

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 6 April 1982

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

ACTS AMENDMENT (CRIMINAL PENALTIES AND PROCEDURE) BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by the Hon. I. G. Medcalf (Attorney General), and read a first time.

PUBLIC TRUSTEE AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. I. G. MEDCALF (Metropolitan—Attorney General) [5.42 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

In 1969 the Public Trustee purchased the lands described in the sixth schedule to this Bill for the purpose of providing office accommodation for the Public Trustee's operations. This action is authorised by section 40(2a) of the Public Trustee Act, which permits the Public Trustee, with the prior approval of the Minister, to use a portion of the moneys standing to the credit of the common fund to acquire land and erect a building to provide office accommodation.

Although the Public Trustee may lease portions of the building, he has no power to lease any vacant land which may have been acquired under this section.

Part of the land described in the sixth schedule to the Bill is vacant and is located on the corner of Hay and Pier Streets. This is referred to in the Bill as the "unused portion" and has been held as open space to conform to the plot ratio for the Public Trust building.

Pennant Holdings Pty. Ltd. and the Anglican Church have agreed to the erection of a building by Pennant Holdings Pty. Ltd. on the land owned by the Anglican Church in Pier Street adjacent to this corner lot.

The Public Trustee has recommended, and the Government has agreed to—subject to Parliament's passing the necessary amendment to the Public Trustee Act—a proposition that the

corner lot be leased to Pennant Holdings Pty. Ltd., on terms and conditions to be approved by the Minister.

Members are probably aware that the Anglican Church owns the whole of the rest of the land in the block, including St. George's Cathedral, Law Chambers, the Old Deanery, and the Playhouse Theatre.

The proposed building development is intended to be in three stages. The first stage will involve a building on the land owned by the Public Trustee and the Anglican Church and will comprise a two-storey underground carpark with an additional two storeys of building above ground level.

Stage two of the development—on the Anglican Church land only—is intended to comprise a 14-storey office tower above the podium.

Stage three at some time in the future is intended to extend the podium and an underground carpark on the Playhouse site up to the Deanery.

Hence, the development of the corner lot owned by the Public Trustee will be complete at the end of stage one. There will then be two storeys below and two above ground level on the Public Trustee's corner lot.

The proposals by Pennant Holdings Pty. Ltd. are generally in accordance with the urban design recommendations for the cathedral precinct which was jointly prepared by the Town Planning Department and the planning department of the Perth City Council.

The Perth City Council has given approval for the first and second stages of the development and, although the approval of the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority is not required, it does have the support of that body.

So far as the terms and conditions of the lease are concerned, these are presently being negotiated with the developers by the Public Trustee, the Valuer General, and the Treasury. The proposed lease will need the approval of the Minister before it comes into operation.

As the proposed development has received the necessary approvals of all authorities involved, the Government supports the Public Trustee's recommendation that he be empowered to lease the land on the basis I have outlined.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Adjournment of Debate

THE HON. J. M. BERINSON (North-East Metropolitan) [5.47 p.m.]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

In moving the adjournment could I have your indulgence, Sir, for one second to ask the Attorney General whether he could make available to us, if they exist, plans of the proposed development?

Motion put and passed.

Point of Order

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: It was impossible for members sitting in this vicinity in the House to hear what just went on. I do not mind missing the questions, because I do not think they are of any interest and, indeed, in some cases the answers are probably of less interest. However, the procedure which just went on, when apparently a speech was made on the adjournment of debate on a Bill, was something which I would like to have heard. I did not hear any of it. Therefore, Sir, could you do something about getting members over there to speak up so that members towards the back of the Chamber can be included in proceedings?

The PRESIDENT: Order! I advise the honourable member that, as far as the Chair was concerned, the member moved that the debate be adjourned and there was no speech. If the honourable member did make a speech, I certainly did not hear it and it would have been out of order if he had.

I suggest to all members that they abide by my constant request that audible conversations cease, because they are out of order. Not only are members unable to hear, but neither is the Chair.

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES: STANDING COMMITTEE

Appointment: Motion

Debate resumed from 31 March.

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West) [5.49 p.m.]: As members would be aware, I oppose the motion. I realise my opposition will obtain the minimum of support, because motions such as this are fashionable at the present time. However, I do not think it is a sensible motion, nor do I believe it is of any great purport. It is common these days for members to move motions of this nature and attacks on the bureaucracy are becoming commonplace.

I took home a copy of the Hon. Phil Pandal's speech at the weekend and read it very carefully. In fact, it does not tell us why we need a committee of this nature. It is a very good speech in many ways, and one or two members have made similar speeches previously.

I went through the speech and marked the key points, which were—

The motion aims to establish a permanent standing committee of the Parliament to investigate, evaluate, and monitor the performance of these authorities.

That is good stuff. Further on the Hon. Phil Pandal referred to the following quotation—

In recent years attention has been focused, in particular, on the pervasive and rapidly expanding role of quasi autonomous Government organisations.

Of course, the question that springs to mind, and one I would have thought the honourable member might have asked, is: Why has it happened? The reason is that these organisations have been authorised by members of this Parliament.

Surely we ought to set up a committee to look at our eagerness to establish these bodies. I am already on record as saying that the majority of such organisations have been established in order to engender a degree of community involvement in the activities of government. Many such committees exist and they have a considerable effect upon the community.

Although it is not recorded in *Hansard*, by way of interjection I asked the Hon. Phil Pandal to tell us something about the now famous Rae committee. I shall refer to that in a few minutes, because the Hon. Phil Pandal did not.

Unless we establish a committee with a definite purpose—for example, to examine the position which obtains in relation to national parks or the future of the dairy industry—unless we establish a committee with an aim, an objective, and a limited life, in order to achieve something, a committee without those characteristics will invent something. Anyone who has lived in this world for any length of time will have seen that happen. One has only to recall the age-old saying that "Where there is smoke, there is fire" to appreciate the relevance of my remarks.

We have seen the trend to which I am referring appear in reports in the Press and in radio programmes. All sorts of clichés are bandied around, and I regret to say they abound in the speech made by the Hon. Phil Pandal when he introduced this motion.

I repeat that if a committee is not given a definite purpose, an objective, and a limited life, it will invent something in order to achieve its end. If a committee does not have a definite purpose and decides it wants to find mismanagement, it will invent it.

Members may say I am talking nonsense, but it is pertinent to take a particular case in point. In order to ensure I had the correct facts, this

morning I telephoned Sir Donald Eckersley and spoke to him personally about the Rae committee which inquired into the dairy industry. I could also go into details in relation to the Wheat Board, but I will not do so, because the Hon. Mick Gayfer and other members of the NCP can perform that task.

The Australian Dairy Corporation was established to sell surplus milk products and it performed a first-class job. A former constituent of mine, Mr Jasper Norton, had a great deal to do with the corporation. That body was established by the industry itself and the chairman is Malcolm Vauser, who replaced Mr Webster when the corporation became involved in this area.

Some years ago, the Australian Dairy Corporation became involved in the handling of dairy products on the local market in Asia. It exported powdered milk, cream, and the like, which were reconstituted in various forms and sold. I do not know whether many members have had business experience with or have resided in the countries about which I am talking; but various degrees of management capability are prevalent and frequently it is necessary to spend money in ways which we, in Australia, would consider to be a little unusual. On occasions also, receipts are not available.

The newspapers have taken up this matter with great élan and Ian Sinclair has been accused of all sorts of things, not because Government money was being spent, because it was not; but because the Government had not really adopted the right sort of audit procedure. I am not too sure how in fact the Government could have done so. However, the position deteriorated to the stage where there were cries for the resignation of Ian Sinclair.

I have spoken personally to Ian Sinclair about the problem, which exists because a committee without a definite purpose has looked for something to justify its existence. Of course, in the circumstances, this was bound to happen. It is true these activities may have happened five years ago, which in fact they did; but, according to the committee, that does not matter. It decided to pin something on the Minister and make a fuss about it.

As members are aware, this matter became a *cause célèbre* when in fact the activities referred to were standard practice in the relevant country at that time. Anyone who has had experience in dealing with the practices adopted by these countries would understand what I mean.

I recall being shown around a foreign city by an intelligent taxi driver. I asked him, "What is the

most noteworthy aspect of your country?" He said, "Freedom from corruption." That was the most important aspect, as far as he was concerned, and he went on to say, "If you go over that border, it is terrible." In fact, he was right.

As the Hon. Mick Gayfer probably will tell members, the same sort of problem is being experienced in relation to the Wheat Board. It had to put on three staff members just to answer questions from the committee, not because they were handling Government money, but because the Government is involved in this area as far as audits, wages, and the authorisation of certain expenditure is concerned. There is no question of swindling in this matter and yet the position has deteriorated to such an extent it has started to affect trade. I am advised a very lucrative sale was made to one nation on a rather confidential basis, as occurs frequently. A slightly more lucrative sale was made to another country and the very committee about which I am complaining was reported to have obtained the information, which it then divulged as a result of the inquiries it was making.

I am at a loss to understand the Government's support for a committee such as this. I am also at a loss to understand a Parliament which has allowed the work of a subordinate legislation committee to pass to an outside body, esteemable as the members of it may be.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams interjected.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I was in Cabinet at the time, which puts a slightly different complexion on the matter. That committee had a definite purpose whereas the committee proposed in this motion is far too nebulous.

I am aware the comments I am making will not be popular with the Press or with the majority of my colleagues. I thought long and hard about whether I should refer to this matter again. This is the fourth time we have voted on this question. I voted the first time and I let it go on the other two occasions. However, my conscience would not allow me to let this matter pass without making a few comments, particularly bearing in mind the fact that I have spoken to Mr Ian Sinclair and Sir Donald Eckersley. The attitude of the latter gentleman to committees of this nature is very definite indeed.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Have you spoken to Senator Rae to get a balance on that matter?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: No, I have not spoken to him in the last week or two. I accept Senator Rae is acting in the manner he thinks fit. The only reason I referred to the Rae committee

was that it was the only committee of that type of which I am aware. I have no doubt members could point to many beneficial actions taken by that committee; but I do not happen to approve of its activities.

The use of the statutory-type bodies we are talking about has been of inestimable value to the community of Western Australia. As a Minister, I have used them on numerous occasions and, as a member of Parliament, I have been party to their establishment.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 p.m.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: My comments are almost a waste of breath because we are tackling a subject which has suddenly become fashionable. It can obtain newspaper and media coverage and people believe that is of tremendous advantage. I have yet to be told of a specific case which highlights the need for the activity we are talking about. We have heard only nebulous phraseology. The departments obtain figures on increases and that sort of thing, so the matter is already being examined, anyway.

The point I have made consistently is that we have never ceased to ask reputable citizens to serve on committees of importance. Recently some fuss was made about Mr Harry Butler being appointed as an adviser in Tasmania. It may be of interest to the members of this House to learn that the same Harry Butler, at no expense to the Government, is serving on the Zoological Gardens Board. He does not receive an honorarium, only the payment of \$35 a meeting—at least that is what it was when I was the Minister.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: He is also getting \$900 a week while he is serving on it.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: That is in Tasmania. He is not being paid by the Western Australian Government.

We are about to set up a committee to examine what we do here in Parliament. Is that what we are doing?

The Hon. P. G. Pental: No.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I am told, "No." I have spoken in general terms. I was loathe to use the example I used, but I used it only after Sir Don Eckersley informed me, as other members of the executive authorities informed me, that the feeling of the farmers from one end of the country to the other was that this sort of committee is very unwelcome. It therefore follows, representing a country area as I do, that I should say something about it.

I have spoken as far as I can in very general terms; and I think Mr Gayfer and Mr Baxter may

have a few words to say about that aspect of the matter. I did not intend to use Sir Don's name but he said I may as well as make known the comment of the farming fraternity. I asked him as Chairman of the Leschenault Inlet Management Authority what he thought about this, and he said he was extremely unhappy about it. Maybe Mr Dans will jump in and say that is one good reason for having a committee of inquiry.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It is one reason.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Perhaps I will receive a 10 minute lecture about the phraseology I used, but I am trying to speak about the proposals in respect of this standing committee. I believe what I have set out has been strictly correct.

I repeat that to achieve something a committee of this type will need to invent something. I heard a very good definition by a rather astute member of the Legislative Assembly, who happens to be a country member also and who has followed the machinations of one of these operations. It seems that to try to turn this House and the media against such a fashionable project is like trying to turn the young and fashion conscious females against the "peasant look" this autumn.

THE HON. P. H. WELLS (North Metropolitan) [7.35 p.m.]: I support the motion to establish a standing committee on Government agencies as moved by the Hon. Phillip Pental, and I support the recommendations of the Pike committee.

I wish to pay tribute to the work of the Hon. Robert Pike and his committee and the provision of the report which has become the stepping stone to this action.

I believe some tribute should be paid to the Hon. John Williams for the comments he has made about the setting up of a committee. From my reading of *Hansard* I note that he has spoken about this matter. Mr Pental's remarks on the motion outlined the case in terms of accountability, and my remarks will support Mr Pental.

If members wish to study the argument further, I refer them to *Hansard* Vol. 2 of 1 October 1980, pages 1753-1770. The remarks on those pages and those of Mr Pental on this motion present a well balanced argument in terms of accountability.

Another argument for accountability has been put forward by the Public Bodies Review Committee of the Victorian Parliament of 1980. In its report it stated as follows—

Accountability means stewardship and responsibility to someone, for something.

I assume if Parliament sets up agencies that report to Parliament, the end result is that they are responsible to Parliament.

I will make further remarks about the climate in which we are moving this motion. One area in which I see a need for such a committee is the challenge that I believe it will present to members of this Parliament.

Firstly, may I make some reference to the remarks made by the Hon. Graham MacKinnon, whom I recognise to be very much my senior in terms of experience in this House. However, despite that, I find it hard to accept some of his argument against the formation of the committee. In one section of his speech he referred to the fact that there is no need for a committee since the agencies referred to were set up by members in this House.

That is not totally correct because I suggest there is not one member of the House who has been present for the total period during which the agencies have been formed. In fact, in respect of the remarks the Hon. Graham MacKinnon made in the 1980 debate when he referred to hospital boards and many similar bodies, none of us is really certain of the size and extent of the role that we are asking this committee to take on. I do not believe any member present knows the total extent or size of the job we are handing to this committee, since the number of Government agencies is unknown.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask members not to carry on audible conversations.

The Hon. P. H. WELLS: In 1980 Mr MacKinnon implied that members would have no knowledge of the extent or area of the committees. If we assume that we were all here and taking part in the formation of these agencies, does that action really reduce our responsibility in terms of their accountability to Parliament?

If we look at this in terms of a private enterprise company which is setting up a number of wholly owned subsidiary companies, it would require those companies to report to the board of the parent company. It would not set them up and say that is the last it would hear from them. The board would check to see that those companies were performing in the way the board set them up to perform. The board would check on their direction and policy. It would make sure the subsidiary companies were still needed for the purpose for which they were created, and if it were required, the board would give direction.

We are somewhat like a board of directors and the agencies set up by us are like wholly owned

subsidiaries. We need to ensure that those agencies are heading in the direction for which they were formed and we need to show some interest in them, apart from accepting their reports.

Perhaps in this area we are the weak link in the accountability chain. The Victorian Public Bodies Review Committee of 1980 dealt with the climate and accountability of committees and on page 9 in referring to the final report of the Canadian Royal Commission on Financial Accountability stated—

After two years of careful study and consideration, we have reached the deeply held conviction that the serious malaise pervading the management of government stems fundamentally from a grave weakening, and in some cases an almost total breakdown, in the chain of accountability, first within government, and second in the accountability of government to Parliament and ultimately to the Canadian people.

There may be some relevance to Western Australia in that. What have we done, as directors in our area of responsibility to these agencies, to ensure that we have a chain of accountability? We cannot just form these committees and allow them to make their reports.

In terms of that climate, one could say that we have a host of examples, both abroad and in this country. They are committees which have examined in very close detail the need for Governments to accept their responsibilities, and the need for Parliaments to accept responsibility in the area of accountability.

For instance, some members would have read the report of the Royal Commission into Australian Government administration. Other members would have read the reports of the Rae committee, which has been mentioned tonight. That was a Senate standing committee. I can remember the debates in 1980 when we argued whether three or four reports of that committee had been produced. In addition, we have the Victorian example, the Public Bodies Review Committee.

I will quote an overseas example with reference to QANGOS, and the following appears on page 13 of the Victorian report—

Writing recently in a booklet entitled, The Quango Explosion: Public Bodies and Ministerial Patronage, Philip Holland, M.P. and Michael Fallon have described the British public body problem in the following way: The governed no longer know their governors. We are now subject to a host of

Committees, Councils, Boards, Commissions and Authorities. Power has passed from Parliament into the hands of unelected and largely representative bodies in pace with the spreading arms of the provision-state. The interpretation and enforcement of the law is passing slowly, but inexorably, from the independent judiciary to bodies whose members are dependent on departmental ministers for their appointment and their pay. The first remarkable thing about public bodies is that nobody knows how many there are.

That sort of thing has been said in Britain, in Canada, and in our own country. Certainly a number of States have moved directly into this area, with certain success.

As a House, we need to be more diligent in our oversight of this area of our responsibility. We should indicate to the agencies what we expect in relation to their reporting. We should ensure that they are proud to exist, if they still need to exist. Of course, I am talking about the supposed reports of the agencies, because I remember some time ago, when early in my parliamentary career I sought to examine one of the Bills before the House, I was horrified to find that a certain report had not been tabled in the House for eight years. I may be corrected on that; but that was just one of the agencies that had been formed by the Government; its members were paid by the Government; it was supposed to be reporting; but it was not reporting.

In relation to reporting, I remind members of the remarks I made in the closing part of the last session. I suggest that one of the roles of the proposed standing committee could be to look at the reporting of the agencies to the Parliament. It could examine whether the reports provided worth-while information to the Parliament. It could indicate how the reports could be improved.

Outside the Parliament, company reports have to meet certain criteria. Those criteria are set down not only by the business world, but by the Companies Act as well. However, many of the reports presented to the Parliament do not fulfil those standards. In terms of reporting and providing the Parliament with the type of information that it needs, the standing committee could be involved in a worth-while examination to determine a standard method of reporting. It could indicate the need for a standard reporting Act.

It is interesting to read the March 1980 report of the Public Bodies Review Committee of the Parliament of Victoria. On page 7 of that report,

the following definition of public bodies appears—

The Parliamentary Committees (Public Body Review) Act 1980 No. 9367, Section 48B (5), defines a Public Body as "any Public Body established by, or appointed pursuant to, any rule, regulation, by-law, order, order-in-council, proclamation or other instrument of a legislative character."

It is interesting to read the remarks that follow the definition. The report goes on to say—

...they have identified some 9,000 organisations which satisfy the definition set out above.

Certainly there is a need for the proposed standing committee to define its total role exactly.

I see a greater role for each of the members of this House once the proposed standing committee is formed. I note from the Pike report that the role of the members will not be diminished by the formation of the standing committee, but rather it will be extended. On page 6 of the recommendations in the Pike report, the following appears—

(7) The reference of a matter by the Council to the Standing Committee shall be on Motion after Notice.

Such Notice of Motion may be given in the usual manner when Notices are given at the beginning of the business of the day.

That provides an opportunity for members to have an interest in the operations of the committee. Furthermore, it provides the House with authority, and it highlights that authority, in that the Council may refer to the committee any matter, in the following terms—

(6) A Member of the Council though not a member of the Standing Committee may participate in its public sessions and question witnesses, unless the committee orders otherwise, but shall not vote.

We are setting up a committee, and the committee will permit members of this House to participate to the degree that it virtually invites us to take an active interest in its working. Furthermore, the House may, by a motion, refer a particular matter to the committee.

I have some doubts about the list of exclusions presented in the Hon. Phil Pendal's motion; but at this stage I do not claim to be such an authority on the matter that I could move an amendment. However, when I consider the State Housing Commission, I am sure most members would like to become involved with it to some degree.

The Hon. Robert Hetherington: We are, every day.

The Hon. P. H. WELLS: As the Hon. Mr Hetherington mentioned, we are involved with it every day. That would be true of most members of the House.

In the wisdom of the members who served on the Select Committee, we find that the SHC has been excluded. In the long term, if I find that it should be included, I will return with an argument for including it. However, at this stage, with my present knowledge, the list of exclusions presented to us is reasonable. Members will have an opportunity to become involved to a worthwhile extent.

We will find that the weak link which presently exists will be removed, and the agencies need not be frightened of the committee. They will be able to exist with pride, because the Parliament will be playing its part by examining the work of the agencies. Otherwise, it is like a member telling his secretary to do something, without bothering to give directions and without bothering to find out what she has done.

Because the Parliament has not concerned itself about these matters in the past, it has done a disservice to many of the agencies. For these reasons, I support the Pandal motion.

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [7.55 p.m.]: I have listened with interest to the speeches made by the Hon. Phil Pandal, the Hon. Graham MacKinnon, and the Hon. Peter Wells. I go a long way towards supporting the remarks made by the Hon. Graham MacKinnon. We are to establish a standing committee of this House to inquire into the various agencies that have been set up with the sanction of the Parliaments over the years. The agencies have been made responsible to either a Government head, a Minister, or somebody else. If there has been any falling down as far as the agencies are concerned, it comes back directly to the Minister or the person to whom the agency is responsible, and not directly to the Legislative Council.

Many reports have been placed on the Table of this House by various agencies, boards, and other bodies; and they are not even looked at.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Precisely. That is why we need to appoint somebody to that job.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: They are not looked at by members; yet the members of the standing committee will be involved with these agencies or boards.

Let us consider what has happened with the Senate standing committees. I was in Canberra at

the end of August 1980 for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association seminar. During my time there, I heard complaints from members of the standing committees that they considered all sorts of things, but nobody took the least bit of notice of their recommendations. That will probably be the situation in Western Australia.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: When the Government changes, it will be different.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The standing committee will go to a lot of trouble. It will delve into this and that, and it will present a report that will be pigeon-holed.

Let us consider what is proposed for this standing committee. I quote the following—

The duties of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies shall be as follows:—

(i) To make such examination as it deems necessary . . .

The members of the committee will say, "What will we have a look at? What will we inquire into? Let's think of something to inquire into." To justify their appointment, they will find something. Perhaps it will be a hospital board, or some other body—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It could be the milk board.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: —because hospital boards are not excluded from the terms of this proposal. Therefore the committee will inquire into a hospital board. The recommendation continues—

. . . and to inquire into the purpose, finance, accountability, extent, nature, administrative control and methods of State Government agencies, including statutory corporations, primary produce boards . . .

This will be a group of "experts". I do not thank the Hon. Mr MacKinnon for calling me an expert. I am not an expert, and I do not feel expert enough to deal with these issues.

Although I have had Ministerial experience, I could not set myself up as an accountant. I have done accountancy and I have kept books. I know a little about accountancy; but I am not an expert on it. However, one of the members of the committee has to be one of these persons—an expert in finance, accountability, and the rest. The members will have to be "top boys" to handle this work. After all is said and done, we are ordinary members of Parliament, trying to do a job for the people.

The committee can inquire into matters that are not subject to inquiry by the Legislative Council. Its members can inquire into anything

they like. They can make up their minds as to what they want to inquire into. I know one member of Parliament has a phobia about a particular hospital board. If he were on this committee he would thrash that phobia and inquire into that board. Let us look forward and realise that although we might have a reasonable group of members on the committee now, we do not know who will be its members in 10 years' time. What sort of people will we have then? They could be a different age group. Perhaps they too will have these phobias about different organisations, and they will check into them and waste a lot of time and money and get nowhere. I say that most decidedly, because of the way the committee is to be set up.

The Hon. Robert Hetherington: It sounds as if future members are to be worse than present members, in your mind.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The report which recommended the setting up of this committee referred to organisations, boards, and authorities responsible for expenditure in excess of \$800 million. I do not know where the members of the Select Committee got that figure, and I would like to know from where they did get it. If, for example, they used the expenditure on hospitals for which hospital boards are responsible, the figure could be quite large. Those hospital boards are directly responsible to the Minister for Health and to the budget set every year; so where does this committee get the right to inquire into such boards? Will it also inquire into the Minister?

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: No. He is specifically excluded.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Mr Berinson and Mr Pandal say he is to be explicitly excluded. How is it that the Minister, who is on the board of the Bentley Hospital, the Osborne Park Hospital, and the Swan Districts Hospital, is not to be inquired into?

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: It refers to exclusions.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: There are three areas of responsibility: health, medical, and hospitals. I raised this matter with Mr Pandal yesterday; I asked him why hospitals were excluded. This proposed committee could inquire into the Minister's administration of those three hospitals. Other hospitals could be involved also, and this is outlined in the Hospitals Act.

How far will the committee go with these things? How far has this matter been thought out? We must remember that there was a Senate committee headed by Senator Baume which conducted an Australia-wide inquiry into hospitals. What did that inquiry establish? Did it

do anything? It did not, despite all the money that was wasted. The committee did not decide anything worth while after all that time and money had been wasted.

The Hon. Peter Wells likened the situation to a group which set up a series of holding companies. He mentioned the way it would keep control of them. That is no analogy at all; it is an entirely different situation.

As I said before, each of these authorities is responsible to someone in Government. They are responsible either to a Minister or to a senior departmental head. They are not just turned loose and left to do what they like. If that were to happen Parliament would not establish them. If there are any which have been set up in such a manner, no-one has mentioned them. There has been only generalisation about these authorities. I have not heard one case put up about any authority which is not responsible to someone or which does not have a responsibility to submit a report.

The Hon. P. H. Wells: I said one had not reported to Parliament.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That is the fault of the departmental head. When I was Minister for Health I made sure that if any reports looked as if they might be submitted late, a departmental officer would check on each body involved to make sure the reports were submitted on time; but that is up to the Minister and the Government. If there is a delay it should be picked up. However, this does not justify the establishment of the proposed committee, which wants to find out which authorities have not reported to Parliament. After all, authorities usually are responsible to a Minister.

The report of the Select Committee states that Parliament often has created Government agencies with the privilege of a degree of independence from Executive and ministerial control. As I said, no-one has illustrated any such independent authority or agency. The Select Committee merely generalised. It said that some organisations had not reported to Parliament in eight years, but that does not mean they have not reported to a Minister. Probably there has been an oversight on the part of a departmental officer; perhaps he has failed to submit the report. It is up to the Minister to see that the reports are submitted as is prescribed in the Act.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: When you have a huge organisation like the Water Board or the SEC, do you really feel that the Minister's own support staff can adequately conduct proper surveys of their work?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Yes.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Or does he in fact rely on their advice to him?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: To a degree he does rely on the advice given to him. Mr Berinson has been a Minister in a Government and he would know that when he was responsible for a particular body he would ensure that whatever advice he got was the proper advice.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: I can understand the limitations on a Minister trying to supervise these giant organisations.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It is difficult, but a good Minister can overcome these problems. He discusses matters with his departmental officers. I ran my Ministry of Health in such a way. I told one of my senior officers that there would be no big boss and that we would run the department as a team. We did so. We succeeded in working as a team. If Ministers work that way they do not have problems with co-operation, and they know what goes on. They are aware of what is happening. They discuss matters with their senior officers; they put their views and come up with decisions which are worth while. Ministers can do that if they apply themselves. I proved it. I quote now from a page 4 of the Select Committee report—

The Committee thus envisages that the proposed Standing Committee should consider the economic performance and ramifications of the government agencies and the appropriateness of the present means by which the State provides particular goods and services.

To some degree I have dealt with that. This is a loud cry for a committee of this nature, comprising members who are responsible to various provinces and responsible to Parliament. Yet they are to set themselves up as members of a really expert, top committee with all its economic sanctions and whatever, to decide whether particular agencies or authorities are acting in good faith. On the same page I refer now to paragraph 13 which reads—

13. With this in mind it seeks to equip the Standing Committee with only a small permanent secretariat.

So the committee will involve itself in a very involved inquiry with all the economic, financial, and other ramifications. To continue—

The Committee should also be able to draw on the resources of the existing Parliamentary staff (especially during the Parliamentary recesses).

Where is this huge staff the committee is going to draw on? This is to be a permanent committee, so it will permanently draw on that staff. The Parliament has a very small staff with other duties to perform. Besides its normal duties, even in the recess, the Legislative Council has to provide staff for Select Committees, which have been a particular function of this House over recent years. We have Select Committees and an Honorary Royal Commission at present, and we are likely to have more in the future. Certainly there is a tendency in this House to conduct inquiries. From where are we to get the necessary staff? It would mean that the staff in the Parliament would have to be increased to cope with the demands of the committee. The way standing committees have developed in Canberra indicates we will always have such committees here. Canberra can afford to spend plenty of money, but our finances are limited and so is the number of staff we can have employed by Parliament to cope with these extra demands.

I remind the Chamber that hospital boards are appointed by the Governor, although the recommendations come from the Minister. No power is conferred on these boards that can be exercised without the consent of the Governor, and this is stated in the Act. I quote sections 18(2) and (3)—

(2) The Minister may, after consultation with a hospital board, give to it directions as to the exercise of its functions.

(3) A hospital board shall give effect to any directions given to it under this section.

It should be understood that members of hospital boards are volunteers; they are not paid people. We have hospital boards looking after major teaching hospitals, country hospitals, and others such as the Perth Dental Hospital. All these board members are giving their services free to the State. They are giving a lot of time and effort to running these establishments.

No sinecure is involved in being a board member. Nonetheless, we are to have a standing committee on which there may be a member who has a phobia about a particular hospital board and who might think there should be an inquiry into that board.

Health and medical bodies are to be exempt, and I believe hospitals also should be exempt. Members of boards are not there just because they get paid. They are there to do a job for the community. It is an insult to their integrity to have a standing committee inquire into their work. They are under the direction of the Minister for Health and they are, more or less,

under the control of the Government. To leave them open to an inquiry by a standing committee is beyond the pale.

If I became a member of the standing committee I would not be prepared to go that far; as a matter of fact, I rather shudder at the thought of becoming a member of this committee. It has been suggested to me that I do so. I do not think the committee will get far with its inquiries; it will not go any further than the Senate standing committee has gone in relation to many of its inquiries.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: What about the improvement in reporting standards of the Commonwealth agencies that have followed the Senate committee's recommendations?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: We have yet to see it. Has that occurred?

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: It has occurred, as a matter of fact. If there is better application by the Ministers to these various agencies—

The Hon. Robert Hetherington: You seem to think Ministers are supermen. I have not noticed it, particularly when looking across the Chamber now.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It is a problem in this set up. They are doing everything bar really being Ministers and settling down to that job. There is enough of them to run around the world and almost administer the world from Canberra and yet they do not seem to be able to—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: We are talking about a committee of this Parliament, not one in Canberra.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: There may be an odd case, such the Hon. Peter Wells mentioned, in which because of an oversight a report was not made for eight years. One or two reports were late during my time as Minister for Health, but I made sure that those reports were sent to this House in accordance with the Act.

That responsibility goes back to the Minister himself and not to any standing committee of inquiry. I do not think the committee should be left to decide *ad hoc* what it should inquire into. The decision to inquire into an agency should be subject to the consent of this House, and should be in accordance with the provisions laid down in the Select Committee report.

I quote from page 6 paragraph (7) of the report—

The reference of a matter by the Council to the Standing Committee shall be on Motion after Notice.

Such Notice of Motion may be given in the usual manner when Notices are given at the beginning of the business of the day.

This would not take very long. Once the committee decides it will inquire into something, why not bring it into this Chamber and in a short motion at the beginning of the business of the day get the consent of the House to inquire into the agency, board, or whatever it might be? At least the inquiry would have the sanction of this Chamber, and personal phobias and beliefs would not be taken into account. The House would decide whether the committee would inquire into that body or authority.

I will not oppose the motion at this stage, although I am not particularly happy about the whole thing. I refer to the matter of an inquiry into primary produce.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: Work that out!

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I know there are differences of opinion between members and authorities as to whether we should have orderly marketing of primary produce. My party's policy for many years has been one of orderly marketing.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That is a very good socialist policy too!

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It is the policy of the Labor Party and it is in the policy of the Liberal Party too.

The Hon. Robert Hetherington: They don't take much notice of the policy!

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Some people hate the thought of orderly marketing and would tear it down tomorrow and would get rid of the Wheat Board, the Lamb Marketing Board, and the Egg Marketing Board.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: And the Potato Marketing Board. I helped save it once.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Some members of the committee will say, "We will have a go at the Lamb Marketing Board and try to get rid of it" or, "We will get rid of the Egg Marketing Board", and gradually the committee will whittle away the orderly marketing schemes that have been built up over the years. We will go back to the Co-operative Bulk Handling situation; my colleague is the chairman of that concern.

The Hon. P. G. Pandal: The standing committee would not be able to get rid of any of those. The best the standing committee could do is to make a recommendation to the House.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I know that. I apologise if I said it the wrong way.

The Hon. P. G. Pental: Fair enough.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It is my understanding that the recommendation to get rid of an organisation, board, or authority would come from the standing committee and it may not be acted upon, depending upon the will of the House. If members of the House support the standing committee as they are going to support this motion, I have no doubt about what would happen: Our authority will go out the window; that is as certain as that the sun shines in the sky most days.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: If there is one day when it does not shine, we are in trouble!

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am frightened at this because at times it could get out of hand and if it does, somebody will suffer. I do not want to see country people in this State suffer because a committee has decided to inquire into something affecting the way they market their products. This could well happen.

I suggest that we have a good look at the hospital situation in Western Australia, and perhaps exclude from the work of the committee health, medical, and hospitals, because to inquire into hospital boards in Western Australia is not the function of this House. I leave it at that.

THE HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [8.22 p.m.]: It is my intention to support the motion with the qualification that I intend to move an amendment.

Members will recall that we moved a substantial amendment to Mr Pike's motion when he was seeking the appointment of a Select Committee. I am very pleased to say that some of the things mentioned by my party in that amendment have been embodied in the report of the Select Committee. The thing, of course, that the Select Committee did not recommend was that the committee be expanded to a joint House committee. That matter is the basis of my amendment.

I will quickly deal with two speakers who have opposed the establishment of the committee. I found it very hard to follow the Hon. Graham MacKinnon, but I realised what he was doing. He is an old campaigner and was throwing a few mackerel to the National Country Party by way of mentioning Sir Don Eckersley.

I have listened to Mr Baxter and was rather astounded when he said he did not intend to oppose the motion. I am not quite sure what the Hon. Norman Baxter was getting at.

We need to be fairly clear on the committee's purpose. I see this committee as being one of the first faltering steps in bringing some sanity into the parliamentary system. We would not need to set up this standing committee, or indeed standing committees would not need to be established in other Australian Parliaments, if in fact there were still representative Governments; but of course there is no representative Government in this State. I do not make the submission from a political stance.

If one casts one's mind back to the debate on whether we should have a Select Committee, one will recall that during the currency of the debate the number of quasi—

The Hon. R. G. Pike: Quasi autonomous bodies.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: —autonomous bodies increased by 28! As late as this afternoon, despite the fact that I made extensive inquiries, I still could not find out how many committees there actually are. If there is a situation like that, surely it is not too much to expect that a standing committee should be set up to examine the agencies.

Nothing has been said about putting agencies out of business or taking any punitive action by diving simultaneously into the front and back door of any hospital board, as Mr Baxter implied. We are talking of simply making a decision. Of course, when the decision is made, there is still a great brake on the committee in that it has to report to this Chamber. I do not think we should run away at the bit.

I read from the report of the Select Committee—

Your Committee recommends, That—

- (1) A Standing Committee be appointed to be known as—The Standing Committee on Government Agencies.

I underline "Government agencies." I certainly would not be here supporting this motion tonight if exclusions had not been listed in Mr Pental's motion because, under those circumstances, I would agree with the Hon. Mr Baxter that it would be just not on to inquire into Government departments.

The report continues and sets out that the Standing Orders of the Legislative Council will be suitably amended. It makes a broad and simple statement about the duty of the proposed standing committee on Government agencies, as follows—

To make such examination as it deems necessary and to inquire into the purpose, finance, accountability, extent, nature,

administrative control methods of State Government agencies, including statutory corporations, primary produce boards, regulatory and quasi-judicial bodies, trustees of government agencies, advisory committees and local and regional bodies (excluding municipal authorities)

I make that quite clear, "excluding municipal authorities." It continues—

... that are the subject of legislation of the Western Australian Parliament, with the exception of those agencies listed in the Schedule to these Orders.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: Very well read!

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Certainly there is nothing wrong with that. If members go to their electorates and speak to a broad spectrum of the people they will realise those people are becoming very concerned that there are so many bodies, committees, boards, and what-have-you. They see them as a breakdown in the democratic process of this country but, above all, in times of our tight economic situation, they see them as costing the country and the State an undue amount of money.

On that basis, I have no other course but to support the motion. I do not believe this will be the last standing committee to be appointed, and I am sure the members who are appointed will do a very fine job and the Parliament will see value in the committee. I am one of those people who likes to think of himself as being a little visionary and believe it will not be too many years hence that the whole business of Parliament will be handled through a committee system. Certainly, the present system leaves a lot to be desired.

However, having said that, I am not happy that the committee did not take notice of what we said and bring down a report recommending that the standing committee be drawn from both Houses of Parliament. I believe that such an important committee as this—I have already outlined my reasons for this—should have been given a much broader base. The committee in Victoria is drawn from both Houses of Parliament and it does an excellent job.

I do not agree with Mr Baxter. I believe that standing committees have done a very good job. In some cases, even if recommendations have not been acted upon, at least the fact that the standing committees are there has prevented excesses in various directions. If some agencies exist which are not functioning as they should, the very fact that a committee is in operation in Western Australia should make people tread warily. I intend to move an amendment.

The Hon. P. G. PENTAL: Is it just a minor amendment?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Only very minor.

The Hon. P. G. PENTAL: Well, we will deal with it tonight, I suppose.

Amendment to Motion

The Hon. D. K. DANS: That is up to members. I move—

That paragraph (1) be deleted and the following new paragraph substituted—

(1) A Joint Standing Committee comprising nine members, four from the Legislative Council and five from the Legislative Assembly, be appointed to be known as the Joint Standing Committee on Government Agencies.

THE HON. J. M. BERINSON (North-East Metropolitan) [8.32 p.m.]: I second the amendment, and most of my comments will be directed to it.

As to the basic concept of the proposed standing committee there has never been any doubt in my mind that the detailed parliamentary scrutiny of Government agencies is highly desirable. When the Select Committee was proposed to consider the need for a standing committee for that purpose, I expressed the view that the need was so self-evident that the preliminary inquiry seemed superfluous. Nevertheless, despite that good advice, the Select Committee was established and I served as a member of it. I can only say that the inquiries and considerations of the Select Committee all confirmed my earlier opinion and I had no hesitation in subscribing to what turned out eventually to be a unanimous committee report.

The terms of reference of the committee unfortunately were such that it was not open to it to consider the merits of a joint standing committee. That is the explanation I offer to Mr Dans who expressed himself as being unhappy that the Select Committee had not given consideration to that prospect. As everyone knows, when my leader is unhappy I am very sad. Nothing would have made me happier than to agree to the reasonable and sensible propositions he advanced during our consideration of the establishment of a Select Committee; but it was out of my hands. I do excuse myself to Mr Dans, and put it to the House that it is not yet too late for us to remedy this apparent oversight of a preferable solution to the problem we are now tackling.

The issue is now raised again by Mr Dans' amendment. It is in line with his amendment to

the Select Committee proposal and the points which were then made in my submission are still valid. The field covered by the QANGOS is enormous and uncharted. Mr Dans' amendment, if adopted, will provide a number of advantages over the proposal for a standing committee drawn from this House alone. In the first place it provides for nine members of a committee instead of six. I hope it will go without saying that I do not advocate large committees for their own sake, but the sheer size of the job which is involved in an attempt to supervise the enormous range of agencies, does justify the services of more than six members—probably more members than the Council alone, with its limited numbers, can reasonably provide.

More important than the question of numbers is the question of the establishment of a joint committee as opposed to one from the Legislative Council alone. As members by now will be well aware, the precedents in Australia go one way each. The Commonwealth has drawn its analogous committee from the Senate alone. The State of Victoria has established its committee from both Houses of its Parliament. What I am suggesting in support of the amendment is that the latter case is closer and more relevant to our own position.

We need to bear in mind that this sort of committee serves more than one purpose. Its primary function is, of course, to provide the impetus to a better and more efficient public administration. A most important by-product, however, can be the insight into administrative matters which members of Parliament can gain from service on such a committee. That is certainly no less important for members of the Assembly than it is for members of this Council; and we should acknowledge this by adopting the amendment proposed by Mr Dans.

Referring briefly to the merits of this proposed committee, let me take one or two of the points which Mr MacKinnon advanced. The Hon. Graham MacKinnon is a man of seniority and of great experience in this Council and his opinion is to be given serious attention. Mr MacKinnon, I am afraid, could see no point to the parliamentary scrutiny which most other members seem to be advocating. I certainly do. I would like to put to him the argument that the point of having a parliamentary scrutiny of these Government agencies is that without this sort of scrutiny it is too easy to allow a situation where these agencies, for practical purposes, have no scrutiny at all.

Again I respect the views of a member such as Mr Baxter, who consistently refers us to Ministers' over-riding authority and

responsibility, even in the case of agencies. By way of interjection I put to him the position of larger agencies which is illustrated by the point I am about to make. I put it to him that agencies like the Metropolitan Water Board and the State Energy Commission are so large that the Ministers' own resources do not provide them with the ability to properly scrutinise their activities.

Indeed, if the question is ever raised in this House about the detailed functioning or handling of the financial affairs of agencies of this great size and scope, the Minister himself must rely on the advice which the agencies give him. In those circumstances, to say that ministerial responsibility is all we need is really missing the point of the exercise and fails to recognise the significant difference between the functioning of a department operating directly under a Minister through a whole line of command, so to speak, and operations of semi or quasi autonomous Government agencies.

With due respect to Mr MacKinnon, we are hardly provided with a balanced account of the work of the Senate committee when we are referred by him to the views of two disgruntled clients, if I may describe them in a way which they would probably also regard as unsatisfactory. It is not my role—and I am not equipped—to defend the role of the Senate committee, but I think his argument distorts the important work of that committee by focusing entirely on the two contentious questions he raised; namely, the position of the dairy board and the Wheat Board. The Senate committee has functioned for about five years and it has been an active committee. By far the bulk of its work has been devoted to inquiries into basic administrative factors with particular reference to questions of accountability. To give an example, one of the Senate committee reports included a schedule of agencies which, despite the statutory requirement for an annual report, had not reported for periods ranging from nine months to 41 months beyond the year following the end of the financial year concerned.

In response to the sort of argument Mr Baxter advanced that none of these committees does any good anyway and that their reports are pigeon-holed and the results never see the light of day, the truth of the matter is that in a quiet and non-contentious way—much less contentious than questions raised with the dairy and Wheat Boards—the Senate committee, by its existence, has produced a much more satisfactory series of agency reports which are more accurate, fuller, and more prompt. In other words, the reports

meet both the letter and the spirit of statutory requirements.

Anyone who says the need for something similar does not exist in this State is really ignoring facts which should be obvious.

I give as an example the MVIT which I have been pursuing with the Chief Secretary during question time.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: Without notice, except on one occasion.

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: Except on the most important occasion when I was obliged to.

The MVIT is a huge organisation handling massive funds. At 31 December 81 it had accumulated a deficit of \$60 million. This is in spite of the fact that the trust's premium increases over the last four or five years have exceeded, by far, the rate of inflation.

It is a body with an annual income now of about \$80 million. As at 30 June 1981 it had investments of about \$140 million and unpaid claims of about \$200 million. The MVIT is a body which can carry its huge debts only by the delay involved between the time of injury and the time of paying out the settlement sum to claimants.

I hasten to add, in making that last comment and, indeed in respect of the questions I have been asking during the last few weeks, that I am not saying that there is necessarily anything wrong or anything improper in the functioning of the MVIT. On the other hand I am very far from confident that this is not a body which justifies some close consideration and independent review of procedures.

When was the last time that anyone in this Chamber or in this Parliament even proposed, let alone engaged himself in such a review? I think it must have been quite a long time ago. In fact, if anyone wanted to study in any detail the way in which the MVIT is functioning and whether it is functioning as efficiently as should be required for a body of its huge size and importance, he would find it very difficult indeed to pursue an inquiry of that sort from any of the printed reports.

When one considers the nature of annual reports presented to the Parliament, it is remarkable how often the size and lavishness of the reports is in inverse proportion to the importance of what is being reported. Quite small departments are in the habit of producing very large, lavish, and colourful publications. However, if one looks at the report of the MVIT, one finds that in an average year it consists of three or four roneoed sheets, and the only information they

contain is the barest detail of a profit and loss statement and a balance sheet.

This is a huge organisation with massive funds which are contributed to on the one hand by tens of thousands of Western Australians, and on the other hand, it has many Western Australians dependent on it for their welfare if something goes amiss on the roads. There ought to be some better knowledge about this organisation among the members of Parliament than is provided by those skimpy reports. Members of Parliament ought to have a better understanding of the MVIT, and we cannot gain that understanding from the printed reports.

My own experience over the last few weeks is that we cannot gain this information either from questions asked in the House. I am not accusing the Minister in another place, let alone the Minister representing him in this House—God forbid—of being evasive in their answers. It is just that if one is making a serious attempt to come to grips with an organisation as large as this one, one cannot do it on the basis of listing questions that will only produce answers that would lead one to want to initiate more questions. Given the lapse of time between question and answer, one will not add a great deal to one's knowledge.

What we need to do is to be able to get together for a few days with somebody from the MVIT—perhaps with the assistance of an accountant or an independent adviser from the insurance industry. We could then ask questions, receive answers, and ask supplementary questions. Certainly the Minister could not be expected to have all these questions in the hollow of his head, as Mr Arthur Calwell said of Sir Arthur Fadden.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: You are speaking of yourself now.

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: No I am not, I am simply quoting Mr Arthur Calwell's remarks about Sir Arthur Fadden.

Even if we had the responsible Minister in this House it would not help. The answers received over the last few weeks are perfectly reasonable. If we ask him such questions in this House, how can we reasonably complain if the Minister says, "This is a matter of detail. You cannot expect me to have all this knowledge in my head. Put your question on the notice paper and I will give you a reply." When one does receive a reply, all the reply does is to stimulate another question in one's head. I give that as one example because the MVIT is an organisation in which I have taken some interest in recent weeks. In fact, I have had a lesson on the ground, so to speak, of our present

difficulty in implementing any form of parliamentary scrutiny in a reasonable sense.

For the reasons set out in the latter part of my comments, I support the move to establish a standing committee. I conclude my remarks by referring to the amendment which calls for a joint standing committee rather than a standing committee of this House. I make the point—

The Hon. R. G. Pike: From the hollow of your head!

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON:—which I take it would be obvious to all members, that agreement by this House to the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition would call then for an adjournment of the debate to allow consequential amendments to be prepared. At the moment we are dealing solely with the principle, which I think is very clear. It is a clear choice between the prospect of a standing committee of this House alone, and a joint standing committee. I repeat that the importance of the project justifies the establishment of a joint standing committee, and I commend the amendment to the House.

Debate (on amendment to motion) adjourned, on motion by the Hon. Margaret McAleer.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: SIXTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed from 31 March.

THE HON. ROBERT HETHERINGTON (East Metropolitan) [8.50 p.m.]: It is with much pleasure, but perhaps with a feeling of *deja vu*, that I support this motion to express our loyalty to the Queen for the second time in the first half of this year. I do not really know why it is necessary that we should express our loyalty so often. I would have thought that once loyal, people mostly stay loyal. However, I am quite happy to support the motion.

I wish to join with other members in saying how much I rejoice in and regret the fact that my former colleague, His Honour Mr Justice Olney, has left us. His was a very good appointment, from a number of points of view which I will not dilate upon now. I believe the State has an excellent judge but at the same time we, on this side of the House, are the poorer for the loss of the assistance of his knowledge and experience. I felt a little sad on opening night to see Mr Justice Olney in this House with his natural dignity diminished by the ridiculous regalia which is worn by our judges. I would be happy for this practice to be changed so that he could emerge once more at least without the wig which to my mind adds nothing to the dignity of anything.

I notice also that since I have been speaking to Addresses-in-Reply, the incumbent of the Clerk's chair has changed three times. We lost Mr Roberts, and I still think of him with great affection. He was very much the custodian of this House and of the privileges of this House. I often disagreed with him, but I always received the greatest of good service from him. We then had Mr Ashley as the Clerk, and it is a great pity that we lost him so soon. One of the things about the officers of a House of Parliament is that they need to grow into the position. It is not a job which one can carry out by the rule book, because although all our Houses of Parliament throughout the British Commonwealth are based on the Westminster system, all are different in their own ways. They have traditions of their own, and the Clerks of the Houses are very much the custodian of not only the general traditions of Parliament and of that House, but also the particular and peculiar traditions of that House. Certainly it gives me great pleasure to see Mr Hoft at least temporarily occupying the Clerk's chair in this House. He has given me very good service, and I believe he has given the House great service during the time I have been here. It is my personal desire to see him continue in that position, but of course, that is not my decision to make.

It seems to me we should wonder, as the Clerk of the House is an officer of the House, whether members of the House should not make some input into the decision-making process when a new Clerk is appointed. I do not want to dilate on that matter here—I just wish to mention it in passing. Certainly I hope that Mr Hoft does not decide to resign prematurely for any reason because we can ill afford to lose his 20-odd years of experience in this House.

I want to welcome to the House my colleague, the Hon. Garry Kelly, whom I have known over many years. I recall many years ago he contested the seat of the same name as the one I am about to occupy next year—the South-East Metropolitan Province. He contested a lower House seat at the time Grace Vaughan was elected. Sometimes we referred to these two people as “Grace Kelly” and “Garry Vaughan”. He fought a very good campaign on that occasion as he did on other occasions, and the result was a fine electoral swing to him. I believe that illustrates three things—his hard work and his good campaign, the lack of calibre of his opponent, and the feeling among the people of disenchantment with this Government. I hope that feeling of disenchantment will be maintained

so that we have a good Burke Government next year.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Time will tell.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: Time indeed will tell, and we shall wait and see.

I congratulate my new colleague on his speech, which appeared to upset the Hon. Philip Lockyer. He seemed to think it was something like old-fashioned socialist drivel. Of course the speech was one of good common sense. The Hon. Garry Kelly referred to democracy and the need for the growth of democracy in this State. No doubt we will hear more about that from the honourable member, and indeed we could use a little more of it.

I am reminded of the need for some improvement in the statements of the gentleman who occupies the position of Chief Secretary. At present he seems to think that computers would get in the way of letting us have the convenience of joint State and Commonwealth electoral rolls, although other States seem to manage quite successfully with this system. It is not just a matter of economics—that is an accountant's view. Unfortunately all too often members of the Liberal Party seem to propound the accountant's view rather than the people's view of what is required. It would be a good idea to take steps to increase the number of people on the roll in this State. Such a course is followed by the Federal Liberal Government. I was at my home in Wilson one day when there was a knock upon the door. It was an officer of the Federal Government checking to see whether I was indeed the person on the role and whether anybody else in my home needed to be on the roll.

The Hon. P. H. Wells: They checked up on you!

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: Yes, they checked up on the occupier of the house. I was grateful for this, and it reminded me that one of my sons needed to re-enrol because he had shifted houses.

Of course, with the accountant's view no doubt it would be said we could not afford the staff; but we should be doing that in this State. We should have people going around and putting people on the roll. Electoral officers would perform this task; therefore, they could witness the enrolment forms. However, if this happened in the areas where there is the greatest discrepancy between the Federal and State rolls, which are usually working class areas or those with a large Aboriginal population, it may mean the Labor vote would grow.

I state quite categorically I have no doubt that the reason this Government has adopted this electoral provision, does not want a common roll, wants to cut costs, and indulges in all the claptrap about why it cannot do these things, is to ensure the "wrong people" do not get onto the roll, and the "wrong people" are the ones who might vote against the Liberal Government.

I welcome the presence of the Hon. Mr Kelly in this place to do battle against the dragons of electoral injustice we find in this State. I was interested to note that apparently our campaign has had some slight effect even on members opposite. To digress for a moment, I believe it ill behoves anybody to criticise a new member in this House for being controversial. When one reads the speech made by the Hon. Neil Oliver, one sees elements of controversy are present in it. I do not really object to that, because I said, by way of interjection, the pattern was set in 1977 by the present Chief Secretary who used that occasion to irritate members on this side of the House. I do not object to that, as long as we can do the same in return.

To return to the point I was making, I noticed, when the Hon. Neil Oliver moved the Address-in-Reply, he said that we now have an adult franchise, bicameral system of Parliament. How true that is. I looked carefully through his speech and nowhere did he say we have a democratic system of Government and, of course, we do not have one. Therefore, as far as that aspect was concerned, his speech was accurate.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: That is only your opinion.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: It is my opinion and I could spend many hours telling the honourable member why it is my opinion. However, I shall be gentle on him tonight and I shall not do so.

It is my opinion that "democracy" means equality of input by everybody as far as the choice of Government is concerned. In these modern times, it involves one-vote-one-value and, in my opinion, if we do not have that, which we do not, we have a grossly malapportioned system in both Houses. In fact, we have just made the malapportionment worse. Therefore, we do not have a democratic system of Government in this State.

Indeed, that is my opinion and it will be the opinion of more and more people in this State as they see the facts for themselves.

As I said, I noticed the Hon. Mr Oliver did not say we had democracy. However, he did say, and I applaud him for it, "No doubt throughout the

years ahead further changes will evolve." At least we have an admission from a member of the Government that further changes will evolve perhaps in the next 100 years. Conservatives always look forward to change not this year, not next year, not this decade, but sometime in the next century. However, perhaps we may be able to hurry it on a little.

I may return to the honourable gentleman's speech a little later. At present I want to do what one usually does in the Address-in-Reply and refer to a problem in my electorate. It is a problem of which you, Sir, will be very well aware, because it is also a problem in your electorate and that of the Hon. Phil Pental. I refer to the traffic difficulties around Wilson, going right through the area of the Canning City Council.

Last year I mentioned an attempt had been made to do something about the very savage erosion of people's lifestyles by traffic passing through what is known as the "Wilson triangle" between Leach Highway and Manning Road. What used to be a pleasant residential area has now been infiltrated by traffic and cars rush past morning and night. I am aware of this, because my car is one of them.

I am afraid that, not very long from now, a serious accident will occur with cars trying to cross Leach Highway from one part of Brairise Street to another. Cars are banking up in that area and they should be stopped by cul-de-sacing. However, if the Wilson triangle is cul-de-saced, traffic will bank up on Manning Road and, as a result, there will be another series of traffic jams.

The Canning City Council proposed solving the problem to some extent by putting a by-pass road just beyond the Riverton Bridge through to a position near Lawson Street on Manning Road. This was a most peculiar proposal, because at present Riverton Bridge, which I thought was supposed to die the death when the Shelley Bridge was constructed, takes two lanes of traffic, one going each way. It was proposed that a four-lane road go into a two-lane road which crosses a bridge which takes two lanes of traffic.

Many people thought it was inevitable the MRPA would accede to that proposal. My colleague, the Hon. Fred McKenzie, seemed to think it was inevitable that would occur. However, it would be essential that either the Riverton Bridge be replaced by a four-lane bridge or some other sort of bridge be constructed. It appears there is no logic in that situation. If that by-pass road were to be constructed, we would

have to establish where the four-lane road was to lead.

In the event, when the Canning City Council placed the proposal before the MRPA, it was rejected on the ground that it would not solve the problems because it would divert traffic into Lawson Street and cause further problems in other areas. Therefore, it was suggested the Canning City Council go away and rethink the whole proposition.

That seems to me to be a ludicrous attitude. It is time the MRPA produced firm conclusions as to what is to be done with the traffic in this whole area. Traffic is building up and the situation is getting worse. Already Albany Highway has far more traffic than it was meant to carry. Indeed, it has more traffic than it would be meant to carry if it were widened, but nothing has been done to widen it. We have seen members of Parliament gain considerable publicity rowing around the river looking at the wetlands in an endeavour to prevent the Chapman-Spencer Roads link being constructed.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I suggest to honorable members that they cease their audible conversations. It makes it very difficult to hear the honourable member addressing the Chair.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: Thank you, Sir. The whole problem has to be looked at overall. It cannot be done by one or two city councils; it has to be done by the planning authority, which should come up with a solution.

One immediate solution which could be undertaken and will have to be carried out eventually, regardless of whatever else is done, is the construction of a bridge across Manning Road. A bridge has already been constructed across Albany Highway to carry traffic on Leach Highway over Albany Highway and a similar bridge over Manning Road would allow immediate cul-de-sacing in that area and provide some relief. I have no doubt a bridge across Manning Road will be a long-term part of the solution to the traffic problem.

Other problems are building up in the Riverton area, where traffic is passing through other suburban triangles. The Riverton Bridge is small and old and was supposed to be replaced by the Shelley Bridge. When I attended the opening of that bridge I remember saying to the then Minister for Transport—I think my colleague, the Hon. Fred McKenzie heard me—"Why is it that you have a six-lane highway leading onto a four-lane bridge? You will soon have to widen the bridge when it will cost more. It is cheaper to do

it now." Of course, the need is in fact there right now.

Unless we do something soon, we will have complete traffic chaos around Cannington, Wilson, and Riverton. Indeed, the whole area of Cannington leading into South Perth will be affected.

I do not know whether we have to wait until people are killed in accidents before the MRPA takes up its responsibilities and does something about the matter. I do not know what we have to do, but certainly for many years now the inhabitants of the area, who have been suffering as a result of increased traffic, have been trying to get something done. For years now nothing has been done and it is high time the problem was rectified. Whatever is done will take at least 12 to 18 months in the planning and execution. It may well be too late to save lives; but the sooner we get onto the matter the better. The time to start was yesterday, but as nothing has been done yet, the authorities should start working on this matter tomorrow.

I feel very strongly about this. For years the traffic problems on Albany Highway through Canning have been well known and all we have had is talk and little roundabouts being built instead of the nettle being grasped and something being done in a constructive way to alleviate the difficulties. In the meantime, what was a pleasant residential section of the suburb of Riverton is being destroyed by traffic, dust, pollution, and the loss of the quality of life of people in my electorate now and in the future and of people in your electorate, Sir, now and in the future. Despite all that, we stand here powerless to get anything done.

I hope something will be done before we have a series of disastrous accidents which would perhaps make people aware of the need to take action.

I should like to make a few brief remarks about some of the matters which were mentioned in the Governor's Speech. Of course, as we all know, the Speech is presented to the Governor by the Premier and the Governor speaks on behalf of the Government, so it is the Government's Speech. On page 3 of *Hansard* No. 1 of 1982 the following statement is made—

Education and Health

The \$480.7 million allocated for education this financial year—an increase of 12.4 per cent—indicates the Government's determination to maintain its commitment to the development and training of young Western Australians. It believes an educated community is one of the most valuable assets

the State can possess in this age of technological changes.

I believe that too; I am at one there with the words of the Government. But since I have been in this House, since 1977, I have said long and often—I hope I do not have to say it very much more—that the Federal Government, particularly by its failure to make sufficient funds available, and this State Government, have failed to educate adequately young Western Australians in this era of technological change. In particular, we need to reduce primary school class sizes so that we can find the children at risk—the children with special educational difficulties and special needs—which will result in our being able to give remedial treatment for those children to be taught according to their special needs. In that way we can increase the literacy and numeracy rate of people who leave our high schools.

I want to make it quite clear—I have made this clear before, but one must be careful these days because one can be misreported so easily—that in my opinion the numeracy and literacy rates have not become worse. However, I do believe we are not sometimes giving people the drills and skills we used to. I have said before that the structural changes in our economy mean that no longer are there unskilled and semi-skilled jobs in sufficient number as there used to be to mop up the illiterate and semi-literate people in our community; therefore if we are to become a high-technology society—that is inevitable—we must choose whether we will educate people better than we have ever done before so that there is a higher literacy rate, or plan for a society in which there is a permanently high number of unemployed people. For me and my party the latter is not an option. I sometimes wonder whether Government members have thought this matter through and whether the latter is in fact an option to them. They are busy chanting, as the Minister for Labour and Industry has chanted, that people do not really want to work, it is all their own fault. People who chant that ignore the fact that technological changes, the structural changes in our community, require more Herculean efforts by Governments than previously have been made to overcome the vast problems confronting us.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Are you saying improved and new technology is losing jobs rather than making jobs?

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: Of course I am not.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: It's not the case in other countries, you know.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: The new technology is doing both; it always costs jobs.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: In Japan it has not been so. It doesn't change the total.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: New and improved technology changes the kind of jobs available and increases productivity; therefore we must change our approach and educate people differently. We must find new jobs, and probably reduce working hours fairly radically.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: That would only make it worse.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: We must look ahead and plan ahead; we must not do as has been done with our railways, and look at the situation with an accountant's mentality and not look to the needs of the future. We must do a vast amount of lateral thinking and planning ahead. I have said before I do not believe the education system in this State, despite the dedicated work of many teachers and many of the people in the Education Department bureaucracy for whom I have great respect—I hasten to add that I do not refer to all of them—is as yet managing to solve the problems. We must do a great deal more; I have made this point consistently.

We must look also more closely at the needs of physically and mentally handicapped people in our community. I do not believe we faced this matter properly last year during the International Year of the Disabled. We must do more positive things in order to integrate physically and mentally handicapped people into normal schools and our society.

I was quite interested to be told certain things when I visited the Pyrtton centre. I was surprised. I realised I suffered from the same ossification of attitude as do others. At the centre there was a Downes syndrome child who at the age of seven was doing the work seven-year-olds do in normal schools. How do we classify the so-called handicapped children? One of the problems with our attitudes towards the mentally handicapped is that we classify them according to IQ levels—old-fashioned IQs. We assume these people cannot develop; we do not always consider where they are, and determine how we can develop them from that position.

As a matter of fact, I think a great deal is to be said about my visit to a Catholic school at Bunbury. The principal said to me that his special class consisted of all the children who had special needs; the ones who were under-achieving, and the bright ones. Of course, this relates to one of the problems that I recognise in a vast

bureaucracy such as the Education Department. One of the problems of a vast bureaucracy is that it is easy for it to categorise people. It does not have the flexibility which we need if we are to treat disabled people as people.

I was interested to read recently an article about a woman who had fallen out of her wheelchair. She had broken her leg, had it put in plaster, and was in a wheelchair. Suddenly she found people no longer tended to speak to her because she was a handicapped person. She was not destined to be in a wheelchair for life, but had broken her leg. She was to be in that wheelchair temporarily, but noticed the change in attitudes towards her.

For us to do what we need to do—to use the vast resources of our society in which the productivity is such that there is enough for all—we should get nearer to what Karl Marx argued for. I disagree with many things he said, but I do not disagree with his ultimate aim—to each according to his needs.

If we are to give to each according to his needs, we must change our attitudes radically. We must change attitudes towards our school system and we must turn our schools into community schools. We tend to sort people into small categories—people separated from each other. I believe that as our high schools become too large we should turn part of them into technical colleges and part into adult education colleges, and make those facilities available to all.

If we are to have human beings taking full advantage of the new technologies in our society, we have to make radical changes to our education system. It is no good behaving as so many people do. I am just appalled when so-called intelligent academics, politicians and businessmen—the whole gamut—argue that because we do not seem to be producing the right product from our schools, producing a product which does not seem to be quite what our society needs, we have to spend less money on education and go back to the three Rs and the old discipline. I remember the old discipline very well; it did not do me any good.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: Obviously.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: Well, it did not.

The Hon. J. G. Pratt: But they didn't all turn out like you.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: No, some turned out considerably worse; not everybody was saved by the fact that he happened to go to a war and subsequently got a free ride to a university. I received that advantage and it made my life considerably different—if anyone

wants to know. How did I turn out then? I turned out with an honours degree and taught at university. I did not do well, as others would say, but it was adequate.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You kept your job.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: I had very high reports of you.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: Mr President, the point I make is that I grew up in the depression period and was one of the people who suffered under the penny-pinching meanness of the education system of the depression. I managed to escape, but that was because a war was on. It was a terrible way for people to escape from the inadequacies of an education system, and now we must do something about that education system and not go around and say, as I have heard it said by people in our community, that perhaps we can solve our unemployment problems if we go to war. We would need a conflict a bit more vigorous than that at the Falkland Islands, but a nuclear holocaust is not something to look forward to.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It wouldn't be much to look back on, either.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: That is true. I say again, although not at great length, we need to spend more money on and need to look again at our education system. We need to determine why it is not fulfilling the needs created by the changes in our society. We have to realise that our society is changing, and changing radically. We do have to realise that we cannot be surprised if the values of today's children are different from our own values because we grew up in a different society. In some ways today's society is better, but in others it is worse.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: It is a hedonist society.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: Yes, it is a hedonist society dominated by people who want to make short-term profits—a typical capitalist society.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: Come on, you are equating morality with capitalism.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: No. I am saying capitalism always has been immoral.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: That is unadulterated Bovril. I am glad you have put it in *Hansard* that capitalists are immoral. Let the people of this State know that you think capitalists are immoral.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: The Chief Secretary—

The Hon. R. G. Pike: Apologises for interjecting correctly.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: —has tried to say that I believe all capitalists are immoral, not that the capitalist structure is based on immorality. He says he will tell the capitalists because he believes they are highly moral people.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: It's in *Hansard*.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I know what is in *Hansard*. Probably I have a better idea than he.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: I just remember the one sentence.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: You say it, he corrects it.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: At least we should do something in our education system for the disabled. We could set aside a few thousand dollars each year to make such a thing possible. If a student in a wheelchair wanted to go to a particular school we could remodel the school to make it available to him. We could do little things like that even with the modicum of money we get at present from Canberra. We could do things to try to change the attitudes of people. Of course, if we could persuade people in the community to allow the establishment of hostels for the intellectually retarded—

The Hon. R. G. Pike: You would have no Labor Party bench if you did that.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: —if we set up hostels for these people instead of keeping them apart in institutions, they would be happier, they would be better off, and it would cost less. The community would be better off also. We must think about these things.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Do you think we should set up hostels for the bright people too?

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: Bright people can normally look after themselves.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You do not think they may be disadvantaged by the education system?

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I do not believe that in our school system we should set aside elitist schools for bright people. We should cater for very special needs. I am not telling the honourable member how to do this, because it would need considerable meetings and discussion.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I agree with you.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I would expect the honourable member to agree with me. I believe that one of the problems with setting up the notion of gifted children is that we are categorising them and some parents are trying to push their children into that category. It could

be an entirely disruptive thing and that is a problem I would expect the Hon. Sandy Lewis to agree with.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I do.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I have not a quick, slick, ready-made solution, but I do believe we have to try, as far as possible, to treat all children according to their needs. We know we cannot be 100 per cent successful but I know we can do more than we are doing, and I hope we can start that before too long.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I will discuss the subject with the honourable member at a later date.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I noticed that the Governor's Speech referred to the growth and development of prisons. I wish to make brief reference to the unfortunate incident which occurred at Canning Vale recently because I remember inspecting the Canning Vale Remand Centre and being shown proudly how it was a strict security remand centre and being told people could not get out of it.

One person has escaped; one person has been caught in the wire; and now one person has been killed; and this is all in a very short time. We need to rethink our prisons and see if we can come up with a better design.

I know it is very difficult to stop people escaping, but I think a 19-year-old youth should not be able to leap the wall and be shot. We have to rethink our attitudes here. I am not making any charges against the person who was responsible for the occurrence but I am saying we have to look at the system and improve it to ensure that it does not happen again.

The Governor's Speech referred also to Aboriginal housing programmes which were continuing in country and metropolitan locations. I will say once more—and I will probably say this at greater length during the Budget debate—that the programmes are inefficient and still are not meeting the needs.

I would like to have it put on record once more that the main time of my electorate office is taken up with housing problems, usually housing problems with Aborigines. I wish this were not so because the situation is getting worse. One of two things is happening: Either I have a very good secretary who is efficient and warm in heart, she worries about people, it is true, so people are coming into my office in droves and the problem seems greater; or the problem is in fact becoming worse. The more one approaches the people in the State Housing Commission the more one finds that they too are desperate to try to do something with insufficient funds and insufficient

accommodation. This is one of the desperate needs of our time.

I might add that I was promised that one of my electors would be housed before Christmas. I am now told she will be housed in the next couple of weeks. If she is not, I will get up on the adjournment motion and speak. My speech on the Belmont Senior High School will be quiet compared with what I will say about the Housing Commission if something is not done.

As I have mentioned the Belmont Senior High School perhaps I should slip it in here and get back to my electorate, because I like to report to the House, once a year, the problems of Belmont Senior High School. I am pleased to announce—and it is not often the news is good from Belmont Senior High School—that the hole has been dug and foundations have been poured and a building is going up. One of the men from the Public Works Department promised that even Mr Hetherington will find the building exciting. I hope that is true because the students of Belmont Senior High School need an exciting building. I hope that before long they will get one.

I wish to make reference to the speech of the Hon. Neil Oliver because I found it to be one of those speeches that send me cold—particularly his remarks about industrial relations. Industrial relations are bad in times and years when there is a lack of industrial security. This has been the case on the waterfront and in the coalmines when people were in fear of losing their jobs and in daily fear of losing their lives. Such conditions tend to make for militant unions, and industrial relations get bad when people fear for their jobs, especially at times of economic recession.

I wish to point out, as I have before, that it is not the unions that have brought about our world-wide recession. It is not the unions. I remember, when I finally got to the university free, that I was told by the new economists that Lord Keynes had solved all our problems, capitalism was going to work, and never again were we going to have the problem of booms, slumps and unemployment. Well, it was not true and it is not a fault of the unions, it is a fault of the system. We have not sorted out how to run our system.

In my innocence I thought that we would not stave off many of our problems after the war through psychological obsolescence and expanding credit and that in due course credit would run out. In due course, our savings did run out and so the trade unions are desperately trying to maintain their standards.

I will not discuss the Builders' Labourers Federation because we are awaiting the result of

the inquiry, but the laundry workers in Government hospitals, the members of the Miscellaneous Workers' Union, the people working for the Government in water supply, the metal workers, and those working at Midland are all trying to maintain their standards and jobs. They are feeling threatened and of course they have to bargain and they have to bargain hard. It is true they bargain most successfully when they are united and it is true one is likely to have better industrial relations when one large union bargains with one large company.

Another fact of which I hope Mr Oliver will take notice is that if one gets up with an even-handed approach and says, "We hate big monopolies on either side and therefore we have to do something to get people bargaining on the shop floor", as he said in his speech, it means one is destroying the ability of the working class to bargain. Whatever the even-handedness of one's rhetoric, one is acting in the interests of the big battalions of people who own the money, the people who own the means of production, distribution, and exchange.

I suppose the member was speaking for the Government—I hope not—and believes that just old-fashioned collective bargaining is not enough. His proposals sounded to me to have a sad whiff of the corporative state of Mussolini's Italy. It seems to me that was the model in his head.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I think you are misrepresenting him.

The Hon. Fred McKenzie: That is how it came over.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I think you are misrepresenting the speaker.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I was very careful, I did not say he was a Fascist. I said there was a whiff of Mussolini's corporative state and that is a matter of opinion. It is certainly my opinion because I have read something about Mussolini's Italy, I have read something about Hitler's Germany, Stalin's Russia, and George Orwell's *1984*. I have seen predictions of our changed society and I very much fear that our changing technology and our ability to suppress people, as well as manipulate minds, will have us finishing up in a non-free State.

I remember arguing, as an undergraduate, with a Communist friend of mine and saying that of its very nature the Soviet system was a repressive one. I believe we are showing signs of repression. It is coming to this country and we have to watch it carefully.

I have quoted the motto of the RSL before, "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance." That is one of the things we were arguing about earlier in another debate: As Governments and Government bureaucracies—I am not anti-bureaucratic, as any member who listens to my speeches knows—burgeon, so does their ability to make mistakes and their ability to control people. We need to watch them all the time.

The person I trust least with power is the well meaning person who believes he knows the truth and knows what is good for other people, whether it is an anti-hedonist philosophy or any other.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You don't fit into that category yourself?

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: No, I do not. I do not believe I know what is good for other people. I believe I can see some of the problems that face us and I believe I have some of the solutions. I learn and change my mind often. I have been known to get up in this House and say I have been mistaken. If Mr Wordsworth wants me to spell it out for him again—I have done this in the past—I am an old fashioned liberal. I believe in an open-ended liberal society. I believe we get nearer to truth only when everyone has his input or we have a Socratic didactics of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Whenever we solve one problem, we find we have created another, so we have always to progress if we believe in all goodwill that we will be nearer to the truth. We will never get there, but we can always improve things if we try to. We do not always improve things. If we believe we have the ultimate truth and try to fit other people into the procrustean bed of their own ideologies—

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Haven't you been telling us over the years that you are a democratic socialist?

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: Yes.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Apparently that is the same as an old fashioned liberal.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I happen to believe that an old fashioned liberal is inevitably led towards socialism, and that the only place for a liberal—a real liberal—is as a democratic socialist. There is no inconsistency in that. One belief follows the other logically, as far as I am concerned. However, I do not want to pursue that, because I will be accused of giving lecture No. 57, and I did not really set out to do that tonight. I am not feeling terribly in the mood for reforming people.

The Hon. Fred McKenzie: Perhaps "liberal" is a misnomer.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: Of course I am saying the Liberal Party is a misnomer. I am saying the Liberal Party—

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Come off that. We could talk about the Labor Party; none of you ever works.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I believe the Liberal Party is at the wrong end of liberalism. It has the *laissez faire* part, but it has forgotten the individual liberty part. I am in the Labor Party because I believe in individual liberty, and the Liberal Party throws it away.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: We believe in it more so than you, I am absolutely sure.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: I can see you joining us soon.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I can assure the honourable member that whenever I look across the Chamber, no matter how disaffected I may be with my party, which is very rarely, I would never cross the floor. There are limits to which one cannot go. I belong here. There is no other party to which I could belong.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: There is no future in it, either. You would lose your endorsement instantly.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Let us be fair. You are sometimes critical of some members of my party in making decisions on arguments; and I happen to be one of the people who occasionally votes with you. I think you are being a little unfair saying you would never cross the floor.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I would not join the Liberal Party. That was the statement I made.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: That is a different thing.

The Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I am sorry if I was misunderstood slightly.

Actually, I intended to sit down some time ago; but with the interjections, I did what one might call an "Hon. A. A. Lewis", and I responded to the interjections and stayed on my feet. I hope that what I have said has made some kind of sense.

I support the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. N. F. Moore.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

THE HON. I. G. MEDCALF (Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [9.44 p.m.]: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Education: School Buses

THE HON. GARRY KELLY (South Metropolitan) [9.45 p.m.]: I rise in relation to an

answer to a question I asked of the Minister representing the Minister for Transport. It should have been addressed to the Minister for Police and Prisons. However, it was answered by the Minister for Labour and Industry representing the Minister for Police and Prisons.

The question dealt with school buses. The make of bus I quoted was a Toyota Coaster model. I am not trying to single out the Toyota as the villain in the piece; but I am dealing with that type of vehicle. I understand other makes are involved. Each of these buses has 11 seats. The seats are nowhere near the size of the seats one finds on the average MTT bus.

According to the answer I received from the Minister for Police and Prisons, under the vehicle standards regulations an 11-seater bus can carry 33 adults. If we do our sums, we find that 22 adults sit on the 11 seats, and 11 adults stand. In the case of children under 14 years, the bus can carry 44 persons. Doing our sums once again, we find that 33 people are seated and 11 are standing. The 33 children sit three to a seat.

Apart from the lack of comfort in the ride when the bus is heavily loaded, in the case of children I am very concerned because many of the buses are owned by schools. It would be very hard to police the children and to discipline them, because of the number of children standing.

A bigger issue is that of safety. With that number of children standing, it would take only a fairly minor accident—say, if the bus had to brake suddenly—for the children to sustain quite severe injuries.

The Hon. W. M. Piesse: Are you speaking of all buses?

The Hon. GARRY KELLY: Some schools own these 11-seater buses.

The Hon. W. M. Piesse: How many?

The Hon. GARRY KELLY: I do not know how many schools own them.

The Hon. W. M. Piesse: More than one?

The Hon. GARRY KELLY: Yes. A lot of schools have fetes and raise money to purchase these buses. They are within the paying capacity of the schools, because a subsidy is provided by the Education Department. Quite a few of these buses are used.

The Hon. W. M. Piesse: How far would they be travelling?

The Hon. GARRY KELLY: They go to the beach; they go on excursions in the city. I do not think it matters how far they are travelling.

because they can be loaded fully with children. When they are on the road, they face the possibility that an accident could occur.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Is it a fact that the teachers are jamming children into the buses in such a situation?

The Hon. GARRY KELLY: What I am saying is that as far as the Police Department is concerned, the buses can carry 44 children under 14 years of age, legally.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Are the teachers allowed to do that?

The Hon. GARRY KELLY: The possibility is for that to be done.

The PRESIDENT: I suggest to the honourable member that he ignore the interjections. The correct procedure is to address the Chair and ignore anybody else who speaks to him during the course of his comments.

The Hon. GARRY KELLY: I am sorry, Mr President.

One of the questions I asked related to the loading levels of the buses. I asked the Minister if he considered the loadings to be consistent with road safety. The answer from the Minister was "Yes." An 11-seater bus with 44 children or 33 adults, if we consider the more general use of these vehicles, is loaded legally.

In an overloaded situation, the chances for injury are enhanced. As I said, it would take a fairly simple accident in which the bus had to brake, and the chance of the children being thrown against the seats or falling to the floor would be increased. That could cause injuries to one or more children.

The argument I am trying to put is that the Minister for Police and Prisons or the Police Department do not see anything wrong in loading buses to these levels—and I remind the House that they are legal levels. Whether a particular teacher did it or not, the point is that it is legal to load to these levels. If the Police Department will not issue regulations regarding the buses owned by the public, at least the Minister for Education should give clear instructions to schools indicating that buses may be loaded with as many passengers as can be seated. No tolerance should be given to allow—

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: It sets a precedent for all school buses.

The Hon. GARRY KELLY: I assure the honourable member that MTT buses are much larger. There is more room. The seats are much wider. I am speaking about much smaller vehicles.

Unless the Minister acts now, before an accident happens, I foresee the situation that a bus with 44 children on it will be involved in an accident, with the chance of somebody being injured or killed. The Minister should issue instructions to the effect that the number of children carried on these buses must be reduced. He should intervene now and say to the schools, "Do not carry more children on these buses than can be seated."

This matter has another aspect. If a bus is involved in an accident and a child is hurt or killed, who will take responsibility? Will it be the Minister for Education? I do not think so. Will it be the Director General of Education? No, I do not think so. Will it be the principal of the school? No, I am sure it will not be. Will it be the bloke behind the wheel of the bus? That is where I reckon the buck will stay.

In most bureaucracies, the buck usually stops at the bottom. It stops with the bloke who cannot pass it any further. This will affect the staff member who has the "B"-class licence. Sometimes it is not a teacher, but a member of the ancillary staff, who drives the vehicle. They will be the people—the blokes behind the wheel—who will cop all the flak should an accident happen.

To protect the interests of the staff and, above all, the interests of the children, the substantive Minister for Education (Mr Mensaros) should issue clear instructions to schools so that the loadings on these buses are commensurate with their seating capacity and cannot be varied in any way. It is important that the Minister for Education acts before a tragedy occurs, and not after.

THE HON. A. A. LEWIS (Lower Central) [9.56 p.m.]: I listened with great interest to that speech. Obviously the honourable member does not know much about school buses. That was obvious from his total attitude. A great number of—

The Hon. Garry Kelly: That particular sort of vehicle, not ordinary school buses.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: That particular sort of vehicle is a vehicle that has been reviewed by the Education Department, as well as many others. The Education Department and the Police Department have a series of regulations on the workings of school buses. The safety in school buses—in the smaller type buses about which the member was speaking—is greater than in the larger buses.

The Hon. Garry Kelly: With 44 children on board?

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: With whatever number they are licensed to carry, because the Education Department, despite what some people think, has quite intelligent people looking after the school buses. The honourable member can obtain a booklet that explains all about school buses. I am surprised, with his background, that he has not seen the bus book and seen the list of—

The Hon. Garry Kelly: I have seen it. It does not say anything about this.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I am surprised he has not seen the additional information that he could obtain from the administration office of the Education Department.

The Hon. Garry Kelly: It is silent on maximum loadings.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The whole matter is set out in the contracts of the school bus operators. If the honourable member would take a little bit of effort and walk to the end of the street, he could find out exactly the loadings on those buses. He could determine what mechanical and other defects each of those buses had.

The Hon. Garry Kelly: What about the loadings?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Wait a minute. The member could worry about loadings until the cows come home. He should see the amount of work that the Education Department has done on all types of buses, with all configurations. That information is freely available to members of Parliament and to the public. One can just go and ask. That would explain the whole matter to the member. It sets out how it is worked out, what safety factors there are, and why a particular number of people should be allowed to ride on the buses.

The Police Department does exactly the same thing for the number of adults on a bus. Really, this is not a matter of urgency which should be raised on the adjournment. If the member had asked some of his colleagues, if they knew, or some of us, if they did not, he would find out the complete answer. This is not a matter of great urgency, to be raised on the adjournment debate.

THE HON. I. G. PRATT (Lower West) [10.00 p.m.]: I cannot let this occasion pass without saying a few words. I am very concerned that the suggestion has been made that teachers, who are mindful of the safety of the children they take on excursions, would knowingly and deliberately put those children at risk.

Unlike the Hon. Mr Kelly I have not served in high schools, but I have spent a considerable time in primary schools. I have organised many excursions and I know these are carried out with thought, care, and planning. An excursion is usually the initiative of the teacher responsible for a certain area of interest. It is discussed fully with the headmaster before a decision is made. I am shocked at the suggestion that a teacher or teachers, after consulting with the headmaster and reaching a decision to take the children on an excursion, would do so without considering their responsibility for the safety and welfare of the children by making a decision, as suggested by Mr Kelly, to crowd the children into small buses so as to place them in danger.

I hope very sincerely that the honourable member's fears are unfounded. Quite frankly, I have much more confidence in our teachers than does Mr Kelly.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.02 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

AGNEW CLOUGH LTD.

Wundowie Charcoal Iron Industry Sale Agreement: Pay-roll Tax Reimbursement

61. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister representing the Treasurer:

What was the total amount of pay-roll tax reimbursement paid to Agnew Clough Ltd. by the State Government over the period 1 May 1977 to 31 October 1978?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

\$196 437.

AGNEW CLOUGH LTD.

Wundowie Charcoal Iron Industry Sale Agreement: Pay-roll Tax Reimbursement

63. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Resources Development:

What was the total amount of pay-roll tax reimbursement paid to Agnew Clough Ltd. by the State Government for each of the periods 1 November 1978 to 30 June 1979, and 1 July 1979 to 30 June 1980, pursuant to Clause 15C of the 1979 Amendment Act of the Wundowie Charcoal Iron Industry Sale Agreement?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

I am advised that the total amount of pay-roll tax reimbursement was—

1 November 1978 to 30 June 1979—\$91 935

1 July 1979 to 30 June 1980—\$134 065.

HOUSING

Wundowie

64. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Resources Development:

(1) Is it a fact that under the terms of the 1974 Wundowie Charcoal Iron Industry Sale Agreement, the State Government

was obligated to provide additional housing in Wundowie subject to funds being available and Agnew Clough Ltd. satisfying the Government of their need for such additional housing?

(2) How many such additional houses were ever constructed?

(3) When was the last such house constructed?

(4) What was the cost to the State of providing this additional housing?

(5) What proportion of these houses are presently not occupied?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

(1) to (5) There have been no additional houses constructed in Wundowie as a result of the company requesting and demonstrating such housing was needed.

AGNEW CLOUGH LTD.

Wundowie Charcoal Iron Industry Sale Agreement: Terms and Conditions

68. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Resources Development:

I refer the Minister to the sale in 1975 of the Wundowie charcoal iron and steel industries under the terms of the 1974 Wundowie Charcoal Iron Industry Sale Agreement and ask—

(1) What was the full sale price associated with the undertakings and business at Wundowie and payable by Agnew Clough Ltd.?

(2) What were the terms and conditions attached to payment of the sale price by Agnew Clough Ltd.?

(3) What was the date by which total payment of the sale price was required to be completed by the company?

(4) When was the last payment of the sale price made by the company, and what was the value of that payment?

(5) What was the sum total of payments made by the company up to and including the payment made in (4)?

- (6) Has Agnew Clough Ltd. ever sought from the State Government or Treasurer any remission in respect of payments of the sale price?
- (7) If "Yes" to (6), what was the nature and extent of the remissions sought?
- (8) Did the State Government or the Treasurer ever afford Agnew Clough Ltd. any remission in respect of payments of the sale price?
- (9) If "Yes" to (8), what was the nature and extent of remissions afforded?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) to (3) The full consideration associated with the sale of the undertakings and business are detailed in the Wundowie charcoal iron industry sale agreement, and the amending Acts No. 64 of 1977, and No. 11 of 1979.
- (4) January 1981, and the amount was \$390 000.
- (5) The company assumed a number of liabilities, including payments to various parties, as referred to in the agreement, at sale date. Details of those payments would only be available from the company.
- (6) to (9) Not beyond those already ratified by Parliament.

GOVERNMENT GUARANTEES

Wundowie Charcoal Iron and Steel Industries

70. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister representing the Treasurer:

In drawing the Treasurer's attention to page 69 of the 1979-80 Auditor General's report, and in particular to a losses and liabilities item for the Department of Industrial Development associated with the Wundowie charcoal iron and steel industries, I ask—

- (1) What form of Government assistance does this particular item refer to?
- (2) Under what authority was this assistance given?
- (3) How much did the State Government guarantee for or on behalf of Wundowie charcoal iron and steel industries?

- (4) When was the guarantee given?
- (5) For what purpose was it given?
- (6) How much has been paid out in respect of the guarantee?
- (7) When did it become necessary to honour the guarantee by repaying the loan?
- (8) Why did it become necessary to honour the guarantee?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) to (8) This matter requires considerable research and when details are to hand, the member will be advised in writing.

AGNEW CLOUGH LTD.

Wundowie Charcoal Iron Industry Sale Agreement: Release from Obligations

72. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister representing the Treasurer:

I draw the Treasurer's attention to the 1974 Wundowie charcoal iron and steel agreement, and ask—

- (1) On what date was Agnew Clough Ltd. released of its obligation to make further repayments in respect of loans undertaken by the previous Wundowie board of management?
- (2) What arrangements have been made for repayment of those loans?
- (3) What currently, is the amount outstanding on those particular loans and payable from the Consolidated Revenue Fund?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) to (3) This matter requires considerable research and when details are to hand, the member will be advised in writing.

AGNEW CLOUGH LTD.

Wundowie Charcoal Iron Industry Sale Agreement: Rail Freight Concession

75. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Resources Development:

For each year of the period 1975-1981 inclusive, what was the total monetary value of the rail freight concession afforded to Agnew Clough Ltd. by the State Government pursuant to clause 15 of the 1974 Wundowie Charcoal Iron Industry Sale Agreement, clause 15A of

amendment Act No. 64 of 1977, the variation agreement dated 26 September 1978, and clause 15F of amendment Act No. 11 of 1979?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

The sale agreement continued to authorise payment to Westrail of a level of rail freight subsidy amounting to—

	\$
1974-75	100 211.59
1975-76	192 903.07
1976-77	244 915.65
1977-78	303 042.26
1978-79	245 086.72
1979-80	130 583.79
1980-81	36 315.16

AGNEW CLOUGH LTD.

Wundowie Charcoal Iron Industry Sale Agreement: Loan Repayment Concessions

77. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Resources Development:

- (1) Will the Minister detail the full extent of loan repayment concessions made to Agnew Clough Ltd. in relation to its Wundowie operations since the sale agreement in 1974?
- (2) What is the total value of the loan repayment concessions referred to in (1) above?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) The concessions are set out in detail in the Act No. 64 of 1977 to amend the provisions of the Wundowie Charcoal Iron Industry Sale Agreement Act of 1974, clause 5 (3) (b).
- (2) The total value will be assessed and advised to the member.

AGNEW CLOUGH LTD.

Wundowie Charcoal Iron Industry Sale Agreement: Raw Materials

79. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Resources Development:

- (1) Will the Minister detail the extent of State Government assistance since 1974 to Agnew Clough Ltd. in obtaining

access to raw material supplies pursuant to clause 10, subsection (a) of the Wundowie charcoal iron industry sale agreement?

- (2) What was the monetary value of this assistance for each year 1975-1981 inclusive?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) and (2) The company acquired the on-going licences, etc. referred to in clause 5 (1) to permit access to raw materials for continuation of the existing operation. In addition, the State has agreed in principle to grant access to wood for charcoal purposes commensurate with the needs of the silicon metal plant. The company is required to pay all statutory charges associated with the above.

AGNEW CLOUGH LTD.

Vanadium Pentoxide: Production

80. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Will the Minister give the production figures of vanadium pentoxide from the Wundowie plant for each calendar year of the period 1979-81 inclusive?
- (2) If such figures are not available, will the Minister give the precise reasons as to why they are not?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) 1979 Nil.
1980 77.41 tonnes.
*1981 334.79 tonnes.
*Total production figures for 1981 have not yet been received from Agnew Clough Limited. Efforts to obtain the information are in progress.
- (2) Not applicable.

AGNEW CLOUGH LTD.

Vanadium Pentoxide: Royalty Payments

81. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

What royalty payments on the production of vanadium pentoxide were made by Agnew Clough Ltd. to the State Government for each calendar year of the period 1979-1981 inclusive?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

1979 Nil.
1980 Nil.
1981 \$6 428.33.

TRAFFIC: MVIT

Break-even Point, and Deficit

89. The Hon. J. M. BERINSON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

With reference to the reported statement by the acting General Manager of the MVIT (*Daily News* of 25 March 1982) that the trust has adopted a programme to bring its operation to a break-even point by June 1983—

- (1) What increase in premiums in 1982 and/or 1983 does this programme involve?
- (2) Even if a break-even point is reached by June 1983, will this not still leave the trust with an accumulated deficit at that time of about \$60 million?
- (3) If "Yes" to (2)—
 - (a) does the trust have any programme to eliminate that deficit, and if so, how; and
 - (b) how can the deficit be eliminated other than by premium increases in excess of those necessary to merely reach a break-even point, or by subsidy from other forms of State taxation?

The Hon. R. G. PIKE replied:

- (1) Based on actuarial projections, which are made difficult by uncertainties of future inflationary effects and court awards, the trust intends to apply for a 10 per cent premium increase to take effect in July 1982. For 1983 the trust may require a premium increase at least in line with inflation, possibly a little higher, with the exact amount being dependant on experience during the preceding period.
- (2) On present indications the trust expects the accumulated deficit to reduce to less than \$40m.

- (3) (a) The intention is to reduce the deficit progressively over the next few years;
- (b) it is believed that premium increases of reasonable proportions, together with investment income, will enable the deficit to be reduced to a satisfactory level.

MINING: NICKEL

Agnew

99. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

I refer the Minister to newspaper reports (*The Western Mail*, 13 February 1982) concerning the possibility of closure of the Agnew nickel mine and resultant loss of some 420 jobs, and ask—

- (1) In view of the reported statement that the selection trust chairman would not deny the possibility of closure, will the Minister comment on the specific difficulties faced by the mine at Agnew?
- (2) Does the Minister have any recent information on the reported closure?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) and (2) There has been a substantial improvement in the Agnew nickel mine operations since the pessimistic *The Western Mail* report of 13 February 1982, particularly with regard to metallurgical performance. There has been an improvement in the grade of nickel concentrate delivered from the mine to the Kalgoorlie smelter from 8.5 per cent to 15 per cent nickel, which has resulted in a marked reduction in smelting costs.

This has prompted Agnew mine management to issue a notice to all employees, which states—

The Joint Venturers are heartened by what has been achieved over the past few months in the mine and concentrator, and encouraged by the revised budget figures submitted to the Committee.

This situation has led the Joint Venturers to believe that further improvements, both in operating procedures and cost reductions, can

be achieved and the budgets submitted covering the balance of the 1981-82 year have been approved.

This is confirmed by a press report of comments by Mr B. D. Watson, Managing Director of MIM Holdings Ltd., which holds a 40 per cent interest in the Agnew mine, with Seltrust Mining Corporation Pty. Ltd. holding the remaining 60 per cent.

As a large nickel sulphide deposit, Agnew compares very favourably with nickel laterite deposits in other parts of the world which are relatively expensive to exploit.

The Government has every confidence in the future of the mine as a long-term contributor to the State's nickel production.

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr Harry Butler: Consultancy

102. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Has the Minister noted that Mr Harry Butler is now employed as a consultant to the Tasmanian Government?
- (2) Is Mr Butler's appointment in November 1981, to the Zoological Gardens Board, still current?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.

WATER RESOURCES: DAMS

Collie

103. The Hon. W. M. PIESSE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Works:

- (1) Has there been any drilling carried out recently in the Collie area for the possible siting of a new dam?
- (2) If so, could the facts and figures of the drilling programme be tabled?
- (3) If not, why not?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes, but the data will not be available for approximately one month.
- (3) Not applicable.

EDUCATION

Priest Report

104. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

Further to my question 729 of 25 November 1981—

- (1) Has the Government yet made any decisions relating to the recommendations of the Priest report?
- (2) If so, will the Minister please supply details?

The Hon. R. G. PIKE replied:

- (1) and (2) The recommendations of the Priest report are under consideration by the Board of Secondary Education. The Minister anticipates that the Board of Secondary Education will present a full report to me later this year.

NORTHERN DEVELOPMENTS PTY LTD.: CAMBALLIN PROJECT

Cost

105. The Hon. H. W. GAYFER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

Since inception, what has been the annual total costs to the Government of the Camballin irrigation scheme?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

I am advised that the total annual costs to the Government of the Camballin Irrigation scheme, comprising operating expenditure, depreciation, and interest on General Loan Funds, have been—

Total Costs	
	\$
1961-62	131 236
1962-63	167 710
1963-64	178 776
1964-65	181 188
1965-66	150 717
1966-67	174 473
1967-68	157 723
1968-69	168 531
1969-70	381 862
1970-71	226 244
1971-72	220 227
1972-73	235 191

Total Costs

	\$
1973-74	244 512
1974-75	247 615
1975-76	286 182
1976-77	336 618
1977-78	270 772
1978-79	276 069
1979-80	290 452
1980-81	432 815

SEWERAGE

Ocean Outfalls: Location

106. The Hon. NEIL McNEILL, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) How many ocean outfalls for sewage effluent are in operation in Western Australia?
- (2) In what localities are each of these situated?
- (3) How many of them are under the control of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Board?
- (4) In relation to each of those under the control of the Metropolitan Water Board—
 - (a) when did each of these commence operations;
 - (b) what is the distance of the discharge point or points from high water mark;
 - (c) what is the size of the discharge pipe;
 - (d) what is the depth of water at point of discharge;
 - (e) what is the volume of discharge; and
 - (f) to what degrees of treatment have each of these discharges been subjected?
- (5) On how many occasions has there been a breakdown in the operation of any of these discharge outfalls, and when did they occur?
- (6) What was the cause in each case?
- (7) What were the risks to health or the environment as a result of such breakdowns?
- (8) To what extent, if any, are these discharge systems subject to regular monitoring by—
 - (a) the Health Department; and
 - (b) the EPA?

(9) On how many occasions, and in respect of which systems, has—

- (a) the Health Department; and/or
- (b) the EPA:

made adverse reports?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) Within the metropolitan area—four. In the country—four.
- (2) Offshore from—
 - (a) Ocean Reef Marina (outlet for Beenypup plant);
 - (b) Swanbourne Rifle Range (outlet for Swanbourne and Subiaco plants);
 - (c) Woodman Point;
 - (d) Point Peron;
 - (e) Albany;
 - (f) Bunbury;
 - (g) Rottneet;
 - (h) Geraldton.
- (3) The first four mentioned in answer (2).
- (4)

	Ocean Reef 1977	Swanbourne 1960	Woodman Pt 1964	Pt Peron 1970
(a) Total length	1.6 km	1.08 km	1.78 km	.518 km
(b) Length of diffuser section	184 m	48 m	118 m	17 m
(c)	1 180 mm	760 mm	750 mm	320 mm
(d)	10 m	11 m	16.5 m	9 m
(e)	28 mega-litres per day	53	33	1.5
(f)	Secondary	Primary-Swanbourne Secondary-Subiaco	Primary	Secondary

(5) There have been no breakdowns of existing outfalls and at no time has it been necessary to discharge untreated effluent through these outfalls as a result of power failures or industrial action at treatment plants.

(The original Swanbourne outfall, which was constructed in 1926-27, broke near the shore in the late 1950s. It was replaced by the existing outfall.)

(6) Not applicable to existing outfalls.

(7) Not applicable to the existing outfalls. (In the case of the original Swanbourne outfall the Public Health Department closed City Beach for a period in 1958 as a protection against typhoid until chlorination could be introduced, pending the construction of the new pipeline and the secondary treatment facilities at Subiaco plant.)

(8) (a) Public Health Department has, for many years, conducted regular

beach sampling surveys. These are monthly in winter and fortnightly in summer.

(b) Nil. However, MWB conducts detailed ocean sampling annually in the vicinity of each ocean outfall in conjunction with Public Health Department.

(9) (a) None for existing outfalls. (This comment excludes the 1958 experience with the original Swanbourne outlet.)

(b) None.

EDUCATION: NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Registration

107. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

(1) Has his department completed the review of criteria for the registration of non-Government schools, and if so, will he supply details?

(2) If "No" to (1), when does the Minister expect the review to be completed?

The Hon. R. G. PIKE replied:

(1) The review of criteria for registration of non-Government schools has not been finalised.

(2) Liaison with other Education Departments and the Schools Commission is proceeding and it is expected that the review should be completed later this year.

FUEL AND ENERGY: ELECTRICITY

Coal and Oil Prices

108. The Hon. FRED McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

With reference to the State Energy Commission annual report 1981, page 10—"In the interconnected electricity system there was an increase of 24 per cent in the price of coal, and 33 per cent in the price of oil"—will the Minister advise what do each of these two figures represent in dollars for the year 1980-1981?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

The average price of coal increased by \$4.20 per tonne, or 24 per cent, and the

effect on operations amounted to \$12.217 million in 1980-81.

The average price of oil increased by \$37.84 per tonne, or 33 per cent and the effect on operations amounted to \$3.553 million in 1980-81.

It will be appreciated that less oil and more coal are being used, as the overall cost of coal is lower than the cost of oil.

WATER RESOURCES: METERS

Life

109. The Hon. W. M. PIESSE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Resources:

(1) What is the anticipated life of a water meter?

(2) What is the cost of replacement of a water meter?

(3) Approximately how many water meters servicing the country areas water supply have to be replaced each year?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

(1) The anticipated life of a domestic water meter is generally eight to 10 years. Both meter throughput and water quality affect this life.

(2) The purchase cost of a 20 mm domestic water meter on the current annual contract is approximately \$36. In addition there are direct and indirect costs of replacement which are estimated to be approximately \$20 per meter.

(3) It is estimated that approximately 8 000 domestic water meters are replaced each year by new or repaired meters in country water supply areas.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOLS

Driver Education Programme

110. The Hon. H. W. GAYFER, to the Minister representing the Premier:

(1) In the interests of road safety, would the Government give consideration to the re-introduction of the driver education programme for high schools?

(2) If not, why not?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) and (2) The subject of driver education has been considered by an interdepartmental committee. The recommendations of that committee are currently being studied by the Minister for Police and Prisons and the Minister for Education.

FUEL AND ENERGY: SOLAR

Solar Energy Bodies

111. The Hon. FRED MCKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

With reference to a publication produced by SERIWA entitled "Solar and Wind Data Network for Australia", in which an appendix headed "List of Solar Energy Bodies in Australia" lists the following three bodies for Western Australia—

1. Solar Energy Research Institute of WA;
2. Solar Energy Studies Group, WAIT;
3. International Solar Energy Society, ANZ Section, W.A. Group;

would the Minister please indicate—

- (1) Who prepared the list?
- (2) Who are the members of the Solar Energy Studies Group at WAIT?
- (3) Who appointed them?
- (4) To whom do they report?
- (5) What activities has the group carried out in the last 12 months?
- (6) What publications has the group produced in the last 12 months?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) The Solar Energy Research Institute of WA.
- (2) The Solar Energy Studies Group at WAIT is an inter-disciplinary group within the divisions of engineering and science.
- (3) Institute Resources Board of WAIT.
- (4) Institute Resources Board of WAIT.
- (5) (a) Involvement in SERIWA projects;
- (b) school educational projects;
- (c) energy audit of buildings at WAIT;
- (d) response to industry enquiries re solar matters.
- (6) No publications have been produced, only project reports as requested.

RAILWAYS

Koolyanobbing-Kwinana

112. The Hon. FRED MCKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What length of rail track between Kwinana and Koolyanobbing has been replaced to date?
- (2) How many sleepers have been replaced to date?
- (3) In what sections of track was—
 - (a) the removed rail used, and the length of track in each such section; and
 - (b) the removed sleepers used in such section?
- (4) What is the extended life given to the sections where this has been done?
- (5) What was the cost of each section?
- (6) What remaining value for rails and sleepers was used in each section?
- (7) What is the present annual rate of tonne kilometre of paying traffic hauled over each of these sections?
- (8) What is the expected annual rate in the next six months?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) 402 kilometres.
- (2) 658 919.
- (3) (a) Kalgoorlie-Leonora—230 to date of a total of 259 km.
Mogumber-Gingin—17 km.
Lake Grace-Hyden—11.5 km.
- (b) Not any of the removed sleepers were reused in the above sections. However, a total of 51 300 sleepers have been reused on other sections as follows—

33 800—Norseman-Esperance.
5 100—Wonnerup-Nannup.
1 600—Tambellup-Gnowangerup.

10 800—Various Sections
(allocated to maintenance gang stocks).

- (4) 25 years where rail was replaced.
- (5) Rerailing costs excluding the remaining value of rail—

Kalgoorlie-
Leonora \$1 800 000
Mogumber-Gingin \$136 000
Lake Grace-Hyden \$92 000

- (6) The remaining value of rail used in each section is as follows—

Kalgoorlie-Leonora	\$1 541 000
Mogumber-Gingin	\$113 900
Lake Grace-Hyden	\$77 000.

(7)

	Net tonne kilometre 000s (1980/81)
Kalgoorlie-Malcolm	38 067
Malcolm-Leonora	2 751
Mogumber-Gingin	20 941
Lake Grace-Hyden	8 480.

(8)

	Net tonne kilometre 000s (Estimate for six month period)
Kalgoorlie-Leonora	30 000
Mogumber-Gingin	11 000
Lake Grace-Hyden	5 000.

RAILWAYS: RAILCARS

Cost

113. The Hon. FRED McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What was the original ordering cost of the present 10 new railcars?
- (2) What is the current cost?
- (3) What will be the final cost?
- (4) What has been the percentage increase since ordering for—
 - (a) spares; and
 - (b) railcars?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) \$7.12 million, including major spares.
- (2) The current estimated total cost including major spares is \$8 million.
- (3) This will not be known until the contract is finalised.
- (4) (a) Spares—nil;
(b) railcars—12.36 per cent.

RAILWAYS

Cockburn Junction-Forrestfield

114. The Hon. FRED McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

Will the Minister advise—

- (1) On the new standard gauge track from Forrestfield to Cockburn

Junction adjacent to the existing standard gauge track—

- (a) how many kilometres of track are involved;
 - (b) what is the cost to date; and
 - (c) what is the expected total cost?
- (2) What trains have been cancelled due to lack of capacity on the present track?
 - (3) How long has this section been operating?
 - (4) What is the expected saving per year as a result of having two tracks?
 - (5) In what areas will the savings be made?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) (a) 30.5 km;
(b) \$9.1 million;
(c) \$9.5 million.
- (2) Nil.
- (3) Since November 1966.
- (4) Financial justification for construction of a double line railway over this section was not based on a yearly operational saving. Construction of an additional track was found to be the least cost method of upgrading the section as part of the Kwinana-Koolyanobbing rehabilitation project, because the demand for track occupancy affected the availability of the section for reconstruction work. Nevertheless, there will be operational savings in future years.
- (5) Savings will be derived from future operating efficiencies.

RAILWAYS: ELECTRIFICATION

Economic Viability

115. The Hon. FRED McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

Referring to question 46 of Tuesday, 30 March 1982, and in particular part (3) of the answer, the Minister has said—"It is anticipated any funds made available in the near future for railway works in Western Australia will be absorbed by higher priority track upgrading projects." Will the Minister

now advise the order of priority of track upgrading projects which will return more of a cost benefit than the electrification referred to, and by how much?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

The words "higher priority track upgrading projects" did not infer that the projects needed to return more of a cost benefit than electrification.

Westrail needs to give priority to investment of scarce capital in the replacement and upgrading of existing railway sections in order for the rail system to continue to function at a standard which meets the growing traffic task.

RAILWAYS: ELECTRIFICATION

Economic Viability

116. The Hon. FRED McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

Referring to question 46 of Tuesday, 30 March 1982—"A Westrail study has demonstrated the economic viability of electrifying the Kwinana-Bunbury railway and its associated branch lines immediately, . . ."—as this description now includes—

Kwinana-Mundijong-Bunbury;
Mundijong-Jarrahdale;
Pinjarra-Calcine;
Brunswick-Collie-Collie Mines;

will the Minister advise—

- (1) How many tonne kilometres of paying goods are hauled over these lines per year?
- (2) How many train kilometres?
- (3) On the basis of a loss of \$3.65 per train kilometre (*The West Australian* of Wednesday, 31 March 1982, p. 3), how much is the loss on these routes per year?
- (4) What is the total potential saving per year revealed in the study on these routes?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

(1) and (2)

	Net Tonne Kilometres '000's	Train Kilometres
Kwinana-Mundijong	234 201	194 976
Mundijong-Pinjarra	132 734	255 186
Pinjarra-Brunswick	203 793	369 773

	Net Tonne Kilometres '000's	Train Kilometres
Brunswick-Picton	37 121	84 865
Picton-Bunbury	9 815	56 086
Picton-Inner Harbour	10 927	17 295
Mundijong-Jarrahdale	109 445	56 707
Pinjarra-Calcine	12 766	17 057
Brunswick-Collie-Collie Mines	75 287	159 516

(3) The \$3.65 loss per train kilometre is an average taken over the whole of the railway system for statutory reporting purposes—section 90, Government Railways Act—and it would be incorrect to use this as a basis to obtain the financial result of any particular section of the railway.

(4) Benefits from electrification are mostly dependent on fuel oil prices and, therefore, will fluctuate in accordance with the actual price of fuel oil at any given time.

The annual benefit estimated in the study on the basis of predicted future oil prices at the time of the study was approximately \$1 million in 1980 values for the sections of lines in question.

PRISONS

Community Service Orders

117. The Hon. J. M. BERINSON, to the Attorney General:

With reference to the Attorney General's news release of 20 February 1982, in which it was said that a significant number of young adults have been diverted from prisons by the availability of community service orders—

- (1) On what evidence is this conclusion based?
- (2) In particular, what reduction in the incidence of prison sentences has occurred over the period since the orders were instituted?
- (3) Is the Attorney General aware of criticism within the legal profession that community service orders have been used to "stiffen up" penalties which would in any event have been non-custodial, rather than replace potential sentences of imprisonment?
- (4) What studies, if any, have been made to test the validity of this criticism, and with what result?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) and (2) Before a person can be placed on a community service order he or she must be convicted of an offence for which a sentence of imprisonment could be given.

The question of how many offenders are diverted away from imprisonment by community service orders, as well as other sentencing options, such as probation and fines, has occupied the attention of many criminologists and research authorities in recent times.

The main difficulty in investigating this area is for the researcher to find out what was actually in the sentencer's mind when sentence was passed. Some recent studies in the UK have suggested that somewhere between 40 per cent and 50 per cent of all community service orders made in that country were cases where the offenders concerned would have received a prison sentence.

One study by M. K. Rook on the question was published in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology* (June 1978) No. 2. Vol. 11 (81-88). Rook studied the impact of the community work order scheme—the equivalent of community service orders—in Tasmania on the prison rate in that State. Rook concluded from his research that the number of persons diverted from prisons with the introduction of community work orders increased from 46 per cent in 1972 to 61 per cent in 1975.

Whilst no detailed study has been conducted in this State, indications are that the trend disclosed in other studies is substantially the same here.

- (3) and (4) No such criticism has been made to me or to the Crown Law Department and no studies on this matter have been undertaken.

COURTS: DISTRICT AND SUPREME

Cases

118. The Hon. J. M. BERINSON, to the Attorney General:

In each of the past three years—

- (1) How many criminal cases were heard in the Supreme Court and District Court respectively?

- (2) How many acquittals were recorded in each court?

- (3) How many days of hearing, in total, were occupied by cases which resulted in acquittal?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

		Supreme Court Trials	District Court Trials
1979	(1)	103	152
	(2)	29	82
	(3)	62	119
1980	(1)	77	208
	(2)	26	100
	(3)	40	181
1981	(1)	77	203
	(2)	22	98
	(3)	42	213

COURTS: CRIMINAL APPEAL

Appeals

119. The Hon. J. M. BERINSON, to the Attorney General:

In each of the past three years, how many appeals were heard by the Court of Criminal Appeal and, of those, how many were wholly or partly upheld?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

	Appeals	Upheld, Wholly or in Part
1979.....	108	38
1980.....	109	44
1981.....	142	43

EDUCATION

Student-staff Ratios

120. The Hon. J. M. BERINSON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

In view of continuing differences as to the need for and the likely effectiveness of further reductions in student-staff ratios, can the Minister indicate whether the Government's position is supported by any research in this State, and, if so,

what was the nature of that research and what conclusions did it reach?

The Hon. R. G. PIKE replied:

No definitive support for the effectiveness on either large or small classes has been revealed by research carried out in this State.

The Government has a policy whereby it treats with some caution the amalgamation of unions. If we are talking about the amalgamation of the unions to which the member referred, it would be necessary for there to be some common thread running through the proposal. In this particular case, water supply employees, hospital employees, and, I think, pre-school teachers are involved, and there is not a common factor running through the proposed amalgamation. Therefore, the Government opposes it on that basis.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

TRADE UNIONS

Voluntary Amalgamation

34. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Is the Minister in agreement with the proposal that a reduction in the number of unions through a voluntary amalgamation should be encouraged?
- (2) If so, will he outline precisely why his Government is opposing moves to bring together several unions to form an amalgamated hospital services and miscellaneous workers' union?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) and (2) I think the Government has made its position fairly clear. Certainly the Commonwealth and State Governments have recognised the great problem in this and other States with demarkation disputes and this would indicate that some sort of amalgamation in the future should be of benefit. We talk about industrial unions, and maybe an amalgamation of unions could be one way to help resolve some of the problems. I will not give figures in relation to the demarkation disputes that have occurred, because it would take a long time for me to do so. For example, it is obvious that demarkation disputes have caused a high percentage of the problems on the waterfront.

COURTS: MAGISTRATES

Robes and Wigs

35. The Hon. J. M. BERINSON, to the Attorney General:

- (1) Is it a fact that consideration is now being given to a proposal that magistrates should don wigs and/or gowns?
- (2) If so, will he undertake to prevent the expansion to lower courts of such a practice which, even as applied in the Supreme and District Courts, is widely regarded as anachronistic and undesirable?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) No.

RECREATION: FOOTBALL

Peter Bosustow

36. The Hon. TOM McNEIL, to the Chief Secretary:

In the 1980-81 annual report of the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation under the heading "Equipment, Grants and Subsidies" an amount of \$200 is shown as being expended on Peter Bosustow's total sport. In light of the fact that he is now playing football in Victoria, and has done so since 1981, will the Minister advise the House whether it is for constantly winning the "mark of the day" award, and if not, would he give the reason?

The Hon. R. G. PIKE replied:

I do not have any knowledge of this amount of \$200 at the present time. I hope in the first place, to be humorous, that it is not for the purchase of eucalyptus and for the benefit of eucalyptus manufacturers in Victoria. I understand Bosistos' manufacture eucalyptus. It is clear that we need expertise in Western Australia in order that we can consistently defeat the Victorians at football. If required I will give a detailed answer to this question.

RECREATION: FOOTBALL

Peter Bosustow

37. The Hon. TOM McNEIL, to the Chief Secretary:

In relation to that answer, as it is a well known fact that the Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, is the number one ticket holder of the Carlton Football Club, will the Minister assure the House that there is no Federal pressure on this money being made available?

The Hon. R. G. PIKE replied:

Yes, and it is not a question of the Prime Minister's being the number one ticket holder. It just happens that he was at that particular time and I hope he will be for many years to come.

COURTS: MAGISTRATES

Robes and Wigs

38. The Hon. J. M. BERINSON, to the Attorney General:

Further to my earlier question, I ask the Attorney General whether he would expect to be consulted before any consideration of the proposal referred to is undertaken?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

The magistrates do not have to consult with me in relation to the running of their courts. A judicial committee which comprises the Chief Justice, the Chairman of Judges of the District Court, and the Chief Stipendiary Magistrate functions in this area. The committee can advise me if they wish. I understand that a proposal has been made that magistrates wear gowns. I

know nothing of any proposal relating to the wearing of wigs. I would regard this as a matter for the magistrates themselves to determine.

ELECTORAL: ROLLS

Federal and State: Dual

39. The Hon. PETER DOWDING, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Has the Chief Secretary examined the cost savings to be made by the State in having an electoral roll maintained or supplied from Commonwealth enrolments?
- (2) Will he examine the practice in other States to see whether substantial cost savings can be achieved?

The Hon. R. G. PIKE replied:

- (1) and (2) I inform the member directly that the question of costs has been looked at. I understand from the determinations and decisions made so far that they are comparative and different. However, lest the member be under any misunderstanding about this very important issue, I would like to say to him in clear terms that the sovereignty of Western Australia is the lifeblood of the State. The determinations made by successive High Court decisions since federation in 1901 have eroded that sovereignty and it is my view that to take any move that might allow the Commonwealth to put its sticky fingers into our electoral rolls would be akin to putting Dracula in charge of the blood bank.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Very colourful!

ELECTORAL: ROLLS

Federal and State: Dual

40. The Hon. PETER DOWDING, to the Chief Secretary:

Will the Chief Secretary tell the House, or will he supply the House with the information of, the basis on which it is said that the costs of using the Commonwealth enrolments for the State roll are comparative with the State's maintaining a separate system of

checking enrolments and the removal of names from the rolls?

The Hon. R. G. PIKE replied:

I will answer the first part of the member's question. Lest my previous answer be misunderstood by him, I make it very clear it is an additional cost to the State if one were to compare the cost as against the cost of one roll being kept on a dual basis by the Commonwealth. Having said that, I ask him to place the balance of his question on notice.

DEFAMATION

Uniform Law

41. The Hon. J. M. BERINSON, to the Attorney General:

- (1) Is it a fact, as reported, that Western Australia has agreed to participate in a uniform defamation law?
- (2) If so, to what extent would the proposed legislation change the present law on the subject in this State, and in particular, would the effect of the proposed law increase or decrease the range of statements likely to be regarded as defamation?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) and (2) I could answer this very simply in my usual fashion.

The Hon. D. K. DAns: How is that?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: No.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: But "No" three times!

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: I will try to be a little more explanatory in order to improve the member's information on the subject. The situation is that no State or the Commonwealth has as yet made any commitment in relation to a uniform law of defamation. Notwithstanding that no commitment has been made, nevertheless, the Standing Committee of Attorneys General has been considering various aspects of the matter for some months, and in order to expedite its consideration of the problems that may be disclosed by a new law on defamation, it has had a committee of Parliamentary Counsel working on the preparation of actual legislation. This has turned up a number

of problems. The Attorneys General took this course following the reports by the Commonwealth and State Law Reform Commissions on this subject. Generally, the object of the exercise has been to have a uniform law throughout the whole of Australia. Whether that results in an increase or a decrease in the number of statements which might be defamatory is a matter for examination when the legislation is finally agreed to. However, I could not really answer that with any degree of truth at this particular time because it is in a speculative area. On the evidence we presently have of the reports which have been made, I would think there is no question but that a more satisfactory law of defamation will emerge.

BIRTH CERTIFICATES

Children Born out of Wedlock

42. The Hon. PETER DOWDING, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Is a birth certificate of a child born out of wedlock available upon the request of the parent?
- (2) Are any restrictions or special requirements imposed prior to the issue of such certificate?

The Hon. R. G. PIKE replied:

- (1) and (2) In reply to the member, I inform him that after a period of a little over two months in office I do not claim to be a full bottle on all the details of every department under my control, and certainly not in regard to this detailed question. If the member wishes replies to such detailed questions, I will see that the departments concerned supply the answers if he gives me the courtesy of at least one hour's notice. In the meantime, I ask him to place the question on notice.

TRADE UNIONS

Voluntary Amalgamation

43. The Hon. D. K. DAns, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

Does the Government, through the Minister, support the voluntary

amalgamation of unions where the unions themselves have determined there is a common interest?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

Again I will say that obviously the Government views very carefully any suggestion of an amalgamation of a group of unions. If, in fact, as the Leader of the Opposition suggests, there is a group of unions with a common interest which wish to join together, certainly the Government would look at the matter carefully to see the likely consequences of such an event. I could not give a firm commitment or a general response from the Government. In each case the Government would have to consider what could be gained by such an amalgamation by the Government, by the employers, and by the unions. The particular case that he drew to my attention earlier is not one which involved a common interest. Rather, it is a case of empire building, and that is one we would resist strongly.

TRADE UNIONS

Voluntary Amalgamation

44. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

Would the Minister indicate to this House whether the criteria he has just outlined relating to the Government's decision about the amalgamation of unions would be applied to take-over bids by companies?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

We are talking now of the industrial field. Certainly I do not think the Government would be looking at other types of amalgamations. If there is a particular area which the Leader of the Opposition believes should be looked at, I will draw it to the notice of the Government.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What a one-sided argument.

