of Government officers, where this is appropriate.

Financial Provisions: The Bill makes provision for moneys received either for goods or services, or as advances or grants, to be paid into a trust Government account or a bank account approved by the Treasurer. The herd improvement service will be permitted to borrow funds from Treasury sources or elsewhere, upon such terms and conditions as approved by the Treasurer.

At the end of any financial year, the Treasurer may instruct the herd improvement service board to remit into Consolidated Revenue such percentage of the corporation's net profit as he deems appropriate.

The Bill requires the corporation to comply with standard audit and reporting provisions.

Transitional arrangements: When this Act is proclaimed, the herd improvement service will take over the present contracts, property, and legal obligations of the artificial breeding board. It is proposed that the Harvey property owned by the artificial breeding board will be sold, and the proceeds used to partially offset the accumulated debt of the artificial breeding board. The Government has agreed to write off this deficit.

The herd improvement service will keep separate accounts of the sundry debtors and trade creditors of the former artificial breeding board. The new organisation will then pay these trade creditors and collect the debts owing to the former board. When these transactions have been finalised, it is intended that the Treasurer will pay to the herd improvement service the amount by which payments exceeded receipts.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Blaikie.

RURAL HOUSING (ASSISTANCE) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR WILSON (Nollamara—Minister for Housing) [11.00 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

It is some time now since the Rural Housing (Assistance) Act has been before this House for amendment. The proposed amendment will enable farmers/pastoralists to meet eligibility criteria to obtain finance to enable a house on their farming properties to be shifted on their properties or shifted from one property to another they own.

At times the authority has received applications to do this and had declined any consideration in spite of knowing it would enable the farmer to farm his property much more effectively.

It will no doubt be known by members that access to home finance by some farmers has been a problem for some time, but this changed with the establishment of the Rural Housing Authority. I am informed that quite often where a farmer has received assistance from the authority, other farmers in the district have built new homes with their own resources. This has enabled the builders to remain in the district and be part of the construction work force in that area.

The authority allocated all its funds borrowed for 1983-84 and, since its inception, has assisted 354 farmers with finance for either new homes or adding to or modernising existing homes on their farming properties. The farmers have been able to borrow these funds on a basis similar to that applying to their urban dweller city cousins.

Although the authority is able to assist farmers/pastoralists to obtain finance for employee housing, there has not been a lot of response from applicants. Members will be aware, of course, that the State has had some very dry seasons since the authority was created and this aspect has had a dramatic effect on the whole of the rural industry. Farmers have seen substantial capital equities eroded, because of loss of income caused by the poor seasons.

Since commencement, the authority from its own resources has lent almost \$6.8 million in loans to 233 applicants. A further \$4.3 million has been lent by building societies or the Rural and Industries Bank of Western Australia under the protection of a Government indemnity to 121 farmers. The authority is aware of the difficulties of some of its borrowers in not being able to meet their

instalments on time every time. With its experience, the authority will do all in its power to keep the farmer and his family on the property to keep providing the essential food and fibre needs of the community and the world. It is realised that farmers are a vital part of the community.

This year the season has opened well for areas of the State which have not had such a good season for some time. Let us hope this injects further optimism into this community.

From time to time, members of this House see the work of the authority in providing funds for housing and the uplift in the living standard of the people assisted. This Government is anxious that the work of the authority be maintained and agrees to a further provision for the authority by allowing the resiting of houses on their farms to become eligible for consideration by the authority.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr MacKinnon (Deputy Leader of the Opposition).

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS PLANNING AUTHORITY AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR WILSON (Nollamara—Minister for Youth and Community Services) [11.05 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill before the House seeks to amend the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972-82.

The aim of the amendments is to repeal the agreement with the Commonwealth Government which was reached in 1974 and contained in the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Amendment Act, No. 100 of 1973. Together with complementary Federal legislation, it provided for—

the Australian Government to establish a State Office of Aboriginal Affairs (Department of Aboriginal Affairs) and to include in its function the administration of the AAPA Act, including the maintenance of the effective operation of—

- (i) the Aboriginal Advisory Council established under section 18;
- (ii) the Aboriginal Affairs Co-ordinating Committee established under section 19;
- (iii) the Aboriginal Lands Trust established by section 20;

the director of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to be a Commonwealth public servant, but also to have a State appointment of Commissioner of the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority;

administrative, staff, and financial arrangements.

Although this arrangement worked reasonably well for some years, a number of situations have occurred more recently which demonstrated to this Government that there is a need for the State Government to have an independent administration in Aboriginal affairs. I understand that when it was in Government, the present Opposition had reached a similar conclusion and that negotiations with the Commonwealth Government about the termination of the agreement had reached an advanced stage before this Government took office. The Commonwealth Government had indicated its strong wish to terminate the agreement so that the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in Western Australia would be clearly identified as the agency responsible for the implementation of Commonwealth Government policy in Aboriginal affairs.

Negotiations continued after the change of Government and agreement was reached for the State Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority to accept increased administrative responsibility for the application of the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act with effect from 20 October 1983.

A position of Deputy Commissioner and permanent head of the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority for Aboriginal Planning was created from that date and the occupant was delegated to carry out those functions on behalf of the State Government, which functions had previously been conducted by the Director of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

Agreement was also reached that the remaining functions of the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act, including the formal process of consultation on State matters with Aboriginal people, would be taken over by the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority with effect from 1 July 1984. It is intended that the authority will remain a fairly small agency involved with policy development and carrying out the statutory requirements of the AAPA Act.

Although it has become necessary to terminate the Legislative arrangement between the State and Commonwealth Governments for the administration of Aboriginal affairs, I wish to make it clear that there is no proposal that the present high level of co-operation and mutual assistance that sensibly exists between the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority will be diminished.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr MacKinnon (Deputy Leader of the Opposition).

CREDIT UNIONS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR WILSON (Nollamara—Minister for Housing) [11.10 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

As the financial system becomes less regulated, as a matter of prudence and for competitive equity credit unions need to offer a greater variety of financial services to their members.

The 33 credit unions registered under the Credit Unions Act 1979-1982, with total assets of more than \$400 million, have expanded their roles over recent years to supply additional services by way of financial counselling, insurance, travel, legal, and property management.

However, with the present competitive financial environment and the changes as a result of technology development, credit unions must be allowed to move with the times so as to remain viable, and to provide even more financial services as demanded by the public. These amendments, which were recommended by the Credit Unions Advisory Committee and supported by the Credit Union Association of Western Australia Incorporated, are designed to give this extra flexibility required today, whilst maintaining the same regulatory powers.

The Bill contains provisions for credit unions to approve and make line-of-credit loans, which can be drawn progressively. Credit unions will also be able to make revolving credit loans, which have the overdraft operation approach.

These two types of borrowing are defined in the Bill under the heading "continuing credit arrangements", and the changes will allow members of credit unions to use a cheque-issuing facility through a liaison with an existing bank, or by direct access to the Australian payments system when permitted. Credit unions will also be empowered to issue to members credit cards similar to Visa credit cards.

Credit unions will also be able to make bridging finance-type loans on which only interest is repaid, and loans with high or low-start repayments to help particular members who seek longer termed loans to purchase their family homes. The present limitations require loans to be repaid by regular fixed instalments of principal and interest.

A credit union can invest its funds in the shares of a corporation which renders special services to the credit union. A provision in the Bill will expand this type of investment to allow loans with registrar's approval also to be made to the corporations.

The corporations can use the loan funds to purchase items such as computers and other electronic equipment, but not to lend to persons or organisations that normally would be ineligible for a loan from the credit union.

As a means of widening the expertise of the various boards of directors, a person will be eligible to be a director, even if he, his partner, a person in his employment, or his employer, is a solicitor or valuer. The provision excluding an external accountant and an auditor of a credit union from being a director of the credit union is to remain.

Credit unions will be allowed to issue various classes of shares to their members, rather than being confined to only one class, and a credit union will be able to raise funds by way of promissory notes as an alternative to other methods. The requirements for the registration of a new credit union are to be strengthened so that at least \$1 million of members' funds will be available to the credit union upon registration, and a feasibility study concerning the commercial viability of a proposed credit union will need to be undertaken.

Where credit unions have subsidiary companies, consolidated income and expenditure accounts and balance sheets will need to be compiled and subjected to audit. A subsidiary of a credit union is defined in the Bill, and the registrar will have access to the books and affairs of subsidiaries.

The Act requires each depositor to be a member, and all deposits need to be received on the condition that at least one month's notice may be required before withdrawal. This restrictive provision is to be withdrawn, in line with the deregulatory changes following from the Campbell and Martin reports.

The liquidity provisions are to be changed so that the registrar may from time to time approve of a security or class of security for liquidity purposes, and the statutory reserve requirements are to be simplified whilst retaining the need for a credit union to maintain a reserve ratio of 2.5 per cent of its assets.

To maintain uniformity with the Companies Code, annual general meetings are to be held within four months of the end of a credit union's financial year, rather than the present period of three months. The registrar's annual report to the Minister on the administration of the Act is presented to Parliament, and will be for each year ending 30 June, rather than 30 September as prescribed in the Act. With the introduction of these changes the credit union industry will be able to operate more freely in the market place,

and offer a wider variety of financial services to members.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Hassell (Leader of the Opposition).

PLANT DISEASES AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR EVANS (Warren—Minister for Agriculture) [11.17 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The intent of the Plant Diseases Act is to prevent the introduction into Western Australia of diseases affecting plants, and to provide for the containment and eradication of introduced diseases and pests. The Act was first promulgated in 1914 and has been subject to many amendments over the intervening years. The Act has become the prime vehicle for control of interstate movements of agricultural produce.

Diseases such as codling moth, brown rot, downy mildew, and phylloxera could be disastrous for the fruit-growing industry if they became established in Western Australia. Many others, such as boillsmut of maize and bacterial wilt of potatoes, would seriously disadvantage other agricultural activities. All occur in eastern States.

The advent of fast transport on good roads, in sealed chiller vans, facilitating the quick movement of highly priced perishables, helps trade and is safe and easy. However, it has made inspection of produce and detection of infringements difficult. The existing system, in which declarations of carried goods are required, does not always deter opportunist importers. High values for short supplied produce and low penalties for illegal movement makes importing attractive, irrespective of disease risk and the moral issues involved.

The problem was highlighted in November 1983 with an interception of cherries. The estimated profit on the relatively small quantity of fruit involved was \$3 000, set against the possibility of a minimum fine for a first offender of \$100.

The Government seeks to broaden quarantine powers so that inspectors can effectively deal with potential as well as actual carriers of plant diseases. The Government also seeks adequate penalties to deter people who place agricultural industries at risk.

A feature of modern trade is its corporate structure. The legislation proposes to deal with such bodies at all levels, as is necessary. Overall, the provisions aim to make the Act more flexible and

appropriate to modern-day agriculture and transport methods.

The Bill is an important piece of legislation. Its intent is to strengthen the legislation protecting the State's agricultural industries.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Blaikie.

BILLS (3): MESSAGES

Appropriations

Messages from the Governor received and read recommending appropriations for the purposes of the following Bills—

1. Land Drainage Amendment Bill.
2. Herd Improvement Services Bill.
3. Plant Diseases Amendment Bill.

METROPOLITAN MARKET AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR EVANS (Warren—Minister for Agriculture) [11.21 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Metropolitan Market Amendment Bill has been prepared to provide for more orderly use of market premises and for the issue and withdrawal of on-the-spot infringement notices against persons who contravene the Act in specific instances.

On 1 April 1983, new by-laws were invoked under the Act to provide, among other things, for the Metropolitan Market Trust, by notice in writing erected in a conspicuous place in the market, to fix the times during which trading is permitted. The by-laws prohibit the entry of unauthorised persons to trading areas outside the fixed trading hours. They also prohibit a person from trading in areas of the market other than those set aside for trading purposes.

The by-laws have generally proved to be satisfactory. However, it is virtually impossible to detect and apprehend offenders who trade across boundaries of tenancies within the market area. Although trading is not permitted before the times fixed by the trust, buyers are entering the market and are allegedly trading from some of the market roadways prior to the commencement of the official trading time. The by-laws do not provide power for the trust to prevent the entry of persons into the market area and the Act does not at present permit the making of a by-law for this purpose. Although part of the market is fenced, many of the tenancies have a road frontage where buyers can walk.

Numerically speaking, not many buyers enter the market before the official trading time. How-

ever those who do, have a significant input in terms of the quality and quantity of product they purchase. Their activities tend to unfairly modify true supply and demand forces, resulting in complaints from other buyers and sellers. The activities are also discriminatory because some tenants have sales floors located closer to roads, making them more visible and accessible.

The amendment of the Act will provide the trust with the necessary flexibility to ensure efficient operation of the market.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Blaikie.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FIFTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed from 1 August.

MR TRETHOWAN (East Melville) [11.25 a.m.]: This morning I presented a petition to the House from 572 residents of Western Australia. That petition dealt with a very serious matter not only for my electorate, but also for the State as a whole; that is, the imminent closure of Martindale Hospital in Applecross.

Some members of this House may not be aware of Martindale for the very good reason that it serves a particular section of the community; that is, those people who are unfortunate enough to be affected by alcoholism. Most of us can quite happily enjoy alcohol in small quantities as a pleasant social diversion and perhaps even as something which is good for the system. However, a relatively small proportion of our population is affected very seriously by the consumption of alcohol which causes a deterioration not only physically, but also in social attitude. Eventually death occurs.

Martindale is a private hospital which, for the last 11 years, has been committed to the treatment of alcoholics within our community. Its success rate has been extremely high. Over two-thirds of the people who have been treated at Martindale have reached a stage where they are able to carry on successful careers, to have strong family relationships, and in every way to take part in community life in the same way as do other people. One-third of the patients achieve that rehabilitation after one visit to Martindale and another third after two to three visits. I understand that success rate is reckoned to be very high.

That success in treatment is the reason that 572 people signed the petition. I understand hundreds

more names are being collected now, because the people who have been treated at Martindale, who are not successful owners of their businesses, who are employees—even executives—and who have successful family relationships realise that, without the treatment they received, it is likely they would now be in a situation where they could not even look after themselves and, indeed, would be on the way towards a very painful and unfortunate death.

Martindale is being forced to close because of the Federal Government's preoccupation, through its Medicare legislation, with the persecution of the private health care system. Martindale has 30 beds, but it operates at an average of approximately 22.4 per cent bed occupancy.

Members will realise that at times patients are admitted in groups and at other times fewer patients come into the hospital. However, the length of stay is relatively constant.

On 1 February, the Federal Government reclassified Martindale from an "A"-class hospital to a category three hospital. At the same time, it raised the Government subsidy per bed from \$16 to \$20 a day. The Government subsidy per bed increased, but it will preclude people with private health insurance seeking treatment for alcoholism in that hospital. The hospital cannot afford to function at the level of private health care payments that a category three hospital receives; that is \$80 a day. The hospital has moved from receiving, through the health insurance system, \$125 a day down to \$80 a day. That is an aspect about which we in Australia should be very concerned.

The Federal Government took the same sort of action when it precluded people from insuring against the "gap"; that is, the difference between the fee a doctor charges and the fee that is allowed by the schedule. That is a denial of the rights of the individual and it is a direct attack on the private health care system.

Martindale is a private hospital. Many of the people involved in running it are dedicated to its cause for the very good reason that they have suffered the disability of alcoholism, have found their way through it, and wish others to achieve the same success. Since the benefits from private insurance have been dropped because of reclassification from \$125 to \$80 a day, that hospital has been losing \$585 a day. Since 1 February, Martindale Hospital has lost hundreds of thousands of dollars. It is at the stage now where the bank managers are saying, "Something must change or we will have to close you down and sell the property to pay the debt which has been incurred". That debt has been incurred because

the Federal Government is insensitive to the needs of people in private hospitals.

Mr Blaikie: It does not like them.

Mr TRETHOWAN: It does not like them and it does not like to see the success rate that this institution has achieved in this State to help people disabled by alcoholism. People who have been there are going out and signing petitions because they know that they themselves would not have families and jobs were it not for the treatment they received at that institution.

I know the State Minister for Health is sympathetic towards it because last year he was kind enough to visit Martindale with me when some concerns were being expressed. He took with him members of the ADA and he saw in detail what the hospital did, the intensive detoxification treatment, the intensive nursing, and the programmes for rehabilitation. I know he has a very great concern for the effects of alcohol because he has said so in the House during a number of debates.

I appeal to the State Government to support those people who petitioned this Parliament to make a submission to the Federal Minister for Health for the reclassification of Martindale back to a special category Class 1 hospital, because it was a special category Class "A" hospital. It received that special category because it was the only institution of its type in this State that was able to offer that total care to those people who needed it.

Who pays for the reclassification? The Government does not pay for it; it is the people who insure with the health insurance funds who pay for it, because it is their subsidy that has been changed. It involves the amount they pay the hospital, not the amount the taxpayer pays.

If we pay private health insurance cover, and we are unfortunate enough to suffer from alcoholism, we will not be able to go to a place which offers treatment in the way that Martindale does. Martindale has a success ratio that has been vouched for by many people in the community.

There is a very good reason for that success ratio. When a patient is admitted to Martindale, he not only has to go through a period of detoxification with intensive nursing, but also undergoes pathology tests to ensure he has no other problems. Many people who go to Martindale suffer from other diseases caused by the effects of alcohol, diseases which are very serious and which affect the condition and the rate of recovery. That detoxification period can take between three and 10 days. At the end of that detoxification process, the patients are not able to

leave the hospital with a surety that their addiction to alcohol will not recur.

In most cases, the stay at Martindale is between four and six weeks. During that time, the philosophy of Alcoholics Anonymous is adopted by those patients. They become involved in therapy.

For the first three or four weeks they do not leave the hospital of their own free will, although no-one requires them to stay there. Once they have achieved a state of self-confidence and they feel that they can leave the hospital, they are encouraged to remain with Alcoholics Anonymous for the rest of their lives. The combination of intensive physical nursing and effective therapy has resulted in a high success rate, and there are many people in the community who have succeeded in overcoming the problem of alcoholism. They are now holding down responsible jobs, have strong and happy family lives, and are contributing to our society. They themselves admit that if they had not had the advantage of that treatment, they would currently be on skid row; they would be derelict and on the verge of death.

I plead with the State Government to take up the case of Martindale with the Federal Minister for Health and to listen to the 572 people who put their signatures on the petition presented to the Parliament this morning. I ask the Government to listen to those who have put their signatures to petitions that will be presented from now on and to take action. I do not believe those people who say that the State Government's attitude is similar to that of Pontius Pilate; that is, that we do not have to be involved, but can sit back and wash our hands of it. I understood from statements made by the Minister that he and other Government members had a real concern, particularly about people who are unfortunately affected by alcohol in our community and who are seriously affected by alcohol as a disease.

Again I plead with the Government to take up the case of Martindale. Unless a reclassification of that hospital happens very shortly, it will close, because the people who run the hospital cannot afford to lose \$585 a day. Their bank managers will not allow them to do that and they may be forced to sell the property so that the debt can be cleared. That is the serious nature of the situation. It is not something that affects only my electorate. It affects the people who live in Applecross, those people who live south of the river, and those people who live in the metropolitan area as a whole.

I now move on to comment on the Small Claims Tribunal. A number of people have come to me and expressed considerable concern about the operations of that tribunal. Let me say quite clearly

at this time that I support absolutely the principles behind the establishment of the Small Claims Tribunal. There is a very great need to offer this protection, because people need to have redress against what they believe to be a commercial wrong. It was originally introduced because the only redress in many cases was for people to go to the Local Court, and the cost of those actions frequently exceeded by a considerable amount the cost of the claim, so people did not get justice because it was not economically viable. It would cost them more to get justice through the court than it would if they did not proceed with the claim.

The Small Claims Tribunal was set up to provide for consumers and others an easy access to redress for small claims that had resulted from wrongs they felt had been done to them in commercial transactions.

During the tribunal's operations, some very serious concerns have been expressed about the equity of the orders that have been issued. The problem this raises is the same as the problem that was addressed originally by the Act; that is, that if someone feels that an order issued against him by the Small Claims Tribunal is inequitable, his only recourse is to the Supreme Court. The cost of a Supreme Court action is probably at least \$3 000 or \$4 000, yet the maximum the Small Claims Tribunal is allowed to handle is \$2 000. Unless a person is prepared to finance his own search for justice, for perhaps two or three times the amount of the claim against him when he believes the order is wrongly awarded, there is no way he can afford to go to a higher court to receive an amendment to what he believes to be an unjust order. That is a great shortcoming of the system.

The tribunal does not operate under the laws of evidence, and in fact offers very little protection for redress against perjury. The Act enables perjury to be covered, provided that evidence given to the tribunal is subject to the requirements for perjury. However, once a hearing is finished, one cannot have a rehearing, one cannot have the opportunity to disprove the evidence that may have been presented against one unless one goes to the Supreme Court, in which case one is then up for a large sum of money. It is a very serious situation. I will highlight the problem by addressing myself to two cases. In both these cases I have no doubt there was a justification for a claim by the consumers involved, but I believe the awards made by the arbitrator could not be justified, were not equitable, and gave rise to a feeling among those people against whom the awards were made that not only was justice not done, but also that justice

was not seen to be done. That is the criterion upon which our whole judicial system operates.

The first case deals with an area wherein there is normally a lot of consumer complaint. It deals with the air-conditioning of an engine and the replacement of mechanical parts within a car that is not new. The car in question was a Holden Sunbird and the situation occurred when this car was taken to a firm that specialised in replacement of parts and reconditioning of engines. A request was made that the four-cylinder engine in the car should be replaced with a six-cylinder engine to give it more power and that a suitable gearbox be provided and everything done so that that car performed as the six-cylinder model of the Holden Sunbird. A quote of \$800 was given for that work. A 186 Holden engine was placed in the car and an Opal gearbox was fitted. As members would be aware, Opal is General Motors-Holdens' manufacturer in Germany. There were problems with the car, some of which the firm attempted to correct. An invoice for \$894 was issued and the amount was paid.

Subsequently further problems developed in the gearbox and changes were made to the car by its owner and the matter was then taken to the Small Claims Tribunal. When the claim was received, the technical officer of the Small Claims Tribunal inspected the vehicle and found some very serious things wrong with it. He found that the engine did not sit square to the chassis and that the mountings were twisted. The engine would not pass the police traffic requirements because it did not comply with the antipollution legislation. There was a problem in the gearbox between the second and fourth gears; it was very stiff and could not be moved except with two hands.

There were extenuating circumstances; for instance, the client of this firm insisted that a "Webber" carburettor which was owned by the client be placed on the engine. I understand that it is technically impossible for that carburettor to pass the antipollution requirements, so the reason the car did not pass those requirements was that the client had his own carburettor attached. Anyway, the matter went before the Small Claims Tribunal and an order was made for \$1 890 to be paid to the claimant. Remember that the original amount paid was \$890 and the order for restitution was for \$1 890.

The amount was arrived at because of written quotes given for certain work that would need to be done on the car, but those written quotes were not produced in evidence. Nothing was produced in evidence; the figure was arrived at on the say-so of the person making the claim.

The following are the details of the quote—

	\$
(1) Supply and fit one all Aussie four speed gearbox	600
(2) Supply and fit one M6 gearbox	240
(3) Recondition 186 motor	750
(4) Pollution and control gear fitted	50
(5) An LH cross-member, supply and fit	160
(6) Supply and fit speedo cable	60
(7) Re-gas the air-conditioning system	30

When the work was done on the car in its original condition there was no air-conditioning unit in the car. How can the firm be liable for re-gassing the air-conditioning unit? Secondly, how can one fit two gearboxes to the one car? Yet the award was for fitting a four-speed gearbox and an M6 gearbox. How can one fit two gearboxes to the one car?

Mr Tonkin: With great difficulty, I would say.

Mr TRETHOWAN: With very great difficulty.

Mr Williams: The kangaroo court is at it again, is it?

Mr TRETHOWAN: That was \$600 for one gearbox, and \$240 for the other. There was no redress against the \$1 890 that was awarded even though it was clearly inequitable for it to be based on two gearboxes being fitted to the one car. No-one could question the order, no rehearing could be ordered, and the only redress would be an appeal to the Supreme Court at a cost of \$3 000 or \$4 000.

Mr Williams: I do not think he can even do that, can he?

Mr TRETHOWAN: In certain areas he can.

Mr Tonkin: Want of natural justice and want of jurisdiction.

Mr Williams: There is no justice in that court at all.

Mr TRETHOWAN: The Leader of the House says one could apply on the basis of natural justice.

Mr Tonkin: Want of natural justice, yes, and want of jurisdiction are the only two criteria.

Mr TRETHOWAN: Want of jurisdiction is obviously okay in this case, but I would seriously suggest that natural justice is not. There would be great difficulty in proceeding with such an action, and that is a clear indication of an inequitable order that was given with no redress being avail-

able to the firm involved. I do not deny that there was a requirement for consumer protection in this case. There was a requirement for work to be done, and for redressing the state in which the technical officer found the car. I do not deny that at all. The amount of \$1 890 represents a gross inequity and the way it was arrived at was clearly a miscarriage of justice. It has left the persons concerned with little respect for the Small Claims Tribunal.

Mr Williams: Very few people have respect for it.

Mr Watt: I could give you a whole list of those people.

Mr TRETHOWAN: This Government is insensitive to the needs of small business because small business people are being affected repeatedly by the operations of the Small Claims Tribunal and what they consider to be a clear level of inequity in the judgments that are made.

I direct another matter to the attention of the House. This deals with a constituent of mine who is a drycleaner, and from my personal contact with him I believe him to be a very professional drycleaner.

Mr Williams: What is his name—Tony Williams?

Mr TRETHOWAN: No, unfortunately, though I suggest he is also a very professional drycleaner. No, he is not a member of this House. The situation here was that a very expensive bedspread was brought to my constituent on Christmas Eve. There had been a party at the house of the owner of the bedspread the night before and a child had been left to sleep on top of the bedspread. The child had wet the bed and urine stains were on the bedspread. It was apparently a single, one-off bedspread. It was brought to the drycleaner, who said, "Yes, I can get that stain out". He looked at it and the material appeared to be nylon. He did expect it to be nylon. There was no indication tag which revealed the material used and I understand that such a tag is not necessary if it is not a manufactured article. In fact, the material was polyester instead of nylon: polyesters are almost never used in bedspreads because they cannot be drycleaned easily. They are used in curtaining materials.

The drycleaner treated the bedspread as nylon and used the appropriate chemicals to remove the stain, but it also removed a sheet of material. He admitted that it was negligence and that there was a problem with it. He did not know he had made a mistake with the material, although it was not an unreasonable mistake. He looked at the code of practice of the Drycleaning Institute and said,

"Okay, I should pay you 85 per cent of the value of the bedspread and I am prepared to do that". The case was taken to the Small Claims Tribunal and at the hearing no evidence was brought forward as to the value of the bedspread, although it was claimed to be worth \$500. No invoices were produced, nor was a letter from manufacturer of the bedspread, to indicate or substantiate that claim for \$500.

The award was made that \$500 be paid, without the bedspread being presented as evidence to indicate to the arbitrator how seriously the article had been affected. Obviously there was a disfigurement, but I understand it was minor.

Mr Watt: That is about par for the course.

Mr TRETHOWAN: My constituent was asked to make total restitution of \$500 and asked for the damaged article back because he was replacing it. That was his restitution. My constituent said the following—

The referee ruled that the claimant keep the bedspread. When I protested that I felt this was hardly fair, the referee said, "It doesn't have to be fair; fairness does not come into it. According to the law I just have to make a decision when the two sides cannot reach agreement".

Several members interjected.

Mr TRETHOWAN: I am worried that in fact that is wrong and that the order transgressed the Act. It is my understanding that the Small Claims Tribunal should not impose a penalty. It is there to rectify a wrong, not to impose a penalty. I suggest that in this case and in the case of the previous automotive claim, a penalty was imposed; a penalty without the benefit of rules of evidence, with no need to produce the article to show the damage. A financial penalty was imposed in both cases on those people who had no redress.

That is something which is happening continually to small business people throughout the State. I give an undertaking that when we are returned to Government, we will review the operations of the Small Claims Tribunal to maintain protection for both sides of the situation. The consumers will be able to receive redress when they have been wronged and we will also make sure that evidence is fairly presented, hearings are clear, and those people who have orders against them know that very clearly and have no argument that justice was not done.

Mr Wilson: Weren't you aware of these things when you were in Government?

Mr TRETHOWAN: I am aware that these things have occurred since this Government has

been in office. When we are returned to Government we will do what I have just said. The actions of this Government are undermining small business in this State.

Several members interjected.

Mr TRETHOWAN: It indicates an attitude of lack of concern about the problems of small businesses. It is not meeting the fundamental requirements of the judicial system in our type of society. Justice should be seen to be done, and those people who have been dealt with by the tribunal should feel that they have had a fair go, that there is clear evidence that the arbitrator did take a fair position, and that the award he made was equitable; not that they should be penalised beyond restitution.

I again request the Government to take action on Martindale, to support those people who signed that petition this morning, and others who may sign petitions which will be presented in the future, to submit to the Federal Government that Martindale be reclassified for the benefit of those people who suffer from alcoholism in our community. I submit also that there is a problem with the application and operation of the Small Claims Tribunal. We undertake that when we become the Government we will rectify that situation.

MRS BUCHANAN (Pilbara) [11.56 a.m.]: I would like to take this opportunity to make a few remarks concerning matters of interest to the people I represent in the Pilbara, along with one or two other issues.

Several members interjected.

Mrs BUCHANAN: First and foremost, I would like to add my congratulations to those expressed to our newly-appointed Governor, Professor Gordon Reid, and his wife. I wish them every success, and know they will serve the people of Western Australia with great enthusiasm, warmth, and friendship.

So far, Opposition members have wasted a lot of the time of this House by indulging in what ranges from childish tantrums to gutter politics. The smell referred to by the Leader of the Opposition is obviously coming from their sour grapes which have reached the point of stagnation. They have the gripes!

Several members interjected.

Mrs BUCHANAN: I do not suppose they can think of much else to do, because the Government is performing well and delivering the goods.

Several members interjected.

Mrs BUCHANAN: This is evidenced by the latest opinion poll. The Government is

maintaining its popularity and members opposite find that extremely difficult to take.

Several members interjected.

Mrs BUCHANAN: The price I would like to see decreased is the price of natural gas. Sir Charles Court imposed that price on us. I would like Western Australians to pay the same price for natural gas that the Japanese pay. How does that grab Opposition members? What good is that for industry in the Pilbara?

We have just witnessed the lowest increases in five years in State energy, State housing, and metropolitan water charges. The increase in water charges for country and domestic consumers is the lowest in eight years.

Several members interjected.

Mrs BUCHANAN: The Opposition members do not want to listen.

Several members interjected.

Mrs BUCHANAN: When the members opposite have finished I will continue! The increase in country water supply charges is substantially below the inflation rate and therefore represents a reduction in real terms. However, I would not expect members opposite to understand what this means. The holding down of these charges has been achieved only by exercising considerable financial discipline. It represents a major achievement.

Several members interjected.

Mrs BUCHANAN: This is of importance to the people in the Pilbara. Regardless of what members opposite might think, that fulfils the commitment we made during the election campaign.

Several members interjected.

Mr McNee: All you have done is break your promises.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs Henderson): Order! Order!

Mrs BUCHANAN: I shall not bother to answer the interjections.

Point of Order

Mr TONKIN: I think it is absolutely disgraceful that some of the larrikins opposite are preventing this member from being heard. If they had any decency, interjections would be okay, but someone has been shouting ever since she rose to her feet. I suggest the member should be given some protection.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs Henderson): I ask members to refrain from interjecting constantly. I know interjections are acceptable oc-

asionally, but constant interjections are not necessary.

Debate Resumed

Mrs BUCHANAN: Right throughout last session, members opposite sought to paint a picture of gloom and doom in the Pilbara. The fact is that things are looking up considerably. The iron ore industry has significantly improved. The total ore exports to Japan increased by 26.2 per cent in the six months to the end of June, and profits have increased.

We in the Pilbara are on the road to recovery. The Cliffs Robe River Iron Associates has recently completed its dredging programme on the port of Cape Lambert and when this is ready to go it will enable it to take the megacarriers. It will greatly improve the situation; those carriers will be able to enter Cape Lambert on days when other than spring tides prevail.

Mr Court: How big can the ships be to come in?

Mrs BUCHANAN: The port will take ships of up to 250 000 deadweight tonnes. The substantial investment that has been put in by this company is a measure of its confidence in the future of the area. As well, the Mimi—Mitsui-Mitsubishi—partners have announced their intention to participate in the North-West Shelf gas project and this has given a further ring of confidence to the area. It represents an important breakthrough. As the biggest project in Australia, there is no doubt that it will be a major contributor to the recovery of the economy. I am extremely proud to be the member for the area which contains projects of such importance.

Industrial relations in the Pilbara are at their best ever. Statistics show Australian workers have set a record for the least number of days lost through industrial disputes since such records were first published in 1970. Room still exists for improvement in the mining industry, and I would not dispute that. I welcome the progress made towards the establishment of a consultative council in the Pilbara. That concept is on the brink of becoming a reality and I take this opportunity to congratulate all the people involved in its setting up—the unions, the Government, and the company representatives—for their tremendous efforts. At long last we might see conciliation replacing the confrontation of the past under the previous Government.

Despite attempts by the Opposition to slander Pilbara unionists, I point out that they are responsible, hard-working people who have not only been wrongly maligned in the past, but also, as was recently brought to light by the Minister for Police

and Emergency Services, they have been openly harassed, along with their families, by right-wing extremists. That took place in 1982. Those extremists poisoned family pets and threatened children and wives with violence.

The community was deeply shocked to learn of the intimidation carried out by a right wing organisation. It was organised by a former senior army officer. He paid \$10 000 to an off-duty policeman to harass those people and their families. I hope the exposure of this rightist element will deter further such activities.

Opposition members: Have you proof of that?

Mrs BUCHANAN: Members opposite might like to ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services about that.

I am glad those activities have been exposed, and I hope they will be deterred in future. We can do without that sort of thing in the Pilbara, or indeed, in any part of the State or Australia.

I want to place on record my disgust at the Opposition's anti-land rights campaign. In recent times the leader of the Opposition and his cohorts have been fear-mongering around my electorate. The Liberal Party organised two so-called seminars in my electorate. These seminars were a disgraceful sham. I have never seen anything like them in all my life. The first was held in Port Hedland and the Liberal Party organised it in a disco bar in one of the hotels.

Mr Court: What is wrong with a disco bar?

Mrs BUCHANAN: I will tell the member. For a start, the event was advertised as an open public meeting; everyone was welcome to attend and hear the land rights debate. When people arrived they were asked to pay \$5 to get in. That was to cover the cost of the hire of the place and the cheese and biscuits to be served afterwards. That would have been fair enough if it had been advertised as such. It was not. It caused people considerable embarrassment when they arrived without money. Those who had money took full advantage of the bar facilities available, and by the end of the evening the whole thing degenerated into a drunken slanging match.

Mr Laurance: What about the \$20 a head for a luncheon in the Pilbara with the Premier, a luncheon which he did not attend?

Mrs BUCHANAN: The second so-called seminar was in Karratha, at a similar venue but it was not quite as bad as the first. It was mainly attended by members of the Liberal Party.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs Henderson): Order!

Mrs BUCHANAN: There were four speakers against land rights and only myself to put the other side of the coin.

Mr Laurance interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I asked earlier in this debate that the speaker be heard with a reasonable degree of silence, and that she be given an opportunity to make her comments. It is not necessary to have a continual stream of interjections, particularly from members who have recently entered the Chamber.

Mrs BUCHANAN: The event at Karratha was by no means a fair forum for debate on such a sensitive issue. It was an absolute disgrace to call those farces "seminars".

Mr MacKinnon: What would you call them?

Mrs BUCHANAN: They were meetings set up for political purposes. The chief organiser of the seminars is a man named Lightfoot, a man who has since announced his intention to seek preselection for the seat of Murchison-Eyre. Those meetings were all about politics; they were not seminars on Aboriginal land rights.

Mr McNee: A lot of Liberal Party seminars are about politics.

Mrs BUCHANAN: These were advertised as public seminars, they were not advertised as Liberal Party meetings.

The Liberal Party has a lot to answer for. It is not the Seaman inquiry which will set the Aboriginal people back, as was suggested by the member for Kalamunda when he spoke the other day, it is his own Party's grandstanding around the countryside, trying to whip up ill-feeling and racism against the Aboriginal people.

Mr MacKinnon: That is rubbish and you know it.

Mrs BUCHANAN: The Liberal Party stands condemned in the eyes of the world for its disgraceful actions.

Mr Clarko: Don't you understand that land rights *per se* is racism? It must be.

Mrs BUCHANAN: That is a typical example of what I was talking about.

Mr Clarko: That is what it means; racism is about race.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs BUCHANAN: I would like to commend both the National Aboriginal Conference and all Aboriginal people, and in particular the member for Kimberley, for his calm and reasoned approach to this sensitive and difficult subject.

I turn now to some comments made in the House last night by the member for Nedlands

with regard to the historic town of Cossack. Cossack is also one of my favourite places. I go there often for recreation, and sometimes to fish. The member for Nedlands may be interested to know I never miss catching my dinner, whether fish or the delectable mangrove crabs which are abundant in the area. Perhaps if he is in my electorate sometime he might like me to give him a few lessons in fishing and crabbing.

Mr Court: I will take you up on that.

Mr Clarko: You couldn't avoid catching them there could you?

Mrs BUCHANAN: The member for Nedlands seemed to indicate that he could not catch them.

At other times I go to Cossack for fund raising functions organised by the restoration committee. I launched the first of these some months ago. I also attend fun days and trophy presentations. In the time I have been associated with the Cossack restoration and development committee, I have strongly supported all its activities, including its applications for grants through the heritage commission. Progress on the restoration programme has reached the stage of a contract being let for work on the next building, Galbraiths Store. We are all delighted with the grant and pleased to see the work going on.

The new access road has also been commenced. It is currently under construction. That will make a difference to visitors to Cossack as well as a difference to the local residents.

I am also assisting the committee in its efforts to have power connected to the town. I feel that will give a great lift to the people who visit Cossack and will promote tourism in the area.

The member for Nedlands might correct me if I am wrong, but from what he said last night, he gave the impression that nobody can go to Cossack any more.

Mr Court: I said that much of Cossack had been closed up since January of this year. The courthouse has been closed for months. It is now open on a part-time basis. Temporary measures have been taken to open it up.

Mrs BUCHANAN: That is only one building. Therefore, it is wrong to say that a large part of the town is not accessible.

Mr Court: Would you agree that that is the main tourist attraction?

Mrs BUCHANAN: I would not say that. There have been some difficulties, but I will get to those in a minute. To set the record straight, tourists are still arriving in Cossack in droves. They have been greatly encouraged by the work of the Cossack committee.

It is true to say that there have been domestic problems and that, for a while, the courthouse was not open to public inspection, as the member for Nedlands said last night. The committee was, at that time, in the unfortunate position of having to dismiss Mr and Mrs van Rark who had been employed as caretakers. They had not honoured the terms of their employment agreement, terms which involved the payment of 10 per cent of proceeds paid by the tourists who visit the buildings in return for their free accommodation in the police barracks. They had also demanded a seven-year lease. In fact, they had tried to get the Department of Lands and Surveys to approve a lease of their own drafting without the knowledge of the committee. When that failed, they went off in a great fit of pique and took out a writ against the committee. They said they had spent \$80 000 on the residence and were seeking either a seven-year lease or compensation for the amount they had spent.

That matter is still the subject of litigation. It is a private matter between Mr and Mrs van Rark and the Cossack restoration and development committee.

Mr Court: Do they still live in Cossack?

Mrs BUCHANAN: They still live in Cossack rent-free. They will continue to do so until such time as the court case is settled. That is likely to take a considerable time.

Mr Court: That was the point I was trying to make. There is a domestic problem. Do you not think the problem has to be resolved quickly? It will not be resolved in the courts. Those matters take years. The tourists are going to the area now. Better facilities, such as toilets, are needed straightaway.

Mrs BUCHANAN: For the benefit of the member for Nedlands, all of those things are being attended to at this time. His suggestion that I should take it upon myself to interfere in the legal process is quite improper. I will continue to assist with the committee's work. I think it is unfortunate that the van Raark problem is hampering the committee in its work.

I am completely satisfied with the way the committee is handling this matter. I have great respect for the people who work on the committee. They are people of considerable standing in the community. I think the committee comprises representatives of the shire council and of the Roebourne Tourist Bureau. Business people from that area are also involved with the committee. A member of senior management of Cliffs Robe River Iron Associates is also a member.

I commend the professional way in which the committee has handled the whole situation to date, and also I commend the way it is planning Cossack. After all, tourism is the up-and-coming industry in my electorate. The work those people are doing will greatly benefit the communities in the surrounding towns. It will create jobs and plenty of tourist dollars for the people in the area.

In conclusion, I would like to say how honoured I am and how proud I feel to be part of this Government. I am particularly proud to be here as a representative of the people of the Pilbara. I look forward—

Mr MacKinnon: —to getting the prices down in the Pilbara!

Mrs BUCHANAN: —to an interesting and stimulating session. I said before: The first price I would like to get down is the price of gas. That price was set by Sir Charles Court. I look forward to debating all matters brought forward by the Government. I especially look forward to Parliament Week. I hope that members sitting opposite will calm down and join in the spirit of that event and help to make it the resounding success that it should be.

MR MENSAROS (Floreat) [12.15 p.m.]: I preface my remarks by humbly offering my best wishes to the new Governor of the State (Professor Gordon Reid). I have had the privilege of knowing him. I am convinced he has the maturity and character needed by that high office to put behind him his political views and to serve the State only within the framework of the law.

I begin this debate by refuting the Government's argument which has been so successfully represented and echoed in the media. The event to which I am referring is the resolution at last weekend's Liberal Party Conference, a resolution which related to the privatisation of utilities. I said two days ago that our policy-making mechanism is entirely different from the policy-making mechanism of the Australian Labor Party. The State Conference of the Liberal Party recommends policies to the parliamentary party—the expert body, if one wishes to call it that, which ultimately makes the policies. However, apart from that, the resolution of the conference and the accompanying debate was misquoted, quite deliberately, I am sure, by the Acting Premier. He tried to achieve some political support from the country community because he badly needs it, albeit he does not deserve it.

The resolution of the conference was either wholly or partly to take over the Government instrumentalities which serve as public utilities. Many examples were given. However, the

resolution was not to take over, holus-bolus, instrumentalities such as the State Energy Commission, the Metropolitan Water Authority, or the proposed new water authority of Western Australia, an authority which will cater for both the metropolitan area and country areas. That was explained during the debate at the conference. The Acting Premier did not point that out; he sets himself up as an expert in interpreting the resolutions.

I will give a few examples of those explanations. The Government's role is to provide services where no-one else can provide them and where those services are necessary to maintain the structure of society to a standard acceptable to all people. It was explained at the conference that there are areas in which it is necessary for the Government to play a role. I suppose that most of the utilities in Western Australia were begun by the Government because no-one else was interested. During the period of its development the United States of America had a larger population and larger areas of arable and usable land. Its railways were built by private enterprise. That situation did not apply in WA; there was a need for the services, but no offers to provide them from private enterprise.

Mr Hassell: Many of our railways were privately owned. The Beverley to Midland railway was privately owned.

Mr MENSAROS: Yes, that is right.

A great deal of emphasis was put on competition during this conference. For example, the mover of the motion said, that the SEC and different private companies could compete for a share of the market. Nothing could be more true than that statement.

It was explained that the functions presently undertaken by Government employees could be directed to the private sector, for example, hospital catering and the Hospital Laundry and Linen Service. This also is right. The only example which was given of a direct sale was that of the State Engineering Works—this was not a compulsory sale.

There is no doubt about it: The whole trend of this resolution is to provide the people of Western Australia with more efficient and cheaper services—services which incurred lesser charges. It might appear to be impossible, but it is not. A proposal of this kind is logical.

The resolution also called upon the Government to proceed gradually, step by step and, of course, some of the steps would be to subcontract the work and this is presently done. The work could be subcontracted only if the resulting prices were to be cheaper and if the work was of the same or

higher quality as if it were done by Government employees. It is not impossible, and in fact, if I had continued with my responsibilities as Minister for Water Resources—a position which I held before the Liberal Government ceased to be in office—I had in mind that the next sewerage treatment plant would be operated by private enterprise. If this had occurred, I would have been in a position to compare the functions of a Government instrumentality with that of private enterprise.

The concept of a private power station, a concept which I had initiated six years ago, was not discharged by this Government at all. In fact, it was continued and only recently for practical reasons, not political reasons, it decided to go on a different route with an SEC power station if the aluminium smelter becomes a reality.

The concept behind private power stations is logical. It appears to be difficult for the Acting Premier to understand, but it can be done despite the fact that private enterprise wants to make a profit. Private enterprise enjoys investment allowances. When talking about a private power station, one is talking about hundreds of millions of dollars. The occasional investment allowances which are available from time to time and which were introduced by the Federal Government can amount to 20 to 25 per cent tax deduction on invested capital. If one is talking about \$600 million, it could mean a deduction of \$150 million or more, and that is a large sum in comparison with operating a Government instrumentality exercise, even allowing that the efficiency of the operation was the same and not higher.

It was on this basis that the documents for a private power station had been compiled. Obviously a company which would build a private power station would have other profits and, therefore, a tax deduction on invested capital would make such an exercise attractive, profitable, and still cheaper than the cost of a Government instrumentality, which of course, would not enjoy these benefits.

A very good example is the situation regarding water in Hong Kong. Last night the member for Kalgoorlie referred to his experiences in Hong Kong, but I wonder if he looked at the water situation in that colony. Some of the water is supplied by private enterprise and, based on the tax deduction principle, a private company has built a magnificent dam. If one were to go to Kowloon, one could inspect the dam which is built in the sea. The dam was built up and the sea water was drained from it. The salt vegetation was rolled and the dam was filled with rainwater. The water from that dam partly supplies, perhaps five or six

million people, people who no longer have to cart their water. There is no need to believe that because an exercise has been undertaken by private enterprise, the end result will be lesser quality. Throughout the world where private enterprise has undertaken public utilities the various Government's have drawn up charters under which private enterprise must operate.

In the United States of America, Japan, West Germany, and many other countries in the world, power is supplied by private companies. Nuclear power stations have been undertaken by private companies and most stringent charters have been drawn up in order to ascertain that the companies maintain a high standard.

Of course, there is no need to imagine that a private company could not, in principle, maintain the country water supply. Admittedly a subsidy is currently paid by the State for this service. I do not know whether the Acting Premier knows the extent of this subsidy because initially he referred to \$27 million, but in today's political notes in *The West Australian* he refers to an amount which is almost \$39 million. Perhaps he wanted to be impressive. Those people who are interested in this subject know that the country water undertakings are subsidised by about 50 per cent.

If a private company were to take over the country water supply there is no reason that it should not be subsidised in a similar manner to the way in which the department is subsidised today. If the Acting Premier does not understand that this could happen, I ask what experience he has had? A Statute applies to the country town sewerage undertaking, and it operates under certain subsidies. It has done so for years and it consists of little entities which are subsidised by the Public Works Department. As long as the capital which provided the plant is amortised it can be taken over by the local shire. This sort of thing exists and the Acting Premier need not be surprised because I have suggested something which worked when the previous Government was in office.

There are plenty of subsidies for private enterprise in other countries. Not every airline is Government-owned. In America, Britain, and many other countries, the airline companies are private companies. However, because of the need for public transport, large or small subsidies are applied to maintain the transport services. These companies are more efficient, competitive, and cheaper than others owned by respective Governments.

The Acting Premier's attack was very much taken up by the media. I wonder whether we shall enjoy the same opportunity to show the other side

of the argument in the interests of objectivity. Perhaps the attack was a self-defence mechanism. The Acting Premier must remember that we were the ones who attacked the Government for removing the subsidies for the country water supply undertakings.

When we were dealing with the proposed amalgamation of water authorities, I said in Parliament that in due course the subsidies might be lifted and the country people might be subjected to higher charges. In fact, this has happened because the Minister for Water Resources applied black-mail to the independent water boards.

Firstly, he wanted to amalgamate them into the Metropolitan Water Authority, and when he realised that there was 100 per cent opposition from country areas to this proposal—not merely 80 per cent opposition—he may have been advised that his jack-boot attitude had to be a little tempered and that he should not proceed fully with his proposal. Perhaps it was decided that the water boards could keep their independence, but that he would screw them to the extent that they would need to raise charges, including the three per cent levy which we did not apply, by selling the water at a more expensive rate. I refer, for example, to the Harvey water board. Various other restrictive measures were taken, such as compulsory use of fluoride in the water, whether or not the people wanted it. Therefore, the cost went up to the extent that the water must be sold at a higher price and the Minister for Water Resources is hoping that ultimately the boards will come forward and ask the Government to take them over. That is why the Acting Premier has made his seemingly popular statement against the Liberal Party stating that it has irrational policies which will result in higher prices. Far from it. As I have tried to explain, we have very practical and pragmatic policies when they are expressed in a way different from that chosen by the Acting Premier. The implementation of these policies would result in greater efficiency, better quality, and cheaper prices.

I now refer to the general way in which the Government treats the Opposition in this Parliament. It is something quite new and it is not true to claim that the Government is behaving as we did when in Government. Previously Labor Governments have not behaved in this way. I have sat on both sides of Parliament and I recall that when John Tonkin was the leader of the Labor Party, he always maintained the role and dignity of Parliament, whether he was in Opposition or in Government. He was not the type of person who advocated the importance and dignity of Parliament only when he was in Opposition and

dismissed its importance on account of the Executive Government when he was in Government.

I refer particularly to the manner in which questions are answered. I do not refer to questions without notice. They have become a farce, and if I were not prevented by the custom of this House, I would humbly suggest, Mr Speaker, that you look into the way this has developed, with dorothea dixers and policy statements occupying question time. However, not even the questions on notice are answered or, alternatively, if they are, the answers are misleading to an extent which provides the last proof needed. I will refer to specific cases in due course because my legal background allows me to ask questions in a cross-examination fashion of which the Government is not aware. The Government replies in a nonchalant way that ignores the role of Parliament—indeed, I suggest it is a contempt of Parliament—or it does not answer at all.

I have many examples, but not sufficient time to mention them all. However, I refer to two recent examples dealing with the Metropolitan Water Authority. I asked the Minister whether the Government had instructed the board of the Metropolitan Water Authority to reconsider changes in rates and charges and come back with new nil or lower increase recommendations.

His reply was—

In accordance with section 44(6) of the Metropolitan Water Authority Act, the board resolved the rates to be applicable for 1984-85 and submitted them to the Minister for approval, together with details of underlying assumptions about the progress of certain board initiatives and future economic conditions. The minor subsequent changes agreed by the board did not involve a reduction in the revenues originally proposed by the board.

I did not ask for that information. It could not have happened this way. The situation was that the board recommended a reasonable, small increase and that reflects no merit on the Government because the previous Liberal Government was responsible for that. Four or five years ago, the five-year corporate plan predicted that with proper housekeeping—which we certainly compelled the board to carry out—some re-organisation, and a Bill presented to Parliament, the board could reach the stage where increases in charges in real terms would not be necessary. The five-year corporate plan anticipated that situation. This year, the board having recommended a small increase in dollar terms, the Minister was obviously under instructions from his bosses to pave

the way for an early election and consequently intimidated to the board that it should come back with a nil increase recommendation. I am not suggesting there will be an early election because I hope the Governor will be objective enough to require a good reason before agreeing to such a step. However, the Government is simply paving the way, and in order to do so, it has mortgaged the future. The member for Pilbara was very proud of the Government in this regard. I query how far the Government's responsibility goes in this matter. Does it extend only to the present or to the next election, or does the Government feel responsible for the people of Western Australia, both of this generation and the generations following? That, too, is Government business; not just the political activity of today but the future. What happened with the MWA was close enough to the small rise that was necessary before the Minister demanded a second recommendation. I have the books and accounts in my head; I do not need to look them up or refer to leaking documents upon which the Government, when in Opposition, was constantly relying.

The Government also fiddled the books by not allowing for any depreciation for the 95 per cent completed Point Peron sewerage outfall project. So the nil increase is really mortgaging the future.

These answers to parliamentary questions are untrue to the extent that although it might not be proved judicially, they are still misleading the Parliament.

On the same subject, I asked the Minister whether he would issue these five-year corporate plans in the future, and if so, would they be issued at the same time as they always have been; that is within the first three months of the year. This is an independent document outlining the future plans of the water authority and its assignments.

What happened this year? It was not issued. Why was it not issued? Because the Government did not know how to fiddle the price increases. I do not want a document stating what the position ought to be. We should decide the price and then come out with the document.

I asked the Minister, "If these documents are still to be published, could they be published in the first quarter of the year?" We do not want to wait until it can be seen that the objective five year plan policy does not contradict the Government's political decision on rates and charges.

What does the Minister answer? He says the decision to publish a corporate development plan in July 1984 was made by the board. Of course it was made by the board, after the Minister hit its members on the head. The Minister further says,

"My understanding is that the board of the water authority of Western Australia has not yet decided when it will publish the plan in future years."

Just look at the composition of this board of the new Water Authority. Apart from the chairman, there will not be a single independent member. I think these matters are sufficiently important to bring them up here in the Address-in-Reply debate so that at least I should be on record and, in the future, students of political history of Western Australia should be able to ascertain the situation.

Amendment to Motion

For these reasons I move—

That the following words be added to the motion—

But we regret to inform Your Excellency that the Government especially the Acting Premier, instead of accepting the traditional role of the Opposition for checks and balances, takes the Opposition's serious endeavour for cheaper and more efficient public utility services so far provided by the Government, out of context misleading the Parliament and the public.

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Leader of the Opposition) [12.45 p.m.]: I second the amendment. The Acting Premier appears to be incapable of stating things clearly without misrepresentation. We have had the example in the last couple of days of his misrepresentation in relation to the cost of the brochure which his department put out to try to woo the submarine contracts to Western Australia.

As it seems to be necessary to do so because of the many misrepresentations, I repeat at the outset that the Government has our full support in its endeavours to bring the defence contracts to Western Australia, and in particular the submarine contract. If the Government wishes us to co-operate in any particular way in making our support apparent, or in taking any action, the Acting Premier can be assured that we will approach the matter in a positive way.

Mr Evans: The same sort of support you tried to use to scuttle the negotiations on the aluminium smelter.

Mr HASSELL: That is nonsense, and the Minister knows it. The Minister knows that we have been responsible for the aluminium smelter. We spent years working on it, and we brought the project to a position which enabled the Government to go ahead with the smelter. I hope the Government does go ahead with it on a proper

basis. Let me assure the Minister we would have brought it into operation several years ago if we had been prepared to give away the electricity. That was always possible.

But let me stick to the point, because time is short. The point is that the Acting Premier allowed it to be represented that the cost of the brochure was \$10 000 or \$12 000 when in reality we have now had it revealed it was \$23 900. That misrepresentation is equivalent to the downright misrepresentation we witnessed in relation to the Labor Party's building in Wanneroo Road where there is to be a Chinese restaurant.

Mr Bryce: How many times will you dredge up the same old story?

Mr HASSELL: This was contrary to the town planning scheme.

Several members interjected.

Mr HASSELL: It was contrary to the agreement with the former Government.

Several members interjected.

The **DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Order!

Mr HASSELL: It was contrary to the form signed by the Premier himself.

Several members interjected.

Mr HASSELL: I might tell the Acting Premier that I found it something of a compliment to hear on the 7.45 a.m. news on Monday that the Government was attacking the Opposition in no less than four items. The Government had absolutely nothing to offer the State by way of news, except four items of an attack on the Opposition. I felt very comfortable on Monday morning that we were on the right track. The Government was worried and it had put its whole machine into operation to attack the Opposition. It had nothing to offer, except some minor item.

I indicate that I can support the Acting Premier—

Mr Bryce: Are you supporting me?

Mr HASSELL: What is the Minister referring to?

Several members interjected.

The **DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Order!

Mr HASSELL: Let me try to make the point that on one matter I can agree with the Acting Premier, and that is that the word "privatisation" in a dreadful word.

Mr Bryce: It is one I quite relish.

Mr HASSELL: I hope that the language will soon provide alternatives of equal meaning, because to me this word does not carry the meaning

it is intended to carry, and it does not convey an important message.

I thank the member for Floreat for having moved the amendment which allows me to correct the deliberate misrepresentations made by the Acting Premier, and to put onto the record very clearly and very simply one thing, and that is that our policies in relation to getting work done in the private sector are aimed only at a reduction in the size and the cost of government and a reduction in the burden on the consumer.

That is the sole objective; that is what it is about. The policy has been formulated and put together, but it is not a final policy. Unlike the policies that come out of the Labor Party Conference, the policies which come out of our conference do not bind members of Parliament. However, the policies being developed are directed solely towards the betterment of Government services, to the improvement of efficiency, and the reduction of costs. They have nothing to do with any of the scurrilous misrepresentations that have been put in train by the Government's media machine in the last two days through the mouth of the Acting Premier and the Minister for Water Resources. The idea that our policies would increase costs is a deliberate falsehood, because there is absolutely nothing in those policies which is designed to or which will increase costs to the consumer.

Mr Tonkin: They must do. Come on! Come clean!

Mr HASSELL: It is nonsense to suggest that policies which are, of their essence, designed to increase efficiency, improve competition, and improve accountability will increase costs.

Mr Bryce: You have made a big blue.

Mr Tonkin: Where will the \$39 million come from? Will it come out of the pockets of the people?

Mr Bryce: You'll wear it!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! If the interjections came one at a time, I would be able to listen to them.

Mr HASSELL: The Acting Premier's lurid claims are sheer misrepresentation and he knows it.

Mr Tonkin: What about the \$39 million? Where will you get that from?

Mr HASSELL: Never have I proposed and never has the Liberal Party proposed that the Metropolitan Water Authority would be sold to private enterprise, because in a practical sense it could not be. Neither have we proposed that other essential governmental services should be sold to

private enterprise, because they could not be and it would not be practical.

What we have proposed is that these services should be made accountable and, where possible, more efficient private enterprise elements should be introduced into them. It is interesting to note the screaming attacks of the Acting Premier on proposals which are not entirely dissimilar—although they come with different intentions and motivations—from those of the Premier himself. Apparently the very short memory of the Acting Premier has allowed him to forget the massive headline which appeared in *The West Australian* of 9 February this year which said, "Burke floats government sell-off idea". The article went on to say—

Private enterprise in WA may soon be invited to take a share in some State Government businesses.

The Premier, Mr Burke, has indicated that the first public enterprise to be the target of a radical change in Labor's economic philosophy could be the State Government Insurance Office.

On 26 March we saw the headline "Government looks to raise efficiency" in the same newspaper, but we have not seen any action of that nature yet. That article reads, in part, as follows—

The Premier, Mr Burke, said yesterday that the Government would seek extra revenue through an asset management programme.

We have seen headline after headline about all this nonsense which has not happened and is not likely to happen.

What kind of absurd propaganda is it for the Premier to talk about selling off the SGIO within about two weeks of introducing legislation to increase its franchise and give it more to do? The complete stupidity of it all defies description; but that is the way the Government operates.

I make it clear to the Government that our policies are directed towards getting Government out of business where it has no place and getting the Government out of a diamond mine which has all the hallmarks of a Government deal in a situation where the Government is using the taxpayers' money to support something in which it should not have been involved in the first place.

It is interesting to read a letter which is only a few days old which was circulated by one of the stock and share brokers in Perth to its clients. That letter refers to the prospectus for the Western Australian diamond trust and says, in part—

The investment now offered has two unique features to it which considerably enhance the investor appeal of this resource project which is not available via the other two Stock Exchange listed participants, CRA Limited and Ashton Mining Limited. They being, firstly a guarantee by the Western Australian Government to a minimum annual distribution equivalent to at least 8.0 cents per fully paid unit for a period of over seven years, and secondly Trust distributions in the years to 31 December 1989 are expected to be tax free in the hands of unit holders at least to the extent of the Government guaranteed minimum distribution.

In other words, the whole of the deal has been held up and put together on the basis of the taxpayer guarantee in competition with investments apparently available on the Stock Exchange. The Government's idea of privatisation—of private involvement in the business sector—is to set up a unit trust with a Government guarantee based on the taxpayers' liability which is, in addition, a tax dodge. In case the Acting Premier is still under some misapprehension as to our policy plans—

Mr Bryce: You sound just like Gough Whitlam when you speak!

Mr HASSELL: —let me repeat that our objective is to make the public utilities of this State effectively accountable and subject to the same tests as to their efficiency and viability as is the private sector.

In case the Acting Premier has forgotten, the business sector remains concerned about the level of rates and taxes charged for water, electricity, and other Government services.

The Government itself has recognised a need for the restructuring of the State Energy Commission in terms of its supervision and is proposing to introduce legislation through the Minister for Minerals and Energy to restructure the SEC, so that a supervisory body is imposed over the top of the SEC in its role as an energy producer and supplier. Provided that legislation is brought forward in the right way, it will be considered very favourably by the Opposition.

The point is that no effective mechanism presently exists by which Government utilities are tested as to their efficiency and the level of their prices. That was a problem when we were in office and it remains a problem. It is an issue we are determined to confront.

Those are the issues we are talking about in terms of our policy development. We believe there is a need to find a way—I have not yet found a total answer—to make the SEC, the Metropolitan

Water Authority, and some of the Government instrumentalities accountable for their performance and responsible for justifying their increases in prices.

As I have pointed out in this House previously, it is not satisfactory for the SEC and the Metropolitan Water Board to go along to the Government each year and say, "We think it will cost us an extra 15 per cent to conduct our operations this year and we want to spend that money, so you impose that charge". The only test then imposed is the political test of acceptability to the Government and the capacity of the Minister to analyse figures and look at what has been put forward. However, businesses in the private sector cannot increase their charges in that way, because they know that, if they put up the level of their charges, they move into the context of competition and they may not be able to win the same orders they won previously and they are open to scrutiny by someone else who supplies the same products.

We are looking seriously at the Government monopolies which provide services in an area where there is no competition or level of comparability with equal services and where the consumers have no choice as to where they will go to obtain that service.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.15 p.m.

Mr HASSELL: I will conclude my remarks to the Government, and in particular the Acting Premier, in this way: We do not mind if the Acting Premier wants to advertise our policies throughout the State. What we object to very strongly is his gross misrepresentations and distortions of those policies. We do not mind if he attacks our policies for what they are, but we do mind if he attacks them for what they are not.

The simple truth of the matter is that we have put together some policy options which are being considered by our party. None of those options is binding at this stage. Our policy development relates to the future disengagement of Government from as many sectors of industry and services as possible.

What we are concerned to do is to reduce the costs and the burdens of Government; to reduce the burden of taxation and the burden of Government charges. What we are concerned to do is to make Government utilities and Government monopolies accountable and to make them justify their charges effectively. What we are concerned to do is to ensure that the private sector is given the opportunity to exercise its creativity and its vigour to the maximum extent possible.

We believe tremendous opportunities are available for the future of this State; we believe

tremendous opportunities are available for preparing for that future and to allow private enterprise to succeed as it has done in the past and to bring us a new era of industrial success, growth and development, all of which is directed to the provision of employment, and a higher standard of living for Western Australians.

That is what our policies are about and that is what they will continue to be about. We will not allow them to be misrepresented or misquoted in the way the Acting Premier has done for gross political reasons. Of course, he is motivated by politics in trying to cast a slur on our policies and in trying to misrepresent them; but he will not succeed in doing so because it is downright untrue for him to say some of the things he has said.

When the media is involved in publicising the Acting Premier's views, as was *The West Australian* this morning with its article about the statements made in this House by the Minister for Water Supplies when commenting on the Metropolitan Water Authority, it does have an obligation to have regard for statements which have already been made by us in correction of the misrepresentations previously made on these very subjects. I trust we will see a proper balance in the Press reports of what is said about these things.

What was decided at our State Conference was a motion of the State Conference—there is no retraction and no backing away from it. It is a motion as part of a policy-development process. It does not bind members. However, I repeat: What is most important of all is that all our policies are directed to reducing the burden on the consumer, the burden on the taxpayer of the cost of electricity, water and other charges. Where those things can be carried out more effectively in the private sector, either in whole or in part, it will be our policy that they should be carried out in the private sector. It will be our policy that there should be contracting out. It might surprise the Acting Premier to know that one of the most hopeful areas relates to hospitals, where studies have shown dramatic opportunities to reduce the burden of costs.

MR BRYCE (Ascot—Acting Premier) [2.21 p.m.]: I could scarcely believe my ears when the Leader of the Opposition was speaking. He has engaged in a monumental bleat because we on this side have decided that we are going to be certain to see to it that the people who live in the country districts of Western Australia understand what is happening today inside the Liberal Party and understand the direction in which it is heading. The headlines that followed the conference of the Liberal Party last weekend in both *The Australian*

and *The West Australian* just began to point to the truth.

I remind the Leader of the Opposition of those headlines. He did not seek to make a statement in this House to say that it simply was not true that those agencies—the long list identified in those articles—to be “privatised” were not in fact to go to the private sector.

Mr Hassell: I don't think you understand what the word means.

Mr Tonkin: There is no such word, for a start.

Mr BRYCE: He has himself just said there is no withdrawing from this position, and I think we should spend a few moments examining the implications of that concept for people in country communities, for farmers, for businessmen, and individual consumers.

Mr Hassell: You are not going to mislead the Opposition. You have just been told how wrong you are and now you are going to repeat it all at this stage.

Mr BRYCE: We intend to make sure that, over the next 12 to 18 months every country citizen in this State discovers what form of uglies are alive and well inside the Liberal Party, just how extreme they have become in asserting their presence, and in fact the truth about those other people who are being encouraged by the man who is currently the Leader of the Opposition. He cannot come to this place and say that because we are determined to see that people understand the true import of those sorts of decisions, were they ever to be put into practice—

Mr Mensaros: What utter nonsense, “true import”, misleading!

Mr Hassell: He is telling simple downright lies. That is what he is doing.

Mr BRYCE: The Leader of the Opposition is obviously stunned. He knows he has made the biggest political mistake of his life in associating himself with this nonsense. This Leader of the Opposition should have come out in the Press on Monday and dissociated himself from that nonsense if he believed that there was in fact any substance in what he has just told the Chamber.

Let us look at what some of the consequences will be. I will not spend very long on the wording of the actual amendment to the Address-in-Reply. I have circulated a copy of it to members of the Opposition and I would be surprised if members of the Press Gallery have not got a copy of it. The wording of that amendment is the most incomprehensible jumble of words I have seen in my career in this place.

Mr Tonkin: It is a disgrace.

Mr BRYCE: It is a disgrace to the performance of the Parliament. Those words mean absolutely nothing, and I find it hard to believe that they have come from the member for Floreat. I find it hard to believe indeed. I can only assume that what he did today was—

Mr Hassell: You have just told another story because you said you circulated it to the Opposition and you didn't.

Mr BRYCE: I said "to members".

Mr Hassell: You said you circulated it to members of the Opposition.

Mr BRYCE: That was a gross and tragic slip of the tongue on my part.

Mr Williams: You do that all the time.

Mr Hassell: It was a Freudian slip. It was a report of expectation under your guidance.

Mr BRYCE: A small slip of the tongue which I am sure members will forgive. I cannot believe that someone as intelligent as the member for Floreat worded that resolution; I can only assume that it was done by one of the backroom boys in one hell of a hurry to be part of the Opposition's *modus operandi* that has been used in the last couple of days.

The member for Narrogin moved an amendment about which he said absolutely nothing. At the last minute, he just tossed it in. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition followed suit a day later and the actual substance of his contribution to the debate bore absolutely no relevance whatsoever to the amendment. We can only assume somebody gave the amendment to the member for Floreat and I am very surprised indeed that he would put his name to it in the way it is worded. He is a competent, intelligent individual, and the wording of the amendment simply defies understanding. It refers to checks and balances. The only check that members opposite are afraid of is that they do not have any check on the extent and the success with which the Government is establishing its credibility in this State. If they expect to use this place to try to destroy the Government's credibility and use it in a checks and balances sense in that way, all I can say is that this week has been a week of monumental failure for the Leader of the Opposition and his frontbench troops because they have not made an impression. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition departed from the Chamber at question time on at least two of the last three days.

Let us look at the actual implications. This Leader of the Opposition and his parliamentary extremists inside the Liberal Party will be reminded of this resolution in country towns at

every opportunity. It is a savage attack upon country people.

Mr Hassell: You are telling lies, and you know it.

Mr BRYCE: This is an absolute matter of principle.

Mr Hassell: You are telling lies and—

Mr Court: You are absolutely pathetic.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: He is unprincipled and I expect—

Withdrawal of Remark

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Acting Premier to resume his seat. It came to my notice during that exchange of interjections that the Leader of the Opposition did on three occasions use an unparliamentary term and I ask him to withdraw it.

Points of Order

Mr HASSELL: On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, I point out to you that on a previous occasion the Speaker has ruled that while it is unparliamentary to call a member of Parliament a liar it is not unparliamentary to say that he is telling lies.

Mr Pearce: And you said, "And he knows it", which means it was deliberate.

Mr Carr: You also said "liar" a few minutes ago.

Mr HASSELL: I did not.

Mr Carr: The previous time you did.

Mr Tonkin: They are not lies anyway.

Mr HASSELL: The point of order is not in accordance with the ruling of the Speaker and I am not bound to withdraw the statement.

Mr Tonkin: Toss him out.

Withdrawal of Remark Continued

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that at the moment I am the Acting Speaker. It has been ruled on numerous occasions in the past that the word "lies" is unparliamentary and I ask that he withdraw it.

Points of Order

Mr MacKINNON: On a point of order Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr Tonkin: Move dissent!

Mr MacKINNON:—I want to take issue with your comment and just point out that the Speaker has ruled accordingly previously. I personally do not agree with his ruling and you may not agree

with his ruling, but the system of Parliament will not work if successive Speakers, Deputy Speakers, and Acting Speakers rule in different ways. We as members of the Parliament must have a consistency of approach and I urge you to reconsider. If you wish to leave the Chair for a while to seek the assistance of the clerks, we would be happy with that course. I am just putting forward a point of view, thank you very much.

Mr Tonkin: It is supposed to be a point of order, not a point of view.

Mr MacKINNON: If you want to examine the previous Speaker's ruling I personally would appreciate it if you did that in the interests of ensuring that we do have a consistent approach in the Parliament so that all members on both sides are treated fairly because, after all, that is what we would expect from the Chair in this House.

Mr Pearce: The Leader of the Opposition should withdraw when he is told to do so.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I rule that there is no point of order.

Mr RUSHTON: On a point of order—

Mr Tonkin: The Speaker is on his feet. Sit down.

Withdrawal of Remark Continued

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: For the third time, I ask that the Leader of the Opposition withdraw the term "lies" which he used in an interjection.

Point of Order

Mr RUSHTON: The point raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is well made in the sense that we have had the experience in reverse when the Speaker ruled contrary to your ruling. He put it down in *Hansard* that that term, objectionable as it is to me in the normal conduct of this House, is now practice in this House, and members on the Government side have used that same word. That is why the Leader of the Opposition has used it against members on that side. I support the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's request—and it is a thoughtful and respectful one—to check that point and ensure there is some consistency in the rulings.

Withdrawal of Remark Continued

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will read to members two Standing Orders before I again ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw. I draw the attention of members to Standing Order 131 which states—

No member shall use offensive or unbecoming words in reference to any Member of the House.

Standing Order 132 states—

All imputations of improper motives, and all personal reflections on Members, shall be considered highly disorderly.

For the last time, I ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw his remark.

Mr HASSELL: I withdraw the word at your command. I object to your ruling.

Mr Tonkin: Without qualification!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition well knows that a withdrawal must be made in an unqualified manner. I ask him to do that.

Mr HASSELL: I withdraw the remark.

Point of Order

Mr HASSELL: Having complied with your request, I ask again that you consult the Speaker as to his ruling in a previous case.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I would appreciate the Leader of the Opposition's retaining his seat and allowing the Parliament to continue. If he continues to reflect on my ruling, I will be forced to take action about which he, the Parliament, and I will probably be upset.

Mr HASSELL: You know very well I am not reflecting on your ruling.

Debate (on amendment to motion) Resumed

Mr BRYCE: This once great political party cannot suffer the pain of being in Opposition.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr BRYCE: As so often happens across the country to the Liberal Party in Opposition, extremism and all its ugliness wells to the surface, and the Liberal Party has gone into a tailspin.

Several members interjected.

Mr Old: You are a little prick.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRYCE: The people who have a hold on the decision-making process in the Liberal Party—they call it the lay party—are the friends of the Leader of the Opposition. He said they could not walk away from the decisions that have been made and they would not walk away.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRYCE: Let us look at what the implementation of these policies would mean to country people.

Mr Old: You would not know what one looked like.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: When I was so rudely interrupted by the unparliamentary language of the Leader of the Opposition—

Several members interjected.

Mr Hassell: You continue to tell untruths.

Mr BRYCE: —I was about to say they would amount to an assault on the security of country people.

Several members interjected.

Mr Hassell: You cannot help yourself.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I can understand members being slightly disturbed both at the actions which have just occurred and at the tone of the speech. In view of that, I intend to allow interjections. I do not intend to allow the House to lower itself to the level it has reached in the last few minutes. I ask members to interject one at a time and not in a continuous stream.

Mr Old: Will you roster them?

Mr BRYCE: A concept that was dreamed up for this Liberal Party Conference would wreak havoc on businesses in country towns.

Mr Hassell: You are telling untruths again.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: There would not be three issues closer to the hearts and minds of country businessmen and women and farmers than those of water, electricity and freight rates.

Mr Hassell: Exactly! You put them up by 30 per cent last year.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: They are the lifelines to the viability of business and the farms themselves. What are the direct implications of such an assault on power, water, and freight costs of this little expedition into ideological extremism to privatise this lovely list of agencies which have over the years been the underpinning of the security of country people?

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: I can tell members opposite we will go to great pains and great lengths to see this material is delivered to the people of country areas in this State.

Mr Hassell: You will be telling more untruths.

Mr Old: You underrate them. They remember what you did last year, you little prick.

Mr Hassell: You are telling untruths.

Mr Blaikie: He is a bucket-mouth.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: Do not members opposite bleed when they realise they have made such a blue? They are out of step with the people they presumably have been protecting all these years.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: These are the numbers that will cause nightmares for members opposite when they realise—

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Once again I ask members to have consideration for people in the gallery, the member on his feet, *Hansard*, and everyone else who is involved and is having extreme difficulty in hearing the Acting Premier. If members must interject, I ask that they do so in a reasonably orderly manner.

Mr BRYCE: If the water services to the rural parts of Western Australia were to run at break-even, and denying any scope for profitability—

Mr Old: You are a cheat.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: Let us reflect on what it would do to costs. The cost of water in country towns would go up by 69 per cent. I am talking about break-even and not taking into consideration the question of profitability. Sewerage charges would rise by 34 per cent, and drainage charges by 211 per cent.

Mr Old: What did they rise last year?

Mr BRYCE: Irrigation charges would rise by 225 per cent.

Several members interjected.

Mr Hassell: Are you telling more untruths?

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: We ought to consider in some small detail what would happen to electricity charges in country towns. I repeat I am not suggesting for a minute there is an element in these figures catering for profitability. This is the break-even point.

Several members interjected.

Mr Old: What was the rise in sewerage rates in the country last year?

Mr BRYCE: Under the uniform tariff policy, SEC country consumers are subsidised by a total of \$63 million per annum. If the actual cost of providing this service were charged, each country

consumer would pay annually, on average—and this is a wonderful figure for members opposite to contemplate—an additional sum of \$292 for electricity.

What all of us are entitled to know in respect of this interesting issue is where the National Country Party stands.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: What we are told so often is that the party we are talking about now, as the natural constituency of the famous old organisation, is currently split in half. The National Party members are not in the Chamber today.

Mr Old: They are not split.

Mr BRYCE: I would like to know from the member for Katanning and the member for Narrogin where they stand on this issue.

Mr Old: Do you want me to answer this?

Mr BRYCE: Yes.

Mr Old: Be quiet for a while and tell us by what percentage the charges for sewerage, drainage, water, and electricity went up last year. That is what you are basing your stupid argument on. You have no brains.

Mr BRYCE: The former Minister has forgotten what side of the House he is on. He did not answer the question.

Mr Old: You answer the question.

Mr BRYCE: Does the Country Party support that proposition? Let me tell members what happened to the National Country Party when it was in Government. It was absorbed by the Liberal Party and nothing was left of it. There was a flicker left, but that flicker became the National Party. What has happened to the National Country Party?

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: It was consumed by the Liberal Party when it was in Government. I am asking the two members sitting opposite whether they support the proposition which the lunatic fringe of the Liberal Party managed to get through its conference. The members will not say a word, because both of them are closet Liberals and are at the extreme end of the Liberal Party.

Several members interjected.

Mr Old: When we saw the proposition put forward we were prepared to comment on it, but we are not prepared to comment on some half-baked newspaper report.

Mr BRYCE: The reality is that the Liberal Party has made its biggest blunder for about 30 years, and unless the Leader of the Opposition and his frontbench colleagues immediately dissociate

themselves from that policy, they will witness their credibility outside the metropolitan area evaporate in an unbelievably short time. The country people will come to understand what the implications of that sort of political lunacy is, and I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that it will be in very specific detail.

Let us consider some of the absurdity of the actual proposition that was reported in *The Australian*. It stated that the proposer of this proposition at the conference said—

Mr Blaikie: Who was the proposer?

Mr BRYCE: The proposer was a Mr Mark McAuliffe. The report hit list as it was called, included the SGIO, the State Shipping Service, Westrail, the SEC, the MTT, the R&I Bank, the WA Tourist Commission, the Public Works Department—which provides water to country areas—and others. It stated that they were but a few of the bodies whose functions could successfully be transferred to the private sector. There is no doubt in anyone's mind that this is the beginning. I hope I have accurately quoted that statement because I do not want to do that person a disservice by misquoting him. He is alleged to have said that the workers in these agencies need have no fear of losing their jobs. In fact, he was reported as saying that, by virtue of transferring to the private sector, there would be more jobs and the terms and conditions of employment would be better. Can members imagine that if profitability is to be a condition, on top of superior employee conditions, what it would do to the cost charges in country towns?

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: I can only assume, knowing the member who moved this amendment, that something was lost in the translation because it does not read as it would have read if he had written it.

Several members interjected.

Mr Mensaros: You do not understand it.

Mr BRYCE: The whole point is that we on this side of the House not only understand the words of the conference motion that was carried, but we also understand the Opposition's motives. The Government will make sure that people in the country regions of Western Australia understand it.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: Let me remind the vocal member for Mt. Marshall that the residents of Kalgoorlie pay only 50c per kilolitre for water and the cost of supplying a kilolitre of water to Kalgoorlie is \$4.50. If the member for Mt. Marshall is concerned about the Agaton water supply, he must

remember that by the time the water reached the tap at the end of the reticulation it would be liquid gold and consumers would not be able to pay for it if it were privatised.

I have been reasonable in my argument and I have not argued about the basic question of profitability. Opposition members can argue amongst themselves. If we assume a reasonable profit margin of 30 to 60 per cent is required, I can only assume what would happen if it were to break even. I can leave it to the imagination of members to work out what the real cost would be if the margin of profit, yet to be determined, was imposed upon this argument.

MR MacKINNON (Murdoch—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [2.47 p.m.]: I am particularly pleased the Government is taking the attitude it is to the proposal that was put up at the Liberal Party State conference last weekend because it will show the people of Western Australia the difference between the two parties. The Liberal Party of Western Australia believes in the efficiency of the private sector and in the ability of the private sector to provide services and jobs to the community at a much more efficient rate than the Government. The Acting Premier has clearly shown the House today that he has no understanding whatsoever of what profitability means. Also, he has no understanding of the resolution that was passed at the conference. He has certainly given us a great issue on which to fight the next State election and the people will know who is standing up for the private sector and who is not.

It is clear from the speech made by the Acting Premier that he will attack the private sector at every opportunity. The Government claims it is a so-called friend of the private sector, but the Government's actions and the Acting Premier's speech show that that is not the case.

I will refer to the country areas in a moment and we will see which parties look after those people.

The Opposition stands firmly behind the private sector and always will. It supports to the fullest extent the involvement of the private sector in the delivery of services to Western Australia. If anyone has made the biggest mistake ever today, it is the Acting Premier. He has put his foot firmly and squarely behind the socialist principles of his party and has shown that his party is clearly opposed to the private sector.

For the benefit of the Acting Premier I would like to read to the House the words of the motion which was passed at the conference. They are as follows—

That this conference supports the implementation of privatisation programmes across a broad spectrum of government functions:—

- (i) Specifically we support the total or partial transfer to the private sector of those functions of government which can be provided by the private sector; . . .

It does not say anything about selling off the employment of Western Australians, but it talks about the total or partial transfer to the private sector of those functions of Government which can be provided by the private sector.

In other words, in the view of the Liberal Party, there are parts of all those agencies which must be looked at with a view of allowing the private sector to provide those services. That is a tremendously responsible attitude to take, the consequence of which is that water charges or sewerage charges or electricity charges will not go up by such a large percentage. In fact the consequences of our policies would be for charges either to fall, or to go up by a lesser amount than would normally be the case, because those services which were previously carried out by the Government would now be carried out by private sector operators in a much more effective and efficient manner. Otherwise there would be no purpose in transferring these functions to the private sector.

Let us look at the effect on the country people which the Acting Premier has talked about. Who are the people who have imposed FID on the people of Western Australia, particularly the country people and those in the north of the State who are affected more than any other sector of our community? Which sector was it which imposed FID on service clubs throughout Western Australia, on parents and citizen's bodies, on the Country Women's Association of WA (Inc) and all those other voluntary organisations which work for the benefit of the country community? It was not the Opposition parties, it was this Acting Premier and his Government which imposed FID on all those sections of the community.

Which Government was it that imposed a dramatic increase in tobacco taxes on the people of Western Australia? Which Government was it that increased fuel charges? In fact which Government was it that promised to bring down fuel costs at the last election by—how much was it?—I think 2c per litre.

Mr Spriggs: It is certainly the dearest in Australia.

Mr MacKINNON: It is the dearest in Australia right now. So much for this Government. So much for the Acting Premier who claims

to have the interests of the country people at heart. Who was it who increased electricity charges by 15 per cent last year? Which party is it that will disfranchise the bulk of country Western Australians through so-called electoral reform?

An Opposition member: The party opposite.

Mr MacKINNON: It has the interests of Western Australians placed at the bottom of its priority list. At every opportunity it is attacking the country people in Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

Mr MacKINNON: This electoral strategy will disfranchise all those Western Australians who rely so heavily on members on this side of Parliament to represent their interests.

The Acting Premier, as I said before, has done this side of the House a great service today by his speech. He has shown he has no understanding of our policies in relation to those authorities and what they are all about. What they are about is people. What we on this side of the House are interested in is, firstly, a more efficient use of the Government's resources. This will necessarily lead to greater savings in the taxpayer's dollar; greater savings in the taxpayer's dollar means less taxation, which means greater profitability, which means more investment, which means more long-term jobs for the people in this community about whom this Government seems so indifferent: The unemployed.

Our policies are all about principles and about people; about people, at the end of the day, throughout Western Australia about whom we care, particularly those people in the country areas. For the Acting Premier to claim that our policies will savagely impact upon the country people is nothing less than dishonest, to say the least. I would use much harsher terms if I had the Speaker's ruling in front of me.

Mr Speaker, for your information I would just like to read a Press statement released by the Leader of the Opposition and dated 31 July. It clearly summarises this issue and shows exactly where the stance of the Acting Premier leaves the Government at present. It says this—

The sole objective of the Liberal Party's policy for the privatisation of Government services was to reduce the cost to consumers, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Bill Hassell, said today.

"The policy will not be implemented in such a way that it would add to the cost to consumers in the city or the country," Mr. Hassell said.

For the Acting Premier to get up and say the direct opposite is nothing more nor less than being totally dishonest. He is misrepresenting what the Opposition is trying to do. What we are attempting to do is stated in the first sentence of that Press release; namely, to reduce the costs to consumers in the interests of all Western Australians, particularly those without a job.

The Press release went on—

"The claim by the Acting Premier, Mr. Bryce, that privatisation would multiply the costs of essential services three or four times is utter nonsense.

"It is the scare tactic of a man who is unable or unwilling to understand a new idea."

He has never had a new idea, that is why he would not understand one.

The statement continues—

Mr. Hassell said that the privatisation policy did not call on the Government to abandon its responsibility to ensure the provision of essential services throughout the State.

Nor did it propose that the Government should abandon its responsibility to ensure equity in charges between city and country consumers.

After all, it was our Government which ensured equity for the people in the country areas.

The Press statement goes on—

"The policy calls for the Government to use private enterprise in the provision of services wherever that will reduce the cost, improve the service, or both," Mr Hassell said.

"The policy is not based on political doctrine, but on hard-headed practical economics.

"Its objective is to reduce costs and that will be its result."

Mr Bryce was wrong when he said the present arrangements whereby city and country consumers paid the same for electricity would be affected by the policy.

He was also wrong when he said that consumers of country water, sewerage, irrigation and drainage services would have to absorb the \$27 million taxpayer subsidy for the services. The effect of the policy would be that the subsidy burden would be reduced, or at least contained, as work was carried out more efficiently.

The prospects for reducing the huge M.T.T. deficit by privatisation were strong. Private bus companies consistently made

profits before a Labor Government put them out of business in favour of the M.T.T. which had been making losses ever since.

"De-regulation of transport has already proved its worth to country people and I can assure the public that our privatisation policy will be even more beneficial," Mr Hassell said.

I conclude my remarks by once again saying that I am very pleased to see that the Government has come out quite clearly as being opposed to our policy of involving the private sector more in the running of Government. It has come out clearly against our policy which will lead to a much more efficient operation of Government, but one which places a much lower burden on the taxpayer and which will ensure many more long-term jobs are created for all those Western Australians who today, under this Government's policy, sadly do not have a job.

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Leader of the House) [2.59 p.m.]: I did not think I would hear a debate in this House degenerate to the degree it did while the Deputy Premier was speaking.

Mr Old: He is the one who made it degenerate.

Several members interjected.

Mr TONKIN: I am referring to the interjection by the member for Katanning-Rowe when he called the Acting Premier a little prick.

Mr Old: I said "you little prig", and you know it as well as anyone in this House. You are the most degenerate person in this House.

Mr TONKIN: Members can see what I mean.

Mr Old: You are trying to say something that was never said in this House and you know it.

Mr TONKIN: I do not know it.

Mr Old: You are a congenital teller of untruths.

Mr TONKIN: Not only that, but he said also that the Acting Premier was degenerate.

Mr Old: He is.

Mr TONKIN: The Leader of the Opposition leaned across to the member for Katanning-Roe and said, "Say it again". That indicates their standard of behaviour. If the member denies that, I will not call him a liar in this House, because that word is unparliamentary, but the next time we meet outside, I shall do so.

Mr Old: You wouldn't be game to.

Mr TONKIN: Would I not?

Mr Old: You don't have that sort of stomach.

Mr TONKIN: Remember those words.

Mr Old: I shall.

Mr TONKIN: The figures we have been given have been described as lies and untruths.

Mr Rushton: They are distortions of the facts.

Mr TONKIN: I shall explain how they were arrived at. They were arrived at by senior officers of the Public Works Department—the same advisers who advised the conservative Government.

Mr Hassell: They were arrived at on the basis of false assumptions and you have been told they were false about 10 times, but you keep repeating the untruths that you are peddling.

Mr TONKIN: Let us look at the figures for the country utilities under my portfolio. The estimated loss for 1983-84 for water is \$26.4 million; country sewerage, \$2.86 million; irrigation, \$6.51 million; and drainage \$1.54 million.

Mr Old: What is the estimated loss and the actual loss of the MTT last year and this year?

Mr TONKIN: That indicates the kinds of losses that we will have. The figures I gave in this House were based on the assumption that, if these utilities were sold off to private industry, it would want to break even; but, of course, that is a false assumption, because, under private enterprise, the utilities would have to make a profit; so the figures we gave are really too low.

It must be borne in mind also that the figures were based on the assumption of historic cost under which the PWD works at present. That is not satisfactory either, because one should work on replacement cost. The member for Floreat and I agree on this as far as the Metropolitan Water Authority is concerned and this Government has supported the authority in sticking to replacement cost in its calculations.

Therefore, if we add the need of private enterprise to make a profit, which we assume, and if we add replacement cost instead of historic costs, the figure would be greater. Therefore, when the Leader of the Opposition says that these are lies—something which he said repeatedly a little while ago—or untruths, which was the way in which he amended his statement, he may be right in that the figures we gave were too low and too generous to his side of the case. Indeed, they are far too low if we add profitability and replacement cost; therefore, they will be expanded.

Mr MacKinnon: You can't stand people making a profit.

Mr Bryce: We love them making a profit.

Mr MacKinnon: The only thing you like about profits is that you can tax them.

Mr TONKIN: That is not true. We are not objecting to people making a profit. We are saying that, when we allow for the inescapable fact of life

that private enterprise would make a profit—indeed, it would have to survive—these figures would be increased.

Mr Rushton: No, they would not.

Mr TONKIN: They would increase to a level above the figures I gave the other day which were as follows: Water charges would rise by 69 per cent; sewerage charges by 34 per cent; drainage charges by 211 per cent; and irrigation charges by 225 per cent.

This year farmers from the south-west—from Brunswick, Bunbury, and Harvey—have come to my office and complained that the charges they paid last year were too high. One can imagine the kind of deputation they would make if the charges had been increased by 225 per cent! However, that is what this Liberal Party is promising.

Now the Leader of the Opposition says, "That was a conference item. That does not mean to say we are wedded to it". As the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, in his usual quiet and perspicacious way, said to me *sotto voce*, "Apparently we have been giving too much credibility to Liberal Party Conferences. Perhaps they are not what we thought they were". In other words, they are just a bit of window-dressing, because the Leader of the Opposition said, "That is not a policy; it is just a proposal". It appears the Liberal Party members get together; they have a conference; members of the party attend; articles appear in the Press; but what those articles say is not in fact what the Liberal Party meant at all.

The Leader of the Opposition has used this escape door, because he has seen the calamity such a policy would bring upon country people. Liberal Party members have said, "Just a minute. We had better do some nice footwork here". I am not saying those members are telling lies or being untruthful. However, I am saying they have done some very fancy footwork and suddenly they have said, "Just a minute, our conference does not bind us. We all know that". When they have seen the calamitous nature of these increases, Liberal Party members have said, "We will have to back away from that". The Leader of the Opposition did that today. He said to the Acting Premier, "That was a conference proposal. We are not committed to that policy".

Mr Carr: They still call it their "policy" though.

Mr TONKIN: They will call it anything they like, if they want to get away with things. These figures are based on actual costs provided by two senior people from the PWD—the very same people who advised the conservative Government.

Mr Rushton: You still haven't understood what efficiency means in business and that it does pro-

vide for profits and everything else, while still providing a service to the customer.

Mr TONKIN: Of course efficiency will reduce costs, and if private enterprise runs a utility, one can have efficiency; but that is predicated upon the assumption that the people in the PWD are not efficient.

Mr Rushton: We have achieved it in another agency and I shall explain it to you in a little while.

Mr TONKIN: In the Metropolitan Water Authority there is great efficiency and the cost-per-service in real terms is going down steadily; so it is not just private enterprise that can be efficient.

I have worked closely with officers of the PWD since becoming Minister and I am full of admiration for their efficiency, their dedication to the people of Western Australia, and their intelligence. I do not believe that a group of people who are employed to do the same job by private enterprise would necessarily be more efficient than those ladies and gentlemen.

Mr Rushton: I am not denying your remark, but you are not allowing for competition and what that does as far as efficiency is concerned.

Mr TONKIN: The member for Dale is suggesting that we would have two water companies operating at Bencubbin, that would provide competition and it would be very profitable! Can members imagine meeting a chap wandering down St. George's Terrace with a big cigar in his mouth and wearing a new suit and asking him, "What are you doing?" and hearing him reply, "I am providing water at Bencubbin. I am one of the companies operating down there. We are making enormous profits"?

If they were making enormous profits, can members imagine what the charges for the service would be like? It is unpalatable to members opposite that charges for country water have gone up by only three per cent this year. Members should go back in history and ascertain the last time country consumers were faced with increased charges of only three per cent. That is a real achievement.

Mr Rushton: How much did they go up last year? That three per cent went on top of this?

Mr TONKIN: That is right.

Mr Rushton: How much is it?

Mr TONKIN: Try to find a year, any year—

Mr Rushton: You could have had a disastrous year last year and nothing this year.

Mr TONKIN: They could be restrained in that way, and they will be battling.

Mr Old: FID helped them a little!

Mr TONKIN: Something else is omitted from this, and that is that the Liberal Party would be selling off to private enterprise only the profitable parts of utilities. Private enterprise would not be able to carry water supplies to some of these places. The Acting Premier mentioned the true cost of water per kilolitre for Kalgoorlie being \$4.50. What do members think those people pay for their first 400 kilolitres? It is 25c!

Mr Rushton: What about the State Brickworks, which didn't make a profit?

Mr TONKIN: The situation is this: Could private enterprise sell water costing \$4.50 for 25c?

Mr Bryce: What happens to the private businesses in Kalgoorlie which are using water at that rate? Their viability goes up in smoke.

Mr TONKIN: We are most concerned for private enterprise, and one of the ways private enterprise will be destroyed is by heaping these costs on its shoulders. If these costs continue to be heaped on its shoulders private enterprise will go to the wall.

Mr Rushton: You are a scaremonger.

Mr TONKIN: The Opposition came out with something which it thought would please some of the rednecks in its party, some of the extreme right-wing people who do not understand even basic economics; then when the Opposition saw there would be increases of 200 per cent, what did it do? The Leader of the Opposition, with very fancy footwork said, "Oh well, this is not our policy. This a proposal".

Opposition members had conferences to float ideas in the air to ascertain the public reaction and if they got applause they said, "This is our policy", but if on the other hand the ridiculous ideas were not applauded—

Mr Hassell: You are telling untruths again. You had better wash your mouth out with soap.

Mr Rushton: He is true, too.

Mr TONKIN: The Leader of the Opposition says everything that we on this side of the House say is untrue and then he goes back to reading his newspaper. He then said, "It is not necessarily our policy. It is a proposal". Is it an untruth that the Leader of the Opposition said that? He does not answer me. That is the kind of man he is.

Mr Hassell: You have been told time and time again—

Mr TONKIN: He tells me that I am telling untruths, and when I ask him whether it was an untruth he studiously does not answer me.

Mr Hassell: You have been told time and time again that we never proposed to sell the water board. You have been told that about five times.

Mr TONKIN: It is a proposal only and the reason that he says that is that suddenly he realises that costs of this kind heaped on the shoulders of country people would be calamitous. It would be nothing short of calamitous.

Finally, I express my thanks to the Opposition for bringing this amendment forward.

Debate (on amendment to motion) adjourned until a later stage of the sitting, on motion by Mr Gordon Hill.

ECONOMY

Western Australia: Ministerial Statement

MR BRYCE (Ascot—Acting Premier) [3.14 p.m.]: I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

Mr BRYCE: When the Government took office 17 months ago we faced an economic situation in Western Australia unprecedented since the 1930s Depression.

Mr Old: What rot!

Mr Blaikie: This is deplorable.

Mr Rushton: You have the privilege of making a statement. Don't tell an untruth.

Mr BRYCE: As a result of the generosity of the Government, the Opposition was privileged to receive a copy of this ministerial statement two hours ago. That privilege was not an accepted practice for many years in this place when I was sitting on the other side of the House.

Mr Peter Jones: We never made statements like this.

Mr BRYCE: Unemployment in the State had grown by 36 per cent in 1982 rising to a total in March 1983 of 62 300 people out of work; inflation was running at 10.1 per cent.

Mr Hassell: How many are out of work now?

Mr BRYCE: A substantial Budget deficit was anticipated for 1982-83 and a worse situation projected for 1983-84.

Today I can confidently say that the Western Australian economy has emerged from the recession and that it faces a buoyant economic future. The new economic directions have been forged because the Burke Government has been willing to make hard decisions, exercise respon-

sible financial management, and consult with all sections of the community.

In co-operation with the new Commonwealth Government, the Burke Government has implemented policies which have halted the deterioration of the economy, made progress towards growth and employment and brought down inflation.

The recovery in the economy in 1984 is expected to gather pace in the following ways—

business investment is expected to stabilise and then increase reflecting major increases in profitability and higher output;

private consumption will increase more rapidly;

employment growth is expected to pick up; and

inflation is expected to decline this year to around 6 per cent.

Broad evidence of a recovery overseas began to emerge during early 1983, somewhat earlier than in Australia, and the recovery has continued into 1984. The upturn has been particularly evident in two of this State's major trading partners, the United States and Japan, while the performance of western European countries has been more uneven.

Economic activity in the OECD area as a whole is rising at a real annual rate of four per cent to five per cent with the rise in the United States expected to be as high as 6.5 per cent.

Unemployment remains high and continues to be a major structural problem in the OECD group. Despite strong gains in employment, the unemployment rate is stabilised at around 8.5 per cent. This high and persistent level of unemployment remains one of the most distressing and difficult issues facing the economies of the industrial world.

Australian economic conditions: It is evident from the recently released OECD forecasts and the strong growth recorded in the level of national economic activity over the first three-quarters of 1983-84 that economic recovery is under way in Australia. On the basis of the most recent quarterly statistics, gross domestic product is now growing at an annual rate of eight to nine per cent, well above the negative growth of 1.5 per cent for 1982-83.

The recovery in domestic output commenced in mid 1983. A number of factors contributed to this—initially an increase in public sector spending and a moderation in the rundown of non-farm stocks. Other influences have been a modest increase in private consumption expenditure in the

breaking of the Eastern States drought. Real private business fixed investment has remained weak, but an increase of 5.2 per cent in the recent March quarter indicates growing business confidence that the recovery will be sustained.

The pick-up in economic activity overseas and good seasonal conditions have contributed to the first surplus in the balance of trade for a number of years, with record levels of exports more than offsetting the high levels of imports.

In 1983-84 both rural and non-rural exports increased by 15 per cent.

It is clear that inflationary expectations are now lower than a year ago. This has been due to the Commonwealth Government's ability to achieve consensus on the problems facing the Australian economy.

The Commonwealth Government has established the basis for an effective incomes and prices policy by its—

endorsement of the accord;

agreements reached at the national economic summit; and

subsequent ongoing consultation and co-operation with the business sector, the trade union movement and the community.

Western Australia economic conditions—consumer prices: A favourable element of economic conditions in Western Australia has been the continuing decline in the inflation rate. The Consumer Price Index for Perth was unchanged in the June quarter of 1984, resulting in an increase of only 4.1 per cent over the same quarter of the previous year. This was the lowest annual movement in the Perth Consumer Price Index in 12 years and can be compared with an increase of 9.9 per cent between June 1982 and June 1983. Even setting aside the influence of the introduction of Medicare on the Consumer Price Index, the underlying inflation rate is now around 6.5 per cent.

Incomes and Wages: Accompanying the decline in the inflation rate has been a moderation in labour cost pressures on business. The increase in average weekly earnings of all employees in Western Australia was 7.2 per cent over the 12 months to March 1984. This was well below the growth of 12.5 per cent recorded for the same year to March 1983. The Prices and Incomes Accord has been primarily responsible for this successful containment of labour costs. It has provided a degree of certainty to business and Government in financial planning and management. The Western Australian Government fully supports the continuation of the accord.

Cost Competitiveness: The winding back of inflation and the moderation in labour cost growth since the Government assumed office are the key elements in improving the international competitiveness of Western Australian industry. This Government's initiatives in restricting increases in utility charges for 1984-85 will give further impetus to the trend towards lower inflation rates.

Consumer Demand: Western Australian consumer demand in real terms grew faster than the rest of Australia. The value of retail sales in Western Australia during the first 11 months of 1983-84 was 9.1 per cent above the value of sales for the same period a year earlier. Corresponding figures for Australia showed an increase of 8.3 per cent.

Building and Construction: One sector of the State's economy which has particularly benefited from Government initiatives has been the building industry. The number of new dwelling approvals in Western Australia in the 11 months to May 1984 was 43 per cent higher than for the same period a year earlier. Corresponding figures for Australia show an increase of 31 per cent over the same period.

The Western Australian Government has contributed to the stimulation of the housing sector by the allocation of sufficient funds to the State Housing Commission to allow it to meet the Government's target of 1 500 dwellings to be constructed in our first full year of office; allocation of additional funds for concessional low interest housing loans; and the release of land for the private sector.

The latest available information shows that there has been a big increase in the number of advertised job vacancies in the Western Australian housing industry. The number of jobs advertised in major Perth newspapers in July rose by more than 50 per cent compared with the previous month.

Agricultural Production: Although seasonal conditions were not as favourable in 1983-84 as in the previous year, the State's agricultural sector has continued to perform strongly. Preliminary estimates show a gross value of agricultural production of \$1 954 million in 1983-84, down slightly on the buoyant outcome for 1982-83 but a good result when account is taken of the small wheat crop which resulted from the lack of finishing rains in 1983.

The Labour Market: Conditions in the State's labour market reflect growing confidence in the economy but they also reflect the legacy of the downturn in employment growth which began in 1981 and continued until the middle of last year.

During the period 1981 to June 1983, the number of new jobs created in the State economy fell well short of the increase in the labour force and, as a result, the unemployment rate rose sharply.

However, the Government has co-operated with the Commonwealth in implementing a wide range of policy initiatives aimed at stimulating employment growth and as a result, the deterioration in unemployment has been halted.

From June 1983 to June 1984 employment in Western Australia grew by 26 000 or 4.6 per cent, well above the national increase of 3.7 per cent. This growth in State employment compares very favourably with a decrease of 1.6 per cent over the corresponding period in 1982-83 and an increase of only 0.8 per cent in 1981-82. This strong growth has succeeded in arresting the rise in unemployment.

However, let me make it quite clear that the present level of unemployment is unacceptable to the Government. The Government has faced up to the real underlying problems of Western Australia and is assembling a package of employment generating initiatives which will be announced in the forthcoming Budget.

The Western Australian Government will continue to press ahead with policies to facilitate private investment in this State. Policies to support and promote investment in the tourism, technological development, small business and resources development areas have been initiated within the last year and are already beginning to show results.

In conclusion, let me say that the Burke Government has demonstrated that it has had the capacity and willingness to tackle the economic problems that we inherited on assuming office.

In the first 17 months, with careful attention to Government expenditure, we have now been able to turn around the deficit and record a small surplus.

The Burke Government will continue to develop policies that will promote business confidence and thus provide the impetus for the revitalisation of the Western Australia economy.

The Government will not shirk from its mission to provide the leadership necessary to successfully respond to this challenge.

I would like to conclude by stressing to all members of the Opposition, the private sector, the trade union movement, and the community of Western Australia that the process of reconciliation has commenced, recovery is under way, and the challenges of reconstruction will be tackled with enthusiasm.

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Leader of the Opposition) [3.29 p.m.]: Insofar as the Acting Premier's statement is a description of certain facts and a presentation of certain statistics, it is to that extent accurate, but one wonders at the reason for such a lightweight statement being made at this time and as to the background of it.

One can assume only that the Acting Premier has seized the opportunity presented by the absence of the Premier to try to make his mark by leaving something on the record that would perhaps increase his support among the flagging enthusiasm of those sitting beside and behind him.

Mr Bryce: We are a happy ship on this side of the House.

Several members interjected.

Mr Burkett: Even when our Leader gets sick we still support him.

Mr HASSELL: Despite the areas which of course are unchallengeable, the statement is in many respects sustained deception.

It begins with the claim that new economic directions have been forged because the Burke Government has been willing to make hard decisions, exercise responsible financial management, and consult with all sectors of the community.

I remind the House that this Government has supported the Australian Council of Trade Unions in the incredibly-timed and ill-considered decision of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, a decision which was announced today to provide redundancy payments and which would place further substantial costs on the private sector, employers, and particularly on small businesses. That is the last decision that should have been made at this time.

I remind the House that this Government opposed the introduction of the wages freeze and has allowed numerous exemptions to it which have increased taxes and charges by over 20 per cent and have contributed materially to the burden of unemployment as a result of the impact of those increased charges on small businesses.

None of what the Acting Premier concludes is casually related to beneficial actions of the Government of the State. Whatever improvements have occurred in the Australian economy have occurred despite the wasteful extravagances of the Burke Government. There is no other evidence in the document to show that any improvement which has taken place in a number of areas has been contributed to by decisions of the Government. In fact, the improvements which have occurred have come about in spite of the decisions

made by the Burke Government and not because of them.

That disposes of the claimed benefits for the State of the general improvements which have occurred as described in the first 3½ pages of the statement.

When we reach the section of the statement dealing with the Western Australian economy—it begins on page 4—the deception flows more thickly and is even more repetitive. The improvement in the Consumer Price Index demonstrably has nothing whatsoever to do with any decision made by this Government. In fact, the Government's decision to increase taxes and charges by over 20 per cent last year has inhibited any decline that has occurred in the Consumer Price Index and has imposed major burdens on the small business sector and the private sector in general. It has reduced employment opportunities.

The second of the key elements in improving the international competitiveness of the Western Australian economy as claimed by the Acting Premier is moderation in the growth of labour costs. I do not dispute that there has been moderation in the growth of labour costs. It has helped in a number of areas. However, nothing has been done by this Government to contribute to it.

Members should remember the huge outcry made by the then Opposition when the previous Government introduced a wages pause to achieve precisely the effect that has occurred. Every time the previous Government warned that wage growth was ruining our international position and costing people jobs, the Australia Labor Party, then in Opposition, accused the former Government of union bashing and of depriving families of the money they needed to live.

I remember the then Leader of the Opposition, the present Premier, standing in this House and yelling and screaming about the increased costs to families because of the wages pause. Anyone who bothers to look up *Hansard* will see his comments are on the record. This statement is another attempted deception by the Government.

On page 6 of the statement, the Acting Premier refers to the improvement in agricultural production. That has occurred, but it is no thanks whatever to this Government. It has occurred because of an improvement in the seasons. In his description of the improvement in the Western Australian economy, the Acting Premier has failed to mention that there has been a lack of sustained improvement in the position of farmers generally.

Mr Evans: You do not think that the arranging of finance for everyone to enable them to get a

crop in had something to do with the change in situation?

Mr HASSELL: Is the member talking about the rural adjustment scheme?

Mr Evans: Yes, and the extension to that scheme.

Mr HASSELL: Those things have been in place for some time. There has been no fundamental change to anything like that.

Mr Evans: There has been a change in extending the criteria to those who were otherwise excluded.

Mr HASSELL: I assure the member that I am not trying to take anything away from what the Government has done. I am trying to deal with extravagant claims made in the Acting Premier's lightweight statement, claims which are, in some respects an accurate description of what has occurred, but in most respects, have exaggerated the nature of the benefits which have occurred, benefits for which the Government has no right to claim credit.

The real point I want to make about agriculture is that the cost-squeeze confronted by the agricultural industries, despite any short-term financial arrangements, is a very real and continuing one. It has been contributed to by absolutely stupid and foolish decisions, an example of which was a decision announced today by the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission in relation to job security and redundancy payments. This Government supported those benefits. It supported also the indexation of fuel costs, the increase in freight costs, and the attempted increase in the regulation of freight. These are all factors which are working against the agricultural industries. They have not been dealt with in this statement at all.

There is more deception on pages 6 and 7 of the Acting Premier's statement in relation to the labour market. He failed to mention that the major cause of the earlier breakdown in employment was the international recession, coupled with a wages explosion. That wages explosion was supported by the then Leader of the Opposition (Mr Brian Burke) and his deputy (Mr Bryce). They opposed the former Government's attempts to bring the wages explosion under some form of control. After failing to deal with that issue, they now claim success in relation to the improvement of employment.

Let us look a little further at the Acting Premier's statement. He said that employment has grown by 4.6 per cent from June 1983 to June 1984. However, he failed to say that in that period unemployment had grown by 8.7 per cent. In other words, unemployment is growing at twice the rate

of employment. However, the Acting Premier, in what was supposed to be a significant statement on the Western Australian economy, did not mention that.

He gave the game away even further when he said that the Government was assembling a package of employment-generating initiatives which will be announced in the forthcoming Budget. I referred to that package in my speech the other day. I am aware of the Government's \$50-million bonanza which will be dished up in the Budget. I am aware that it is putting together a package of measures to bolster employment because the Government is desperately concerned about its lack of performance since taking office. I ask members to bear in mind that it was elected to office on the promise that it would improve the employment situation significantly. It has done nothing after 17 months in office.

The Government is now assembling a package which will, no doubt, be remarkably similar to the packages we have heard about before. In speaking in the debate on the Address-in-Reply, I mentioned a \$50-million package to provide a stimulus to our economy. It will have a very small impact only, although it will be a desirable impact. What would provide a more direct and immediate stimulus and would give relief to the business community would be the removal of the financial institutions duty. The Government could do that if it had \$50 million to apply to other packages.

The last straw in this statement from the Acting Premier comes on page 8 when he claims that careful attention to Government expenditure is the cause of a small Budget surplus in 1983-84. Absolutely no mention is made of the massive 20 per cent increase in taxes and charges which was the highest in Australia and more than twice that of the other States. That massive raid on household and business budgets provided the balancing of the Budget and provided absolute proof of the Government's failure to live up to its very clear and distinct promises prior to the last election that it would balance the Budget without increasing taxes and charges. The Government is attempting to perpetuate some of its discredited statements. The first is that it inherited a deficit from the previous Treasury benches. That is a gross but repeated untruth. There was no deficit. Secondly, the Government is attempting to perpetuate its claim that it has somehow brought about a miracle in generating a turnaround in the economy. That is a gross untruth. It has had no perceptible impact on the economy in terms of improvement, except a negative one. Thirdly, the Government is trying to sell the story that it can take credit for the reduced inflation rate. It can take no credit for

this because it had nothing to do with reducing the inflation rate. In fact, it contributed materially to maintaining it by direct impact of substantial increases in taxes and charges which went straight into the inflation rate. There was no deficit. This management of the economy is building up fiscal problems for the future. The Government is taking royalties in advance to get into the diamond field; it has indulged in profligate spending; it has underwritten huge commitments in the name of the taxpayers by purchasing units in the diamond trust—a guarantee which should never have been given; and the unemployment figure is more than 4 800 higher than it was a year ago. It is 19 200 higher than it was two years ago. One should also take into account the hidden unemployment of which these Government members constantly talked when in Opposition, but which they have not once mentioned since they have been in Government. In that case, unemployment is probably substantially higher than the figures published. Employment in the building and construction industry is down 23 per cent to the year ended May 1984. The apprenticeship scheme is in tatters. There is no solution in sight to unemployment for school leavers, with worse to come. That is not a situation where the Government can claim those things the Acting Premier has claimed in his statement. We cannot foresee a significant improvement.

It is true that in the economy there have been some changes for the better. Certainly the moderation in wage payments brought about by holding down demands to more reasonable levels, as a result initially of the wage freeze, is a very important factor and one which should continue to be supported by all sides. However, we have not seen any bold initiatives to get the State going; we have not seen the Government fighting for the right to develop Western Australian resources, in particular uranium which provides immediately available opportunities for more jobs; we have not seen the Government bringing about the kind of dramatic change which it forecast it would bring about when seeking the endorsement of the people at the last election; and, we have not seen the Government move towards a reduction in unemployment which would give confidence for the future. I do not want to be associated in any way with talking down a recovery. However, many people who are far better qualified than I in matters of economics, have been saying that there are still problems ahead for Australia, and in many respects those problems are related to Australia itself and not to world conditions.

In that regard, one has only to refer to the continuation of the outmoded award provisions for overtime, leave loadings, shorter working hours,

and longer holidays which all add to costs. Added to that burden is the additional provision for job security and redundancy payments to which this Government has lent support in a most foolish and short-sighted way. A superannuation scheme is also proposed.

We are witnessing a general decline in the possibility of real growth and real profitability in the private sector, which is the only area in which there can be a real future for employment and job security in this country.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FIFTH DAY *Amendment to Motion*

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR RUSHTON (Dale) [3.46 p.m.]: I preface my remarks by referring to the debacle which occurred during the Acting Premier's remarks. I ask you, Mr Speaker, to be so kind as to examine those remarks and next Tuesday give us some guidance as to future conduct in the House.

I was indebted to the Leader of the House, the Minister for Water Resources, for referring to freight rates—one of those things which would have taken off if the Opposition when back in Government were to implement some of the suggestions put forward at the recent conference. The Minister has given me an opportunity to delve into that matter and show how clearly the Government was wrong in its charge of increased costs. I shall also reflect on and support the motion by the member for Floreat who is one of the most able members in this House. He is very experienced and practical and has achieved great results in the portfolios he has held involving industrial development, the State Energy Commission, and the water board. He does his homework well and he has a legal and accounting mind which can analyse and present very practical propositions. I think all members should take very seriously the points he made.

I support the proposals put forward by the Opposition which obviously will be introduced when it returns to Government. It had been doing most of the things included in the resolutions of the conference, to which I shall later refer.

We must attack the problem of the size of Government expenditure by comparison with the State's economy and the extent of the State Government's revenue raising.

The Opposition has referred to areas to which it intends to give greater emphasis; they have been in the Liberal Party's basic policy for some time, and some have been actively pursued. I have been most active in pursuing those objectives in the portfolios I held, but while in Opposition one has an oppor-

tunity to review one's performance and rekindle one's enthusiasm for those things which could be improved upon. One can also examine in a practical way what can be done to improve the economy for the advantage of the community.

Many options for introducing efficiency can be considered, and incorporation is one of them. I will relate that to Westrail shortly. Of course, Westrail is well on the way towards adopting a commercial position. I played some part in advancing that, and I support many of the ideas Westrail is proposing. The only difference of opinion I would have with Westrail is with regard to the timing of the introduction of some of the changes.

Of course, subcontracting could be used to great advantage, and there is also the option of selling-off an industry that the Government thinks is not efficient. For instance, the State Brickworks were sold. At the time, it was my understanding that the State Brickworks operated at full production but still made a loss. Of course, there was the inefficiency in production, and most probably overmanning. For my part, what happened with the State Brickworks is a rough guide to what can be done by a private firm in turning inefficiency to efficiency. The company was able to pay a dividend and still produce bricks more cheaply than before.

We are objecting to the unfair and dishonest presentation by the Acting Premier following the Liberal Party Conference last weekend. It would not surprise me, after the Acting Premier's performance, if the Premier gets out of bed quickly and takes his place back here so that no more disasters take place in his absence. The Acting Premier's performance was a sad one and it was without substance in its arguments. That does not augur well for his future.

I suggest that the media needs to examine with full objectivity the proposals that have been made by the Opposition to enable both points of view to be put. When I introduced the deregulation of land freight for small goods, the media printed many untrue statements made by the Labor Party and the unions. It was impossible to have the rebuttals published. Every thought should be given to the matter by the good, professional media people that we have.

In support of those points, I mention the statement made by the Minister for Transport which was reported in *Western Transport* on 15 June 1984. People from all parts of the State sent me a copy of the report, thinking I may have missed it. The report emphasised the inaccuracy of the two members on the Government side who have spoken today about profits and efficiencies. Members who were in the House prior to the last

election will realise the turn-around in the present Government's thinking and the conflict that exists within the Cabinet on the issue of efficiency. The following are the remarks of the Minister for Transport as recorded in the newspaper—

"There are those in Caucus and in Cabinet who severely detract from the initiatives in relation to deregulation," Mr Grill said. "But I'm telling you officially that we recognise the initiatives taken by the previous government in relation to deregulation to be the correct ones."

That is a fair guide, and it was repeated in this House. That was published when the Labor Party was against deregulation and it said it would do all sorts of things when it became the Government. However, I respect the Minister's comments, and he has been big enough to recognise the facts. It is encouraging to think these remarks were made in public by the Minister. In the next comments, he refuted totally the words of the Acting Premier and the Leader of the House, as follows—

Results of deregulation so far were seen as:

A greater range and frequency of service and a wider choice.

Sixty per cent user preference for the new system.

Savings of 40 to 50 per cent in available freight rates.

Here we have somebody talking about higher freight rates and the previous Government's action which brought about a substantial reduction in freight rates through efficiency and through a move towards the commercialisation of an instrumentality.

The next remark made by the Minister for Transport was as follows—

Net financial benefit to users of \$11 million a year.

We could make these changes by introducing private enterprise and incorporating instrumentalities such as Westrail, and improve efficiency in that way.

The next remark the Minister for Transport made was as follows—

Loss of railway revenue but at the same time a greater fall in railway expenditure.

That is the direct answer to the remarks made by the two Ministers in question—the two speakers in this debate. By cutting out an unprofitable activity, a profit can be made.

When one looks at the portrait of C. Y. O'Connor in the passageway, one recalls the unfair personal attack made on him during the intro-

duction of the goldfields water supply. That had an adverse effect on him; and that is the sort of thing that happens if we have unbalanced reporting about events. Change would never be introduced in that case, but change must be introduced. We certainly rely on balanced statements being made from two points of view so that the public can make up their own minds. It would be tragic if fresh and new ideas were prevented from reaching the public by only one side of the argument being put.

I can make this statement without any fear of contradiction. If the Labor Party policy on transport and, for that matter, the one on local government, were put into effect now, it would be a tragedy for this State. Those policies are not practical or functional. I fear the day when we move in the direction indicated in those policies.

We have heard of proposals relating to privatisation. I do not like the word "privatisation" very much, and I like to think one takes a pragmatic approach. With my great interest in transport, my own approach has been that way. One should not take a party political approach; one should be flexible and practical.

What would happen to Westrail if we were to follow our policy? We have committed ourselves to the commercialisation of Westrail, and we have taken steps to put that into effect. I suppose the hallmark of the new era in transport in this State was the deregulation of the smalls freight after 50 years. That enabled the next phase of the commercialisation of Westrail to take place.

Now we see the corporate plan which has been embodied formally in a five-year plan. Of course, Westrail has been putting that into effect for some time, and I was a part of it earlier. Before too much more water flows under the bridge, we should move towards incorporating Westrail and appointing a commercial board with people who are active and capable commercially. They would be responsible people. However, before that could be done, the Government of the day would need to have demonstrated to it that Westrail was capable of reducing its deficit and running in its own way without being supported. We have a way to go before that can take place.

The Main Roads Department provides another example of what can be done by involving the private sector. The very best results have been achieved by involving private contractors to do certain segments of the work while at the same time having the department's employees continue to do their own thing. I had a tremendous fight with the Fraser Government over its move to have all its grants carried out by way of private con-

tracts. This did not allow flexibility. Both areas need to work together. This is all part of the private enterprise participation in Government activities working to all our advantage.

As members know, Stateships expects to be breaking even within four or five years. The Court and O'Connor Governments reduced Stateships from a four-vessel fleet to a three-vessel fleet and moved to a leasing arrangement which would allow for changes from time to time. The last action we carried out in this area was to replace a ship of about 12 000 tonnes with one of about 20 000 tonnes, and that was the *Irene Greenwood*, which is on the east-west route. This year Stateships will have a reduction in costs in real terms and actual terms as well. Nevertheless, the present Government still has to make decisions in this area. We did not think even our approach to Stateships was good enough. This is an example of the pragmatic approach that this Opposition, when returned to Government, will follow.

The organisation which really lends itself to particular attention is the Metropolitan Transport Trust. It is a fact of history that the Labor Government in the 1950s applied pressure in order to remove the private sector from the transit transport scene in the metropolitan area. It introduced diesel taxes and created an insecurity with various routes until it finally squeezed the private bus companies out of business. It then established the MTT, which has a good record. Generally speaking, the only unacceptable feature of the MTT is its deficit expectation, one which is well beyond what any Government should accept. In the year 1991 it expects a deficit of at least \$150 million. Its deficit has spiralled since this Government reintroduced the Perth-Fremantle rail service. This has helped to create an escalation of its deficit and it expects a deficit over the next decade of \$1 billion.

All these areas provide opportunities for our proposition to be given every attention, and there are many ways of carrying out what we advocate. I would like to see a central commission co-ordinating the work. I would like to see private operators employing people in the unions working with the Government and providing this great flexibility. The conditions of employment would more closely relate to a commercial operation. When I make my contribution to the Address-in-Reply I will give a far more detailed explanation of the terms and conditions of employment relating to Westrail.

What we are saying today is that what has been said by the Acting Premier and the Leader of the House does not stand up. Their own colleague demonstrated that with the words I quoted earlier,

when he referred to a loss of railway revenue and at the same time a greater fall in railway expenditure. There was a gain to Westrail of something like \$6 million and a gain of \$11 million to the consumers, with the total result being a magnificent one for transport.

Features of any change will always be open to challenge and disagreement, but when the Government reviews the total scene it will see that the commercialisation of Westrail has produced magnificent results, not only in financial benefits to the instrumentality but, more importantly, in its commercial advantage, its cost advantage, to the users of the service.

MR LAURANCE (Gascoyne) [4.05 p.m.]: I support this amendment to the Address-in-Reply, criticising as it does the Acting Premier for his attacks on the Opposition, purely because it brought forward some new policies that, if given sufficient chance to be implemented, would be of great benefit to the people of this State.

I applaud the Leader of the Opposition for adopting those policies and for articulating them so well in the public arena in recent days. This is the great hope of the Liberal Party, and it offers great benefits to the people of this State, both in terms of increased efficiency and better services—and hopefully lower costs. Members from opposite sides of the Chamber will never agree whether things can be done best by the Government providing the services or by the private sector providing them. We could argue the matter until the cows come home. But this is a good time to be considering this proposition, because what we suggest can be done, despite what has been said by Government members.

As members know, at this very moment the eyes of the world are focussed on the American city of Los Angeles. As the twenty-third Olympiad takes place we find a tremendous world spectacle being organised by that city. The games are being run by private enterprise, and they will run at a profit. What a magnificent comparison we can make between these games and those held four years earlier in Moscow, because the previous games were run by a Communist State at enormous cost, perhaps in the order of billions of dollars. Today, four years later in a private enterprise country, we find that the games can be just as spectacular and can be run at a profit by private enterprise. Private enterprise can be more efficient and make a profit. These Olympics so far have been every bit as spectacular as earlier ones.

Consider the 1976 Olympics held in Montreal; those games were held at a tremendous loss. The people of that city will be paying for those games

well into the next century. What a tremendous burden of debt to leave behind. It was not that they were run poorly, but they were run by the State.

Mr Jamieson: You could hardly say that the games in Perth were run by private enterprise, yet we are still paying for some of those venues.

Mr LAURANCE: If the Olympic Games can be run at a profit, we can do the same and have the water supply authorities run by private enterprise.

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: Of course it is possible. That is a classic example.

Mr Evans: How much would it cost?

Mr LAURANCE: State games were held in Montreal and in Moscow at a loss, yet these games being run by private enterprise will be run at a profit.

Mr Evans: With sponsors of great magnitude. Who would sponsor a water supply?

Mr LAURANCE: Private enterprise will find a way. The Government should not tell us that it cannot be done.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Burkett): Order! It would make it a lot easier if the only member I had to listen to was the member for Gascoyne.

Mr LAURANCE: I congratulate Los Angeles not only for being able to stage these tremendous games which are the focus of world attention at the moment, but also for being able to do so at a profit because they are run by private enterprise. It shows that it can be done. Problems will arise and the Government will find solutions to the problems, but it is not necessary to have more and more Government involvement in major enterprises.

Mr Davies: Why do people keep coming to me to ask for Government money?

Mr LAURANCE: Because they have become used to it. That is why this is a tremendous change in principle for the Liberal Party; it is going back to basics and spelling out that these things can be done by the private sector.

The extreme of the philosophy put forward by members opposite is the totalitarian state. Let us recall the words of former President Kennedy in that tremendous speech he made before 100 000 Berliners in the shadow of the Berlin wall. He said that any economist could prove to him that a controlled economy could be run better than a free enterprise economy. It could be dictated to and

directed. He said "There is only one thing—we do not have to build a wall to keep in our people".

Members opposite can have their controlled economies and Government enterprises; their philosophy leads to bigger government, more regulation and Government control, and a sluggish economy. That is the end result of their policies. On this side of the House we stand for different policies. We believe they can provide more efficient services at a profit to the benefit of all people, and at less cost to the taxpayer. That is the bottom line. It is also a matter of freedom of choice. People might not be able to line up so easily for Government hand-outs but they would have spending power in their dollar, rather than in the Government's dollar. I know that you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Burkett), as a commercially-minded man, would understand that proposition.

Mr Read: That is why he is smiling.

Mr LAURANCE: He comes from a private enterprise orientated family.

Those sort of policies brought forward for the ultimate benefit of the people of this State deserve more credit than to be attacked in the way they were from the Government benches and by the Acting Premier. They do not deserve the nasty criticism that was levelled and the references to "rednecks" and "right wing extremism". It is unbecoming of a Government which promotes Government enterprise as opposed to private enterprise to attack the philosophies and ideologies brought forward by the Opposition.

It can be easily proven that it is not necessary to have bigger government in order to supply more services or be more efficient. In addition to the policies of privatisation which the Leader of the Opposition brought forward, he also outlined at the weekend the need for streamlining of approvals to get the shackles of Government off the back of private industry.

When I was Minister for Tourism a chap from Hong Kong came to me and said, "I want to build a hostel and bring people here from Hong Kong for holidays. I have been waiting three months for an approval, will you help me?" I said I would endeavour to do so. He said, "If I were putting this approval forward in Hong Kong the Government would have 90 days in which to tell me to stop, not the other way around. Here I have been waiting 90 days to find out if I can do it". In Hong Kong the onus is on the Government to provide answers, not the developer, so that when he puts in his building application the Government has 90 days in which to deal with it, and if it does not, the application is automatically approved.

The Hong Kong Government may make some mistakes in planning, but we also make mistakes and make people jump through hoops. Our system is not perfect. If we put the boot on the other foot and told Government departments "Here is an application for building; I intend to start building on the 61st day unless I hear within 60 days why I cannot proceed", it would put the bureaucracy on the hop. It would orientate things more towards private enterprise and development and growth. It would put the onus on the Government to say why a person could not do something, whereas at present the onus is on the individual to show why he should be allowed to do it. I hope that philosophy will pervade Governments in the future.

We can bring about those changes, streamline approvals, and unshackle private enterprise.

Mr Davies: You didn't do much while you were in Government.

Mr Rushton: I did in my department.

Mr LAURANCE: I have appreciated the opportunity afforded by the amendment moved by the member for Floreat to expand on the philosophies which are so totally opposed to the Government's ideology. It is the way the Australian economy should go, and certainly it is the way this State should go if we are to have a vibrant economy. People must be freed from some of the burden of taxation so that they can succeed in private enterprise. The Government's criticism of these policies is that they will impinge heavily on country people. That is a whole lot of nonsense.

One can see the difference between our philosophies when one talks about costs to country people. This morning, the member for Pilbara criticised the Opposition for charging \$5 for country people to go to a land rights seminar to hear the Leader of the Opposition. He went there and I am sure he gave them more than their \$5 worth.

Mrs Buchanan: I was criticising the fact that it was not advertised correctly.

Mr LAURANCE: Some months ago when Cabinet met at Karratha, the member for Pilbara invited businessmen to pay \$20—four times the cost of the Leader of the Opposition's seminar—to go to a businessmen's lunch to hear the Premier. She said "Take it to the top and ask your questions directly of the Premier". They paid their \$20 and went along to Karratha, and about 15 minutes after the lunch was supposed to start a message was sent that the Premier could not come. The people present were told it was hoped to get the Deputy Premier along in his place.

After a further delay during which the people were starting to get angry and were thinking the

member for Pilbara would refund the \$20, or that they would get a discount, the Deputy Premier came along. A businessman stood up and sought to get his money's worth by asking the Deputy Premier a question. The Deputy Premier said, "I do not know the first thing about that. Write to me giving your name and address, and I will pass it on to my ministerial adviser and write to you in due course".

That was the \$20 worth they got at Karratha! If one went to Karratha now and asked the people whether they would prefer to go to a \$20 lunch for the Premier at which he would not appear, or pay \$5 to hear the Leader of the Opposition give them \$50 worth, I know what people would say.

It is very shallow criticism from the Government when it talks about giving value in charges to country people. We know how to look after country people; that is why we represent most of them in this House, and will continue to do so. More of them will come back to us next time.

Mr Carr: We represent a lot more country people than you do. Count the seats and have a look at them.

Mr LAURANCE: That is purely an historical aberration that will be corrected at the first opportunity. I support the amendment because country people know that, despite what the Minister for Local Government says, ALP influence finishes at Midland Junction. The ALP would not know what goes on in areas of the State further away than that. The conservative politicians of this State have an empathy with country people. They will introduce a system which will result in lower taxes, less government, more freedom, a more vibrant economy, and lower wages. That is what our policy stands for.

Mr MacKinnon: And more jobs.

Mr LAURANCE: Yes, and more jobs. The country people understand that only too well. I support the amendment.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [4.22 p.m.]: I have just heard the dissertation of the member for Gascoyne. It indicated a sudden change of attitude on that side of the House. The Opposition is always indicating that it is against centralisation. However, what its conference is proposing would be the greatest centralising venture that Western Australia has ever been indulged in. Whether the figures given by the Minister are correct is a moot point. Undoubtedly, they are. I do not imagine that the Minister worked them out personally. I am sure I would not have worked them out. I would have referred them to my officers and, from the information that they have available to them, they would have come up with figures and sup-

plied them to me. In due course, I would have then supplied them to the House.

Mr Laurance: That is an exercise in political chicanery.

Mr JAMIESON: I will follow that through in a minute. It is a fact that when the Opposition contemplates anything such as the sale of State works like the State Brickworks, the State timber mills and other such organisations, they give them away to private enterprise. It does not sell them at a fair and reasonable price. It disregards the fact that private enterprise should be expected to meet the reasonable costs associated with headworks. How could the Liberal Party's proposal for the selling-off of the Metropolitan Water Authority operate if there were equal rating of country areas?

Mr McNee interjected.

Mr JAMIESON: I probably connected a lot more when I was Minister than the member will ever do in his life.

Mr McNee: You have never seen some towns.

Mr JAMIESON: I have never seen some towns or visited them. However, I made a judgment about them using my heart and not my head.

Mr McNee: I asked how many you had connected lately.

Mr JAMIESON: I have not connected any lately because I am not a Minister; I am not in that position. I want to talk about the small towns that are connected to a water supply. Connecting towns to water supplies would be very costly if it were not for the fact that they were in an overall scheme and rated accordingly. If that were not so, people would not be able to live in many areas. They would leave those areas in droves. I would not deny them that right. I think that is a justifiable right in this country.

Mr MacKinnon: Nor do we.

Mr JAMIESON: The Opposition does. If the Opposition sold them to private enterprise the public would be charged accordingly.

Mr MacKinnon: Where did we say we would do that?

Mr JAMIESON: The statement from the conference is very clear.

Mr MacKinnon: What statement?

Mr JAMIESON: The statement from the conference.

Mr MacKinnon: I read from the conference statement earlier. You could not have been listening.

Mr JAMIESON: I heard the member read it.

Mr MacKinnon: If you heard me read it you would know that I did not say that at all.

Mr JAMIESON: It was stated in general terms.

Mr MacKinnon: That was not what the statement said.

Mr JAMIESON: If the Opposition did not mean it to be in general terms it should have specified what was meant in the statement.

Mr MacKinnon: You are misleading the Parliament.

Mr JAMIESON: I am not misleading the Parliament.

Mr MacKinnon: Can you not read English? You have the statement in front of you.

Mr JAMIESON: The statement that the member is referring to is the motion that we are now debating. I am referring to examples of how things have been handed over to private enterprise.

The member for Dale sold part of Westrail's business to Total West. He gave them millions of dollars' worth of equipment. What has Total West done? It has recorded a loss. The member for Dale wrote that business down to the lowest possible level. All sorts of machinery was virtually given away by the State.

The people living in the far-flung areas of this State should be catered for. They should not be dominated by private enterprise which would drive them into the cities. That is not the right way to go about this.

A section of the amendment rather intrigues me; it states—

... out of context misleading the Parliament and the public.

We should examine what happened in the past. A few years ago when I was Leader of the Opposition, I received a leak from the Main Roads Department, as one is bound to in that position, that the Commonwealth Government of the day was about to announce the sealing of the road between Port Hedland and Broome. After consulting my advisers, it was decided that it would probably be a good idea for me to get in first and make an announcement about that road which, after consideration, I did. All hell broke loose in Parliament. Every country member asked a dorothy dixer about work in his area being stopped to finance the project that I had announced. Members were concerned that local authorities would not receive funds in the next year because of the repairs to that road. They felt that all roadworks would stop and the money would be ploughed into that section of road. I thought the public was being misled.

When the Liberal election policy came out it included funds for the sealing of that section of road. That was done without any hassles or without stopping roadworks in other districts. Those works went on without interruption.

If members opposite continue to call the kettle black, they should consider their side of the picture. This is a typical example of the Opposition abrogating its responsibilities. It should stand by the resolutions it makes at conferences.

Mr MacKinnon: We stand by exactly what we say.

Mr JAMIESON: We have been talking about the statement for a week and a half. We do not run away or deny the decisions made at Labor Party conferences. We are prepared to stand up and say that those decisions were arrived at in proper circumstances by a majority at the conference. As soon as the Opposition's rank and file or kith and kin, or whatever it is called, makes a decision, members sitting opposite run out on that decision. That is nonsense. The people behind those conferences work their legs off. What happens? When a policy becomes part of the Opposition's platform, it is denied. What sort of a democratic action is that? Democracy does not exist in the Opposition parties.

Mr McNee: You would not know democracy from an old plough in the paddock.

Mr JAMIESON: I certainly do. The member is a silvertail. He has been well looked after and well provided for.

Several members interjected.

Mr MacKinnon: You are not content to attack the private sector, you are now attacking the hard-working farming sector.

Mr JAMIESON: The member for Mt. Marshall has never worked hard in his life. Some farmers are genuine and I take my hat off to them; for instance the members for Moore and Vasse, and others. The member for Mt. Marshall may have chased a few cows around the paddock, but his background is not a good one. He has no need to come out saying he has worked his heart out in the sun and that sort of nonsense.

Mr McNee: I am getting ripped off now by you.

The SPEAKER: Order! I think we should get back to the amendment.

Mr JAMIESON: Whether these costs were exact is a moot point.

Mr MacKinnon: It is not even relevant.

Mr JAMIESON: The conference of the Liberal Party made a determination to change this over from Government to private enterprise for some

reason or other. When it does that it gives away the birthright of the people of this State. It has given it away in the form of the brickworks, the State sawmills, and State hotels.

Mr Coyne: That is probably just as well with regard to the hotels.

Mr JAMIESON: No, they almost made a profit. Not much was involved, but the hotels were in some pretty poor districts; some of them in the electorate of the member for Murchison-Eyre.

Several members interjected.

Mr Rushton: What about the State brickworks? It was going at full production and still made a loss.

Mr JAMIESON: It did something else; it provided jobs and it kept the price of bricks down. There has been an enormous escalation in the price of bricks since that time, and also in the price of timber since the State sawmills were taken over. Members should look at the cost escalations in the next six months following the takeovers and observe what has happened.

Mr Coyne: Look at the price of beer now.

Mr JAMIESON: The member must talk to Mr Bond about that. I do not drink very much of it these days. It might cost a little more in the parliamentary bar before long. However that is by the way. Some things must be accepted, but others should not be. We should not draw people from the country into the city because of some stupid political philosophy to which the Opposition is clinging. The Government will get the numbers as a result of that, not the Opposition. The country people now know of the large subsidy provided by the State for country water supplies and other services. Such subsidy is justly provided. Millions of dollars each year are spent in this way and the figures can be checked from the Auditor General's report. It is important to maintain this system in a country such as Australia. The Opposition at its State conference has come forward with a policy to convert that system to one that will drive people into the city and, therefore, it deserves the hiding it will get at the next election.

MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [4.34 p.m.]: I support the amendment that has been so ably moved. It is important that Government members understand the difference between the Australian Labor Party and the free enterprise parties on this side of the House. The arguments on our philosophical differences will certainly continue for some time to come. On the one hand the Australian Labor Party is committed to the control and socialisation of the nation's resources and a belief that the nation's resources are best shared among the people by Government action; on the other hand, we on this side of the House, take the contrary

point of view; we believe that as far as is reasonable and practical, private enterprise will give the people of this nation and State the best value for money. I do not have the slightest doubt that in the 1986 State elections, or earlier if the Government calls an early election, the people of this State will indicate how they feel about the Labor Party in Government and what it has done for country people.

Another important difference exists that should be understood. Like the Australian Labor Party, we on this side of the House have an annual conference. Our conference gives an indication of the direction in which the rank and file members want to go. The Labor Party conference presents matters that are binding on the members concerned. That is the vast difference. The Labor Party members are caucused in the Parliament and the Opposition parties are not.

Mr Jamieson: That is nonsense. You might get away with the first statement but not that one.

Mr BLAIKIE: The member for Welshpool can say it is nonsense, but I remind him that I have been around here for a year or two and I can recount previous incidents.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not think you should. I think the member should stick to the amendment. It has nothing to do with conferences or anything like that.

Mr BLAIKIE: With due respect, Mr Speaker, this amendment is about privatisation and the concept of privatisation came out of the conference of the Liberal Party last weekend. This amendment came forward as a result of that conference. The member for Welshpool is aware of those members of his own party who have gone outside the Caucus and who have lost endorsement.

To continue with the amendment; it is important to try to achieve cheaper prices and more efficient public utilities and services. In this regard there is an opportunity for private organisations to provide those services. We are very much aware of this Government's actions since it has been in office. It is unfortunate that the Leader of the House is not in the Chamber at present. He has a number of questions to answer with regard to country areas and what has been done to country people. The Government's actions have cost the country people dearly. Unfortunately you, Mr Speaker, were not in the House when the Acting Premier and the Leader of the House spoke. Therefore, you are not aware of how critical they were of the Opposition's amendments. The Government has done a great disservice to country people by the way it has amended the Act and given the Minister control of the local water

boards. It ill-behoves the Government to say that charges are now less for all people in country areas and that they are getting a fairer deal. That is not the case.

In the Busselton-Margaret River newspaper, the following headline appeared, "Water rates hike for extensions". This was a report of the meeting with the chief engineer (operations south) of the Public Works Department (Mr John Stanley). The newspaper report contained the following—

Mr Stanley was at the meeting to tell the board that it could not expect to get a State Government subsidy to help meet the \$1.1 million estimated cost of the scheme extension.

At a meeting with Water Resources Minister Arthur Tonkin earlier this year the board was told a condition of it not being absorbed into the State's single water authority was to include the Abbey residential area in its scheme.

The Busselton Water Board, in conjunction with the Bunbury Water Board and the Harvey Water Board, had been proceeding fairly satisfactorily and providing satisfactory services to its rate-payers; but the Minister and the Government were not satisfied with that. They wanted to interfere with the workings of the water boards and take them over. Following the public outcry against that move, the Government said, "Well, we won't take you over but we will impose certain conditions on you". The section I quoted was one of the conditions.

Earlier, members of the Government were saying repeatedly how the people in country areas had been put to advantage by the Government. That is not the case in the areas I mentioned.

The newspaper article continued—

The chief engineer argued, however, that even if the rate increase was 16 per cent Busselton consumers would still be far better off than their PWD counterparts.

To illustrate this point he said the average ratepayer in PWD areas between Australind and Dunsborough paid far more than those in Busselton where the average was currently under \$150 annually.

The average payment for each service in 1982-83 in other areas were Boyanup \$348, Brunswick \$253, Capel \$223, Dardanup \$191, Dunsborough \$197, Eaton-Australind \$246 and Peppermint Grove \$257.

The Minister and the Government wanted to take over the water board because it was so efficient

and its charges were lower than those in the Public Works Department areas. The rates charged, as instanced by the chief engineer, were less than \$150 annually; so it ill-behoved the Government to say how it had been so grand for country people and how the country people were paying less now than they had previously. That is not the case, and the Ministers were wrong in the arguments they put forward.

In the Press release, Mr Stanley was quoted as follows—

Mr Stanley emphasised that he was only implementing State Government policy and he was in Busselton to tell the board what he recommended before having discussions with the Water Resources Minister.

The following also appears—

Mr Stanley; "You have done well to run a cheap scheme but if I obey the rules, the work you need to do could mean a rate increase of up to 16 per cent."

So much for the Government's argument about how it has been looking after the country people.

I will not deal with all of the water boards, but I will mention one aspect of the Harvey Water Board. I have a paper which I will place on the Table of the House. It is from the Harvey Water Board and it is headed as follows—

TO: ALL OWNERS OF LAND IN THE HARVEY WATER AREA WATER BOARD RATES AND CHARGES

This letter was sent to all owners of land in the Harvey Water Board area, and it contains the following—

You are probably aware, as the result of reports which have appeared in the local Press, that the State Government is taking certain action aimed at forcing the Harvey Water Board to increase its charges for water.

Yet only half an hour ago the Minister for Water Resources said, in this debate, that because of his and the Government's actions, the charges were less. That was a fallacious statement, and it shows how the Minister is a stranger to the truth.

The letter from the water board continued—

Apart from the charges for water, the Minister for Water Resources has indicated the likelihood of legislation changes which would result in pensioners' rates rebates being absorbed by the Water Board.

That is a departure from the norm and from what the Minister is now saying. The letter continued—

Also, the Public Authorities Contribution Act is to be amended to require the Board to pay a percentage of its gross revenue, probably 3%, as a tax to the State Government.

That is another charge on the people. It continued—

An additional financial burden which will be placed on the Board will be the need to create a Depreciation Reserve.

Another interesting paragraph read as follows—

On top of all this, the Minister for Water Resources proposes that the Water Board Act amendment would provide that the Minister must approve of the rate that a Water Board intends to charge in any year and the basis on which those rates are raised.

Speakers from this side of the Chamber have indicated, by a series of arguments, how the Government is quite wrong in its actions. As far as the people in the south-west, and particularly those in the water board areas, are concerned, that is the situation. I have only spoken about Busselton and Harvey, but I could give the House a dissertation on the Bunbury Water Board. However, I would rather leave that for another debate at another time.

Because of the actions of this Government, the people in the areas of the Bunbury, Busselton, and Harvey Water Boards will pay substantially more for the services they receive from their public utilities. That is a result of the interference of the State Government. The Government should allow the utilities the flexibility to operate and allow private people to become involved in providing goods and services to the community.

I support the amendment.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 17	
Mr Blaikie	Mr McNee
Mr Bradshaw	Mr Mensaros
Mr Clarko	Mr Rushton
Mr Court	Mr Thompson
Mr Coyne	Mr Trethowan
Mr Grayden	Mr Tubby
Mr Hassell	Mr Watt
Mr Laurance	Mr Williams
Mr MacKinnon	

(Teller)

Noes 24

Mr Barnett	Mrs Henderson
Mr Bateman	Mr Hodge
Mrs Beggs	Mr Jamieson
Mr Bertram	Mr Pearce
Mr Bryce	Mr Read
Mrs Buchanan	Mr D. L. Smith
Mr Terry Burke	Mr A. D. Taylor
Mr Burkett	Mr Tonkin
Mr Carr	Mr Troy
Mr Davies	Mrs Watkins
Mr Evans	Mr Wilson
Mr Grill	Mr Gordon Hill

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr O'Connor	Mr Parker
Mr Crane	Mr Brian Burke
Mr Old	Mr McIver
Mr Spriggs	Mr P. J. Smith
Mr Peter Jones	Mr Tom Jones
Mr Cowan	Mr I. F. Taylor
Dr Dadour	Mr Bridge

Amendment thus negatived.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

MR READ (Mandurah) [4.50 p.m.]: I take this opportunity during the Address-in-Reply debate to congratulate Professor Gordon Reid on his appointment as Governor of Western Australia. He is a man well worthy of the appointment.

I congratulate also the Government on its achievements over the past 18 months, because those achievements have been very well received by the people of Mandurah. They appreciate the lowering of the inflation rate, although of course this is perhaps more in the sphere of the Federal Government; nonetheless they appreciate the things done for them by both the Federal and State Governments.

There is a great confidence among the people of the area, and this is reflected in many ways. Mandurah has experienced an upsurge in the building industry, which is very pleasing to see, especially following the hard times people have experienced in recent years.

People of the area have indicated a strong interest in the Argyle diamond venture and are interested in obtaining shares. I have had numerous inquiries at my office.

Mr Coyne: Tell them not to touch it.

MR READ: The low-income families, in the Mandurah area particularly, appreciate the low increases in Government taxes and charges this year.

I take this opportunity also to pass on my thanks to the many Ministers who have lent me support and assistance with problems people have experienced in Mandurah. I will now acquaint

members with some of the things happening in the area.

The Mandurah bypass road and bridge are becoming realities. This bypass will be a tremendous boost to Mandurah and will alleviate many of the traffic problems experienced, especially during holiday times. It will take heavy haulage traffic away from Mandurah and so increase pedestrian safety in the town. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 1985 or early in 1986.

I congratulate the Minister for Housing for moving to alleviate the State Housing Commission accommodation problem in Mandurah. The work involved has been a tremendous boost and quite a number of new houses will be built. Members should note that the increase in units to be built this year is 40 per cent up on the total for the last nine years, indicating to me at least that we have a Government which is watchful of the needs of the people. I ask the member for Murchison-Eyre to note that State Housing Commission accommodation should first be built in areas of greatest need, and we have waiting lists in Mandurah well in excess of what one could expect to find in towns such as Mt. Magnet in the Murchison-Eyre electorate. I would not expect any criticism of the Minister for Housing in this respect.

The use of CEP funding in the area has been of great benefit. In the order of \$200 000 has been spent in the Mandurah Shire on CEP projects.

The Peel Inlet Management Authority has spent approximately \$82 000. The Department of Conservation and the Environment is undertaking a Peel Inlet phosphorous reduction study at a cost of \$126 000 and a similar study is being undertaken by the Department of Agriculture at a cost of \$133 000. The Peel Inlet Management Authority's programme is centred on the restoration of Coopers Mill and Warranghup Springs. Work on both these areas will enhance their tourist appeal.

In connection with the work by the Peel Inlet Management Authority, I must commend the Minister for the Environment for his help in bringing about improvements and the upgrading of equipment by supplying two tractors which will help to keep weed off the beaches. The transport section of the original harvester has been modified to make it capable of harvesting weed, and a new and larger truck has been provided for the removal of the weed from the beaches and for general work for PIMA. Added to this we have had a \$170 000 dredging programme initiated in the navigation channels in the Sticks Channel and at the mouth of the Serpentine and Murray Rivers. This will mean greater safety for boating and greater access

for boating enthusiasts. This work can only be of great benefit to the Mandurah area.

One of the main attributes of this Government is its ability to move swiftly to address problems, and I can emphasise this with one example. For many years the Mandurah emergency water rescue group has been a soul without a home. Even so, its members have been very enthusiastic and capable. The lack of a home has not added to the morale of the group. For a town such as Mandurah, an emergency water rescue group is essential because of the town's great dependency on boating activities. I have the greatest admiration for this group, and I am pleased that it is now to be located on a grant of land which abuts the Mandurah Fishing Boat Club. Members of the group are well and truly establishing their headquarters there.

We have had problems with transport in the region and I again pass on my thanks to the Minister for Transport for his efforts to resolve those problems. We have benefited from increased seating at the Fremantle Railway Station, where the bus for Mandurah leaves. Toilets are to be constructed at the Kwinana bus station. These things might sound trivial, but they are important to pensioners especially, who comprise a large percentage of Mandurah's population.

At a recent meeting with the Minister we looked at many problems, including one which appears never to have been addressed before; that is, the problem of the area provided to carry cases on buses travelling to and from Mandurah. Members may not have thought of this as a problem, but for many people in my area the MTT buses are the only way by which they can travel to Perth perhaps to catch a plane or a train for whatever reason.

It meant that they had a problem, because their luggage had to be transported in the aisle of an MTT bus. That issue is being looked at now and special space will be provided. I am confident that will be well-received by the people of Mandurah.

The Minister for Water Resources is well known in Mandurah. He has been down there many times and has addressed problems quickly. For some time a water pressure problem existed at Halls Head and, when acquainted with it, the Minister was quick to move and the matter was resolved.

Perhaps one of the main issues involved in the State election as far as the Mandurah electorate was concerned related to the estuary which has been in contention for many years. The Government has placed great emphasis on a commitment to seek a rapid solution to the problems associated

with the Peel Inlet and Harvey Estuary and the Mandurah sandbar. In the near future the Premier will meet with the Mandurah Shire Council and the representatives of the Peel Inlet Management Authority to present a Government proposal aimed at arriving at a solution to the estuary and sandbar problem. Unfortunately, the Premier's back problem resulted in the postponement of an earlier meeting, but both the Mandurah Shire Council and the Peel Inlet Management Authority have shown commendable co-operation and understanding in the matter.

Many other small achievements have been made in Mandurah and I will not enumerate those now. However, they have shown the people of Mandurah that they have a Government which is willing and ready to move on any problem. One of the main features of this Government and, in particular, of its Ministers, is that they do not get bogged down in excuses; they see a problem and act on it. With those words, I repeat my expressions of sincere thanks to the Ministers concerned.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Clarko.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY: UNPARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mr Harman): Order! Before I call on the Leader of the House to move a motion to adjourn the House, there are a couple of points I want to make, about a debate that occurred this afternoon, for the sake of clarity and in order that members know in what position I stand regarding the use of the words "lies" and "liar".

Previously I have ruled in this House that the word "lies" and the word "lying" are not unparliamentary. While I do not advocate the use of those words and have always believed that good temper and moderation should be the hallmark of parliamentary debate, the fact is those words are

being used time and time again by some members. I ruled that they were not unparliamentary, but at the same time I did rule that the use of the term in describing a member as a "liar" was unparliamentary and the reason I adopted that course of action was that the term "liar", when describing a person, has a habitual meaning. I do not agree that members should be described in that fashion, so I have ruled that the use of the word "liar" is unparliamentary.

I have brought these matters to the attention of the Deputy Speaker who was not aware of the ruling I made last year.

Mr Hassell: It is a pity he didn't take the trouble to find out as he is supposed to.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am trying to assist the Parliament to attain a situation where members know what are the Speaker's rulings, and when that sort of interjection is made I find it disgusting. I do not advocate the use of the words. It is up to members, but if they want to use them the responsibility falls on their shoulders.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Leader of the House) [5.47 p.m.]: In moving the adjournment of the House I would like to say that this week I have witnessed the most disgraceful rowdiness I have ever heard in this Parliament—

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mr HASSELL: Mr Speaker, is the Leader of the House entitled to make a speech when he moves for the adjournment of the House?

The SPEAKER: Order! No, he is not. I ask the Leader of the House to move the motion.

Debate Resumed

Mr TONKIN: With much delight, I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.48 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

2 to 4. *Postponed.*

ENVIRONMENT

Air Pollution: Australind

117. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How regularly does the Government monitor the noise and air pollution levels at Laporte, in Australind?
- (2) Are these levels within the guidelines adhered to in Western Australia?
- (3) If not, has the Government taken any steps to bring the level or levels within the acceptable guidelines?
- (4) Is he aware that residents of Australind believe their health is being affected by the air pollution from Laporte?
- (5) Is he prepared to do a survey at Australind to find out if the residents' health is affected by the pollution from Laporte?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) Monitoring is done in response to specific noise complaints in accordance with the Noise Abatement Act. Testing for chimney emissions is a continuing process.
- (2) Yes—but occasionally they exceed the levels.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) Yes.
- (5) The total population of Australind is too small to provide a reliable statistical result. However, the Government is concerned that the health of residents is not adversely affected and the company is now required to submit monthly stack testing results in order to comply with the Air Pollution Control Council's limits on acid gas emissions.

118, 120, 122, 123, 128, 129, 133, 134, 136, 137, and 147. *Postponed.*

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Building and Engineering Industries

148. Mr COURT, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Has the Government plans for resource and further processing of resources projects in the next year to assist the engin-

eer and construction industry in this State?

- (2) If "Yes", what are these projects?
- (3) Will they have the same level of Western Australian content as achieved in the past?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) to (3) The Government is actively pursuing the development of a number of major resource projects. If these projects proceed, work will be provided for the engineering and construction industry during and after 1985.

There are projects which are currently under construction and are providing work for the engineering and construction industry. These include the Argyle diamond project, North-West Shelf gas project and a number of gold projects.

The Government's objective is to optimise the Western Australian content according to the specific nature of each project. It is envisaged that the local content will be of at least the same order as has been achieved in past resource projects.

ALUMINIUM SMELTER

Power Tariff

152. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) In view of the State Energy Commission's advice to the Government that it would be financially preferable to offer a discounted electricity tariff in the early years of a smelter tariff, than to pay for gas retained in "inventory", what is the amount of annual "discount" involved in the tariff proposals forwarded to Kukje/ICC and Reynolds Metals on 28 May?
- (2) Was an allowance for the 3 per cent Government levy payment included in the tariff proposals referred to in (1)?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) and (2) The Government has specifically set up the Aluminium Smelter Task Force to advise on all aspects of the smelter project, including power tariffs. The advice is from the Aluminium Smelter Task Force on these matters, not the State Energy Commission.

I am not prepared to comment at this time on tariffs being considered for the

aluminium smelter. As previously indicated, information on the benefit to be obtained from the establishment of the smelter, and associated cost-benefit study will be made available at the appropriate time.

ALUMINIUM SMELTER

Power Tariff

153. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

Adverting to the reply given to part (1) of question 33 of 26 July 1984, concerning the proposed smelter power tariff by the State Energy Commission, am I to assume that the answer is "No"?

Mr PARKER replied:

The answer to part (1) of question 33 of 26 July 1984 is quite clear. The member for Narragin is free to assume what he chooses.

ENERGY: STATE ENERGY COMMISSION

1984-85 Budget

154. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

By what method, or on what basis was the Government able to approve the State Energy Commission budget for 1984-85, and determine tariff increases, when the operating result for 1983-84 was not known, and the year's final financial situation unknown?

Mr PARKER replied:

The determination of the 1984-85 tariff was based upon the commission's estimated results for 1983-84 together with a projection of cost and price movements and economic activities for 1984-85.

ENERGY: STATE ENERGY COMMISSION

Income

155. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

What percentage of the State Energy Commission's income was derived from—

- (a) domestic customers;
 - (b) commercial and industrial customers,
- during
- (i) 1982-83;
 - (ii) 1983-84?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (a) 1982-83—domestic 39 per cent; commercial, industrial, other 61 per cent;
- (b) 1983-84—domestic 38 per cent; commercial, industrial, other 62 per cent.

MINERALS: COAL

Tonnages Purchased

156. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) What tonnages of coal were purchased from—
 - (a) Western Collieries Ltd.;
 - (b) Griffin Coal Mining Co. Ltd.,
 during the 1983-84 financial year?
- (2) What was the total cost of the coal referred to in (1)?
- (3) Has payment for all coal delivered during 1983-84 been finalised?
- (4) If the answer to (3) is "No", what tonnage still has to be paid for, or what funds are still owed to the coal companies?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) (a) 1.3 million tonnes;
- (b) 2.1 million tonnes.
- (2) The total cost of coal arises out of commercial contracts with the coal suppliers which are regarded as confidential.
- (3) No.
- (4) Payment has been made for all coal received. However, some price adjustments for those tonnages are still in dispute between the State Energy Commission and the Griffin Coal Mining Company Limited and are the subject of litigation in the Supreme Court.

ENERGY: ELECTRICITY

Kwinana Power Station

157. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) Adverting to the reply given to question 30 on Thursday, 26 July 1984, will he confirm that no discussion or consideration was held or given to Korean interests providing generating equipment to be installed at Kwinana power station, or elsewhere in Western Australia?

- (2) At what location(s) is it proposed to install generating equipment to use natural gas for electricity generation?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) In December 1983 the Government announced publicly that it had approved all letters of intent for the purchase of generating plant for the new south-west power station from Korea Heavy Industries and Construction Company Ltd.

If the member for Narrogin is referring to gas turbine generating plant, no discussion has been undertaken regarding the supply of such generating plant from any Korean organisation.

- (2) Electricity will be generated from gas at the existing Kwinana power station using existing generating plant. Some additional gas turbine plant is also planned but final location for the installation of this equipment is still to be resolved.

ENERGY: GAS

Pipeline: Dampier-Wagerup

158. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) With regard to deliveries of natural gas to the south-west from the North-West Shelf project, is the Dampier-Wagerup pipeline yet able to receive and transport "early gas"?
- (2) If the answer to (1) is "No", when is it anticipated the line will be able to transport gas, and the joint venturers provide delivery?
- (3) What is the estimated revenue loss to the State Energy Commission resulting from the present delay in commencement of deliveries?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) and (2) The Dampier-Wagerup pipeline is ready to receive gas from the joint venture participants as soon as it is available and has been for some time.
- (3) I refer the member for Narrogin to the answer to part (3) of parliamentary question 3422 dated 29 May 1984.

159. *Postponed.*

ENERGY: STATE ENERGY COMMISSION

Government Publicity Letter

160. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) On what basis, and for what reason, did the Government require the State Energy Commission to include a Government publicity letter, signed by the Premier, within current accounts being forwarded to State Energy Commission customers?
- (2) Was the requirement transmitted to the commission by the Premier or the Minister?
- (3) Was the requirement considered by the Commissioners of the State Energy Commission?
- (4) Was the letter drafted by officers of the State Energy Commission, or provided to the State Energy Commission by the Department of Premier and Cabinet?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) Assuming that the member is referring to the letter to consumers from the Premier, the Government believes that continued restraint on the part of all sections of the community is essential to the maintenance of the economic recovery. In holding down increases in most charges to below the inflation rate, the Government hopes it has given a lead that will be followed.

The letter was aimed at securing community co-operation for economic restraint.

- (2) The Premier asked the Minister for Minerals and Energy to make the arrangements with the commission.
- (3) The request was not considered by the Board of Commissioners of the State Energy Commission but senior management was aware of the request.
- (4) The letter was provided to the commission by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

ENERGY: STATE ENERGY COMMISSION

Ministerial Directions

164. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) Has he caused the State Energy Commission to record any directions of his since assuming the portfolio which made

him the responsible Minister according to the State Energy Commission Act?

- (2) Has he reaffirmed any of the recorded directions of his predecessor, and if so, how many?
- (3) Has he let lapse any of the recorded directions of his predecessor, and if so, how many?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) Section 10(6) of the State Energy Commission Act 1979 as amended requires the commission to record all exemptions, discretions or directions given by the Minister and which have a continuing effect.
- (2) Yes, eleven (11).
- (3) No.

WATER RESOURCES: WATER AUTHORITY

Five-year Corporate Plan

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

- (1) Is it proposed to retain the practice of working out a five-year corporate development plan and publishing it every year when the amalgamated Water Authority of Western Australia starts its operations?
- (2) If "Yes", will that five-year plan be affecting only the metropolitan area or the whole of the State?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) and (2) The Board of the Water Authority of Western Australia will be responsible for the production of any future corporate development plans for that authority. I understand that the board has not yet given consideration to these matters.

ENERGY: ELECTRICITY

Power Station: Carnarvon

174. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) Have studies been undertaken by the State Energy Commission to determine whether the Carnarvon powerhouse can be fuelled by gas?
- (2) Is it intended that the gas would be supplied from the Dampier-Perth gas pipeline?

- (3) If so, where would the take-off point be?
- (4) How would the gas be transported to the Carnarvon powerhouse?
- (5) What stage have the studies reached?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) Yes. Studies are being undertaken currently.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) A location just to the north of Gascoyne Junction.
- (4) Lateral gas pipeline or road transport of compressed natural gas (CNG).
- (5) Studies are still in progress and no conclusion has yet been reached concerning the feasibility of the scheme.

176. *Postponed.*

NATURAL DISASTERS: FLOODS

Flood Plains: Studies

178. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) When does he expect that the Busselton flood plains study will be completed?
- (2) Will the study include the—
 - (a) Wonnerup;
 - (b) Broadway; and
 - (c) Quindalup areas?
- (3) When did the study commence?
- (4) In view of comments made by the Shire of Busselton regarding floodway lands delineation, would he consider delaying legislation until these factors are known?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) End 1985.
- (2) (a) Yes;
 - (b) Broadwater (not Broadway) is included;
 - (c) No.
- (3) 1984.
- (4) I am prepared to listen to any reasonable request for the consideration of the legislation to be delayed.

179. *Postponed.*

FIRE: BUSHFIRE

Rosa Brook

182. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) Can he detail the extent of a fire on Sussex Locations 2831 and 4332, Rosa Brook?
- (2) Was the fire caused by any failure of the State Energy Commission powerline and what was the reason?
- (3) How extensive was the damage to the above property?
- (4) How much fencing was destroyed and what was the cost of replacement?
- (5) What action does he propose to ensure that pasture losses, hay losses, and stock agistment cost, will not be required to be borne by the property owner?
- (6) On how many occasions has the property owner written to the commission regarding his position following the fire and on what dates has he been replied to?
- (7) Were any other costs incurred in controlling the fire and if so to what extent, and has it been agreed that any costs will be met by the commission?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) The fire referred to spread into Location 2831 which is owned by a Mr Fontana and into Location 3181 owned by Mr Fry. Approximately 12-14 hectares of grass, 61 hectares of bush and 1 200 metres of fencing was burnt.
- (2) The fire was caused by an electrical arc which resulted from a broken high voltage conductor of an SEC power line contacting the ground. No reason for the conductor failure has been established.
- (3) Refer to (1).
- (4) 1 200 metres of fencing was destroyed. The cost of replacement was \$2 500, as estimated by MBS loss adjusters who were employed by the commission.
- (5) The commission's insurers, SGIO, have declined the claim.
If negligence by the commission is demonstrated it is expected the commission insurers will reimburse costs incurred.
- (6) On 31 January 1984 a letter was received from MBS loss adjusters with a preliminary report of the fire and details of estimates of cost of damage.

A letter was received from Mr Fontana on 12 March 1984. The commission wrote to Mr Fontana on 3 April 1984 advising him that his claim had been forwarded to SGIO for consideration and a further letter on 10 May 1984 advising that his claim had been declined by the SGIO.

- (7) Some costs would have been incurred by the fire brigades involved. The commission has not agreed to meet any costs arising from the incident, because according to the commission's insurers there is no evidence of negligence.

HEALTH: HOSPITAL

Armada-le-Kelmscott Memorial

189. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Will he please table a ground plan for the development of the Armada-le-Kelmscott Memorial Hospital?
- (2) What attention is to be given to retaining the significant flora on the site and maximise the enjoyment of the magnificent views available from this site as the necessary development programmes are implemented?
- (3) Is it intended to relocate the present morgue, which now occupies the best scenic views, to another less attractive site?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) The review of the consultant's recommendations for the various elements of development of the Armada-le-Kelmscott Hospital site require consolidation with current proposals for the Armada-le area of each of the newly amalgamated departments. This process is now being undertaken and precludes tabling of a master development plan at this stage.
- (2) As is usual with all hospital redevelopment planning, maximum attention will be given to aspect for patients and the retention of as much of the natural landscape as possible.
- (3) This matter has already been noted and will be given appropriate attention at the detailed planning stages.

190 to 199. *Postponed.*

SPORT AND RECREATION

Olympic Games: Government Assistance

200. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Youth and Community Services:

What assistance was granted to Western Australian Olympians by the State Government prior to their departure for the Los Angeles Olympics?

Mr WILSON replied:

The member will be aware that the State Government made a contribution to the national Olympic appeal of \$20 000. Additionally I am informed that the WA Institute of Sport made a direct total grant of \$8 000 to WA Olympians under guidelines established by the Board of Management of the Institute.

TRANSPORT: MTT

Perth Terminal Working Party

201. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Transport:

Since its formation, how many times has the Metropolitan Transport Trust Perth terminal working party referred to in question 2800 of Thursday, 5 April 1984, met?

Mr GRILL replied:

It is a committee that has been established, not a working party of the Metropolitan (Perth) Passenger Transport Trust as referred to in the question. The committee was formed to examine the feasibility of establishing a city bus terminal to cater for tour coaches and long-distance bus services and is under the chairmanship of the Commissioner of Transport.

The committee has met four times on a formal basis and several informal meetings have been held.

BUSINESS

Self-employment Business Ventures Scheme

202. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) How many applications have been received for funds under the Government's "Self Employment Business Ventures Scheme"?

- (2) How many applications have been approved?
 (3) How much has been approved?
 (4) Will he provide me with a list of successful applicants and their projects?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) 38.
 (2) 11.
 (3) \$47 555—
 (Loan \$41 460)
 (Grant \$6 095).
 (4) Yes. A list will be forwarded by letter to the member.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Community Employment Programme

203. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) Under the community employment initiatives programme designated as co-action, how many people have been assisted under the programme?
 (2) How many applications for the programme have been received?
 (3) How much has been allocated to the successful applicants?
 (4) Will he provide me with a list of the successful applicants?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) 288 unemployed people. Many more people have been assisted in other ways by the programme project officers.
 (2) 36.
 (3) \$17 375.60.
 (4) Yes. A list will be forwarded by letter to the member.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Community Employment Programme

204. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) Under the community employment initiatives programme designated as "community initiatives", how many small projects to assist local communities have been funded?
 (2) How many applications for the programme have been received?

- (3) How much has been allocated to the successful applicants?
- (4) Will he provide me with a list of the successful applicants?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) 13.
- (2) 25.
- (3) \$6 463.72.
- (4) Yes. A list will be forwarded by letter to the member.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Western Australian Labour Market Centre

205. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) Who will actually be completing the major study of the State's labour market which is to be co-ordinated by the Western Australian labour market centre?
- (2) What terms of reference have been given to the group which has to carry out the report?
- (3) How much will the report cost?
- (4) Who will fund the cost of the report?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) to (4) The question is not understood. The member is aware that a Western Australian Labour Market Research Centre—a consortium of Murdoch University, the University of Western Australia and the Western Australian Institute of Technology—has recently been established and a specific programme of activity for the centre is in the process of being finalised.

The programme will certainly produce a far clearer picture of how the WA labour market works and will be of considerable use to policy-making in the area of labour force planning and training programmes.

In support of the centre's research programme, the Government has provided a grant of \$40 000, a sum which has been matched by the Commonwealth Government's Bureau of Labour Market Research.

206. *Postponed.*

GAMBLING: LOTTERIES

Instant: Guidelines

207. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Youth and Community Services:

Would he detail for me the guidelines under which funds are allocated under the Sports Instant Lottery Fund programme?

Mr WILSON replied:

The Government has produced a comprehensive booklet which outlines the rationale and guidelines pertaining to grants in the Sports Instant Lottery Fund programme. This booklet has been available to all State sporting associations and the public since February of this year.

In fact in a letter to the member on 27 February 1984 I pointed out to him the existence of the booklet in question, and where and from whom it could be obtained. It is free of charge.

208. *Postponed.*

EDUCATION

Work Experience Programme

209. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is the Education Department to continue with its work experience programme?
- (2) If so, will this continue on the same basis as previously?
- (3) If not, on what basis will it be continued?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes, except that the special funds made available from the *Transition from School to Work Programme* will not be available for country students seeking work experience in the metropolitan area.
- (3) Those schools that offer students work experience away from home will now have to raise funds for travel and accommodation expenses locally.

210 to 212. *Postponed.*

HOUSING: LAND

Purchases

213. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Housing:

What land has the State Housing Commission purchased in country or north-west areas since 1 July 1983?

Mr WILSON replied:

The State Housing Commission has acquired the following building sites since 1 July 1983—

Country—68

North-west—57

214 to 218. *Postponed.*

WATER RESOURCES

Catchments: Clearing Bans

219. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) How many properties, and in which shires, have been purchased by the Public Works Department because of catchment clearing bans?
- (2) What is the area involved and what has been the yearly cost of purchases to date?
- (3) How many properties, and in what shires, are currently under review or negotiation for purchase and what is the amount of money involved?
- (4) Would he table maps showing the area subject to catchment clearing bans and the total area under consideration for purchase?

Mr McIVER replied:

- (1) to (4) It will take several days to compile the information. I will therefore arrange for it to be provided direct to the member for Vasse as soon as it becomes available.

220. *Postponed.*

WATER RESOURCES: UNDERGROUND

Bunbury, Busselton, and Capel

221. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Has his department carried out any survey into the extent of underground water resources in the Bunbury, Capel, Busselton areas, and with what result?

- (2) Can he say how many bores can be established and whether their flow rates are to be monitored?

- (3) (a) Further to (2), does this apply to all users, including industry use for mining, manufacture and agricultural purposes and are any industries able to seek variation;

- (b) if so, would he indicate?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) The Public Works Department has carried out very limited groundwater investigations in the area immediately west of Busselton with a view to establishing availability of water for public water supplies for urban development between Busselton and Dunsborough. This work established that limited groundwater is available, although there should be sufficient for the foreseeable public water supply demands.

However, the geological survey of the Mines Department has carried out investigations of the underground water resources throughout the Bunbury, Capel and Busselton areas under the State water resources assessment programme. This work has defined very large artesian and subartesian aquifers in the region, particularly west of Busselton, through to Bunbury.

- (2) It is not possible to indicate the number of bores that can be established as this depends very much on pumping rates required from each bore.

Major users generally monitor their water use and provide the information to the department on request. Groundwater well licences issued under the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act usually specify an annual allocation of water.

- (3) (a) and (b) This applies to all users whose bores require licences. Any user may seek variation. However, such variations are only approved where it is considered that other users and the resource will not be adversely affected.

222 to 231. *Postponed.*

ELECTORAL: REFORM

One-vote-one-value

232. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform:

Is it a fact that under the proposals he put forward for electoral reform as the latest attempt to implement Labor's "one-vote-one-value" policy, the Legislative Council province covering the sectors seats would, on existing boundaries, be underquota?

Mr TONKIN replied:

The use of the term "sectors seats" by the member for Merredin is a new term to me so in order to make an answer to his question possible, I am assuming that he has referred to the proposed northern Legislative Council region designed to be analogous to the present statutory electorates of the north-west-Murchison-Eyre area.

Only an analogy can be drawn between this present north-west area and what may emerge after a redistribution of electorates into 57 equal enrolment Assembly districts grouped into four regional electorates for the Legislative Council. Unlike all the present north-west area boundaries which were drawn in secret by the Liberal Party, the 1984 reforms propose that all boundaries shall be drawn by the independent Electoral Commissioners. It is therefore not really helpful to try to force direct comparisons between the existing electoral structure and the reform proposals.

If such a direct comparison is forced between the existing structure and the reforms, the enrolment of the north-west statutory area is at present slightly under-quota. The same can be said of most country districts and the proposed agricultural region and it is these undemocratic anomalies that the reforms address. The Government strongly believes that each citizen is equally entitled to cast a vote that means something.

TRANSPORT: FREIGHT

Grain

233. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What is the scheduled grain freight rate for grain transported by rail from—

- (a) Corrigin;
(b) Southern Cross;
to Kwinana?

- (2) What is the actual distance travelled in each case?
(3) Using annual tonnages of grain hauled for each of the last three years what was the average—
(a) rate per tonne;
(b) distance hauled, in each of those years?
(4) If grain growers do not accept the proposed grain freight contract what consideration has been given to charging Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. for the total grain transport task and allowing that company to seek reimbursement from its shareholders?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) (a) \$18.88
(b) \$23.60
(2) (a) 422 km
(b) 435 km
(3)
- | | 1981/82 | 1982/83 | 1983/84 |
|-----|---------|---------|---------|
| (a) | \$12.64 | \$14.50 | \$14.88 |
| (b) | 281 | 301 | 277 |
- (4) Charging on this basis has not been considered for adoption at this time. It is a possible option for the future.

AGRICULTURE: MACHINERY

Road Use

234. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

- (1) Can—
(a) two agricultural implements attached to a tractor by means of a "twin pull machine";
(b) an air seeder with a trailing cultivator bar attached to the rear, be towed along a road by an articulated four-wheel tractor?
(2) Will he table regulations or requirements which must be complied with when transporting agricultural machinery along a road?

Mr CARR replied:

- (1) (a) No.
(b) (i) in the case of a tractor registered as an articulated vehicle—No.

- (ii) in the common case of a so-called articulated tractor licensed as a single unit—Yes.

(2) Yes.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 85).

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY

"Herb Graham House"

235. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is it a fact that the land occupied by Herb Graham House, which was supposed to be a non-residential Labor Party club but is now a Chinese restaurant, was purchased from the State Housing Commission?
- (2) Will he table in the House all correspondence and documents relating to the sale of that land?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) and (2) See the answer provided on this matter in reply to question without notice on 1 August 1984.

236. *Postponed.*

STOCK: CATTLE

Liver Fluke

237. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Are cattle from liver fluke areas allowed into Western Australia?
- (2) If so, under what conditions?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The cattle are required to be treated for fluke before they enter the State. On entering the State they are required to be treated on two occasions, the first not earlier than 19 days and not later than 22 days after the treatment administered prior to movement; the second not earlier than 56 days and not later than 63 days after the treatment administered prior to movement.

Further regulations are being prepared to formalise administrative procedures for properties of destination in the south-west.

238 to 243. *Postponed.*

TRANSPORT: RAILWAYS

Canning Vale-Leighton

244. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Does the Government intend to complete the narrow gauge rail line—both ways—southern link between Canning Vale and Leighton marshalling yards?
- (2) Will the southern rail 3'6" link be completed before the America's Cup in 1987?
- (3) When is it expected the latest inquiry into the introduction of a light rail vehicle will be completed?
- (4) Is it expected a light rail vehicle will be available for public transport before the America's Cup in early 1987?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) Yes, this work is currently in progress.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) It is expected the inquiry into the acquisition of a lighter and technologically advanced railcar will be completed by the end of this year.
- (4) It is expected the above vehicle will be in service on the suburban rail system prior to the America's Cup.

245. *Postponed.*

HOUSING

Construction Programme

246. Mr BLAICKIE, to the Minister for Housing:

What is the State Housing Commission building programme for the—

- (a) Bunbury;
- (b) Busselton;
- (c) Margaret River districts, for the 1984-85 financial year?

Mr WILSON replied:

The proposed State Housing Commission building programme in 1984-85 is (subject to funding)—

	Commonwealth/ State	Abor- iginal
(a) Bunbury	72 units	4 units
(b) Busselton	41 units	2 units
(c) Margaret River	7 units	- units

247 to 249. *Postponed.*

PORNOGRAPHY: VIDEO FILMS*Classification*

250. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Administrative Services:

- (1) Would the Minister prevail on the Commonwealth Government to tighten guidelines regarding rating audio/video-tapes and also to have questions on customs declarations regarding import of videotapes?

(2) If not, why not?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) and (2) I will ensure that these matters will be listed for discussion at the next meeting of Commonwealth and State Government Ministers responsible for censorship.

TRAFFIC*Western Suburbs*

251. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Planning:

Could he please table the report by the task force headed by Mr Peter Lalor to study traffic and the solution of it in western metropolitan suburbs?

Mr PEARCE replied:

All but two of the original copies have been distributed. A copy has been sent to the member today.

ROADS*Rochdale Road: Bypass*

252. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Planning:

Now that the Lalor committee appointed by the Minister for Planning is reported to have recommended that the bypass road for Rochdale Road, Mt. Claremont, should be built as a matter of priority, can he detail when the building of this bypass road is going to commence and what is the anticipated construction period?

Mr PEARCE replied:

The public has until the end of August to comment on the recommendations in the report, following which the matter will be considered by Cabinet.

WATER RESOURCES*Dams: Stinton Creek*

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

- (1) Is he in possession of any information that certain chemicals used for spraying in the catchment area of the proposed Stinton Creek Dam would pollute the water in the new dam when it is built?
- (2) If so, what preventive measures is the Government going to take in this regard?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) Results of chemical analyses of water from Stinton Creek, including the level of pesticide residues, indicate that the quality comfortably meets current Australian drinking water criteria. The proposal for utilising Stinton Creek is to pump the water back to the Canning Dam storage where the already low levels of any residues will be extensively diluted.
- (2) The intention of declaring the area as a water reserve is to ensure that it is utilised in a manner that allows its continued use for agricultural purposes without causing degradation of the water quality. Investigations and monitoring will continue until the resource is required for public water supply in 10 to 15 years' time.

WATER RESOURCES: WATER AUTHORITY*Investments*

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

- (1) At what periods were interest payments received from the Treasury on moneys the Metropolitan Water Authority invested with the Treasury during the year 1983-84?
- (2) At what time(s) were these interest moneys transferred to capital accounts?
- (3) What is the procedure expected to be in this regard in the financial year 1984-85?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) The authority maintains a number of accounts with Treasury including its "Capital Replacement Account". The funds held in the capital replacement ac-

count from time to time are invested separately by Treasury on terms agreed with the authority.

Interest earned on the capital replacement account is paid into the authority's main account, when received. Interest on other authority accounts is paid by Treasury in June each year, for the preceding 12 months to 31 May.

- (2) Interest attributable to the capital replacement account is calculated by the authority at the end of the financial year on the basis of a detailed analysis of the availability and application of capital funds during the course of the year.
- (3) As above.

WATER RESOURCES: WATER AUTHORITY

Assets: Depreciation

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

- (1) What was the final decision regarding the percentage of depreciation of the Metropolitan Water Authority's assets for the 1984-85 financial year?
- (2) Is this depreciation percentage calculated on replacement value of assets as at 1 July 1984?
- (3) When are the set-aside depreciation amounts transferred to capital accounts?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) The Budget estimate for depreciation for 1984-85 has been calculated to reflect the true economic cost of asset usage, having regard to the estimated useful lives of the various categories of assets employed and their replacement cost. This methodology supersedes the former benchmark percentage, based on an average asset life of 50 years, which was used during the phasing-in process.
- (2) The budget figure for depreciation is based on the estimated replacement value of assets at 31 December 1984 prices.
- (3) Due to self-financing requirements during the current year, depreciation is transferred to the capital account on a quarterly basis with an adjustment in the final quarter to reflect the difference between the budget estimate and the actual amount of depreciation determined by the board for that year.

WATER RESOURCES: WATER AUTHORITY

Assets: Depreciation

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

- (1) Are the depreciable assets used in providing water, sewerage and drainage by the country water undertakings of the Public Works Department's engineering division being valued for replacement value, presumably to be the basis of the depreciation of the amalgamated Water Authority of Western Australia?
- (2) If so, what is the rough approximate total value of these assets expected to be at the end of the 1984-85 financial year?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) and (2) An estimate is being made of the approximate total replacement value of country water, sewerage, drainage and irrigation assets and, for the end of 1984-85, this is expected to be about \$1 800 million at December 1984 prices.

SUPERANNUATION

Water Authority

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

- (1) What is the Metropolitan Water Authority's contribution to the superannuation of its employees for the last financial year—
 - (a) in terms of percentage of the annual aggregate salary bill;
 - (b) in actual dollar amounts?
- (2) What is the variation in the percentage compared with 1982-83?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) In 1982-83 the board obtained an actuarial valuation of the liability of the authority as of 1982 and since then provision is being made each year which recognises the true costs of superannuation to the authority's activities and should progressively ensure that contributions required in the future will be adequately funded.

The authority's superannuation provision for 1983-84 was—

- (a) based on 9 per cent of total payroll.
- (b) \$6.45 million.

- (2) The provision for 1982-83 was based on 8.25 per cent of total payroll.

HOUSING

"Housing Problems! Needs!"

258. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Housing:

In the report to the Minister for Housing entitled "Housing Problems! Needs!", it was indicated that building costs for the 1982-83 year rose by only 0.9 per cent. What has been the increase for the 1983-84 year?

Mr WILSON replied:

There are no final figures available at this stage for the financial year 1983-84.

EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOL

Willetton

259. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Have plans for the provision of additional administration facilities at Willetton Primary School yet been finalised?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) What is the estimated cost of these improvements?
- (4) When is it anticipated the improvements will be completed?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) and (2) Several schemes for increasing administration space have been put to the school. The favoured one by the department is to use part of the superseded library for office space and this still requires some further negotiations.
- (3) and (4) These details will be available when the latest scheme has been detailed and costed by the Public Works Department.

260. *Postponed.*

POLICE

Firearms: Legislation

261. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

When will the current review of the firearms legislation be completed?

Mr CARR replied:

The review of firearms legislation has been completed, and recommendations will be submitted to Cabinet for consideration in the near future.

PORTS AND HARBOURS

Jervoise Bay

262. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) Has the Jervoise Bay breakwater project, which was funded from the State's total wages pause programme, yet been completed?
- (2) If so, what was the final cost of completion of the breakwater?
- (3) How many people are currently employed in the shipbuilding industry at Jervoise Bay?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) \$2 172 956.
- (3) To obtain this information it would be necessary for a survey of all firms in the shipbuilding industry located at Jervoise Bay to be carried out.

The Minister for Employment and Training is not prepared to authorise such a survey at this time.

However if the member feels he must be provided with the information perhaps he should write to the Minister detailing his reasons for requiring these figures and consideration will be given to the request.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Employment Strategies Fund

263. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) How much of the \$1 454 720 committed to the State employment strategies fund, as referred to in question 69 of 31 July, had been spent as at 30 June 1984?
- (2) Will the Minister list the projects on which the \$1 454 720 had been committed?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) Reconciliation of recoups from the fund has not been completed. At 30 June 1984 \$201 837 had been recouped against expenditure by departments.
- (2) Yes. A list will be forwarded by letter to the member.

264. *Postponed.*

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Community Employment Programme

265. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Employment and Training:

What was the total amount of funding that was made available to Western Australia under the community employment programme for the year ended 30 June 1984?

Mr PEARCE replied:
\$22.986 million.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Pawnbrokers Act

266. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Is the Government considering amending the Pawnbrokers Act?
- (2) If so, what is the general nature of these amendments?
- (3) When is it likely that the legislation to effect these amendments will be presented to the Parliament?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) An interim amendment will be introduced to prohibit the avoidance of the Pawnbrokers Act by the use of the "Option to Purchase" device. A thorough review of the operation of the Act is to be carried out.
- (3) The interim amendment is likely to be introduced to Parliament as soon as possible

WASTE DISPOSAL

Liquid Report

267. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Have the consultants to the Metropolitan Water Authority investigating the situation in Perth with regard to liquid waste disposal yet reported to the authority?
- (2) If not, when is it anticipated that the report will be completed?
- (3) Will the report be made public?
- (4) If not, why not?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Late 1984.
- (3) and (4) The report covers one facet of the total problem of liquid waste disposal in the metropolitan area which is being considered by a Cabinet committee which is continuing the work of the committee established by the previous Government. The Cabinet committee will report to Government.

268. *Postponed.*

"BUNBURY 2000"

Home Building Programme

269. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Would he give details of the Government's intention to sell surplus land to finance a major State home building programme as contained in the "Bunbury 2000" document?
- (2) What and where is the land in question and in what towns does the Government intend the major State home building programme will be carried out?
- (3) What are the amounts of money anticipated—
 - (a) from land sale;
 - (b) for building purposes?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) to (3) All these matters are under comprehensive review and negotiation.

270 to 272. *Postponed.*

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

PARLIAMENT WEEK

Minister for Education: Letter

51. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that the letter he tabled on Tuesday, addressed to school principals and signed by the Director-General of Education, dated 12 July, and relating to Parliament Week, has not yet been posted to school principals?
- (2) Is he also aware that his office and the Director-General's office have advised me that the letter will be posted once advice on details relating to it have been received from the Premier's office?
- (3) Does he still claim that the involvement of students in Parliament Week is not politically motivated and is being carried out only by Education Department officers?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) to (3) Yes, I am aware that the letter I tabled in this House on Tuesday or Wednesday of this week has not yet been sent to schools. At the time I tabled it, it was my understanding that it had been sent out.

Mr Clarko: You made another mistake.

Mr PEARCE: It was an error and I concede that, but the only reason the Deputy Leader of the Opposition knows that is he obtained that information from my office this afternoon; so there has been no effort to conceal the matter.

In fact, the basis of the member's question is information given out by my office. This afternoon I spoke to the Director-General of Education who was also unaware that the letter which he wrote and signed on 12 July had not been sent out because the normal procedures in the Education Department are that letters which are sent out to schools on a circular basis either by the Director-General of Education or by myself are signed and consigned by others and the Director-General is seeking to establish why there has been such a lengthy delay in the mailing of that letter. That is the simple point. There is obviously no political interference in the way in which this thing will work because not only did I not know that the

letter had been sent out but also I sought to see a copy of it.

Mr MacKinnon: Why is the Director-General of Education waiting for approval from the Premier's office before he sends out his letter?

Mr PEARCE: The Director-General is not waiting for approval from the Premier's department for the letter which he is sending out. The letter which I tabled will be sent out in the exact, precise form in which I tabled it. As I understand the matter—and I am waiting for a full report from the Director-General—it is simply waiting on information with regard to Parliament Week which is to be supplied by the public servants in the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Mr MacKinnon: From the Premier's office. That was the information supplied to us.

Mr PEARCE: The Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform has made it quite clear in this House—

Mr MacKinnon: What has the Department of Premier and Cabinet got to do with an Education Department letter? You were at great pains the other day to explain to us that it was the department's letter. Now it is the Premier's office which is explaining the detail. They are the ones who are telling them whether they will send out the letter. Why has not the Attorney General sent it out?

Mr Tonkin: You have been told.

Mr PEARCE: If the implication of that last interjection by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was that the Director-General of Education takes his instructions from officers in the Department of Premier and Cabinet, that is not an accurate statement, and that is an unwarranted attack on a very important public servant.

Mr MacKinnon: Why has he not sent his letter out?

Mr PEARCE: The Director-General of Education in this State takes instructions only from the Minister for Education.

Mr MacKinnon: It seems very strange for his officer to tell me that he is waiting on advice from another office.

Mr Tonkin: If you shut up you will hear the answer.

Mr Blaikie: What a dreadful way for the Leader of the House—

Mr PEARCE: It amazes me the way in which the Opposition is so bereft of ideas that it has to try to fly with any molehill it can lay its hands on. The letter that I tabled in this House the other day, written by the Director-General of Education, has not been sent out because the letter itself refers to additional information which will accompany that letter and, as I understand it, that information has not been available.

Mr Tonkin: Because the schedule is not finalised, that's all.

Mr MacKinnon: Not been available in a printed form from the Premier's office?

Mr PEARCE: Not from the Premier's office, from the public servants—

Mr MacKinnon interjected.

Mr PEARCE: Listen, bucketmouth, if you want me to answer the question, how about keeping your mouth closed until you hear the response?

Mr Clarko: You should talk. You took an extra 15 minutes yesterday.

Mr PEARCE: I will spend 45 minutes on my answer, the way we are going, and we will all go home.

Mr Blaikie: Why don't you tell us something?

Mr Tonkin: Mr Speaker, this is intolerable.

Mr PEARCE: I am trying to finish a sentence without being shouted down by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I want to answer his question.

Mr Tonkin: Let him finish answering the question.

Mr PEARCE: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition wishes to make an assertion that the Director-General of Education is acting under the direction of members of the Premier's staff for political purposes.

Mr Tonkin: That is untrue.

Mr PEARCE: It is untrue. It is an unfair and unwarranted attack and reflection on the fine public servant who has served the previous Government with great distinction and is also serving the Government in which I am Minister for Education with great distinction. I understand that when the Deputy Leader of the Opposition sought information from my office he sought also a copy of the letter which in fact I tabled here two days ago and if he would retrieve that letter from the table—

Mr MacKinnon: I have a copy of the letter. I have it here.

Mr PEARCE: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition should read out the section which says that certain printed information will accompany this letter, and he will then understand that the—

Mr MacKinnon: Whose letter is it?

Mr PEARCE: It is the Director-General of Education's letter.

Mr MacKinnon: What, you are the one who was telling us that the Education Department wanted the participation of students in Parliament Week.

Mr Tonkin: That is correct.

Mr MacKinnon: Clearly, it is not correct.

Mr Tonkin: You are stupid. There on that committee—

Mr MacKinnon: They are sitting here waiting to be told what to do by the palace down the road.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PEARCE: This is a blatant misuse of question time.

Mr Clarko: You certainly are.

Mr Tonkin: You won't let him answer. You are a mob of hooligans. The way this Parliament has behaved in the last two days is a disgrace.

Mr Clarko: You would know a bit about that.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Tonkin: Cancel question time.

The SPEAKER: There is a very quick alternative to stop all this nonsense—

Mr Tonkin: My oath!

The SPEAKER: —and that is for me to leave the Chair.

Mr Tonkin: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: If members want to have questions without notice, I suggest they co-operate with the Chair.

Mr Tonkin: A mob of larrikins!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PEARCE: If it is the belief of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that the Director-General of Education is misusing his position for political purposes, he should move a motion in this House to that effect to see whether he can get the support of members.

Mr MacKinnon: That is not what I said at all.

Mr Tonkin: You did.

Mr PEARCE: I say quite unequivocally to the House that should he table such a motion, I will enter the debate with a great deal of pleasure and fervour, and defend the propriety of the Director-General of Education's position.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Job Security Test Case

52. Mr HASSELL, to the Acting Premier:

- (1) Is he satisfied with the outcome of the job security test case in the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission?
- (2) Will he support similar measures flowing to Western Australia including the new redundancy provisions?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) and (2) I am not the Minister for Industrial Relations and I am not the Minister who represents him in this Chamber.

Mr Hassell: You are the Acting Premier, though.

Mr BRYCE: If the Leader of the Opposition is looking for information I suggest he put the question on the Notice Paper. If he is looking for mischief we will give him some curry to go with his rice.

Mr Clarko: The French poodle bites again!

PRICES

Consumer Price Index: June Quarter

53. Mrs HENDERSON, to the Acting Premier:

- (1) Would the Acting Premier comment on the recent CPI figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics for Perth during the June quarter?
- (2) In particular, could he comment on the broad implications for Western Australia during the remaining five months of 1984?

Mr Clarko: On a day-by-day basis!

The SPEAKER: Not too long, either.

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) and (2) I would be delighted to.

Mr Clarko: How about on a week-by-week basis? There are only 22.

Point of Order

Mr HASSELL: I have a point of order, Mr Speaker.

Mr Bryce: Isn't my tie sitting correctly today?

Mr HASSELL: I ask whether the question is in fact in order.

The SPEAKER: Yes, I rule it in order.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr BRYCE: I would be pleased to do so in response to the question from the member from Gosnells. I thank her for her kindness in giving me some notice of the question.

Mr McNee: I suppose she thanks you for giving her the reason to ask the question!

Mr BRYCE: I expect that when I finish the member will thank me for giving him the information.

Mr McNee: I would thank you a lot more for some help with the Agaton water scheme.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: I can promise the member that, in the interests of the people who want to be able to afford to pay for their water, that is not likely to be privatised.

The Consumer Price Index for the June quarter, compared to the March quarter 1984, was static or nil change. In comparison, there was a 0.02 per cent increase nationally over the eight capital cities.

The CPI survey revealed Perth experienced much lower increases in the costs of housing and transport than the national average.

The costs of health and personal services decreased at an even faster rate than the average.

The costs of recreation and education, which are already significantly lower than the average of Australian capital cities, also decreased.

I thought the member for Mt. Marshall would be a bit pleased about that. The price of petrol in Perth fell during the quarter. The most important index—the price of food—has remained near static at 0.38 per cent increase.

The implications of this deceleration of price inflation to WA are that inflationary expectations—especially wages in-

flation—will be reduced commensurate with the static nature of the CPI.

Mr Court: What about Government charges?

Mr BRYCE: I was getting close to the end of the answer, and now I have to take a little bit of time out to remind the member for Nedlands that the level of increases in Government charges for the next 12 months is so low that Western Australians simply cannot remember when a Government made such a courageous decision.

Mr Clarko: What about last year? You put them up high enough for the next three years.

Mr BRYCE: Last year it was somewhat higher. The former Minister for Education has forgotten that he and his colleagues left us with this monstrous deficit, with the major agencies of this State running into such unbelievable deficits that it was simply financial responsibility at that time to increase those charges in the way they had to be. Now of course the ship has been set right and I know it really thrills the Leader of the Opposition. I am just a little disappointed that he did not make the concessions to the Chamber today when he responded to my statement on the economy.

It is widely anticipated that the minimal increase in the national average CPI will dissuade any six-monthly wage indexation in October. I expect, as a result of the CPI, another important economic indicator, the survey of business opinion will show a vigorous optimism in the Western Australian economy which has been revealed in the last four quarterly surveys.

The scenario augurs well for the Western Australian economy for the remainder of 1984.

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY

"Herb Graham House"

54. Mr HASSELL, to the Acting Premier:

What arrangements were made, and by whom, in relation to the leasing of Herb Graham House by the Government for offices used by members?

Mr BRYCE replied:

I would have thought with all the issues involving the acquisition of land, the applications for the development of the

building in respect of the City of Stirling, and the actual development of the centre—all issues which are fundamentally outside my portfolio—

Mr Hassell: I want to know what safeguards were involved, in view of the fact that it was a deal between the Labor Party and the Government.

Mr BRYCE: Is it not surprising that this very upset Leader of the Opposition is prefacing his question with a statement like that? I feel confident that any of the arrangements that were entered into were on a par. If the Leader of the Opposition wants specific details about the amount of money per square metre that was paid for any office space that has been leased, I suggest that he ask in a sensible and appropriate way, with a question on notice, so that the information can be given.

Mr MacKinnon: Will you then answer?

Mr BRYCE: I will give all the information about all the electoral offices in Western Australia.

TECHNOLOGY

Marine Technology Park

55. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Technology:

What plans does the State Government have to establish a marine technology park in Western Australia?

Mr BRYCE replied:

I am pleased to say that it is the Government's view, and strong desire, that the second technology park in Western Australia will be a marine technology park. The Government has before it currently—in the sense that the technology development authority does—two proposals for the development of a marine technology park.

One proposal involves the South Fremantle power station which has come to the end of its useful life and which is on standby. The site itself is ideal for this rather interesting and important concept. The second one involves a proposition that has been presented to the Government by some developers in the Mandurah district. Both of those propositions look interesting and they are before the technology development authority for assessment and consideration.

TRANSPORT: MTT

"Privatisation"

56. Mrs BEGGS, to the Minister for Transport:

Is the Minister aware of the Opposition's recent suggestions that it would be beneficial to privatise the public transport services offered by the MTT and can he outline the impact of these suggestions?

Mr GRILL replied:

It is a complete myth that the "privatisation" of public transport would reduce the cost to the taxpayer to any significant degree.

As in virtually every other city in the world, the function of Perth's public transport is primarily non-commercial. It provides safe transport at modest cost for the many people unable to use cars, because, for example, they are too old, or unable to afford the use of the car. It also caters for 40 per cent of the commuter journeys to the centre of Perth, significantly reducing the level of traffic and its associated congestion and environment nuisance.

Public transport at a reasonable price is a necessity both for social welfare and for the general benefit of Perth's community. "Privatisation" would either result in unacceptably high fares or it would require Government subsidy. More likely, following the logic of conservative Administrations elsewhere, the profitable sector would be sold off for private benefit leaving the remainder for Government operation without even the support of the more commercial routes.

I am all in favour of improving efficiency. The MTT is under instruction to pursue it through all available avenues. Comparative figures prepared by the Commonwealth Grants Commission showed its bus operating efficiency to closely match that of private bus operators elsewhere in Australia.

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY

"Herb Graham House"

57. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Housing:

Is the Minister aware that the Premier wrote to me, when I was Minister for Housing, indicating that a site purchased adjacent to Wanneroo Road in Nollamara for what is now Herb

Graham House would be used solely for what he described—

The SPEAKER: Order! You are asking the Minister a question which relates to an incident which occurred before he became the Minister for Housing, and a matter about which the Premier wrote when he was a member. It is not a question which the Minister would be able to answer. Those sorts of questions are not in order.

Point of Order

Mr HASSELL: With due respect, we are pursuing a number of questions about this issue, and as a result of earlier questions this week the Minister for Housing has examined the file relevant to this matter within his portfolio. Therefore, he does have available to him the information that is being requested in the question.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I rule the question out of order.

Questions without Notice Resumed

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY

US Warships: Working Party

58. Mr COURT, to the Acting Premier:

When will the Western Australian ALP working party controlling the extent of visits of US warships to Western Australia report its findings?

Mr BRYCE replied:

I guess the member for Nedlands needs to be put right about a few matters in respect of the procedure within the Labor Party and the relationship between the Labor Party and the Labor Government of this State.

In case any doubt exists in the minds of the Leader of the Opposition, his deputy, the member for Nedlands, or any other member sitting opposite—and I notice there are not many of them today—

Mr Tonkin: There were 13 when question time started and there are 11 now.

Mr MacKinnon: How many Ministers are here?

Mr Clarko: On one occasion when you were in Opposition, none of you was here.

Mr BRYCE: Perhaps I should lay it on the line so there is no doubt in their minds in case they are worried. At the Federal

Conference a decision was made by the Labor Party to warmly embrace the ANZUS alliance and to welcome ships of the US Navy to our port and other ports in Australia as part of that obligation. We were very happy to do so. That might really disappoint members opposite, but that was the position adopted.

The question of whether some grounds exist for discussion between the Australian and US Governments about the frequency of visits does not concern this Parliament. It concerns this Government, but it is not an issue that rests with the constitutional authority or responsibility of this State. The visits of the ships has the complete support of the State Government and we welcome the decision made at the Federal Conference.

Mr Court: I am asking about the working party.

Mr BRYCE: I thought I would give a little background and then come back to tell the member that what happened in discussions between the Foreign Minister (Mr Hayden) when he came here and a working party or a group of interested members of the Labor Party has nothing to do with me.

MULTICULTURAL AND ETHNIC AFFAIRS

Immigration: Referendum

59. Mr READ, to the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs:

Referring to the imprecise call by the Liberal Party State Conference last weekend for what amounts to a referendum on immigration to Australia, does he have any figures relating to the proportion of immigrants in the Western Australian population?

Mr DAVIES replied:

I thought most people knew those figures and that the Liberal Party in particular might have known them before treading in this minefield. It was disappointing indeed to see such an apparently antagonistic attitude from the Liberal Party Conference to people who have been welcomed here to our shores over such a period of time.

Mr Clarko: Is it antagonistic to ask for a referendum?

Mr DAVIES: From the wording of the party's resolution—if that is what is

worrying the member for Karryinup—it would appear the Liberal Party believes that every person who comes into this country from another nation should leave behind his or her ethnic, national, or cultural heritage.

Mr Clarko: That is nonsense.

Mr DAVIES: They want them sanitised so that every person living in Australia is the same. The Government is not prepared to endorse that policy.

Mr Clarko: Which adviser wrote the answer?

Mr DAVIES: I do not have an adviser in my office.

Mr Clarko: It is a dorothy dix question prepared by the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Mr DAVIES: This is the kind of thing I have been saying over and over again since becoming Minister in welcoming the people in our community who have migrated here—people the member sent soldiers away to defend.

Mr Clarko: Me?

Mr DAVIES: The member's Government. Some 470 young Australians lost their lives as a result of a decision his Government made to send Australians away to defend people he does not want to see in this country. What does he have to say about that?

It is a divisive policy which can only create ill will in the community. This is especially so if one considers that at the 1981 census, about 28 per cent of Western Australia's population were migrants. The national figure was about 21 per cent. To adopt such an antimigrant stand is likely to be offensive to more than a quarter of the population. It is quite clear that the Opposition is saying it is on a racial band wagon and it hopes to get some advantage from the difficulties those people might be encountering and which they are trying very successfully to overcome.

That kind of divisive attitude is bad for the whole community and raises the risk of unnecessary tensions. I find the approach especially disappointing as the policies that have been followed were those of successive Federal and State Liberal Party Governments. What does the Opposition have to say about that? Does it say it blundered and made a mistake and did not want those policies, or

are Opposition members saying that in retrospect they should not have done that? If so, let them come out and say it.

It is a great pity that the party should be turning away from such policies for what appears to be nothing more than political expediency. This same motion failed to say what kind of question would be put to the people, but we know what that would be.

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY

"Herb Graham House"

60. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is he aware that the Premier personally elicited letters from surrounding residents of what is now Herb Graham House petitioning that as the premises would be used solely as a meeting place and for ALP club activities, they were agreeable to the facility being established in a residential area?
- (2) In view of the public interest in this matter will he agree to table the State Housing Commission file which contains the letters from Mr Burke and the residents in the area? If not, why not?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) and (2) Dealing with the last matter first, I take it that when the member was a Minister, he agreed to table papers from departmental files? In fact he never did. No member of the then Government did, and it has been a practice of all Governments not to table such papers. We are not going to do it either. As I said yesterday, it is totally dishonest of this Opposition—

Mr MacKinnon: Cover-up!

Mr Blaikie: What are you hiding?

Mr WILSON: In that case, the previous Government was guilty of cover-ups. It is totally dishonest of the Opposition to take this self-righteous attitude now and try to indicate that we should be doing something as a matter of principle. It is a point on which the Opposition is totally bankrupt.

I am not aware of the matters to which the member referred. I do not carry those details in my head.

Mr Clarko: Nor anything else.

Mr WILSON: I will not try to match the member's intellect; the level is too low.

The member for Gascoyne asked about letters written to him as Minister for Housing. I do not know anything about personal letters to him as Minister. I doubt whether letters written to him personally are even on the file. They will not be tabled in Parliament. That has always been the practice, and it is the practice adopted by this Government.

WATER RESOURCES

Dam: Harding River

61. Mrs BUCHANAN, to the Acting Premier:

- (1) Is the Acting Premier aware of a move by an Aboriginal group in the Pilbara to stop work on the Harding River Dam?
- (2) What is the current status of the dam project and what is the Government's attitude to the move?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) Yes. The Government is aware of such a move and we are deeply concerned about it.
- (2) This afternoon I will issue a Press statement which sets out the Government's position and the project's current status. With your indulgence, Mr Speaker, I would like to read the statement to the House. It is as follows—

The State Government's worst predictions of the Federal Government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage legislation were supported by an absurd and ill-advised attempt by an Aboriginal group in Roebourne to stop work on the Harding River Dam.

The Acting Premier today indicated that the Minister with special responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Keith Wilson M.L.A., had been advised by a lawyer from the Aboriginal Legal Service that an application under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 1984 had been made to stop the work.

Mr Bryce said the application made a mockery of the Seaman Land Inquiry and undermined genuine efforts to develop a land policy that took into account conflicting interests.

The \$13 million Harding River Dam is planned as the Pilbara's main water supply. About \$9 million has already been spent on the dam, which is seventy per cent completed.

Mr Bryce said that the Federal Government had already contacted the State Government about the application, and details of the State Government's position would be made known forcefully to the Acting Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator Susan Ryan.

He said it was particularly regrettable that the Aboriginal Legal Service had chosen to act in such an irresponsible fashion and that such action only gave credence to its critics.

GAMBLING: CASINO

Applicants: Cabinet Subcommittee

62. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Local Government:

I understand that the Minister for Local Government was a member of the Cabinet subcommittee investigating the casino applications. I ask—

- (1) How many times did the committee meet with the applicants?
- (2) Did the committee meet with any applicant on more than one occasion?
- (3) If so, who was the applicant?

Mr CARR replied:

- (1) to (3) The member would be aware that the question of the casino approval and establishment is within the portfolio of the Minister for Administrative Services. The question should be correctly directed to that Minister.

LIQUOR: WINE

Grape Spirit Excise

63. Mr TROY, to the Minister for Agriculture:

In regard to the difficulties evident last year relating to the grape spirit excise and particularly the lack of representation of small wineries on the wine and brandy advisory council, what developments have occurred to ensure that they are adequately represented in the future.

Mr EVANS replied:

I thank the member for the timely notice of the question that he gave me. I appreciate it. I am aware that the wine industry emphatically wants representation on the wine and brandy industry advisory council. That view was conveyed to the recent meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council in the strongest terms. The Minister for Primary Industry indicated his preparedness to re-examine the composition of the council. Western Australia produces less than two per cent of Australia's wine, but has 20 per cent of Australian wineries. These small wineries are usually family concerns. They are efficient and are a means of decentralisation.

The small wineries, particularly in Western Australia, attract greater attention from the media, from consumers, and have a significant impact on regional development and tourism. They tend also to have different problems than do the large wineries. The Western Australian industry believes the council should have members drawn from fully represented State associations, because there is a danger that the proposed membership will represent only the views of powerful sections of the industry.

It has been suggested that this situation has already occurred in connection with wine excise policies. The Government recognises the seriousness of this matter and will continue to support the industry. Of the 350 commercial wineries in Australia, 225 are small wineries; that is, wineries of less than 500 tonnes crushing. So the claim of the small wineries is valid.

GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

"WA Government Notes"

64. Mr MacKINNON, to the Acting Premier:

- (1) Is the Acting Premier aware that the Premier, in the latest issue of the *WA Government Notes* publication stated—

The Western Australian Development Corporation will not impinge on private enterprise. It has no brief to do so?

- (2) Is he also aware that the Premier has instructed the corporation to seek an in-

volvement with a foreign bank to operate in Western Australia.

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) and (2) Is it not rather strange that the member should ask that sort of question? Has he forgotten that during the debate in this House on the legislation to establish the WADC, the Opposition took a strong stand and insisted that the corporation ought to be kept at arm's length? He and his friends in the other place, during the debate on clause 4 (4) and (12), insisted that the Western Australian Development Corporation be not subject to ministerial direction.

Mr MacKinnon: You obviously have not read the statement by the chairman of the corporation who said that the Premier directed the corporation to be involved in the foreign bank deals.

Mr BRYCE: Where did the chairman say that?

Mr MacKinnon: It was reported in the paper. You must sleep a lot, I think.

Mr BRYCE: I simply tell the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that because he and his colleagues put that amendment into that Statute and insisted that the corporation be kept at arm's length from the Government, if he wants answers about the whys and wherefores of the WADC, he should put the question on the Notice Paper. I will accommodate him and provide answers so long as those answers do not prejudice the commercial viability of the WADC.

TRANSPORT: WESTRAIL

"Privatisation"

65. Mr D. L. SMITH, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister for Transport aware of reports that a Liberal Government would sell Westrail to private enterprise?

- (2) Can he outline the Government's policy with regard to Westrail's position in our State?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) and (2) the reply is—

Mr Blaikie: Tell us about the railway lines that you closed down?

Mr GRILL: They have not been closed.

Mr Blaikie: You have given them the kiss of death.

Mr GRILL: If any Government gave any railway line the kiss of death it was the member's Government by removing freight from them two years ago.

The Opposition's mania for selling Government agencies is a fresh and novel evasion of the normal governmental responsibilities to provide efficient and reasonably priced services. Presumably, with no deficit-making agencies left, a Liberal Government would congratulate itself on its financial astuteness.

In the Opposition's "Sale of the Century", I am intrigued as to who is going to buy Westrail. Railways, the Liberals might not have forgotten, are a natural monopoly in the southern half of this State, and I wonder which party pal considers himself best qualified to use ownership of the railways to his own financial gain and to the railway users' perpetual loss.

The Burke Government, let it be said, has no doubts that Westrail has a strong and absolutely secure future in the efficient services of this State. We will certainly not sell out Westrail to private interests. Nor will we allow private road transport to replace Westrail in the enormous range of tasks for which railways are commercially best suited. As the Government sees it, our job is to make Westrail more effective at its major and economic and social task rather than to abrogate our responsibility by removing it from the Government's arena.