

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 11 November 1981

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

SPEAKER OF THE COOK ISLANDS PARLIAMENT

Ceremonial Dress: Gift

THE PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths): I wish to advise that following a visit to the Cook Islands Parliament by the Clerk of the Council, it was brought to my notice that the Speaker of that Parliament, the Hon. David Hosking, did not possess a wig or gown, and he was very keen to obtain the ceremonial dress for his office.

Over the years we have accumulated a number of these items and, upon requests we have received from time to time, have donated them to museums and the like.

We were fortunate to have available the wig and gown of the Hon. Sir Leslie Diver, who resembles Mr Hosking in stature, and I gave Mr Ashley my approval to forward the articles as a gift to the Cook Islands Parliament with our best wishes.

RESERVES BILL (No. 2)

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by the Hon. D. J. Wordsworth (Minister for Lands), and read a first time.

MRPA: WUNGONG GORGE AND ENVIRONS

Disallowance of Amendment: Motion

Order of the day read for the resumption of the debate from 27 October.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. P. G. Pandal.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL: 150th ANNIVERSARY

February 1982 Sitting: Motion

Debate resumed from 5 November.

THE HON. H. W. GAYFER (Central) [2.37 p.m.]: I am one of the members of the important committee which you, Sir, suggested be set up. The Hon. Graham MacKinnon is the chairman of the committee and the Hon. Jim Brown and the Hon. Colin Jamieson are members of it also.

I desire to support most of the remarks so ably made by the Hon. Graham MacKinnon when he introduced the motion. I say "so ably", because my colleagues would have to agree with me that we could not refute what he said and he has left little for us to add in respect of the motion other than to pledge full support for it.

I believe we should take heed of the 150th anniversary of the Legislative Council in this State, although I do not maintain the 150th anniversary is any more important than the 100th, 75th, 50th, or whatever.

However, today a great number of people desire to be educated as to the necessity of the present form of Government, therefore, we believe most sincerely it would be a good idea to celebrate the anniversary in recognition of the activities of the Parliament.

The theme of the celebrations has been developed in such a way that we hope young students will be involved and interested and the Westminster system of Government, which has operated here for 150 years, will certainly be placed on the pedestal where it belongs.

The committee has worked extremely hard in its endeavours to organise not what one would call an entertaining or educational week, but rather a programme which will acknowledge the activities of the past and the place of Parliament in today's world. It will recognise also the need for this type of Government to continue into the future.

I agree with most of the comments the Hon. Graham MacKinnon made, and I have to hand this to him: He is an extremely good organiser. I do not think there would be one of us on that committee who would not agree that he has put his heart and soul into the exercise. He suggested that we endorse his suggestions, but that would be a little wrong because sometimes we do not agree with them.

I did not agree with Mr MacKinnon when he said the guest list had been carefully checked in order to give it an historical flavour. That really was not the intention of the committee at all. As the Hon. Jim Brown will verify, quite a lot of young or relatively young people have been included.

The second error which appeared in the newspaper report of Mr MacKinnon's speech was in relation to the race club meeting which will be held on the Saturday of that week. The Hon. Norman Baxter is organising amongst the members of this hallowed House a means by which a trophy may be awarded on that day which will be known as the Legislative Council Cup, and not the President's Cup as Mr

MacKinnon said. It would be derogatory of the President if we were to attempt to pay for a trophy when we know the President would be delighted to donate it in his own right. We could not possibly usurp that privilege. A President's Plate will be awarded. Another race will be called the Speaker's Purse. I do not know what will be the trophy for that; I think the "purse" part is an anachronism. There will also be the Governor Stirling Medal and the Black Rod Handicap, each suitably named for this occasion.

I am delighted that I have been able to assist in some small way with this event and I hope it will be accepted by all members of Parliament in the spirit in which it is advanced. Some members of Parliament may be at variance with whether or not this House should continue; be that as it may, it has continued for 150 years, and that in itself should be recognised as part of the history of this State, because momentous decisions were made here long before even the other House came on the scene.

It is to this end that I believe the proposition advanced by the Hon. Graham MacKinnon should be endorsed and should be supported by every member of Parliament, and certainly by the State in general. The activities of the week have been well laid out. All I can add is that those involved have willingly given what little we could to the programming of that week. There is still a terrible lot to do, and all of it will be in vain if we do not receive support. If the meeting becomes an opportunity for general debate, that will spoil the spirit of our intentions. I ask members, particularly in this House, to understand that what we are doing is being done in the best spirit on behalf of the people of Western Australia.

THE HON. J. M. BERINSON (North-East Metropolitan) [2.45 p.m.]: This motion deals with proposals to mark the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Legislative Council. In spite of the blandishments of the Hon. Mr Gayfer, I advise the House that the Opposition opposes the motion. We are led to this decision, not only by the terms of the motion itself, but by the nature of the programme which it is intended to initiate. That programme, as outlined by Mr MacKinnon, consists mainly of entertainment on the one hand, and empty ritual on the other. To the extent that there might be some educational component, there is nothing to suggest that this will be other than superficial, or even misleading.

Indeed, going on past experience and available indications, there is every reason to expect the contrary. The basic problem with this programme is that it all adds up to a celebration and the

Opposition seriously questions whether that is even remotely appropriate.

The Hon. Tom Knight: It is a long time since you have had a celebration.

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: 7 February 1832 was the first sitting day of the Legislative Council in Western Australia and was the first step on the path to independence and representative government in this State. If we could divorce that event from what has followed, there might indeed be a cause for celebration, but we cannot separate the facts of our history in that manner, nor can we ignore the role of the Legislative Council in distorting the course of democracy in this State and, in the end, of preventing it. In Western Australia's 91 years of independence it has never once had a Labor majority in its upper House. That is not because of some inability by Labor to attract majority support in the State.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: Why is that?

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: On the contrary, we have had Labor majorities in the lower House quite regularly and for extended periods.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: You had three seats and lost them. The people woke up to you.

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: The reason for Labor's historical lack of members in this House has nothing to do with the will of the people and everything to do with the blatant manipulation of a grossly corrupt electoral system.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: What rubbish!

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: So we are forced to ask: What is there to celebrate?

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: Should we celebrate corruption in the political process?

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: Yes.

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: Should we celebrate the effectiveness of the corruption of the political process? Present Government members might wish to celebrate that because they are the beneficiaries of it, and they have again demonstrated, as recently as in the electoral districts legislation in May of this year, that they are still the unashamed torchbearers of that process.

The Parliament as an institution should hardly be debased by a celebration of that kind, nor should the electors of this State be mocked by it. From its inception in 1832 this House has always existed for one purpose only, and that is to protect and entrench conservative interests. In times of Liberal Government it is effectively moribund.

[Laughter.]

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: I really cannot understand for the life of me what members opposite have found to laugh about in that proposition. The fact is that in times of Liberal Government this House is moribund. In times of Labor Government it does come to life, for the purpose then of obstructing legislation time and time again.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: Why did you ever want to join it?

The Hon. G. E. Masters: He is a very bitter man.

Several members interjected.

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: This House has epitomised—and still does—the criticism by Laski of upper Houses in general. He said—

If they agree with their lower House they are superfluous.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask honourable members to cease their interjections, which are out of order.

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: To continue—

If they disagree with their lower House they are obnoxious.

This House at various times has been both. That fact is bad enough, and the attitude of the Opposition is that it only adds insult to injury to celebrate it.

Over the 150 years of its existence the only things about this Council which have changed are its form and the methods by which it has preserved its conservative character and majority. In the early and more blatant days this was done by restricting the vote to the wealthy. In recent years the system has been more sophisticated, relying on a gross imbalance of voting power between those areas likely to vote Labor and those likely to vote Liberal.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Rubbish!

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: For the benefit of the Minister who asserts that it is rubbish, I will remind him of the position we faced in 1980. At that time two thirds of the members of this House were elected by one-third of the voters while, conversely, two-thirds of the voters were represented in this House by only one-third of the members.

Several members interjected.

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: It was no coincidence—as all members of the Government wishing to buy into the argument will know—

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: —that the disadvantaged two-thirds were in the metropolitan area where support for the Labor Party has traditionally been higher than in the non-metropolitan area.

A Government member: What will the position be next time?

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: Did I hear someone interject and say, "What will the position be next time?" I am happy to say what it will be. All members of the Government parties were happy to regard as a reform the measure to amend the electoral districts legislation earlier this year. We then started from the position that two-thirds of the voters elected only one-third of the members of this House. Under the "very fair system" established by the new Act, at the next election 59 per cent of electors will elect 31 per cent of the seats. It is an advance, I suppose, of about 5 per cent in about a 100 per cent disproportioned weighting against metropolitan votes.

If that is what Government members are happy to regard as reform of the electoral systems and if they have satisfied themselves with it, they will not satisfy the Opposition or the voting public of this State to the extent that they become aware of how the value of their vote is being manipulated.

I have discussed in detail only the position in the Legislative Council, because that is what is directly involved in the motion before the House. I will not trouble members with the parallel, if not identical, position in the Assembly. As has been demonstrated on many occasions the situation there is also scandalous and a travesty of the notion of democracy.

The establishment of a Legislative Council in 1832 was an important historical event. Had that Council and the other elements of self-government which followed from it been permitted to develop democratically we would indeed have something to celebrate. As it is we do not, and dressing up the occasion with unveilings, hollow formalities, jolly times at the races, and river trips does not change that. All the worse that so many of the activities will be at substantial public expense.

This motion is unacceptable, as is the programme suggested to follow. I urge the House to reject both.

THE HON. P. G. PENDAL (South-East Metropolitan) [2.57 p.m.]: I support the motion and wish to speak, not merely as a member of the

Government or the Liberal Party, but as a member of the principal subcommittee established to oversee the introduction of celebrations for the 150th anniversary of this House.

It was a little unfortunate that the deputy leader of the Opposition commenced his speech with perhaps some fairly valid criticism about what he saw as deficiencies in the programme that is being organised for the celebrations which commence on 7 February next year. That criticism may well have been better placed by bringing it to the notice of the people concerned in order that if a deficiency were found in the programme, in terms of the people of Western Australia, something could be done to correct it. This can still be done.

One of the criticisms appears to be—and he did not use the word—that there appears to be an element of elitism involved in the programme. The member should take the time to acquaint himself with the details of the programme that have been outlined so far, because there is no suggestion in that programme of any measure of elitism.

Indeed, the committee has gone to some lengths to ensure the widest possible participation by people throughout the length and breadth of Western Australia. There is no greater evidence of that than the fact that the organising committee, at this stage, has arranged to contact 50 to 60 senior high schools throughout the State on a widely representative basis. It has taken into account that about three-quarters of the school population attend the State school system and the remaining quarter attend the independent school system.

Through these representations, students will be invited to come to Parliament House sometime early in the new year to undergo some basic training in the practices and procedures of this place. This training—and I ask members of the Opposition to remember this—will enable high school students to act as guides for the thousands of people we hope will be attracted to this Parliament to celebrate the 150th anniversary of this House.

There is no suggestion that any restriction ought to be placed on the sorts of people who should take part in the celebrations, and it is sad the deputy leader of the Opposition, rather than make some positive and constructive criticism about it, should overlook the fact that the programme has been designed to ensure the involvement of thousands—perhaps tens of thousands—of ordinary Western Australians by visiting this House.

Mr President, I have heard you say on many occasions to school children visiting this place that they should always remember throughout their lives that Parliament House belongs to them, just as the Parliament belongs to their parents and friends, and that they are entitled to come to this House at any time of the day or night when the Parliament is sitting. I have heard you further make the point that not only does Parliament House belong to all of the people of Western Australia, but also we would hope the people would take advantage of visiting Parliament House. This place is not the forbidding monstrosity a lot of people seem to think it is.

The basis of the planning of the week of celebrations has been to undermine the sort of thinking people grow up with; namely, that Parliament is not here to be visited. The programme has been based around the belief that unless people involve themselves, and see the workings and procedures of the two Chambers, they will have little knowledge and understanding of the institution of Parliament.

Sadly, Mr Berinson's only argument fell on that point, because had he bothered to listen to the Hon. Graham MacKinnon he would have known that the whole programme is centred around the participation of ordinary people; we are encouraging people to come here during February and see and understand what the Parliament is all about.

Mr Berinson went on with a lot of quite extraneous arguments in relation to an appeal made earlier by Mr Gayfer. He should not have brought that matter into the discussion, but since he did, a couple of points need to be answered. He talked about the percentages which, for generations, members of the Labor Party have talked about in suggesting that this place is some monster-like creation out of the nineteenth century which has no place in this century.

As late as only a couple of weeks ago, Mr Berinson's own colleagues in New South Wales, with no more than 55 per cent of the vote, were returned to power with 70 per cent of the seats under an electoral system they themselves created. However, we have no suggestion from members opposite about the lack of electoral democracy in New South Wales.

When I have referred Mr Berinson to the behaviour of Labor Governments in Western Australia in the 1930s and 1940s he has replied, "We have changed our minds; we have a new morality since then. We do not agree with what was done then". I ask Mr Berinson whether he agrees with what has been done in New South

Wales only a week ago, which has created a situation where the Labor Party in that State was returned to power with 70 per cent of the seats after receiving only 55 per cent of the vote.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: That is one-vote-one-value.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: If those comments are judged to be irrelevant to the motion before the Chair, I would agree; however, they are about as relevant as the matters raised by Mr Berinson. I know he has some duty to raise them, but that is not the point; the point of the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon's motion, which was so ably pointed out by the Hon. Mick Gayfer, is that the whole exercise is a celebration in recognition of 150 years of the Legislative Council. That the Council has been in existence for 150 years is a fact of life, whether or not people like it; therefore, it was thought appropriate in some way to involve the people of Western Australia in the celebration.

Other points could be made; however, I ask members to bear one thing in mind: It is only one week ago in this House that the same speaker, the deputy leader of the Opposition in this place, rightly sang the praises of the Hon. Howard Olney for the work he did in bringing about changes to the Workers' Compensation and Assistance Bill.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: I also explained it had nothing to do with the Council itself.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: When that comment was made to the House—this lousy, gerrymandered House—a number of members from both sides agreed with Mr Berinson and acknowledged the fact that a person like the Hon. Howard Olney not only had put a lot of work into the Bill but also had been successful as an Opposition member in changing the Government's mind.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: No, in persuading the Minister in another place.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I suggest members endeavour to confine their remarks to the motion before the Chair. Even though I may have been lenient in allowing some speakers to drift from the motion, I assure other members that that leniency is about to cease. I would prefer now to listen to some comments on the motion.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: The motion is an admirable one, if for no other reason than the point emphasised in the comments made a week ago by the deputy leader of the Opposition about the worth of this House in its capacity to act as a review body for legislation coming before the Parliament. That in itself is good reason not only to support the motion but also wholeheartedly to

praise and support the sort of activities which are being planned by the Hon. Graham MacKinnon on members' behalf.

In supporting the motion as wholeheartedly as I can, I leave members with a quotation which was alleged to have been made many years ago by a Labor Premier of this State (Philip Collier) who said, "Thank God for the Legislative Council!"

The Hon. D. K. Dans: He did not make that remark. It could never be attributed to him.

THE HON. R. G. PIKE (North Metropolitan) [3.07 p.m.]: In rising to support the motion moved by the Hon. Graham MacKinnon it is appropriate and relevant to make some comments, since the Labor Party in its opposition to this motion highlighted what it alleged—and alleged incorrectly and without fact—to be a corrupt electoral system as it relates to this House.

In dealing with that in the first instance, I quote from a statement made by the previous leader of the Labor Party (Mr Ron Davies) on a "Nationwide" interview on Tuesday 19 February when he said, "I do not believe that electoral systems win elections". I add to that from memory the statement made by Mr Casey, the Leader of the Labor Party in Queensland who said, "What we need to do is win 50 per cent of the votes and 50 per cent of the seats".

What we have heard this afternoon has been the old scoffing and fudging attitude of the Labor Party's omelette of scrambled principles.

The Hon. P. H. Lockyer: They have no principles.

The Hon. R. G. PIKE: So-called principles. What the Labor Party needs is surgery, rather than aspirins. When I see members of the Labor Party, tongue in cheek, making those sorts of comments, what I see is manifest hypocrisy by members who sit here, directed by an outside organisation—directed by a Trades Hall and by a union movement—

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: It is the same old thing.

The Hon. P. H. Lockyer: It is true, though.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I indicated earlier that although some leniency had been allowed to members in straying from the contents of the motion, that leniency was about to cease. I suggest to the Hon. R. G. Pike that I have allowed him his piece of leniency and I recommend he now talk about the motion.

The Hon. R. G. PIKE: In addressing myself to the motion, it is appropriate I make the point in relation to members of Parliament, generally, whether they be members of the Liberal Party, of the National Country Party, of the Labor Party,

or of any other party that we have within the Parliament and within the democracies of the parties which members in this place represent a system whereby members are chosen or selected or endorsed to sit in this place. In order not to appear partisan, I apply my comments to all political parties. However, I ask the House to note this point: The only political party wherein the trade unions have 60 per cent of the vote and wherein the State council of the party has the right to endorse the members and wherein the ordinary rank and file has almost no say whatever—this absolute denial of democracy—is the socialist Labor Party in this State.

How much hypocrisy do we have to stand in this place? We have the situation today where the Labor Party in Tasmania has sacked its Premier, with the Trades Hall direction being given to a party which claims to be—

THE PRESIDENT: Order! It is my intention to endeavour to have this motion dealt with as expeditiously as possible. There is not much chance of doing that until someone starts to speak to the motion. I suggest that the Hon. Bob Pike could give the lead to the rest of the House by being one of the first to speak to the motion.

The Hon. R. G. PIKE: Thank you for your very erudite direction, Sir. For the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, we were not to know that the Hon. Joe Berinson was to deliver this partisan tirade against the very existence of the Council in which he so recently sought a seat, having been dumped from the Federal scene. He believes it is a House which is undemocratic and does not represent anything, yet it must represent something for him to aspire to gain a seat here.

The speech I am making now is entirely without notes, which the Leader of the Opposition seems to think I cannot do without in order to make a speech, notwithstanding the fact that when he speaks to a substantial piece of legislation he reads from very copious notes. I had to get that in.

As far as this party is concerned, perhaps we ought to send the deputy leader of the Opposition—as was suggested by the Hon. Mick Gayfer—to the Cook Islands instead of you, Mr President.

The Liberal-Country Party Government in this State—now and in the future—knows that a party governs best by governing least; it knows that ever since there has been complete adult franchise for the upper House the people in this State have voted in excess of 2 per cent higher for the non-Labor Council candidates than for non-Labor Assembly candidates because they trust

those candidates; and it knows the Labor Party in this State has never been successful in securing the support of the people because the people do not trust it. Each and every time members opposite are dumped by the people in this State they seek, like bad workmen, to blame the tools. The fact is that people in this State will not repose that type of confidence in the socialist Labor Party.

Here we have a party that is saying, on the one hand "We now believe in the upper House; we now believe in the Senate—with some drastic curtailment of their powers". But whenever they get the opportunity, whenever the barn door is really open, the Trades Hall union direction to which this party bows on every occasion comes out and retreads the old socialist catchcry, "Let us get rid of the upper Houses". That is what the deputy leader of the Opposition is all about in this so-called opposition to this quite sensible motion moved by the Hon. Graham MacKinnon.

THE HON. LYLA ELLIOTT (North-East Metropolitan) [3.13 p.m.]: I do not think I have ever heard such a disgusting load of balderdash in all my time in this Chamber. I seriously ask all members of this House: When this Legislative Council Cup is run next year, are we to see 16 jockeys on the one horse? That would faithfully reflect the situation in this Chamber because we are all aware of the fact that some of us represent electors with a vote just one-sixteenth of the value of the vote of electors in other areas. No-one can claim that is a democratic system of electoral representation. It is absolutely disgraceful; it is absolutely grotesque.

If we do not have a fair and democratic electoral system we cannot have a fair and democratic parliamentary system. Time and time again we have seen the corrupt electoral system in this State result in a distorted representation of parties in this Chamber.

It is quite dishonest of Mr Pandal to talk about the situation in New South Wales. The electoral system in that State is as fair as possible. That State has introduced a system which is as close as one can get to one-vote-one-value with single member constituencies. It has an upper House, the members of which are elected on a proportional representation basis.

If there are a large number of marginal seats it is possible to get an imbalance of representation in the Parliament; but that is very different from writing imbalances into our electoral districts laws, as we have done. I get very tired of members opposite telling us that this is a House of Review which is based on the Westminster system. We

are supposed to be celebrating a Parliament based on the traditions of Westminster. We cannot do that, because ours is a very different system.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: I thought we were celebrating 150 years of the Legislative Council.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: The House of Lords in London since 1911 has not had the power this House has to block or amend money Bills.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: Which is a great shame.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: It is a great shame this House still has that power. Since 1946 the House of Lords has not been able to delay legislation for longer than a year. So this House still has powers that were removed from the House of Lords many years ago. This House still has powers which make it one of the most powerful—if not the most powerful—upper Houses in the British Commonwealth. We also have a very unfair and undemocratic electoral system which creates a distortion in the representation of people in this Parliament. The situation is that whenever a conservative Government has power in the lower House the Legislative Council is a rubber stamp; when a Labor Government has power it becomes a house of obstruction.

I do not want to be part of any celebration of such a parliamentary system, so I oppose the motion.

THE HON. P. H. LOCKYER (Lower North) [3.18 p.m.]: I support the motion and in speaking to it I will not lower myself by adopting the miserable stance adopted by Opposition members. We could send the lot of them home in just two small taxis. All the whinging and groaning they have come out with this afternoon will fall on deaf ears, certainly in my electorate.

I have canvassed this motion very thoroughly in the schools in my electorate and I inform you, Mr President, that the school children in Lower North Province are quite excited about taking part in the celebration. I take it that Mr MacKinnon, who will be in command of this exercise, will be able to arrange for some of my school children to act as guides on this important occasion.

The stance taken by Opposition members on occasions such as this, which should really be a great celebration, never ceases to amaze me. A period of 150 years is not short; 1832 was a long time ago. It is a great shame that our future citizens and the children of our State—the people who have been given careful consideration in

regard to this occasion—will be subjected to the childishness that was evidenced in the arguments brought forward this afternoon by members of the Opposition.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Perhaps the Labor Party does not care about children.

The Hon. P. H. LOCKYER: I thought it did care about children, but it seems that the Hon. Sandy Lewis is right; the Labor Party does not have regard for our future citizens—

The Hon. Lyla Elliott interjected.

The Hon. P. H. LOCKYER: Miss Elliott had her opportunity a moment ago, and I will not allow her to start again. It never ceases to amaze me that members of the Labor Party do not take into consideration the matters I have raised. They have their views in regard to gerrymandering and similar sorts of things, but on this occasion I call on them to put those arguments aside. They have more than enough opportunities to put those points of view, and certainly they use every opportunity presented to them. On this occasion, on the basis of pure decency alone, they should put those points of view aside.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Don't make me sick.

The Hon. P. H. LOCKYER: Merely looking at the member is enough to make me sick.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. R. Hetherington: The hypocrisy makes me sick.

The Hon. P. H. LOCKYER: If members of the Opposition feel as strongly about this subject as they say they do, they should not be in this place. It is not difficult to resign from the Legislative Council. Many of them would not be missed, including my friend on my right hand side. His departure from the House would take six months even to be noticed.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: That is a stupid statement.

The Hon. P. H. LOCKYER: This occasion is one on which all members of the Council should join together in some form of celebration. The opportunity has been placed at their feet, but members of the Labor Party have chosen to ignore it, which is most disappointing. I know that some of them, if not most, with tongue in cheek have chosen to ignore this opportunity. I feel sad because of that situation.

I support the motion.

THE HON. W. R. WITHERS (North) [3.22 p.m.]: This motion was really meant to get us together to help celebrate the formation of a

House of Parliament which started democratic government in Western Australia, but the debate certainly has polarised. It would appear we are not acting like a House of Review in this debate; we seem to have lost sight of the fact that we are a House of Review. Some of the remarks Mr Berinson made were perfectly correct; however, I disagree with most of them. For instance, he was correct when he said this House was established to propagate conservative beliefs. We cannot avoid that fact of history; it was established for that very purpose—it had a property franchise. It was not a truly democratic House and remained that way for a long time. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that this House for all its faults was the forerunner in the Parliament of Western Australia of the people's House, the lower House, under a democratic franchise. Other arguments can be made about that point, but I will not go into them now. I believe we should celebrate the establishment of this House.

We know there still exists some racist provisions in our Statutes which do not make this House purely democratic, but because members have heard my views on that so many times I will not dwell on the matter. Whether or not they agree with those Statutes, members know the Statutes exist—that is what we have got.

The lower House achieved a democratic franchise before we achieved ours even though the Council was the first House. In 1965 we achieved that democratic franchise which meant that not only a person owning property, but also a resident of Western Australia was able to enrol for and vote at Legislative Council elections. Up to that point of Mr Berinson's remarks I agreed with him, but I will now refer to the remarks with which I disagreed.

He used words to the effect that it is looked upon as odious if a member of this House votes against his party after it has made a decision in the Legislative Assembly. We know that happens in this House, and I disagree with that remark. Sure, it happens; but that is the fault of individual members, with the exception of members of one party, the Australian Labor Party. It is only members of the Australian Labor Party—who sign the ALP pledge before they are elected—who must abide by Caucus decisions. That pledge is contained at pages 23 and 24 of the ALP constitution and rules. It is binding on every individual member of the ALP and means that members of the ALP find it very hard to celebrate a democratic process and the formation of this House, because they cannot participate in the functions of a House of Review unless they are given approval by their Caucus. It is unfortunate

that many of the people who are not members of the Australian Labor Party seem to think that a similar pledge applies to them. That is the fault of individuals, not the fault of this House.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Don't you really think it is tied up with the party system?

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: In our case, which is the case of non-ALP members, we do not take a pledge to vote along the lines of Caucus decisions.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: There are certain factors, political selection, etc.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: The fault rests with individuals. This House is to celebrate the formation of the Westminster system of Government in Western Australia through the establishment of this House; albeit, this House started off in a non-democratic fashion. It started off with a property franchise which we cannot accept today. With all the faults this House has it was the forerunner of a system of which we can now be proud. With all the weaknesses in the Westminster system—there is a stack of them—it is still the best system I know.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Hear, hear!

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Some years ago I discussed this matter with Miss Elliott. The discussion occurred early in our political lives, when we first came into this House in 1971. She came in with some views that indicated to us she thought all people not in the ALP were people of low principles and, really, people not to be trusted. I would say Miss Elliott has changed her attitude now; she has found also there are a number of people in all parties in this House who do not have high principles. I remember her words when she asked me a certain question. She said she could not believe that I as a member of the Legislative Council would go against the decisions of my party. She said, "What would you do if you were faced with that problem?" and I said, "I would vote against my party in this House". That situation might be all right in the Legislative Council if the party to which a person belongs has the appropriate numbers, but it would not be all right in the Legislative Assembly.

The conversation to which I refer was not private, so I am sure Miss Elliott does not mind my recalling my memory of it.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: It is a fact of life. I don't mind your repeating the conversation.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: She asked, "What if your vote was the vote that put down the Government?" and I said, "If I were placed in that situation it would mean one thing: It would

mean the party I belonged to had abdicated its principles, and I would vote against the measure accepted by the Legislative Assembly, and because I had brought down the Government I would immediately resign”.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: Do you remember the liquor legislation? You voted the way the Government didn't want you to.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I remember that occasion well. However, it was not quite as simple as Miss Elliott puts it. We had taken the business of the House out of the hands of the Leader of the House—the point was technical. The Hon. Neil McNeill was the Leader of the House and he was most distressed by the situation. In our enthusiasm to have a House of Review we did something that was unforgivable; it had nothing to do with what the party wanted, it was related to our taking the business of the House out of the hands of the Leader of the House.

Very soon I will resign from the Parliament—this is not my final speech—because in my view my party has abrogated its principles. Those words are not my own, they appear in platform 7 in respect of the Kimberley Branch of the Australian Labor Party. However, that is another matter.

I would like to prove the point to Miss Elliott that I am sticking to the word I gave her in 1971. Having made that rather pompous statement and maybe having made myself look as though I wear a halo—which I do not—I point out that it is the members of this House who make it a House of Review, with the exception of the Australian Labor Party. I would like the Australian Labor Party to change its platform and rules to state that the ALP pledge does not apply to the Legislative Council, because until that happens the ALP cannot participate in a House of Review.

To recap: This House is a democratic House and has been since 1965. There is imbalance, certainly, with the different provinces in the country and city, but that is another matter. I believe we should be celebrating and working towards improving our democratic system. We have improved it in the past and will improve it in the future. However, in the meantime, our 150th anniversary at least deserves some celebration in which the people of the State can participate. For that reason I support the motion.

THE HON. NEIL McNEILL (Lower West) [3.31 p.m.]: The Hon. Graham Mackinnon moved the motion which is recorded on the notice paper and in support of which he added a number of comments. His comments were a description and illustration of the events which were proposed and

which had been to some extent determined by a committee which was set up at your suggestion, Mr President. The committee comprised representatives of all the political parties, including the Labor Party.

Mr MacKinnon commented about the nature and number of activities which are to be held as a celebration of the commencement on 7 February 1832 of Government and the Westminster system of parliamentary Government in Western Australia. Let us not forget we were one of the first colonies in Australia.

The Opposition, through the deputy leader of the Opposition, has chosen to oppose the motion on the ground, as stated by the deputy leader of the Opposition very clearly and emphatically, that it is opposed to the celebration. Apparently, the Labor Party believes it is no occasion for celebration, although I am not sure of the unanimity of the ALP on that.

Let us reflect on the true meaning of the opposition of the Labor Party to the celebration. Two alternatives were open to the Opposition: Firstly, it could oppose the celebration because it felt it was not an appropriate way to observe the founding of parliamentary Government in Western Australia; and, secondly, it could have moved to amend the motion in order that it would fit in with its partisan political attitude. However, the Opposition chose not to do that. It chose not to try to amend the motion.

Let the record state what the Opposition opposed. Before proceeding with that I will state what has been said so ably by Mr Pental: If the Opposition is in so much disagreement with the nature of the activities which are planned for that week in February next year, what steps, if any, has the Labor Party taken to amend them? I am not aware of any steps and the speakers of the Opposition have not stated any steps; therefore, I presume they do not have any suggestions.

If they do have suggestions I believe it would have been totally acceptable and well within the procedures of this Parliament had they presented them. That would have indicated a complete participation in the celebrations. However, members opposite did not do that. I will read the motion the Opposition has opposed because earlier in this debate the President appealed to speakers to speak to the motion. It reads as follows—

That this House doth resolve—

That on the last sitting day during 1981, the Leader of the House be requested to move that the House . . .

That is what the Opposition has objected to. To continue—

... adjourn until Monday, 8 February 1982, at 8.00 p.m. for the purpose of receiving from His Excellency the Governor a message from Her Majesty the Queen relating to the 150th Anniversary of the first meeting of the Legislative Council in Western Australia ...

So, they do not wish to meet for that purpose and they do not wish to hear that address. To continue—

... and to enable both Houses of this Parliament to move an address of loyalty to Her Majesty.

They do not want that either. To continue—

That the Address should be moved by the Leader of the Government and supported by the Leader of the Opposition in each House.

Presumably, they will direct that the Leader of the Opposition in both Houses will not support that. Is that what they are saying? To continue—

That for the meeting of the House on 8 February 1982 so much of Standing Orders that allow of any additional business being transacted be and are hereby suspended, and that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly acquainting it thereof.

Obviously, they do not want that either. The Opposition had an opportunity to use all the procedures of the House available to it to move an amendment which would have received consideration, but possibly not support, from this side of the House. That at least would have indicated its sincerity in an address of loyalty to the Queen. Clearly, the opposition to the motion would be quite useless if the deputy leader of the Opposition were now to claim that was not what he meant.

The deputy leader of the Opposition is an experienced parliamentarian but unfortunately in my view it is to his discredit that he has acted in a purely political way by saying things we have heard so many times in this place, by crying and weeping because the Labor Party has lost its numbers in this House over the years. As someone has said, its greatest losses have occurred since adult franchise for this House in Western Australia.

When you Mr President and Mr Ferry, other members, and I first came to this House in 1965

some of the then stalwarts of the Legislative Council had been elected by Labor Party supporters, under a different system of franchise prior to that date, but had in fact occupied seats in this House.

What happened to the two members for the North Province? What happened to the two members for the Lower North Province? Just to name four members, what happened to them? Three have gone! Not only have they gone, but some of the Legislative Assembly members within those provinces also have departed the scene.

I have stated the truth of the matter before, and no amount of protestation on the part of members of the Labor Party can deny the fact that they are not concerned for the people of this State. Their crocodile tears will not convince us of that. Labor Party members simply cannot cajole, persuade, or force the electors of this State to elect them to this House. They were elected once, and the members lost their seats. What great members they were!

At that time, by an informal decision of all members of this House, which was considered to be a non-party House, members decided they would not sit under a party system but they would continue to occupy seats on both sides of the House, irrespective of their party affiliations.

Therefore, changes have come about. That is the truth of the matter, and the words of the deputy leader of the Opposition cannot fool us. Let us hope that they cannot fool the people of Western Australia. They have not fooled them so far.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Would you like to indicate how the Labor Party had control of the lower House for 35 years, and it has not had control of this House yet?

The Hon. NEIL McNEILL: This is not the first time that the electors of Western Australia have had drawn to their attention, forcibly or otherwise, by members of the Labor Party that the party claims a gerrymander in this State; and yet the Labor Party cannot persuade the electors of Western Australia that it is telling the correct story. History bears that out.

The future may show something different. I will not try to portray the future. It may be that the electors of Western Australia will change in the future, but to this moment they have not.

All that has happened today is that the Labor Party has served notice on us, on the Parliament, and on the people of Western Australia that, first of all, it has no intention of supporting any of the activities and celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the Legislative Council. The party

has given notice that it will use somebody else's forum in order to put its policies, no matter how chatty and tatty they are.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Do you mean that the Parliament is not our forum?

The Hon. NEIL McNEILL: The Labor Party will use that forum to advance its partisan attitudes and beliefs. Nobody but the Labor Party accepts those beliefs.

The fact of the matter, in terms of the motion before this House, is that the Opposition will oppose it. I hope its opposition will receive full publicity. Let us consider what the Opposition is opposing. I will state it again, because it bears restating. The motion provides that the House will meet—

... for the purpose of receiving from His Excellency the Governor a message from Her Majesty the Queen relating to the 150th Anniversary of the first meeting of the Legislative Council in Western Australia and to enable both Houses of this Parliament to move an address of loyalty to Her Majesty.

Does that mean the Labor Party does not share in these feelings of loyalty, as it will not take part in these celebrations? Is the Labor Party so advanced in its thinking that it has something better to replace our system of government? After all, we are talking about our system of government.

I remind members of my remarks when I moved the Address-in-Reply on the opening of this Parliament. I dealt with the topic of the place of the Queen, the place of the Parliament, and the place of the Westminster form of government in the Commonwealth of Nations. Is the Labor Party alone amongst the 40-odd nations of the Commonwealth? Is it the only body in the 1 000 million people around this world which still believes that the current form of government, with the Queen as the head of the Commonwealth of Nations, is not the most appropriate? We should not forget Nigeria just recently joined, and Pakistan is taking steps to do so.

It would be useless for the Opposition to say, "Look, we are not talking about that at all. It has nothing to do with the subject". It has everything to do with the subject.

Quite frankly, the speech by the deputy leader of the Opposition was a most disgraceful exhibition. It gave no credit to him whatsoever. I believe firmly—and if I am wrong, I am prepared to accept it—that that speech by the deputy leader of the Opposition will do nothing towards increasing the Labor Party's participation in this Legislative Council. Certainly that speech will do

nothing to improve the Labor Party's chances of greater participation and greater numbers of members in this House. Of course, that aim is misguidedly accepted as the be-all and end-all of the Labor Party's entire existence.

I support the motion.

Sitting suspended from 3.47 to 4.00 p.m.

THE HON. R. HETHERINGTON (East Metropolitan) [4.00 p.m.]: I wish to oppose the motion, and I shall be brief. I regret very much that the Hon. Neil McNeill said the things he did.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: They are all true.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: However, as he has said them, I want to make a brief point in that regard, because I feel I must do so.

We all know that Her Majesty the Queen acts on advice and there are times when we move motions of loyalty. To say we think this is not an appropriate time for a motion is to say nothing about whether or not we are loyal to the Queen.

Every year in this House we pass a motion of loyalty to the Queen and members on this side support it. I have always supported it personally and I shall continue to do so as long as we are a monarchy and the Queen is our head of State.

If somebody then said to me, "Your party believes in republicanism" I would say, "Personally, I think a republican form of government is a better form of government". However, that does not mean the Queen will not receive my loyalty until such time as we democratically change the form of government. I do not believe the time is with us yet to change the form of government, nor do I believe the people want it to be changed. Therefore, I remain completely in support of the monarchy and completely loyal to it.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You are just saying once a year is enough, are you not?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: How many times do you have to do it?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I would have thought once in a lifetime was enough. I have taken an oath of allegiance as a member of the armed forces and an affirmation of allegiance every time I have been elected to Parliament and I will support motions of loyalty and allegiance every time they are moved in this House.

If this motion is passed and I am here in the Parliament, I shall support a motion of loyalty to the Queen; why would I do otherwise?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I don't know.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Therefore, let us get rid of that red herring.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: It is not a red herring.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Call it some other colour.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: To say we do not think this is an appropriate time for a motion of loyalty has nothing to do with whether or not we are loyal. I hope no member of this House will stand up and impugn my loyalty.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: Why should they?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: There is no reason that they should.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: There is your answer.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: However, there were implications in the speech made by the Hon. Neil McNeill which I want to put right. I hope I have put them right on my own behalf and on behalf of Her Majesty's loyal Opposition.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Are you saying this is the right time, at the 150th anniversary?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am saying it is not the right time. I oppose the motion and I shall say briefly why I do so. A number of irrelevant remarks have been made about the motion such as the fact that school children will participate, and various other matters have been mentioned. Whatever the Hon. Bill Withers has said, this State is not yet a democracy.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: Is that because you are not in government?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: It is not because I am not in government.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: Of course it is.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Since the last election and since I have been in this House, I have said a number of times that, at the last two elections, the majority of people in Western Australia were against us and I accept their decision. However, that does not mean I have to think we have a good Government, because the majority of people have voted for it. I have said that once, and I shall say it again.

Members should get the issues straight. When the Hon. Phillip Pental pointed out that the NSW Government with 55 per cent of the vote gets 70 per cent of the seats, it can be seen that is one of the drawbacks of a system of single-member electorates. For this reason, at various times, it has seemed to me that perhaps a proportional representation system would be better. It is highly debatable and I will not debate it here, because it is a long and complex matter.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Is there a drawback to the dual seats in the Council?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: It is possible, and I have argued it within my own party. Some of the arguments have had effect, because we changed our policy from one of abolition of the Legislative Council to one of its reform.

There is an argument for a Legislative Council properly elected and there is an argument for a Parliament properly elected. It is my opinion that, although it is 150 years since we took the first step towards parliamentary government, we have not yet got a democracy in either House. This is not a democratic system.

The Hon. Tom Knight: That is a minority view, isn't it?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: That does not necessarily make it wrong. It is my view and it is a view I shall stick to.

The Hon. Tom Knight: I thought a democracy was a situation in which the majority had the say. That is what you are getting at. You said it yourself, but now you are saying you don't agree with it.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I shall not give the honourable member a lecture on democracy, because it would take several hours and I would not be sure that, at the end of it, he would understand it.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Or at the beginning.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Indeed, he may not even understand it at the beginning. As far as I am concerned, unless the people can participate equally in the election of their members, we do not have a democratic system.

I hope the Hon. Vic Ferry does not stand up and quote the discrepancies in the British system, because there are many drawbacks at Westminster at present and, to some extent, it has departed from the democracy it once had. However, I am not arguing about that now.

Basically I am making a very simple statement that, whatever the committee may have decided, whatever the propositions may be, and whatever form the celebrations may take, we on this side of the House believe that, until we have democracy in Western Australia, there is nothing to celebrate, and it is as simple as that.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: I suppose you know the committee is comprised of two Labor members, one Liberal member, and one NCP member.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am quite aware of that.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Well, don't say what you are saying now.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I have said it and I shall continue to say it.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: You are still wrong.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I may be. Until we are a democracy there is nothing to celebrate and, therefore, on this ground and this ground alone—

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: It is a pretty weak ground, isn't it?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I would not think so and certainly the opinion of the Minister would not sway me, bearing in mind the kind of inanities that come from him from time to time.

Several members interjected.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I know Mr Gayfer does not like people talking about democracy.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: I take what you have said as a vote of no confidence in the committee and in your own members. It is a committee directed and set up by the President of this Chamber.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: As far as I am concerned, we will have nothing to celebrate; therefore, I oppose the motion on that ground. It is of no use members saying it is sour grapes on my part or anything else. I know that, at the last election, the Labor Party did not get a majority of the votes. If we did get a majority of the votes in this House, we would be hard pressed to get a majority of members. As far as I am concerned, the electoral system in this State, as my deputy leader said, is undesirable, undemocratic, and unfair.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You expect us to accept that, do you?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: No doubt the Minister will not accept it, because his Government introduced the system. It is of advantage to his party and I do not expect he will accept it, because I am merely putting forward my point of view.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Do you expect the Liberals in the other House to accept it?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I tell the House and you, Sir—because I am really talking to you—I am simply saying that, after 150 years we have progressed merely from a kind of government by a nominated Council which we had 150 years ago to a non-democratic form of parliamentary government.

I point out to the House, as I have pointed out before, that Stalin's Russia and Hitler's Germany both had adult franchise. Adult franchise does not necessarily equal democracy.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: What do they have now?

Several members interjected.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am just pointing out to the members who are interjecting—if they want me to be quick, they might stop interjecting—that, as the Hon. Phillip Pandal has said by way of interjection, we need more than universal franchise to have a democracy.

For the reasons I have given time and time again in this House—I will not repeat them now—I believe that because in this year of grace 150 years after our founding we are still not a democracy, the anniversary is something we should not celebrate. If members want to read further implications into my opposition of the motion, let them do so, but there are no implications other than what I have said.

As far as I am concerned, the fact that Her Majesty the Queen is mentioned in the motion is, in one sense, incidental and if this motion is carried and a motion of loyalty to the Queen is moved, I will then, as ever, support it; but I will not support this motion.

THE HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [4.14 p.m.]: I am fully aware of what the motion says. I am aware also of some of the other suggestions in relation to this special sitting. At the outset I might indicate one of the suggestions is that, in both Houses on that day, there be two speakers. After listening to the debate this afternoon I say that is a very admirable suggestion.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Just wait until after you have finished and we will see whether it is admirable.

A Government member: I thought it was Mr Hetherington who was called democratic.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I do not believe anyone in this Chamber would really believe any Labor Party member would have supported this motion.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: You could have fooled us.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Mr Gayfer must be easily fooled. It was obvious that we would take advantage of the situation to express our views. I am not stupid enough to think that the motion will not be carried. Why do we oppose the motion? The motion itself looks innocuous enough; it is very carefully worded. On reading it,

it certainly does not imply any kind of political bias.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: It is a democratic motion.

The Hon. D. K. DANKS: One of the things that interests me is why are we going to celebrate 150 years of the Legislative Council?

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Because none of us will be here for the 200th.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. D. K. DANKS: It would have been just as appropriate to have celebrated 149 years of the setting up of democratic government in Western Australia. It would have been easy enough to celebrate 151, 152, 153 or, indeed, every year until we reach the 200 mark the Hon. Sandy Lewis just referred to. The Labor Party sees no good purpose in it.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: It won't be here then.

The Hon. D. K. DANKS: How could we celebrate 150 years of the gerrymandering of the electoral boundaries of the upper House, the Legislative Council of Western Australia? The question of gerrymandering of the electoral boundaries for Council electorates is challenged not only by the Labor Party: all trained political observers, including the popular Press of this State, would tell the same story.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: It is all genuine.

The Hon. D. K. DANKS: It has been stated by our speakers, not only during my time in this Parliament nor only since we have had full adult franchise, but indeed long before that we complained about the undemocratic system of elections to this House. It is recognised by trained political observers, that Western Australia has the worst electoral laws in Australia with its Council boundaries being drawn to make it impossible for a Labor Government ever to receive a majority vote. That is just not the view of the Australian Labor Party. So why in the name of goodness does the Government expect us to support this motion?

It has nothing to do with whether we are loyal to the Queen or whether someone signs a pledge card, or whether the House is democratic or undemocratic. Let me remind the House that the question of how one votes in this place, at least with the Labor Party is *de jure*, and for the Liberal and Country Party it is *de facto*. If someone denies that statement, let him go and fish out the *Hansards* going back over the years and he will see what I say is correct.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I don't even understand it.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Isn't it interesting that no-one has denied it?

The Hon. W. R. Withers: No-one can understand it.

The Hon. D. K. DANKS: We should celebrate 150 years of gerrymandered Council boundaries by calling the Parliament together, as this motion says we should do, and announcing to the public of Western Australia that we will institute a proportional representation system for the election of members to this Chamber.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Hear, hear!

The Hon. D. K. DANKS: Then on that day we can fly the flags from this place, switch on the lights, and keep Parliament open seven days and nights a week for the rest of the year or for another three or four years. Under those circumstances it would certainly engender the kind of interest we need to have in our parliamentary system. Much has been said about what the President says to school children when they come here and what he does not say. I also bring many school children here and make an observation about the strengths and weaknesses of the Parliament. I do not talk politics to school children, as I believe they should form their own opinions. What I do say to them is this: "This is the Legislative Council and down there is the Assembly. At least we have a political system that you can come along to and see in operation. You can see how it works. I would like you to go away and study the system so that when you grow up and you have your first vote you will understand what it is all about".

Had the motion embodied—perhaps Mr McNeill may have been right—the proclamation that "Henceforth, the members of this Council will be elected by a PR system", I can imagine the thump with which it would have hit the carpet. That fine red carpet down there would have been rebounding for years from the thump.

What has caused all the stir here this afternoon? It has been caused because the Hon. J. Berinson, exercised his right to use this forum; and, strangely enough, that great advocate of democracy, the Hon. Neil McNeill, had the audacity to suggest Mr Berinson was using it as a forum for some kind of political purpose—his forum! When we are talking about the loyal Opposition and the loyal Government, it happens to be our forum too.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: Hear, hear!

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Mr McNeill says it is "our forum". How dare he come in here and make those statements in our forum!

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You walk out and leave it occasionally on some Bills when it is too hard to make a decision, don't you?

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: With sheer frustration.

Point of Order

The Hon. NEIL MCNEILL: I claim to have been misrepresented. The Leader of the Opposition is misleading the House. I did not claim they were using this as a forum, but in fact the forum to which I was referring was the celebration proposed on 7 February 1982.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I do not think that is a point of order, but if Mr McNeill wants to make that assertion, let me say this: That is the way I interpreted his remarks. Even that, to me, does not cut much ice, because whether or not we attend, it is still our forum. By implication or the tone in his voice he seemed to say, "Don't you interfere with that". The things Mr Berinson said were correct. In my opinion, this so-called celebration of 150 years of democratic government is just another shallow political stunt to assist a Government which is in deep trouble with the electorate. It is going to cost no end of money.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: That is pathetic.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: We cannot allow that waste of money. I will refer to that during the debate on the Budget. Let us face it, a 150th celebration, no matter how one tries to pump it up, is a colossal and expensive flop.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: Absolute rubbish!

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Don't talk rot.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I took part in all the functions, Mr Moore. I went along to functions when I was asked to go and they were a colossal flop. I cast no aspersions on the Hon. Graham MacKinnon, who did his best; but the celebrations would have been a bigger flop had Mr MacKinnon not come on the scene at a very critical time. As far as I am concerned, the Opposition does not speculate about what we are going to do in the future. I say to the members of the Government that the Opposition will not be a party to this motion, which endeavours to set up what I have already described as another expensive political stunt.

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [4.25 p.m.]: The intention of this motion is to bring about a sitting of Parliament on 8 February 1982 with a view to receiving through the Governor of the State a message from Her Majesty the Queen to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Legislative Council. It is not just the establishment of the Legislative Council that matters so much in respect of this celebration, it is the matter of the establishment of the first Parliament in Western Australia for the purpose of laying down laws and ordinances for the conduct of the State and to maintain law and order so that the Colonials at that time could operate under the laws. This is what we are going to celebrate. We are not celebrating the Legislative Council of today, or anything else, but purely the establishment of Parliament in Western Australia in 1832 to maintain law and order.

If members go outside and turn to the right they will see a photo on the wall. It is a photo of a meeting of this House in 1932, the jubilee of the establishment of the Legislative Council, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of its establishment and of the establishment of Parliament in Western Australia.

Of course, this anniversary is of specific interest to me because at that time my father was the only Minister in this Chamber. I welcome the opportunity to be part and parcel of a further celebration, that of its 150th year, because I will not be here—certainly I will be dead in 50 years—and I do not think any other member will be left to celebrate its 200th anniversary. The Hon. Mr Lewis said one of the reasons we are having this celebration next year is because none of us will be here for the 200th year.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I'll still be here.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You'll need a wig then.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The matter of loyalty has been raised in respect of this motion. I am surprised when members of the Opposition get up and talk about democracy and then advocate that members of this Chamber should be elected by PR. If anything is more undemocratic, it is the election of members of Parliament by proportional representation. That is the most undemocratic method of election because it does not relate to the person, his value or capabilities, but purely to parties; and one might as well be in Russia or one of the other countries where people are elected on a party vote instead of a personal vote including a party vote. Most of us in this

Chamber have a personal following in our electorates; perhaps some do not, but most of us do. That personal following goes a long way in the electorate and is a great help in respect of the problems a member faces when elected.

The Hon. Bob Hetherington said our method of election and our electoral laws are the worst in Australia and our method of election is undemocratic and is absolutely wrong. I say there is nothing wrong with our electoral laws! The Labor Party claimed prior to 1964 that everything was wrong with this Chamber and that electoral laws were wrong, so we amended them to give the people of this State adult franchise and in so doing, we widened the scope of this Chamber as far as electoral laws are concerned.

At that time it was accepted with open arms by the Labor Party of the day. It thought it would solve all the problems. Members of the Opposition are never satisfied; it is now 17 years later and they are still complaining about the electoral laws and the method of election to this Chamber. I really cannot understand their attitude and I cannot understand the attitude of the member who has been in another Parliament and has seen what happens there and then talks about the situation in Western Australia.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Those members are elected on a 10 per cent variation of votes between electors. Here we have a variation of up to 800 per cent.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: As I was saying before the honourable member interjected he was a member of the august Senate.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: No, I was not.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Get it right.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I do not think we have heard him condemning the Senate.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: He was not in it.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: If any House is undemocratic it is the Senate. I have never heard the honourable member complaining about that and saying how undemocratic it is.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: You have not been listening, Mr Baxter.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: He often does not listen.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: With the number of electors in a State as vast as ours it is only natural that if we do not have members elected as they are the city would have more representation than the country areas.

If there were a large majority of members in the city as against the country this State would go

down hill because the country areas would be given very little; and after all is said and done, it is the country areas that keep this State going. The metropolitan area rides on the back of the country and north-west areas. Therefore those areas are entitled to a fair share of representation.

Government members: Hear, hear!

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: For members of the Opposition to say that the system is wrong is complete and utter poppycock. They should think about this again and I am sure they will realise—and I go back to what I said originally—what the 150th celebration is all about. It has nothing to do with electoral laws. It is to celebrate the establishment of the first Parliament in 1832 and the subsequent establishment of the Legislative Assembly in 1889 which gave us dual Houses in which laws could be passed and ratified from one place to another. Members opposite should think about this motion again and understand what it is about.

THE HON. I. G. PRATT (Lower West) [4.33 p.m.]: I support the motion and I believe that in considering it we should take into account the fact that this Legislative Council would not be operating if it were not for the people who have been members of it over the 150 years of its operation. Certainly those members have carried with them a great deal of nostalgia and tradition. Those people who have served in this House make up the centre point of the subject on which we are talking. The Legislative Council is not an inanimate object of stone, timber, and glass; I believe it is those members who have served in it during this period to whom we are actually paying tribute. During this time some very great people have served the people of this State in this House.

The Hon. Graham MacKinnon, who has spent more time in this House than I have, has often spoken of his early days in this House and of the wonderful service given by people such as Frank Wise and other members of the Australian Labor Party. Possibly, when we pass this motion—and I hope we will pass it today—members of the Opposition will realise that it is not a motion of celebration; it merely means we will receive a message from Her Majesty relating to the 150th anniversary. In other words it relates to people from all political parties who have served in this House during those 150 years.

I am absolutely aghast that the Opposition should use such an occasion—to use the Hon. Des Dans' words—to take a shallow political stand. In fact they are dishonouring the service people have given to this House and to the people of Western Australia. The reason the Opposition has chosen

to do this, and members have spelt it out clearly, is that they are against what they say is a gerrymandered system of boundaries in this State. If I am to address my remarks to this motion I will have to refer to the remarks which have been made so far by members of the Opposition. They claim it is a gerrymandered system. In fact that is absolute rubbish. It is a system in which an allowance or loading is given to members in sparsely populated areas.

It is not a matter of one looking for areas with high socialist or free enterprise populations and drawing a ring around them to exclude other people. The actual boundaries laid down by Parliament are drawn by commissioners.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Is that why Pilbara has twice as many electors as Kalamunda?

The Hon. I. G. PRATT: Had the member listened he would have heard me mention the fact that we have established as a principle in Western Australia that sparsely populated areas have—

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Like the Pilbara.

The Hon. I. G. PRATT: —fewer electors than the more densely populated areas.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Like Kalamunda.

The Hon. I. G. PRATT: The development of this State has caused some concern because the population in some areas has grown more rapidly than in others. I have no doubt that, when the population explosion of the north-west has settled down, both Houses of Parliament will pass a law to restructure that system.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: The Pilbara boundary was set in this Parliament less than six months ago.

The Hon. I. G. PRATT: It does not matter what Mr Berinson says now to get himself off the hook.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: He is not on the hook.

The Hon. I. G. PRATT: He is, and I will explain clearly and carefully why that dispels the gerrymander argument.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Perhaps to your satisfaction!

The Hon. I. G. PRATT: A "gerrymander" is a line one draws around a pocket of voters and it is something which does not affect voting between the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. A Legislative Council electorate includes a number of Legislative Assembly electorates. That is the peg on which members opposite have tried to hang their argument.

I suggest that perhaps the Opposition is sincere in what it says; but let us see what it echoes. Does

it echo the wishes of the people of our State? Do the people of our State wish us to change the system of giving a loading to the populated areas? Members of the Opposition would like the system changed.

Two factors affect the number of Labor seats held in this Chamber. One is that the Labor Party finds it difficult to win country seats. Back in 1972 the Labor Party found it possible to win country votes. The Federal Government at the time made all sorts of rash promises to country electors which it repudiated after being elected. As a result country electors do not want to know about the Australian Labor Party because they do not trust that party when it makes promises.

The other point is that when we look at the Legislative Council votes as opposed to the Legislative Assembly votes, we find that some people voting for two Houses on the one day do not trust the ALP in the upper House. We find invariably the votes for Liberal Legislative Council candidates are higher than the votes received for Liberal candidates in the Legislative Assembly. Therefore, we find that people in Western Australia choose to give stronger support to the Liberal Legislative Council candidates than to the Liberal Legislative Assembly candidates.

If there was any substance in the Australian Labor Party suggesting it well represents all the people in Western Australia in this matter we would not have that situation. We would find, if that suggestion were correct, that the Liberal members in the Legislative Council would receive fewer votes than Liberal members in the Legislative Assembly; and that does not happen.

Back in 1977 the Australian Labor Party was convinced it had an issue; it convinced the media it had an issue in my electorate. It is interesting to note that when I was elected to Parliament, Forrest Road ran through my province. After the electoral boundaries redistribution Forrest Road became the boundary of my province. The ALP decided to use that boundary as an issue because I was a country member and it organised a "March for Democracy". It received significant television and press coverage and planned a march down Forrest Road, which had become the boundary between a country and a metropolitan province. What interest did the country and metropolitan electors show? None. Between 20 and 30 people—I believe it was only 24—participated in the march and most of them were imports of the ALP.

The ALP is out of favour with the people of Western Australia and it does not have an issue. The people of Western Australia are not

interested in what it is saying and they have demonstrated this at elections and by the lack of interest shown in the march to which I have referred.

The ALP has the audacity to come to our House and use a motion which says nothing about—

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: What do you mean when you say "our House"?

The Hon. I. G. PRATT: Mr Berinson's and mine.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: You do concede we are entitled to use it?

The Hon. I. G. PRATT: Of course I do, but I also question the way in which members opposite use it.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: We will use it at our discretion.

The Hon. I. G. PRATT: I do not agree with the way members of the Opposition have used this motion. It has nothing to do with the electoral system but merely marks the occasion of 150 years of the Legislative Council and 150 years of service by members of all political parties, to whom I pay tribute. I believe all members in this House should support this motion.

THE HON. F. E. McKENZIE (East Metropolitan) [4.44 p.m.]: I oppose the motion. It is difficult to argue about what is contained in the motion proposed by Mr MacKinnon because it is cleverly worded. The Hon. Neil McNeill stated that the Government wishes to use the 150th anniversary celebrations next year to enlighten the public. I oppose the motion because it appears the 150th celebrations will not be utilised to enlighten the people of Western Australia as to what the Legislative Council is all about.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: Do you think people are so dumb they cannot work it out for themselves?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I am not saying they are dumb. However, it is in the Government's interest to keep people ignorant of what transpires in this House, and how we are elected.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Are you aware the committee has written to all the organisations, and the Education Department, asking them to contact new members in order that you may go out and make these sorts of speeches to the people? That is part of the programme. We have done that, and we have sent you the base notes.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: It depends on how Mr MacKinnon wants us to do it. He is not

suggesting we will be allowed to go into schools and expose this place for what it is?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Why not?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: We will welcome the opportunity, and that is what we are going to do. Why should we not tell members what we intend to do?

I have found a gross ignorance among the people as to what transpires in this place and in regard to the Government of this State. I have found this out by talking to school children. Somebody said to me the other day, "We have an upper House because when we have a bad Government in the lower House, the upper House can stop legislation". They were amazed when I explained that the Liberal-Country Parties had always held the upper hand in this place and that the Labor Party had never had a majority here, and that when we have had a bad Government in the Legislative Assembly—as we have now—that Government's legislation passed without any hindrance.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: Your knowledge of history is astray. The Liberal Party has not always held the majority in this place.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The Labor Party has never held the majority in this place. It has been in government approximately half the time since the commencement of responsible government in 1890 but because it has never held a majority in this place, it has never been in power.

How do members opposite account for the fact that the Liberal Party in this Chamber represents 19 of the 32 seats, yet the Labor Party actually receives more votes than the Liberal Party? We have only nine seats to the Liberal Party's 19 seats, and the Liberal Party can govern in its own right.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: What about the seats you have lost to us?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Instead of the 150th year celebrations being a flop, as they may well be, it is up to us to turn the occasion into something exciting.

If we want to do something positive to celebrate this occasion, we could start by abandoning the title "The Honourable". Apart from Ministers and ex-Ministers, what has any one of us here done to deserve that title? We have hung on to it for far too long. Some of my colleagues in another place who have served in the Ministry have no right to retain that title. It is merely a symbol of power, by which the Government thinks it can

convince the people of what a wonderful place this is.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: Don't you know why? You should enter into correspondence with the Queen.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: He is asking, "What moral right?"

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I entered this House simply because I could not get into the Legislative Assembly. I wanted to go somewhere, so I had to settle for this place.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: What about your mate, Berinson? He must have done the same.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Members opposite may laugh, but it is the truth. I would much prefer to be in the Legislative Assembly. Let us start celebrating our 150th year by doing away with the title "The Honourable". It has irked me ever since I came here.

Whenever I go to a function my wife and I are announced as, "The Honourable Mr McKenzie, and Mrs McKenzie", whereas my colleague, the member for Ascot, and his wife are announced as, "Mr and Mrs Bryce". Why cannot I be called "Mr McKenzie"?

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Because you could not get into the Assembly.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: It is your punishment.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Perhaps it is my punishment. However, it is in the best interests of the Government to promote the present system because it has benefited the Government for so long and has been a disadvantage to us.

It behoves us to try to bring about democracy in this State. Members opposite can argue all they like, but they cannot dispute the fact that the Labor Party has nine seats in this House, whereas the Liberal Party has 19, despite the fact that the Liberal Party receives less votes than the Labor Party.

I oppose the motion.

THE HON. A. A. LEWIS (Lower Central) [4.51 p.m.]: I enter this debate in sorrow.

The Hon. H. W. Olney: It is an honourable sorrow.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Most members of the Labor Party in this House are decent people. The tragedy of this political stunt of the ALP is that these decent people have not made the decision; they have been instructed from another place.

The Hon. P. H. Lockyer: They have been commanded.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Yes, commanded by their Caucus as to what they must do. It is a tragedy that these decent men and this decent woman should be instructed from another place, where the numbers of the ALP are.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Do not keep going; I will burst out crying.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: It is a matter for tears that even in things to do with this House, men of high moral standards—we have heard Mr Hetherington talk about high moral standards, and we know Mr Olney, Mr McKenzie, and their colleagues are people of such standards—should be forced into such a situation.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I notice you did not mention me.

The Hon. P. H. Lockyer: You are a borderline case.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I will deal with Mr Dans later. Even on the subject of the 150th anniversary of this House, members opposite cannot make a decision for themselves, but must have instructions—and here, Mr McKenzie let the cat out of the bag—from their so-called superiors in another place.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I did not say that.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: But Mr McKenzie did say that he would far prefer to be a member of the Legislative Assembly, and came here only by second choice. Some of us—the Hon. Joe Berinson, my friend, the Hon. Mick Gayfer, the Hon. Neil McNeill, the Hon. Jim Brown, and myself—have served in the lower House.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: This is a House of retirement!

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: We were good enough to get into the Assembly and we were either kicked out, or our seats were abolished.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The Liberal Party has not always had the numbers in the Assembly, but it has had the numbers in the Council since the inception of this Chamber. That is why you wanted to get out of the Assembly.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Mick Gayfer and I got out for a different reason; our seats were abolished.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: They drummed us out.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The Hon. Neil McNeill, the Hon. Joe Berinson, and the Hon. Jim Brown, got out for a totally different reason: The public did not like them very much.

The Hon. J. M. Brown: Don't you think it was due to redistribution?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: No, not at all. Here we have these people—honourable in the extreme and moral, as Mr Hetherington has told us—who have been instructed from another place as to how they should vote.

Then we heard ridiculous arguments from the Hon. Joe Berinson on voting rights. He quoted the Federal Parliament, and the balance of representation there. He said that if we used a fair system the Labor Party would have more Federal members from Western Australia. However, if we used that same system to elect members here he would complain, because the Labor Party would not have the members.

Then we had the Hon. Lyla Elliott's argument about 16 jockeys on a horse—this from the chairman of a Caucus who chaired the meeting when Caucus instructed all these honourable people not to stand up for themselves.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: Don't you think we have a vote in Caucus?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: There are nine Labor members in this place and some 23 in the Assembly, so members here must let the people down the other end tell them what they should do in this place.

What spineless individuals; there is not a vestige of backbone amongst members opposite. Not one member opposite was prepared to say, "It is our House; we will make the decisions". I do not hear too many queries from ALP members about whether I vote the way I want to vote; I think they have learned their lesson on that one.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Have you ever participated in defeating a Government measure?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Yes; has Mr Berinson?

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Which one in the last five years, other than the Liquor Bill?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Does Mr Berinson want me to run through them?

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: Tell us which ones.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Wait a minute; I am dealing with Miss Elliott's 16 jockeys on one horse. I am sorry the Hon. Lyla Elliott has 16 jockeys on a horse; however, her horse is fed by the people who produce. The producing areas of this State are those electorates which contain relatively few voters; however, they produce the wealth so that Miss Elliott can have her 16 jockeys on a horse. She thinks their voting strength should be reduced to one-sixteenth of its present level. The country has carried the metropolitan area on its back the total time—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Would you like to apply the same theory to the iron ore companies?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: —by the production of the things we eat, and the materials that are used to manufacture motorcars, and the like.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Come off it.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The Hon. Des Dans knows it is right.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Apply the same theory to the people in the north-west.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: In Mr Dans we have a leader of Her Majesty's Opposition who would not answer whether he intended to join with the Government in paying his respect to the Queen's message. He thought it was very funny.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Mr Hetherington said they would not.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: We have not had an answer from the Leader of the Opposition. Mr Hetherington might have made a slip of the tongue, and may be castigated by the chairman of the Caucus sitting behind him.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I do not think you listened to me speaking very carefully.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The day the Hon. Des Dans speaks very carefully will be a good thing for this House.

Mr Dans has not said yet whether he will honour the commitment before him as Leader of the Opposition if this motion is passed, as it will be.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I warned you not to speculate.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The Leader of the Opposition speculated 50 years hence and he was told that some of us may not be here then. It is a matter of sorrow and disgust that we have had to debate this matter from 2.30 p.m. until now.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It would be interesting to work out the man-hours and the money involved in this foolish exercise and add its cost to the cost of the celebration, and then relate it to Mr Lewis' speech—uncorrected.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I am sure Mr Dans may have some research people who could work that out for him. I am sure the public would not be intensely interested in it nor would they be happy with the nonsense we have heard from the Labor Party today about upper Houses.

The public will not wear the ALP; they will not have a bar of it. Members opposite may as well realise that now. Members opposite can scream to the high heavens, but they are just not good enough. Let them consider my seat. Where is the

Labor Party vote? Where is the Labor Party in the two Assembly seats? Mrs Piesse and I hold this province. Where is the ALP? The ALP cannot win upper House seats because the public know its members are hypocrites and imposters. After today's debate the public will know even more about the ALP. I support the motion.

THE HON. V. J. FERRY (South-West) [5.02 p.m.]: I support the motion; obviously it has embarrassed members of the ALP. I cannot believe all members opposite share the sentiments expressed by the deputy leader of the Opposition and other ALP speakers. It is a great shame they are divided on this very simple issue, an issue of loyalty.

I consider this motion to be a matter of privilege for the people of Western Australia. The Parliament is merely a reflection of the community. It is through the medium of Parliament that the people are being honoured for 150 years of progress which is envied by many people all over the world.

I had the privilege recently of attending an overseas Commonwealth Parliamentary Association seminar. I came into contact with representatives of nearly 80 Commonwealth Parliaments. In both official and unofficial contact it was abundantly clear that many people from various countries envy our way of life, which is reflected in our parliamentary system. Members of Parliament are a reflection and a sample of the community.

Members opposite have argued that our parliamentary system is not a suitable one. I remind them that the system under which we operate suited the ALP admirably for many years when it held seats in the goldfields areas and the Pilbara and Kimberley areas of this State. In those days they did not complain or try to alter the system, a system which they now bleat about in such a pathetic way. The same principle applies today as it did then, so it is a very hollow argument that has been presented by the ALP today.

It has been said already that in 1964 a Bill was passed to change the system of voting in this State and that by 1965 adult franchise applied to all our elections. The ALP welcomed this legislation with open arms; it also lost seats because the people rejected it at the polls. The argument of members opposite today has therefore been rather hollow.

I sincerely hope this motion to celebrate 150 years of our way of life in Western Australia will be supported because of the good sense of

everyone associated with this House. I wish the occasion well.

THE HON. P. H. WELLS (North Metropolitan) [5.06 p.m.]: I support the motion relating to the 150th anniversary of the first meeting of the Legislative Council of Western Australia.

As one of the newer members of the Legislative Council it has been my privilege in the short time I have been a member to invite large numbers of my constituents to visit the Parliament to see it and to understand the process of our democratic government as a reflection of the Westminster system.

I wonder why the Opposition opposes this opportunity not only of sharing in this celebration but also of inviting constituents to come to the seat of government in Western Australia and to share in what is their Parliament. It would appear to me that a number of them are frightened of bringing people to the Parliament in case the people learn too much about our democratic system. I gather this is the case because on reading *Hansard* I have found that a number of ALP members have sneered at members who have invited groups to the Parliament.

It has been my privilege to invite people to the Parliament and to discuss the workings of our democratic system. It will be a great privilege for me to invite people here to share in our 150th celebration. From my experience with the large number of people I have already invited to see the Parliament I know that many people from North Metropolitan Province would wish to join in the celebrations.

I give notice to the organisers of the celebration that should any allocations be not taken up by members of the ALP I would be happy to take them so that I can bring more people to the Parliament, because I know many people will wish to come.

In the short time I have been a member of this House I have found this Chamber has provided me with many opportunities to review legislation. My observation is that some members do not bother to take advantage of this opportunity. The choice is up to members. I find it a challenge to study the legislation presented to us. I find there are problems with resources, but nonetheless an opportunity is provided to review legislation. It has been my privilege to work within our system and to share this opportunity of review, and on a number of occasions to make a contribution to the debate.

I look forward to the celebration because it will provide me with an opportunity to share the Parliament with my constituents. I thank the

members of the Parliament who are giving their time to organise the celebration. I believe we should take every opportunity to share our democratic system of government and the Parliament with the people of our State.

THE HON. I. G. MEDCALF (Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [5.10 p.m.]: It is scarcely necessary for me to say that the Government supports the motion, in view of the comments already made by Government members. The Government regards this celebration as an important, commemorative event. It sees no reason for us not to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the first sitting of the Council in any way we see fit.

It is a cause of regret to me that members of the Opposition have decided to make this the opportunity of moving into other areas which, strictly speaking, do not concern this motion. You, Mr President, have been extremely lenient in allowing the debate to continue in the way you have. Of course, you have been very fair. Once the deputy leader of the Opposition got onto his favourite hobby horse which led him astray from the motion you had very little choice, in view of your desire to be fair to all members, but to let them make similar comments. In no way am I being critical of the way the debate has proceeded. It has produced some very useful comments which one would not have expected.

It is unfortunate that the deputy leader of the Opposition saw this motion as an opportunity to stray as far as he did. For him to describe the celebrations as an empty ritual was to condemn every anniversary celebration, centenary, or any other celebration that may be held. If one takes a very strict view and one has a fanatical attitude, all such celebrations could be considered empty rituals. Those who have particular religious views can take a bigoted stance against those who do not share the same religious beliefs.

It behoves us all to tolerate all other people's special beliefs. If one describes proceedings as an empty ritual, one should be careful to say that it is, in one's opinion, an empty ritual, and not to declare it as if it is an inspired view. It is just the view of a particular prejudice in the community. I tolerate that prejudice. I do not believe one should declare in such absolute terms what one dislikes.

The comment was made by the Hon. Phil Pandal that a former Labor Premier (the Hon. Philip Collier) had said, "Thank God for the Legislative Council" It was reported in the Press some years ago that he had spoken those words. This produced a letter in *The West Australian* from Mr C. E. Menagh for whom members of the

time had the greatest respect. He was a reporter who recorded the events of this Parliament very truthfully. He said that those comments could not be found in *Hansard* and he challenged anyone to show where those words had been spoken by the Hon. Philip Collier. I daresay that was the origin of Mr Dans' comment to Mr Pandal that he was wrong about those comments.

It so happened that at the time this controversy was raging I was attending a social function held by the Law Society which was attended by the then Chief Justice (Sir Albert Wolff), who is now deceased. I believe I can say this; I would not want to defame the dead. He said to me, "Oh, you might be interested in that letter in the paper the other day about Phil Collier. I would not know anything about what was said in *Hansard*, but I was the Crown Solicitor for many years and the adviser to Phil Collier. He used to consult with me at all his serious moments, when he had some big legislative problem. I don't know whether you will ever find it in *Hansard*, but I can tell you that many a time he was very pleased to have the Legislative Council sitting there to throw out some of the radical things members of his party wanted to put forward".

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: I think that is doing a disservice to the late Mr Collier, to put that on record, because we don't know.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: I am just repeating what Sir Albert Wolff said to me. I have no way of proving that he said that, but in view of the fact that the comment was made to me, I decided to put it to the House. Members will still hear commonly made the comment the late Phil Collier made. I do not know whether the comment can be found in any document; I would not waste my time looking for it, and I accept Mr Menagh's version of it because he was a faithful reporter. I accept also what Sir Albert Wolff said to me. However, I mention the matter in passing.

During the time of the Tonkin Government one or two of its members in the Legislative Assembly said to me, "Make sure you don't pass that Bill coming up your way". I will not mention who said that because I do not want to impugn anyone.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: They would have said that facetiously, wouldn't they?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: No, it wasn't facetious.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: It was said to me on a social occasion that in regard to one or two particular pieces of legislation the Minister did not want the legislation passed.

The Hon. P. H. Lockyer: They were quite serious; they weren't facetious?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: They were quite serious. I am saying this view is one which has been put on a number of occasions. One must accept that politics is the art of compromising in order to obtain the things which the Government wants, and the passing of legislation it wants. The system must be followed and the game must be played in that way. Every person cannot have his or her own way; every member of a Government, every Minister in a Government, and every member of a political party cannot have his or her own way. Every member of the Labor Party cannot and every Minister of the Tonkin Government could not have his own way. Obviously people must compromise. In Cabinet, Ministers must accept the views of the majority. In a party room or anywhere else one must take note of the views of the majority—that is a fact of life.

If one is in Government and knows that legislation must be passed, clearly one must do what one can in various ways to ensure that the legislation will be passed. That is one of the charters of Government; a Minister must try to end up with a good solution, a proper solution, although the end result may not be just that which the Minister wanted. A Minister cannot always get what he wants, and if anyone thinks otherwise he is on a false trail. We cannot always get what we want, and that applies especially to situations in Parliament. No member or Minister can always have his own way.

I am sure the Hon. Phil Collier was glad of the existence of the Legislative Council, and I am sure many other Ministers have been grateful for its existence. Irrespective of that point the Legislative Council serves an extremely useful purpose.

As I think the Hon. Joe Berinson said, there may be an occasion of discussions in another place about a particular piece of legislation, but that discussion does not derogate from the work of this House, and it does not derogate from the opportunity members in this place have to make comments and to attempt to have those comments accepted or to convince other members that their views should be accepted. Those things are not prevented from occurring.

A certain judge from Queensland once said to me that he believed one of the worst occurrences in Queensland was the abolition of its Legislative Council in 1921 or thereabouts.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: It was in 1922.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: He said, "The Council gives the Parliament the opportunity of having a second look at things. The Council gives everybody that opportunity, and in most cases the

legislation is delayed so that people can have another think about it. I believe not having a Council is a serious fault in the Queensland Parliament". I made that remark in passing, subject to your indulgence, Mr President, like many other comments that have been made today. Many comments made today do not seem to have relevance to the motion before the Chair.

The remarks made by the Hon. Neil McNeill in his summing up were very much to the point, unlike the remarks of many other members. The motion relates to the receiving of a message from the Queen and to the presenting of an address of loyalty to the Queen. That is all the motion is about, and it is something to which members of the Opposition should give much thought. It is all that will be involved if this motion is passed.

When the time comes for the addresses to be made by the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Government I hope the addresses will be confined to the correct topic, and not wander all over the auction. I do not know how one can stop such wandering. Mr Dans did say, and I think appropriately, that he was pleased that only two speeches will be made. I had thought it desirable that Mr Dans and myself meet to discuss how the matter should be handled, although not the content of the speeches. While I was thinking about that I looked at Mr Berinson and suddenly the wisdom of Solomon came to me with the thought that I should write Mr Dans' speech and he should write mine, and we should exchange them five minutes before the meeting commences. However, I am not sure whether I thought that solution out properly.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Perhaps you should give it more thought.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: With the wisdom of Solomon you thought it out properly.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: Everything that needs to be said on this matter has been said, apart from the comments that Mr MacKinnon will make in his summing up.

I commend Mr MacKinnon for his idea of putting forward this motion and what it attempts to do. The idea was also that of the President.

Mr MacKinnon has much experience in this area of activity; no-one is more qualified than he to work out the details of the plan. He has had the assistance of an excellent committee, and I commend its members for the work they have done. The committee has been representative of the Parliament, although this fact was not borne out by the debate. I congratulate the President for the part he has played in this plan, and I indicate

that the Government supports the motion. I commend it to the House.

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West) [5.24 p.m.]: To say this has been a happy afternoon for me would be an absolute lie. The remark, "Why did I bother?" fairly well sums up my feeling. I understand and appreciate the attitude of the Australian Labor Party, but I wonder why its members did not make their statements and then say they would support the motion. That course would have had exactly the same effect.

Mr Dans thinks that the State's 150th anniversary celebrations were a failure. That is a personal view which he was entitled to put, and I do not look back on those celebrations with unmixed joy; however, I thought his remarks had no relevance to this afternoon's motion. I am sure my colleagues, Mr Gayfer, Mr Brown, and Mr Colin Jamieson would agree with me. I must admit I have been aware of the difficulties; one would be foolish not to be aware of them. One thinks that in regard to an historic event one ought to be able to do something to celebrate it. Surely people accept that the organisation is here and, in the words of Mr Gayfer, we should celebrate its future. Perhaps we could celebrate its future when it no longer exists, if that is what members want, but they should say so like adults. They could then say, "Yes, but we will take part in the celebration; we will go along with the men we have allowed to sit on the committee".

God help us! Mr President, I apologise. One of the problems I have experienced with increasing age is that I am becoming more emotive. In my youth I would have used the word "emotional", but now the word "emotive" is more in use.

All my life I have wanted to be a member of Parliament, and when I became a member of Parliament I wanted to become the Leader of the Legislative Council. I made both positions, although I was emptied from the position of leadership. I did make it. I have taken on the jobs I have been asked to do. I was asked by the President to do this job, and to the best of my ability I did it.

It would have been more difficult if it were not for the help, consideration, and ideas of interested people. If Mr Berinson is interested in the education of people why did he not put up that idea at an earlier stage? The Education Department was written to and asked to advise schools that members would be willing to address students on the history of the Parliament in this State. The committee discussed the course taken, and members were forwarded speech notes to use.

It was known and appreciated that the emphasis placed on different aspects would vary, but that was no business of ours.

If I continue along those lines I will only become more emotional. As I have said, ideas came in. I suppose whoever happens to be wearing the hat gets the blame or the credit. Before I get the blame or the credit I ask people to wait to see how the whole thing turns out. Half the population will say that a particular painting is terrible, and the other half will like it. The same applies to everything else in our community.

I am seriously concerned by what will happen. The only clue given by Mr Hetherington was that if the motion is carried the Labor Party will go along with the idea. I sincerely hope that is the idea of his party.

If members of the Labor Party do not turn up at functions I would not say it would seem terrible, but certainly it would seem strange. There is no reason we cannot have the functions if the Labor members do not attend.

Mr Dans commented about the speeches to be made on the day, and Mr Medcalf elaborated on that point. We of the committee hope that the delegates of the Labor Party and everybody else make speeches on the day that are quite formal and not in any way flavoured by what has happened today. We hoped that all the things people wanted to say would be said today so that certain thoughts would be out of their systems. Indeed, the type of remarks we heard today were expected.

I did not expect the Hon. Lyla Elliott to get up and say, "Three cheers! The Legislative Council is a marvellous organisation. I have always agreed with what it has done, and I will come over with my bucket and spade and have a jolly good time at the picnic". I expected her to get up and say, "There are shortcomings, but nevertheless it is an historic occasion, a birthday". I thought Mr Gayfer's reference to anniversaries and special occasions was apposite. It is a special occasion, and we should celebrate it.

Miss Elliott may say she will give notice that at the next occasion the Opposition will move for better representation, or whatever. I do not wish to go into the facts but I can remember a time when the Government could lose a Bill if two members crossed the floor. At one stage we were a smaller party than the ALP. However, that was not the subject of this discussion.

I am hopeful that at the end, we will be told that despite all they have said, members opposite will come to the party, will attend the joint meeting, and will go to the races. One or two

members have told me they will attend, but I am bitterly disappointed about what has occurred. I am sure Mr Brown and Mr Jamieson will join us on the day and I can understand the terrible position in which they have been placed. I sincerely hope they will be allowed to participate, because their participation is invaluable. They have both participated all the time and their input has been first class.

I might have known that this would be a dramatic day. Firstly, it is Armistice Day and it is the 101st anniversary of the hanging of Ned Kelly. This day is notable also for the dismissal of Mr Whitlam; perhaps that is the reason that the nature of the generally temperate people of the Opposition has been other than temperate when they have spoken today.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: That would not have helped.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: One matter which did upset me was that which concerned the Education Department and the pupils who have given their wholehearted support to the proposed celebrations. I will not refer to the other speeches except to say that I have already conveyed my praise to the Hon. Neil McNeill who brought the matter back to an even plane.

I am sure this motion will be carried and when it is transmitted to the Assembly we will be left with a doubt as to whether the joint meeting will take place in the way we have planned. I believe we can carry on in the hope that the celebrations will reflect the feeling of some satisfaction—from the small straw the Hon. Mr Hetherington gave us—that we have weathered 150 years of progressive parliamentary government in this State and not once in that 150-year period have we lapsed into any form of dictatorship or authoritarian Government. God be praised for that and I pray that it will continue forever.

Question put and passed.

Resolution transmitted to the Assembly.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. W. R. WITHERS (North)
[5.32 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill seeks to alter the alignment of the common boundary between the Kimberley and Pilbara electorates and to place with the Boundaries Commission the responsibility of future boundary changes to that area known as the north-west/Murchison-Eyre area. The rapid

expansion of population in the upper half of that region has now made the statutory boundaries anomalous.

Earlier this year, Parliament endeavoured to correct the anomaly found in that imbalance created by the rapidly expanding Pilbara electorate, but the amendments contained in that legislation created an even greater imbalance. That imbalance is reflected in a few simple statistics which show the Kimberley electorate to be 85 000 times larger than one city electorate whilst having only 18 per cent less electors. Despite its huge size of 823 000 square kilometres, the Kimberley has more electors than 26 other electorates in the State.

These imbalances and anomalies need to be corrected by the interpolations of the Boundaries Commission, rather than by the political influences of Parliament.

Since the passage of the last Bill which altered the common boundary between the Kimberley and the Pilbara, members have heard of the dissatisfaction expressed by the northern shire councils in respect of that change. Members also have been able to reflect on the impossible task of representing such a huge Legislative Assembly electorate, which contains not only a large number of communities with a dynamic growth rate, but also 52 Aboriginal communities. Members were not to know of the expected dynamic growth in the Kimberley, because the discovery of oil there was not announced until after the passage of the Bill which changed the boundaries.

Because of these considerations, this Bill seeks to return the common boundary of the Kimberley and Pilbara electorate to the alignment it had at the last State election and to place the responsibility of future boundary changes with the Boundaries Commission in respect of the north-west/Murchison-Eyre area so as to bring electoral uniformity with the agricultural, mining, and pastoral areas in the rest of the State.

I commend the Bill to the House.

THE HON. PETER DOWDING (North) [5.34 p.m.]: The Opposition supports the Bill at this stage and may wish to raise a number of other matters if the Bill reaches the Committee stage.

The principle that Mr Withers has espoused—that is, to review a situation which is clearly one of the worst gerrymanders that has been perpetrated in the history of this State—is a view with which we concur.

It is one of the worst gerrymanders because, whilst the Opposition does not agree that it is appropriate in this day and age to have an

electoral system which is based on any principle other than equality of value for each vote for each citizen in this State, there has been in the past an argument that weighted votes for isolated areas has been justified because of the difficulty in communication and because of sectional interests which need to be protected.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: Because you held the seats, too!

The Hon. PETER DOWDING: That is, of course, the fatuous comment we would expect from someone who obviously does not know his history. The Labor Party has not endeavoured to do as the Liberal Party is attempting to do on this occasion; that is, to completely disregard basic democratic principles. The people in the Murchison-Eyre and Gascoyne will be able to perceive the inadequacies of Mr Moore when he seeks re-election.

The point I wished to make was that an argument has been put forward—which I do not espouse and the Labor Party does not espouse—which does not have any validity. That argument was that weighted votes for isolated areas have been justified because of the difficulty in communication and sectional interests which need to be protected.

If at any stage in our history there had been any truth in that argument, it must surely have evaporated by now because there is no part of this State, with the availability of air transport and with improved communications, that does not have communication facilities. There is no part of this State that could not be serviced adequately by a member of Parliament. It is quite clear that the concept of protection of sectional interests of, say, the pastoralists, is no longer appropriate in a democratic House of a so-called democracy.

Whereas there may be some argument and some who still wish to espouse the argument in favour of weighted votes, that simply does not hang true of any steps taken by this Government in relation to the electorates the subject of this Bill. If there is any truth or validity in the argument about weighted electorates, can it be said there is justification for an electorate, such as Kalamunda, having a much smaller number of electors than one of the most isolated areas in this State; namely, the Kimberley electorate? Even Mr Moore would find it difficult to justify an electorate of only 2 000 electors in this State for the lower House when the electorate of Kimberley is, under the old rolls, almost three times the size of that in numbers and almost six times that size under the proposed new boundary.

I am pleased to note that even Mr Moore does not have the temerity to suggest otherwise. So there is no argument at all which supports the changes in boundaries as have been proposed to be carried out at the end of this year.

For members who are not familiar with them I will quote the figures under the existing boundaries and under the proposed new boundaries. The electorate of Kimberley has 5 850 enrolled electors but under the new boundary it will be an enrolled electorate of 11 748 people.

The electorate of Pilbara has, under the existing boundaries, 15 544 electors, but under the new boundaries it will have an enrolled electorate of 9 554 people. Upon examining those figures, we will note that the number of electors for the proposed Kimberley electorate is greater than the number enrolled for Mundaring, Kalamunda, or Darling Range. There are almost 4 000 more electors in the most isolated section of this State than there are in the electorates which are no more than suburbs of Perth.

In respect of the roll figures and the number of people who reside in that area and are eligible to be enrolled and are not enrolled—due to circumstances I will deal with in a moment—it is estimated that 40 per cent of the electorate is not enrolled in the Kimberley and Pilbara electorates.

If those figures are accurate, on the old Kimberley boundaries some 2 343 people are not enrolled, making a total enrolment under the existing boundaries of 8 201. Yet if one looks at the statistical material available on the advice of the demographers, it would appear that upwards of 10 000 eligible people live in the electorate of Kimberley on the old boundaries—2 000 above the figure I have just quoted.

On the new boundaries of Kimberley, with an existing enrolment of 11 748, and adding the 40 per cent, which amounts to 4 699, the total number of people eligible to be enrolled in Kimberley is 16 447. If the demographic information is correct, a total of 18 447 people live in Kimberley, and they will be represented by the next Labor member for Kimberley. Those people will be under-represented in this House after the redistribution when one compares Kimberley with any other electorate in this State. Indeed, more people will be living in Kimberley than in Nedlands. It is absurd that that situation should apply.

Turning for a moment to Pilbara, under the existing boundaries there is an enrolment of 15 544. Adding 40 per cent takes it to 21 762. Under the new boundaries, it will be 9 544 plus

3 822, making a total of 13 366. That will bring it into line with some metropolitan seats. The electorate of Pilbara will be on a par with metropolitan seats, while the electorate of Kimberley will be much larger than most metropolitan seats.

The electorate of Pilbara will be nearly twice the size of electorates in the agricultural areas of this State; and it will be nearly twice the size of electorates as near to the city as Mundaring, Kalamunda, and the like.

There is no secret about it. This is a clear attempt to prop up the position of Brian Sodeman, the member for Pilbara, who is in a very shaky situation and who is likely to lose his seat at the next election.

The Hon. P. H. Lockyer: Rot!

The Hon. PETER DOWDING: Mr Sodeman knows—and I am sure the Liberal Party machine knows as well—that on the figures before the last State and Federal elections, which figures undoubtedly will be improved upon at the next State election, he will have no chance of maintaining his seat at the next election. For the sake of keeping one seat in the Parliament, this State is being subjected to a gerrymander as blatant as anything done in Queensland by Mr Bjelke-Petersen. It is a democratic disgrace that the electors of this State should be treated thus. In my view, it is an attack on the democratic process. There is no justification for what has occurred. There is no justification for leaving the position as it stands at present.

The position in relation to the North Province and the other electorates which affect the electoral basis of this House is unchanged in the Bill. As the Labor Party has made clear for a very long time, there is no point in having a House of Parliament which is not democratic.

The United States Supreme Court has held since 1962 that the essence of democracy is to do away with the concept of weighted electorates. Weighted electorates mean that the conservative interests have the numbers, not because they represent the majority of people in the State, but because the electorate is sectionalised in a way to ensure the supremacy of the conservative view. That is flying in the face of the principles of democracy.

If one wished to ensure the election of a number of people who represented sectional interests such as in the country, agricultural, mining, or pastoral electorates, one could have a weighted vote in this House. That might give some legitimacy to the outrageous position in this State where it matters not what percentage the

Labor Party polls at a State election—whether 57 per cent or 60 per cent of Western Australians wish to ensure that the State is run by a Labor Government—the Labor Party will never have the power to control the process of legislation through this House. If the conservatives retained the balance of power in this House through nothing but a gerrymander, the conservative Government would grow flabby and lacking in sensitivity to the democratic needs of our society. That has occurred in this case.

Other factors must be mentioned in connection with any comment about the state of the electoral rolls in Pilbara and Kimberley, and in the rest of the State. Some 37 000 people who are not on the State electoral rolls in this State have enrolled for Commonwealth elections. Only one explanation can be given for this, and that is that the Government is manipulating the electoral system by making it more difficult for people to enrol in a State election.

It is a fact that many people change their addresses frequently because they do not have the economic ability to maintain their address in one place for a length of time, or because they move around the State following work; and those people are more likely to be supporters of the Opposition. The Government knows this. Indeed, it would appear that almost two-thirds of persons interviewed in a sample recently—people who were not on the roll—would support the Labor Party. For whatever reason, in each case those people have not been enrolled at the State and Federal levels. There is undoubtedly an interference in the electoral enrolment process by virtue of the 1979 amendment to the Electoral Act.

The justification for limiting the classes of witnesses to electoral enrolments was that it was to protect illiterate Aboriginal persons from being dragooned into enrolment without understanding the nature of the act. Surely members opposite will now know that Aboriginal people have shown themselves to be determined to vote, no matter what obstacles the Liberal Party and this Government put in their way. Elections have been held for the State Houses, for the Federal House, and for the National Aboriginal Conference since our Electoral Act was amended. Three elections in that time have shown that even the most ill-educated person understands the nature of the democratic process sufficiently to know what it means to enrol.

The Hon. P. H. Lockyer: They are manipulated.

The Hon. PETER DOWDING: We have heard not a skerrick from anybody, including the Hon. Phil Lockyer; and suddenly we find that even the Hon. Norman Moore visited the Cundeleele Aborigines recently and offered them all sorts of goodies on behalf of the Western Australian Government. A lot of interest has been shown in the Aboriginal communities in Murchison-Eyre; and recently the Hon. Norman Moore has found Cundeleele a matter of interest in his electorate.

The Hon. N. F. Moore interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. P. H. Lockyer: Racial manipulator!

Withdrawal of Remark

The Hon. PETER DOWDING: I ask for the withdrawal of that remark. I regard it as offensive.

The PRESIDENT: I did not hear the remark.

The Hon. PETER DOWDING: It was, "Racial manipulator".

The PRESIDENT: I ask the honourable member to withdraw the remark.

The Hon. P. H. LOCKYER: I am sorry that it touches the member's heart. I withdraw it.

The PRESIDENT: I ask the honourable member to withdraw the remark without comment.

The Hon. P. H. LOCKYER: I withdraw.

Debate Resumed

The Hon. PETER DOWDING: It is that sort of scurrilous remark that we have heard so often since 1976. Despite three court hearings involving members opposite and their supporters, we still hear those sorts of allegations. As the Hon. Phil Lockyer knows what happens to people outside the House—

Point of Order

The Hon. R. G. PIKE: The Hon. Peter Dowding asked for a withdrawal of the remark by the Hon. Philip Lockyer. He is now repeating the charges without repeating the words. That is unfair.

The PRESIDENT: I suggest to the honourable member that he disregard the interjection which has been withdrawn.

Debate Resumed

The Hon. PETER DOWDING: Despite three court hearings and a number of allegations of misconduct, members opposite and their supporters have not once taken the bit between their teeth and done anything about it. They know as well as I do the sorts of allegations made since 1976 in a most scurrilous way against the member

for Kimberley and others. Whether or not they were echoed in this House, nobody was able to sustain them.

The requirement for special classes of witnesses to the electoral enrolment cards has made the job of the State Electoral Office so much more difficult. In that office, the civil servants do their best to avoid the charges which are inevitably laid as a result of pressure from this Government. They do their best to ensure that elections are free and democratic; and they do that with limited staff, limited financial resources, and a limited opportunity to have their voices heard.

Those people do not find it easy to process the thousands of enrolment cards that come into the office each year without adequate witnessing. I suggest there is no longer a need for that special provision in the Electoral Act. The provision was inserted only to inhibit Aboriginal people from enrolling. At the very best, it has made the job of people in country and pastoral areas more difficult if they want to enrol.

Recently in this House we dealt with a Bill which made changes to the procedures for witnessing declarations because of the difficulties people experienced in finding justices of the peace. The range of persons who can sign statutory declarations is broader than that permitted under the Electoral Act. As an example of how absurd are the provisions, a civil servant cannot witness an electoral enrolment card, but he can witness a statutory declaration. A school teacher may witness a declaration, but he cannot witness an electoral enrolment card. A commissioner for affidavits, who is far more important in the legal sense than a justice of the peace, cannot witness an electoral enrolment card. A notary public, whose signature is the only signature recognised internationally on documents, cannot witness an electoral enrolment card.

Those absurdities highlight the difficulties that people experience in seeking to enrol in this State. That is the explanation—and the Government knows it—for the low enrolment in this State. This has led to a situation where the rolls are so bad and the Government is so embarrassed by them that, in a so-called cost-cutting effort, it is no longer printing the rolls with its previous frequency. Therefore, the opportunity for people to work their way through the morass and out of the chaos is even more limited.

Instead of adopting the sort of step that was taken in the Northern Territory to utilise the services of the Commonwealth Electoral Office and to avoid the duplication of rolls, this

Government has chosen to maintain a separate State roll. For what reason? The answer is simply that it is part of the Government's attempt to maintain its power in this State at all costs.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 p.m.

The Hon. PETER DOWDING: The matters properly to be considered in making a division of electorates are really three. These criteria that ought to be employed are referred to in various Statutes, particularly section 7 of the Electoral Districts Act. Regrettably, the quota system is one the Government has used to achieve its major gerrymander. The commissioners, if they were required to analyse the electorates the subject of this legislation, would be required to have in mind community of interest, means of communication, distances from the capital, physical features, and the existing boundaries of districts. On none of those criteria could it possibly be said that the changes which are the subject of this legislation were justified.

Not only is there a clear determination by the Government to ignore the geography, which is evidenced by the geographical line it has drawn in which it has placed almost all of the Labor-voting inland mining towns into an already safe Labor seat of Kimberley, but also it has divided shires in half and has placed a line directly through the Shire of East Pilbara and also one separating the Shire of West Pilbara from its administrative centre in Onslow, which remains in Mr Sodeman's propped-up seat, and from its central numbers area; namely the towns of Tom Price and Paraburdoo. Between those two towns there is a population of 8 000.

The line separated the towns of Tom Price and Paraburdoo from their coastal service towns of Karratha and Dampier but, funnily enough—because the gerrymander was just getting embarrassing at that stage—left Pannawonica attached to its coastal service town of Wickham. It excluded Newman from its coastal service town of Port Hedland, and Shay Gap and Goldsworthy from their coastal town of Port Hedland. It meant that the community of interest which existed within the Pilbara, and might well have justified a division of the Pilbara into two electorates, was shattered, which is to the substantial disadvantage of the Pilbara.

It meant that the community of interest in the Kimberley which, up until now has been substantially related to the pastoral industry and to the exploration and mining industries, but not the iron ore industry, was also muddled by integrating into it areas of the iron ore industry separated geographically from the Kimberley

area by 1 000 miles of desert. It is now impossible, under the boundaries that the Government has inserted, to travel from one half of the Kimberley electorate to the other by scheduled airline other than by travelling into and stopping within the electorate of Pilbara. It makes it impossible for the member for Kimberley to travel from the geographic Kimberley area into the rest of his electorate other than by travelling into Port Hedland and then into Karratha to reach the two towns of Tom Price and Paraburdoo and on to the town of Newman.

So, on the basis of community of interest and means of communication, there is no justification for the change and it lends itself to a return to the geographical boundaries the subject of this legislation. It is of interest to note the number of shires in the electorate of Kimberley and Pilbara that have objected to the Government's proposal and have voiced their objections strongly. They are not organisations which normally get involved in what might, on the face of it, appear to be a party-political issue, but the effrontery of a Government prepared to manipulate the electoral boundaries in this way is so great that the shires in many cases have felt it necessary to intervene and speak on the issue. In a sense, it amounts to an abandonment of the electorate of Kimberley because the Government knows it is unwinnable. There is an extremely able and popular member for Kimberley who has held the seat against all comers, and so without any explanation it has placed into the electorate of Kimberley more towns voting Labor.

The Aboriginal communities of Strelley and Yandeyarra again are placed into the electorate of Kimberley, despite the immense geographical difficulty of getting to Yandeyarra. The only way by which the member for Kimberley can go there is to fly into Port Hedland and stay there overnight, and this is not part of his electorate; other than that, he must service Marble Bar and Nullagine and the major towns I have mentioned as well as the town of Wittenoom. We understand that the Government is ready to cast the inhabitants of Wittenoom into the electorate of Kimberley because it knows, because of the disgraceful way it treated those residents who have made so much of a mark on the tourist industry, it has no chance of receiving their support at the next election.

It is not appropriate to move boundaries for purely political purposes and for that reason, the Opposition supports the proposal that there ought to be a reference of all seats within this State to the Boundaries Commission. It is a proposition which needs to be accompanied by additional

measures. The Opposition takes the view that it is perhaps not the time nor the place to introduce legislation for that purpose, since this is essentially Mr Withers' Bill, and it raises a very important and urgent issue.

The Opposition firmly believes that the principle of weighted electorates no longer serves the community of Western Australia. As the Hon. Joe Berinson has said in the past, can anyone point to a section of the community in the electorate of Murchison-Eyre that really wants seven times the voting power of some other section of the community in Western Australia? Is there anyone in Gascoyne who insists on having three times the voting power of an electorate in Kimberley? Does Mr Norman Moore really suggest to any sensible person that the electors of Murchison-Eyre demand privileges not available to the people of Kimberley in terms of their voting powers? Does he really suggest that the people of Kimberley and Pilbara should be disadvantaged in comparison with any country electorate?

Regrettably, the Government will simply squash this genuine attempt by the Hon. Bill Withers to change what is an unjustifiable position and, no doubt, the Minister will get up in his usual manner and not answer all the major issues involved and will simply use his numbers to cut out any sensible discussion on this issue.

It is of interest to note that the Minister himself represents an electorate in the upper House which contains fewer electors than my province. One can drive from one end of his province to the other without any difficulty at all and canvass all of the issues within the electorate without any of the difficulties that exist in isolated areas. How on earth can he have the temerity to support a proposition where he has 25 000 electors in his province and I have nearly 30 000 eligible electors in my province, which is by far more difficult to service in any terms one likes to justify?

So the answer to the Minister is not to divide the distant provinces in half, but as in the Federal situation to give a quota, plus or minus 10 per cent, which allows for a reasonable movement of population between elections, and then give the members the facilities to deal with the electorates which are large. It is a facade to suggest there is any rhyme or reason to the Government's attitudes except to maintain its increasingly fragile hold on power in this State.

THE HON. N. F. MOORE (Lower North) [7.41 p.m.]: I did not intend to speak in this debate because the House had already decided during the recent debate on amendments to the Electoral Districts Act to agree with the

Government's decisions on this matter. However, I rise to point out some facts to the Hon. Peter Dowding who, I suggest, has cast aspersions upon my attitude towards Aboriginal people. I realise I am not relating my comments strictly to the Bill.

The Hon. P. H. Lockyer: Make sure he sits in the House long enough to listen to it.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: What he said was quite unfair and unjustified. He referred to a meeting I attended in Kalgoorlie of the Eastern Goldfields Aboriginal Consultative Committee and suggested I attended for some political purpose. I want to make it quite clear to him and the House that I was invited by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs officer in Kalgoorlie (Mr Cedric Wyatt) to attend that meeting. I accepted the invitation and spoke to the Minister for Community Welfare to ask whether there were any matters he felt could be mentioned at this meeting.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Any largesse you could distribute. That is the truth.

The Hon. P. H. Lockyer: Shut up and listen.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: I bet you worked for that invitation.

The Hon. P. H. Lockyer: You will be exposed for what you are.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Desperate for a bit of largesse.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: The State at that time had decided its policy on the Cundeelee Aboriginal people.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: What a coincidence.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: It is an issue in which I had taken a considerable amount of interest.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: I'll bet you had!

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: I was very pleased that the Government had at last made a decision and, of course, I was delighted to be able to have the opportunity to make that announcement because the Cundeelee people are my constituents.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Had you ever serviced them before?

The Hon. P. H. Lockyer: Yes, unlike you.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: I was delighted that the Government had at last made a decision on their future and that a pastoral station was going to be made available to them, and I was pleased to have the opportunity of making that announcement, regardless of what the Hon. Peter Dowding says in relation to political largesse and so on.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: The timing was political, because you know you are going to lose your seat at the next election.

The Hon. P. H. Lockyer: Don't be so childish!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: The honourable gentleman is suggesting that in my activities as member for Lower North Province I use examples such as this to try to gain some support amongst Aboriginal people. He has suggested if I do not do this, there is no doubt I will lose my seat at the next election.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: There is no doubt that you will lose it and there is no doubt that they will not support you. You and your party are not deserving of it.

The Hon. P. H. Lockyer: How would you like to be white and to be in his electorate? It is a second-class situation.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: It is very interesting when one looks at the endorsed Labor Party candidates for Lower North Province and Murchison-Eyre, who have one aim in mind. In fact, the endorsed candidate for Murchison-Eyre said publicly in the newspaper that because he could not rely on the traditional white Labor vote, he would have to enrol Aborigines—

The Hon. Peter Dowding: He did not say that at all and you know it!

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: —because they would vote for the Labor Party and therefore he would win the seat.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I recommend to honourable members that they cease their interjections, and I recommend to the Hon. Norman Moore that he ignores them and directs his comments to the Chair.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: Thank you, Mr President. I was suggesting that the example quoted by the member was a derogatory remark in relation to my performance as a member of Parliament in respect of the Aboriginal people. I make the point that the Cundeelee Mission is not an isolated example; I have been involved with people right throughout my electorate, regardless of their colour, ever since I became a member of this House. I suggest that the member talk to people in the north-eastern goldfields; and particularly to the people at the Mt. Margaret Mission, where I have been successful in getting a school, a new power supply and now a water supply.

The Hon. Peter Dowding interjected.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: That is not the reason at all. In fact, the first thing I did as a member of Parliament was to get a school at Mt. Margaret. That was in 1977. I suggest the member considers those things instead of making ridiculous remarks. I am very upset about this because that community is one in which I have taken a great deal of interest.

The Hon. P. H. Lockyer: That is the sort of slimy thing he does.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: These are people in whom I have taken an interest because they are my constituents and not because they are black, white, or brindle.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: You did not criticise the Commissioner of Police for his attitude, did you?

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: I was not even in the Chamber on that occasion.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Would you have criticised him if you were in the Chamber?

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: I have already spoken in this House about the situation that occurs in some parts of my electorate in respect of Aborigines drinking.

The Hon. Peter Dowding interjected.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: If the member opposite wishes to refer to some of my speeches he will see that I said I was very distressed about the situation.

The Hon. Peter Dowding interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Again I say to the honourable member that his interjections must cease, and I recommend that the Hon. Norman Moore addresses the Chair and does not enter into arguments with the member opposite.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: Thank you, Sir. I must confess that I find it rather difficult to ignore the interjections, but I will do my best. I wanted to give some examples of occasions in which I have taken an interest in the Aboriginal people in my electorate. I regard all my constituents in the same way, whether they are black, white, or anything else. They are all constituents, and if they have a problem I will do my best to remedy it for them.

I take great exception to the suggestion of the Hon. Peter Dowding that in respect of the Cundeelee Mission I was merely trying to win votes for the next election. That is not true, and the proof will be found at the next election.

THE HON. R. G. PIKE (North Metropolitan) [7.43 p.m.]: I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without making some comments in respect of

the remarks made by the Hon. Peter Dowding regarding representation in this place. He referred to imbalance in voting power, and in particular, to a changed imbalance in province voting power. As is always the case, he alleged the Labor Party is never able to win a majority in this place, and I thought it appropriate that I should bring to the attention of the House the fact that in regard to electoral systems the Labor Party has adopted more positions than exist in the *Kama Sutra*.

The fact of the matter is that a study of history will show that the Labor Party, having consistently failed to gain the support of the electorate in this State, seeks—and has sought on other occasions—to change the system. Therefore, I did a little mental arithmetic which I jotted down on paper, and which I will now state so that it will at least be recorded in *Hansard*. Perhaps if I speak slowly, the Hon. Peter Dowding will be able to follow the point.

The Hon. P. G. Pandal: Very slowly.

The Hon. R. G. PIKE: I make the point that at present there are nine members of the Labor Party in this place. I make the further point that the North Metropolitan Province, which I represent together with the Hon. Peter Wells, was recently represented by one Liberal member and one Labor member. Therefore, it is a province, in terms of its existing boundaries, that the Labor Party is always able to win. The same situation applies to the other provinces which I shall enumerate.

The South-East Metropolitan Province, as you know, Mr President, because you are one of its representatives, was represented by one Liberal member and one Labor member until the recent success of the Hon. Phillip Pandal. Clearly, for the purpose of my hypothetical argument it could be admitted that the Labor Party could win that seat. Therefore, that represents another two seats which could be won by the Labor Party.

Let us now look at the Lower Central Province. We have had all this garbage and malarkey from the Opposition tonight; but this is a province which has in it the Assembly seats of Collie, Warren, and Katanning—two very strong Labor seats and one National Country Party seat. That is a seat any amateur psephologist would have—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What does that mean?

The Hon. R. G. PIKE: It means a person who studies politics and electoral results, something the Leader of the Opposition has been trying to do for years.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Can you say it again?

The Hon. R. G. PIKE: It comes from the Greek word for "pebble".

The Hon. Peter Dowding: And it has a lower enrolment than my province.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Explain that if you can.

The Hon. R. G. PIKE: Let members courteously and quietly listen to the facts so that they may be properly recorded by *Hansard*, and let members give the reporters a fair go so that at least they can hear.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: It has a lower enrolment than my province.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: What is so marvellous about your province?

The Hon. R. G. PIKE: Excuse me for interrupting the members while they are interrupting me.

The Lower Central Province has two of the strongest Labor seats in the State, and one National Country Party seat. Any amateur election results watcher and student of the same would tell us there is no way at all any party other than the Labor Party could win that province.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Do you think you could win Collie yourself?

The Hon. R. G. PIKE: The point was made earlier tonight by Mr Lewis that the province has enjoyed excellent representation, and the fact that the Labor Socialist Party in this State has failed, and will fail dismally in the future, to capture the confidence of the people cannot be ascribed to boundaries; it is a question of the ability to win 50 per cent of the votes and 50 per cent of the seats. I take that province as a most tangible, most practical, and most realistic example to illustrate the socialist party could win seats if it had the confidence of the people, and if it had candidates of the calibre of the members presently representing the province—in this case the Hon. Win Piesse and the Hon. Sandy Lewis. The calibre of those persons representing the coalition parties has enabled them to capture this province which has two super safe Labor electorates and one National Country Party electorate.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie interjected.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: I am not surprised the Labor Party would not have a bar of you.

The Hon. R. G. PIKE: If I may carry on with the point I am making, in the case of the North Province—and anyone with a modicum of ability in mental arithmetic can check this out—the Labor Party holds one of the seats. Therefore,

theoretically—and nobody may gainsay this fact—it is able to win the other seat. In the Lower North Province we have a situation in which the Labor Party owns the province; it has two members.

If we add to the total of nine members, two members for the North Metropolitan Province, two members for the South-East Metropolitan Province, two members for the Lower Central Province, two members for the Lower North Province, and one member for the North Province we arrive at the incredible total of 18 members in a House of 32—an absolute majority which, as far as history is concerned, if one can be properly retrospective in this matter, is a situation that has always been attainable. Not even the loud-voiced Opposition can gainsay the fact that the Labor Party is able to win provinces in which it has held one seat at one time or both seats at another time.

So I say to members opposite what was properly said by the leader of the Labor Party in Queensland (Mr Casey): If an Opposition is good enough it can win 50 per cent of the votes and 50 per cent of the seats. No amount of jawjawing from the Labor Party's megaphone on the other side of the House—Mr Dowding—will gainsay those facts. It is a question of having the confidence of the people. I suggest that instead of engaging in smart aleck tactics in this place members opposite should spend some time trying to gain the support of their electorates.

Let this put paid for all time to the furphy that is trotted out on every occasion that the Labor Party has never won a majority in this place. It has always been able to win a majority, but it has just never been good enough.

THE HON. J. M. BERINSON (North-East Metropolitan) [7.56 p.m.]: The debate has taken a peculiar direction, in fact, two peculiar directions with the recent contributions by the Hon. Norman Moore and the Hon. Robert Pike.

Mr Moore is concerned with defending his personal record as a member and Mr Pike is concerned with showing that it is theoretically, if remotely possible for the Labor Party to win Government in this State with or without a gerrymander. Neither of them has concerned himself with the morality of a gerrymander and neither of them has concerned himself with Mr Withers' Bill. That confirms their general attitude—

The Hon. N. F. Moore: I said I would not speak about it.

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: —to questions of electoral reform in this House, and I hope they

will excuse me if I try to direct the debate back to Mr Withers' Bill.

Several years ago I remember seeing a cartoon that had a figure of a sad man on it—he was really a terribly miserable man—and the caption under the cartoon said, "My friends told me to cheer up, things could always be worse. So I cheered up and, sure enough things are worse". I am reminded of that cartoon every time I consider the Electoral Districts Act. It is such a thoroughly objectionable piece of legislation that one would think any amendment at all would have to be a change for the better. One would think that, but one would be wrong because the Liberal and National Country Party Government has shown such remarkable ingenuity in finding ways to make the legislation worse. By "worse" I mean worse from a democratic point of view.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: No worse than the Labor Party.

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: When the Electoral Districts Act was last before the House the Labor Party pointed to the fact that the strong growth of population in Rockingham would shortly—

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Has that anything to do with Mr Withers' Bill?

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: I am glad that the honorable member asked that question, and the relevance of it to the Hon. W. R. Withers' Bill is that what we saw in the Bill earlier this year was a package directed at manipulating the electoral system of this State. Mr Withers' Bill is in effect an attempt to reverse one aspect of that package, but since it may have escaped the member's attention on the last occasion the legislation was before the House, I think that I should direct the Hon. A. A. Lewis' attention to the whole nature of the package. Faced with the fact that a strong growth of population in Rockingham would shortly have led to the creation of two Labor seats, the Government parties manipulated the Act to restrict that area to one representative. Again, worried about their prospects in the hills electorates, the Government arbitrarily drew a line to exclude from those seats important pockets of Labor support.

Coming directly to the point of Mr Withers' measure, in the north the Government acknowledged its loss of the Kimberley seat for the foreseeable future, and it drew another arbitrary line to try to stave off the loss of Pilbara.

Mr Withers' Bill is restricted in its immediate aim to reversing the position only in regard to the dividing line between the Kimberley seat and the

Pilbara seat. In the longer term he seeks to leave the boundaries of all four statutory seats to the judgment of the independent Electoral Commissioners.

As the Hon. Peter Dowding has indicated, we support that to the extent that those provisions will lead to at least some improvement in the present situation. We support the second reading for two reasons: Firstly, with a view to opening the way to the possibility of further amendment at the Committee stage, and secondly, on the basis that reverting to the pre-1981 boundary between the Kimberley and Pilbara seats would at least leave the position marginally better than it is now.

If it appears that our support for the Bill is something less than whole-hearted, then that accurately reflects our position. The fact is that the pre-1981 position was also scandalous. It is just that what we have now is carrying that position to the furthest degree.

Now, Mr President, to understand the irrationality and the lack of principle in the provision which Mr Withers wants to amend, we have to look beyond the north-west to the metropolitan area, and to the area between. The historical basis for the gerrymander of this State has always been the grossly disproportionate number of seats allocated to the anti-Labor voters who live outside the arbitrarily defined metropolitan area. Under the system metropolitan voters have been regulated virtually to second-class citizenship; their votes are worth only about half that of the outer metropolitan voters and, as we have seen, as little as one-eighth of the value of the voters in the Murchison-Eyre electorate.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You are going through it all over again.

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: I have been here for a year and a half and I have never found a decent answer to the arguments we put forward about electoral reform.

Point of Order

The Hon. R. G. PIKE: On a point of order. Mr President, the member has just used the word "gerrymander". I say that the coalition parties in this State hold steadfastly to a quota, but I will read the definition—

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: I object—

The PRESIDENT: All right—I am listening to the point of order of the honourable member.

The Hon. R. G. PIKE: I object to the use of the word "gerrymander" and I ask for it to be withdrawn.

The PRESIDENT: Order! That is not a point of order.

Debate Resumed

The Hon. Peter Dowding: I can understand how they squirm.

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: I am pleased to see that Government members are at last becoming sensitive about this issue. It is a sensitivity that does them more credit than their performance in the past, which included the sort of attitude of the Hon. A. A. Lewis, which is to the effect that he has heard it all before.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Twice in the one day.

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: I commend the attitude of the Hon. R. G. Pike, and I hope his sensitivity extends to some of his colleagues; it will not be before time.

To the extent that the Liberal Party has ever made any pretence of defending the current position in principle, it has relied on factors such as distance, space, and remoteness. Of course, it knows as well as we do that sort of argument is all humbug, but at least some skerrick of respectability for it might have been possible if only it had attempted to apply that standard with any degree of consistency. If there were any consistent application of that so-called principle, the Pilbara and the Kimberley would surely have amongst the smallest enrolments in the State. Instead, under the recently redrawn boundary, Kimberley will have 3 000 more electors than the seats of Darling Range, Kalamunda, and Mundaring, and indeed, 3 000 more voters than in every other one of the 23 non-metropolitan seats.

The seat of Pilbara will have a larger enrolment than all of those seats, with the single exception of Avon. Unfortunately for the logic of Mr Withers' argument, the position will be little better in principle than it is now, even given his redrawn boundary. I am pleased to have his acknowledgement of that point by the nod of his head.

Even reverting to the old boundary, we will be left with the position that Pilbara will have almost double the electors of all of the 23 non-metropolitan seats. Indeed, Pilbara will have more electors than a number of metropolitan seats. How that can in any way be accommodated to the pretence of a defence in principle which the Government condescends to present from time to time, is impossible to discern.

A more attractive proposal in Mr Withers' Bill is the proposition that boundaries of the existing four statutory seats should be referred for the decision of the Electoral Commissioners. It really is obnoxious that the boundaries of any seats should be established directly by Governments. There is no other possibility—political nature

being what it is—but that power of that sort will inevitably be exercised to subvert the democratic principle, and to apply that power for self-interest and for the advantage of the existing Government.

So I believe Mr Withers is leading the House in the right direction in suggesting that in future the boundaries of the seats should not be established by the Government—by the Parliament—but should be established by the Electoral Commissioners. If that is right, however, as I believe it is, why wait, as Mr Withers suggests, to apply that principle only from 1986 onwards? In the view of the Opposition, that principle is sound enough to apply at once and that will be the point of an amendment which we will move during the Committee stage, if the Bill gets that far.

It should, of course, be understood that even with such an amendment, or even with Mr Withers' Bill in its present form, the position would be acceptable only on a very short-term basis. Democracy demands one-vote-one-value and that should apply throughout the State, just as it applies throughout the Commonwealth in Federal elections and throughout every other State of the Commonwealth, with the single exception of Queensland. That is the main area to which we must always direct our attention and to the extent that Mr Withers' Bill moves at least some small, some marginal distance along the path to that general reform, this Bill ought to be supported, and I commend it to the House.

THE HON. G. E. MASTERS (West—Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife) [8.10 p.m.]: We have listened already to two speakers from the Opposition, and it is fair to say that we have heard those same speeches on a number of occasions. As the Hon. J. M. Berinson said, he has a right to say it as often as he likes. That is fair enough, and we understand it. Nevertheless, I suggest that we could quite easily have read the same speech in earlier copies of *Hansard*. That was certainly the case with the Hon. Peter Dowding, because his speech was like a gramophone recording.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Well recorded though!

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: We are becoming used to those sorts of distortions in the honourable member's speeches, and all concerned are becoming heartily fed up with some of the expressions used.

I have found it extraordinarily confusing to listen to the two sets of debates today. We heard one argument put this afternoon, and then the opposite argument put tonight. I think the Opposition is in a state of utter confusion. Its

arguments in the latter part of this debate have been absolutely confused, and the insincerity with which the Opposition members approach this debate is to be deplored.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: We are not confused.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: We always hear Opposition members saying there should be one-vote-one-value—

The Hon. Peter Dowding: And that is right.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: —and that there should be equality in the different electorates. Having heard that, we listened to the Hon. Peter Dowding talk about the alterations to the seats of Kimberley and Pilbara. He said these boundaries should be decided on geographical grounds.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: You didn't listen. I didn't say that at all.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I wrote it down. They were the exact words that the honourable member used.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: That is untrue. You have to distort the argument.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: As it happens, there will be virtually an equal number of electors in both electorates. So there is a division which virtually divides the number of voters equally in the Kimberley and the Pilbara at the present time.

The Hon. Peter Dowding then went on to talk about the West Province which has 25 000 electors and how wrong it is to compare that province with the remote areas of the Pilbara and Kimberley. Again that is a contradiction of what he said in the afternoon.

He said there should be an equality of voters, but not 10 minutes later he said that equality is all wrong. I want to know what the Opposition really stands for, and what it really means. The Opposition should be honest about its stance. We know very well that when the ALP represented the north and held these seats, not one single word was said about this situation. We know the Opposition is conducting a political exercise tonight.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: What have you done with electoral boundaries?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The Opposition has contradicted itself twice in the one afternoon.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Why don't you answer the argument?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: It is about time that the public realised what the Opposition is doing. I suggest that the Opposition will make the

Hon. Bill Withers change his mind. He will be embarrassed at the way Opposition members are supporting his Bill, knowing their insincerity, and knowing the way they are using the Bill for political purposes, and contradicting everything they have said earlier.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Would you care to say why Katanning should have fewer voters than Kimberley and Pilbara?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am commenting on what the Hon. Peter Dowding said. He said it was wrong for my province to have the same number of electors as the seats of Kimberley and Pilbara. I suggest that he does not know what he means. All we have had from him is contradictions.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: All you have given us is personal abuse. You have not had an argument.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: We recognise that the Pilbara and Kimberley boundaries are not perfect, but the result is as good as we can achieve in the difficult circumstances.

We know there are developments in the Hon. Bill Withers' electorate, and what we are saying is we have made those changes to have an even balance, to make things work properly, knowing the demands on those people. We make no excuse for it. We think they are the right changes.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: No-one else does.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Come on; they can hear the member from where they live.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (the Hon. V. J. Ferry): Order! There are far too many interjections.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The speeches we have heard from Opposition members tonight have been typical. A number of untruths have been told and there have been distortions of the facts and figures. Members opposite have suggested there are thousands of people not yet on the electoral roll. When the Hon. Peter Dowding says 30 000 people are not on the roll who could be on the roll, he obviously does not know for sure. These are typical comments; they are typical of the distortions which members opposite have produced in this debate. Their figures have no foundation, and members opposite know this.

They are flying a political kite when they speak about a move to prop up the electorate of Pilbara. Mr Brian Sodeman has never been in danger of losing that seat, because he is too good. The fact that the Hon. Peter Dowding's secretary will be standing for the seat at the next election means nothing. The Labor Party will not win the seat.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: That is what you said about Mr Bridge.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I imagine Mr Sodeman is a thorn in their side and will continue to be so because he is such a very good operator.

We have to recognise that there is rapid development in the Kimberley and the Pilbara. This is acknowledged by everyone who visits the north. We know the situation has not yet stabilised. The Hon. Bill Withers mentioned in his second reading speech that there have been changes since the boundaries were drawn. We recognise this; and that there will be more changes.

Realising this we believe there should be a holding position. There is no doubt the boundaries will have to be changed in the future. We know there is the possibility of gas and oil being found in good quantities. We know there are diamonds there. We know the irrigation areas will provide more and more farms producing crops different from those produced now.

The area is in a state of flux. That is the very reason we have placed the boundaries where they are now. We know the northern area has a special tradition of development and representation. The boundaries obviously have to recognise the changing circumstances. We know there are different climatic conditions in the north: it has a tropical climate. We know the people live a different style of life. Anyone who has been there knows this. It is a very special area; that is why the boundaries in the northern area have been drawn separately from those throughout the rest of the State.

Members opposite can laugh if they like, but they have been doing somersaults all day. They have contradicted themselves at every point; they have produced different arguments in two different debates. Now they are trying to get out of their predicament.

This State is composed of one million square miles and has about 1.4 million people. In the main those people live in the metropolitan area, in the most isolated capital city in the world. About two-thirds of the population live in the metropolitan area with the remaining third spread throughout the rest of the one million square miles.

We recognise that at this stage the State cannot operate with a one-man-one-vote system. The Opposition knows that; it would be the first to admit it if it were game enough.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Why not?

Several members interjected.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Earlier in the debate the Hon. Peter Dowding said it was unfair that his electorate had the same number of electors as the seats of Kimberley and Pilbara.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Why couldn't that system work?

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife has the floor. It is completely against the rules of debate that there should be a constant running fire of interjections. I will not tolerate such a barrage of interjections in future.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: We know we are in a changing world; we know there are demands on this State such as never before; we know the world is looking for raw materials and food; and we know there is exploration in progress. This State, and particularly the north-west, is in a state of flux, so there will be changes. As changes occur so the boundaries will eventually change. At this stage we believe the proper course of action has been taken. No doubt in the future we will see places like Karratha experience rapid population growth. This will put pressure on the Government of the day to change the boundaries.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I don't think Mr Withers believes this.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am sure he does; he is an honourable man. If we consider the electorate of Murchison-Eyre we find that for similar reasons it is a difficult area to cater for. It is a vast area. The Hon. Norman Moore and the Hon. Phil Lockyer represent the area well. There again there are changing circumstances. The Opposition does not realise there are special circumstances that must be considered. I challenge members opposite to go out into the field and tell people in the north that they will be represented from a Perth electorate. That would happen with their idea. If they held the seats they would soon change their minds. With mining developments and other pressures on the area, special circumstances are created. The people there deserve representation in the Parliament.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Is that why Kalamunda has so many fewer voters?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Because of the Opposition's distortions and somersaults today I might ask the Hon. Bill Withers whether he really wants the Opposition's support when it is using his Bill for political purposes. It has no real concern. I am sure members opposite would rather have the boundaries stay as they are, but they are using the Hon. Bill Withers because they think they might gain some political capital. I ask

the honourable member if he would join the Government in voting against his Bill or if he would perhaps withdraw it. I am sure he must be embarrassed by the way the Opposition has dealt with his Bill and by its use of devious methods to suit itself. Members opposite have demonstrated a complete lack of principle and shown they have no real interest at all in the new boundaries. I ask members sincerely to oppose the Bill.

THE HON. W. R. WITHERS (North) [8.23 p.m.]: It is unfortunate that I did not hear any rational debate from Government members. I must add that I cannot agree with all the points made by the Opposition. Although it is obvious the Bill will be defeated, I would like to comment on contributions made by members.

The Hon. Peter Dowding said the boundaries represent the worst gerrymander in the history of the State. I am prepared to go further than that. On my research the boundaries are the worst gerrymander carried out in the history of the western world. It is approximately 70 per cent more of a gerrymander than any other carried out in the world. I am ashamed to have to say that; I am ashamed to have experienced the situation.

The Hon. Peter Dowding said he thought air travel allowed reasonable representation in this day and age. It is certainly better than it used to be, although I do not agree with him wholeheartedly. There seems to be a misunderstanding between myself and members who do not live in their electorates and do not have the advantage of air travel. Although I explained the situation once before I have heard several comments in the corridor and in the House which indicate that the situation is not quite understood.

Members consider that if a country member can cross his electorate by five hours of hard driving, air travel must be far better. However, they forget that a consideration of air schedules gives a completely different story.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: There is a lot of truth in what you say.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Certainly five hours of hard driving can be wearying, but I ask members to consider that on Monday night I left my home town of Kununurra in an F28 jet—not a prop jet but a pure jet—and 4½ hours later I was flying over the southern border of my electorate. I had travelled for four and a half hours in a pure jet and had only just begun to leave my electorate. The jet made one brief stop in the Pilbara to refuel.

Members should consider also that if I was travelling to Newman in that jet I would have to

travel either to Port Hedland and remain there overnight or possibly to Perth and remain here overnight and then fly up to Newman the following day. Later I would have to reverse the situation. So from my home town to that southern town in the Pilbara, which is now in the Kimberley, it would take me, by jet, four days. That is what people do not seem to understand.

When members consider the multiplication factor of the towns in the area that have now been put into the southern Kimberley they will see it is impossible for any member effectively to represent the area at all. It is impossible to represent the new inclusions in Kimberley from what was the Pilbara region if the member resides in the Kimberley. There always were more communities that had to be visited in the old Kimberley seat than in the old Pilbara seat. This seems to have been overlooked.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: I do not think it was overlooked; I think it was a deliberate decision.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: It would have been a totally corrupt and immoral decision if it was deliberate. I would like to think this matter had been overlooked.

The towns and communities that have to be visited in the new Kimberley seat total 16 towns and 52 Aboriginal communities. There are only five Aboriginal communities in the Pilbara. Let us say I lived in the electorate and I was to visit one town or community every weekend. We have to spend perhaps 115 days in Parliament and for every three days in Parliament we have to tack on an extra day because I have to be down here on Monday and I cannot leave until Friday. So there are only a few days remaining. If a member decides that he is going to represent those towns and Aboriginal communities from his home town, and we start applying the multiplication factors by the four days, how can he represent them all? How can he get there?

The Government has decided to provide a special allowance, which is very welcome. This will amount to \$1 500 a quarter and is to allow a member in the north to represent his electorate by using a charter aircraft. It costs \$1 800 to use a charter aircraft from my home town to Newman, the southern-most town in the electorate. A member would never be able to get a charter to cover the electorate once with that allowance. I might add I would not expect the taxpayers to pay for it, and I will make a speech on this subject at a later time. It is too much for the taxpayers to pay.

What I am saying, and have always said, is that a system cannot be devised to allow fair

representation in an area such as the new Kimberley electorate; it just cannot be devised because as yet we do not have the technology. Maybe when we have machines for prestidigitation we will be able to have fair representation, but not at the moment. Those remarks deal with Mr Dowding's comment; I disagree with him about air travel. Maybe my remarks explain the impossibility of the task the Government has placed upon a member for Kimberley.

The Hon. Norman Moore did not say anything about the Bill—

The Hon. Peter Dowding: That is true.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: —in his speech, but he did by way of interjection to Mr Joe Berinson. He said that the House previously made a decision on this matter, but I point out to members that the House did not make a decision on this before; the House made a decision to change the joint boundary of the Kimberley and the Pilbara. The decision made no reference to the part of my Bill now before the House which states that after the next election the boundaries commission should be responsible for the boundary changes.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: The Minister didn't refer to it either.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: I didn't refer to you doing it either.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: The Hon. Bob Pike came close to stating the situation when he mentioned the *Kama Sutra* because that book describes the various things that human beings do to each other, which the Government has done to the people in the Kimberley electorate.

I thank Mr Joe Berinson for his support; albeit it was half-hearted. I can understand his half-hearted support and why he made reference to the matter. In order for the Government parties to do what they did to the Kimberley electorate by way of the last electoral boundaries legislation, they had to adopt platform 7 of the Australian Labor Party in respect of the Kimberley. It was this action that led to my resignation from the Parliamentary Branch of the Australian Liberal Party.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: What is platform 7?

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: It is for the establishment of a one-man-one-vote system, and this was done in respect of the Kimberley electorate.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: They didn't do that; if they had it might have been different.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: In respect of the Kimberley electorate I am correct.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: You can't have Mr Masters adopting it in this situation.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: It is not being adopted at all.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: You should listen to the debate.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I always enjoy Mr Masters' colourful debating style; most times his facts are unquestionable.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: But not very accurate.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: When the Minister commented on the future of the Kimberley and said that the Government had alluded in its considerations to the equalisation of votes in the Kimberley and the Pilbara, he failed to mention that even if the number of voters in the Kimberley is 12 000, and the number of votes in the Pilbara is 12 000, the adjoining Murchison-Eyre electorate would have only one-sixth of the number of electors in each of the Kimberley and the Pilbara electorates, and the adjoining electorate of Gascoyne—

The Hon. Peter Dowding: It would have a third.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: —would have only one-quarter to one-third of the number of electors in each of the Kimberley and the Pilbara electorates.

I will now explain why I put this Bill to the House, and I will explain the events leading up to it. I have explained that I resigned from the Parliamentary Branch of the Liberal Party because it adopted an ALP policy. I have been supported fully—totally—by the Kimberley branches of the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party at its conference also supported my opposition to this ALP policy. I am not telling tales; the matter was reported in the Press—I am just putting it on our record. I will not describe all the pressures upon me, but I was caused to consider my resignation from the Parliament. I realised I had not done everything I could to get things back on the rails. I am a Liberal, I am still a member of the Liberal Party, and I still believe in the philosophy of the Liberal Party because I cannot see any better. I do not agree with what is happening at the moment, but that relates to people, not a philosophy.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: That's all right, it's pure people.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It is impure people.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: They are determined to get power at all times.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I admire certain people in this Chamber. I will not admire them when they vote against my Bill, but in regard to other matters I admire them.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Thanks, Bill!

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: The last card I had to play in this whole charade—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Filthy business.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: —was to say that if I did not have this private member's Bill passed I would resign, and that is what I will do. However, I have been requested to extend my period until January to allow a by-election to be organised efficiently. I will extend my stay for that period, and of course I would cancel that if the Bill were passed, but I can see that it will not be.

I was asked by you, Mr President, to reconsider joining this House for the celebrations on 8 February, and I said that certainly I would enjoy being involved in those celebrations, and I extended my resignation date.

The Labor Party has indicated that it has initiated litigation in respect of the boundaries. If I find that litigation has some possibility of success to change the boundaries back to their original position, I may delay my resignation for another month to hear the findings of the court. I would be very cranky to find that I could have properly represented the people in the far north, the Kimberley area, but had resigned from Parliament too early.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: Do you think there will be an early decision on that?

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I do not know whether there will be an early decision, but I expect it to be around March.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: There will be an early decision.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I have presented this Bill as a measure of my sincerity, not as a measure of pressure because I will resign if it is not passed. I have taken this course of action in the hope that the people of the Kimberley will achieve effective representation that they do not have under the existing Statute, and to ensure that at a later date what happened in this Parliament will not happen again. Political decisions were made, and people voted for a Bill which they did not fully understand and because of party pressures they allowed something to happen—the greatest gerrymander the world has ever seen. That is impossible for some people to believe, but I challenge anybody in this House to find any gerrymander that has been carried out

on such a large scale in such a huge electorate. The way to gauge the gerrymander is to refer to the largest electorate and the number of electors it has, and then the smallest electorate and the number of electors it has. It will be seen that this gerrymander is horrific.

I would like to think that the facts and beliefs I put on behalf of the people of Kimberley will cause members to vote for this Bill.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Do you think they have had a change of mind in the party room?

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I do not think Government members will vote for this Bill, but I hope they do.

Question put and negatived.

Bill defeated.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

MACHINERY SAFETY AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 10 November.

THE HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [9.01 p.m.]: The Opposition has examined this Bill and sought the views of people connected with it. In view of our inquiries, we see nothing sinister in the Bill, and we support it in principle and in detail.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Thank you.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by the Hon. G. E. Masters (Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife), and passed.

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND) BILL

Consideration of Tabled Paper

Debate resumed from 5 November

THE HON. A. A. LEWIS (Lower Central) [9.03 p.m.]: I am not one of those who, in Budget debates, talks in slating terms about the Federal Government and its cuts to the State Government. I am a believer in small Government; I believe all Governments should have razor gangs, although I believe "good

management" to be a preferable term. In my opinion, most Governments can manage with the finances they are given.

This probably is the most technically sound Budget I have seen since I came into the Parliament. I realise the problem which faced the State in getting enough money from the Federal Government and that the amount of money did not appear to the Cabinet and to certain of my colleagues to be enough.

I believe it would have been quite appropriate had the Federal Government followed the lead it asked the State Government to take and did not include great increases in its own expenditure. I have no objection to the Federal Government increasing expenditure on defence and on shire councils. However, I take strong exception to the Federal Government increasing its expenditure by about 15 per cent at the same time as it asked the States to cope with an increase of only 7 per cent or 8 per cent.

I wish now to deal with a few matters mentioned by the Hon. Tom Knight in his address to members. I think he was a little astray in his comment on the Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation. I believe he was talking about the sporting facilities fund, when he referred to three people who gave out certain sums of money. That fund is contained within the estimates of expenditure of the Premier and Treasurer, and although the amount does decrease this year, it has fallen to \$1.45 million and not \$705 000 as the Hon. Tom Knight mentioned. That amount involves the normal Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation grants, and is used for many purposes.

While on the department for Youth, Sport and Recreation, I take this opportunity to agree with what the Hon. Tom Knight had to say about the horrific amount of money spent on administering the department. My breakdown of figures indicates the pure administration of the department swallows up about \$911 000, which is almost one-quarter of the total budget for the department of \$3.7 million. As I say, that money goes in pure administration and not in developmental services, which has a budget of another \$850 000.

This department was established to help areas with their recreation needs and to give grants so that equipment pools could be established. It was not established so that a bureaucracy could emerge which would overwhelm the entire system. If we are to make cuts in expenditure, let us make them in the right direction.

The Government has announced certain plans for the 1982-83 Budget, some of which I would like to comment on because they are allied to the Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation. The first matter is the subject of a question asked this evening on swimming pool subsidies. Mr Deputy President (the Hon. R. Hetherington), you may remember who asked the question.

The larger shires with fairly big incomes will not notice the loss of \$3 000 nearly as much as a small shire like Boyup Brook, with only 1 800 people.

The Hon. W. M. Piesse: Or Wagin.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I am using Boyup Brook for the purposes of my argument. The loss of \$3 000 represents about \$1.50 a head based on the population of that shire and accordingly, the shire's budget will be that much smaller. The Government must exercise some sense in deciding where it will cut swimming pool subsidies; perhaps it could use a sliding scale.

I turn now to the recreation advisers themselves. The Government has said it intends to allow the local government authorities, which currently are putting these people to work, to be responsible for their employment in the future, for which the State Government will subsidise their salaries by 50 per cent. This is a somersault on the part of the Government, and it is a bad one.

In my opinion, we should get rid of the administration and/or the developmental services which are situated at Perry Lakes. Really, we could handle the whole administration of recreation officers by the establishment of, say, a senior recreation officer and an assistant. Recreation officers must have one employer; they cannot, as the Government is suggesting, have a multitude of employers. This proposal has been tried in Victoria, and it was a failure; it was tried in British Columbia, where it was a failure. It has been tried in the City of Stirling in Western Australia and I believe it has been a failure there.

The City of Stirling employed recreation advisers—as the people from the Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation were called—and recreation officers. It appeared to those of us who watched the situation that the recreation officer had no promotional opportunities in his employment.

The Government is doing the wrong thing by saying it will subsidise the shires to employ recreation officers. It will ruin the very sensible scheme established by the Hon. Graham MacKinnon. The Government has let the scheme get so far out of hand that the whole recreation scene is being splintered by an economic review

committee that does not understand what recreation advisers are all about.

I refer members to this very glossy publication, the report of the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation for 1980. If one looks at the section concerning recreation advisers, it appears the flow pattern has been structured in such a way that the services of those officers could be dispensed with at any given point of time.

We go on with too much of this sort of nonsense. Mr Withers has spoken at length about the cost of publications, and it fascinates me to read an annual report that contains no breakdown of figures. The report shows to whom the grants have been given, but no balance sheet appears.

When one reads a simple report like that just tabled in relation to national parks, one sees the difference. The national parks report is roneoed, and it has complete statements in it. The Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation should be censured for treating the public and the Parliament in that way.

I will return to the national parks scene at a later time. I do not want to disappoint the Minister.

I have spoken about the employment of community recreation advisers by local government authorities. I can summarise the difficulties in which the recreation advisers find themselves if they are employed by a local authority. They include the lack of support by a field group, the lack of support by Government agencies, the lack of transfers from one position to another, and the lack of promotional opportunities. I do not believe a recreation adviser should be a permanent appointment in a shire. The advisers should work themselves out of jobs.

At present 35 recreation advisers are working in the field. We could stabilise the figure at 35, and rotate those people throughout the country and city areas.

As a country member, I believe the subsidy of half the cost to a shire is unfair to the country areas which have to provide accommodation and far higher travelling expenses than a city municipality would have to provide. The recreation advisers have a general feeling of being sold out. They have a total lack of confidence in the director. They are uncertain as to where they stand.

The answer given by the Minister to your question, Mr Deputy President (the Hon. R. Hetherington) was that these matters would be discussed. It appears to me that the Government is going on regardless, and the director is going on regardless, with the idea that recreation advisers

are dispensable. It appears that local government in the country will not pick up their employment. The recreation advisers are uncertain about their future; but in the main they have done a first-class job in the country areas. I cannot comment about the city areas; but the job done by the recreation advisers in the country is one of the real successes of this Government. I would hate to see the work that is already being done with the creation of many recreation facilities for people being destroyed by the lack of experience on the part of administrators, and the allocation of minute amounts of money.

Most of the recreation advisers would like to retain their Public Service status. They believe—and so do some of the rest of us—that the elite sports people will take over the Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation. For both you and I, Sir, elitist sports are probably in our background; but any community youth, sport, and recreation scheme should cater for the masses and not for the elite. We have seen what happens when we provide fancy running tracks, and only a small number of people can use them. We have to meet the upkeep of those. We should consider the biggest number of people receiving the benefit of the funds available, and not just the elitist groups.

Another interesting aspect is where these people stand in relation to long service leave and the perks of office they have presently under the Public Service Board.

I will leave the Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation with that minor serve. The Hon. Phil Pandal and the Hon. Tom Knight have commented on the performance of that department during consideration of the last two Budgets. The Government should take some notice of these comments, because it could be too late if it does not. The Government could ruin the whole of the recreation advisory scheme and lose to the Public Service a number of dedicated, hard-working people who know what they are talking about in the field of recreation.

I move to another of my favourite subjects, and that is the arts. Most members would have heard of the magazine *Artlook*; and probably most members would have heard of the Hole in the Wall Theatre. It fascinates me that the Federal Government could not fund the Hole in the Wall Theatre, but out of the air came \$53 000 to fund it.

Let us consider what the arts are receiving. I will deal with *Artlook* in a minute. I am not knocking the arts; I have been noted for some contribution in that field. However, if we consider the Western Australian Arts Council, its

allocation rose by something near 11 per cent to \$2.234 million. I hope members recall some of these figures later, because when I deal with national parks, they will need to have those figures in their memories. We find that \$2 million is allocated to that aspect of the arts. In the Treasurer's list for Miscellaneous Services, we find that the Australian Ballet Foundation is to receive \$40 000; the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust is to receive \$40 000; and the Australian Music Examinations Board—now, what is so special about this board that its expenditure is allowed to increase by 30 per cent from \$26 000 to \$34 000?

Now we come to the Festival of Perth. The time has come for Western Australians to decide whether we ought to have a festival every year. Perhaps we would be better off if we had a festival every second year, and shared the artistes with South Australia. The allocation for the Festival of Perth is \$229 000.

The Western Australian Symphony Orchestra's allocation has increased by a minor 25 per cent to \$125 000. Music seems to have received a fairly good deal.

We then move on to the Perth Entertainment Centre, and this year that will receive a 300 per cent rise to \$198 000. Then we go through such things as the Art Gallery, the Museum, and the Perth Theatre Trust. How many people go to the Museum? The Museum will receive \$3.778 million, and that is without the extra building going on.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: We had 200 000 people go through the Museum.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: That is half the number that go through Yanchep National Park in a year. For the total national parks service there is an allocation of \$2 million. The Minister put his finger right on the point I am trying to make. I am glad that he did so, because he will be pushing with me to make sure that this imbalance does not occur in the future.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: I will be telling him about that later on, too.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I am glad about that.

The Art Gallery of Western Australia is to receive \$2.808 million.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: It has about—

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: About 65 000 people pass through the Art Gallery in a year. The allocation of \$2.808 million is far more than the national parks service will receive. Members will realise why I tend to become a little annoyed. I tend to agree with the editor of *Artlook*, who is an

old and very good friend of mine, when she talks about the bureaucracy in the arts.

An amount of money is being wasted day by day by the Western Australian Arts Council. Some of us probably remember when John Harper-Nelson ran the Arts Council very effectively. He had one part-time girl assisting him, and he did not have a great heap of people around the place, running tours, etc.

Why cannot we give the money to the theatre companies and to the artistes, and let them organise their own programmes? Why do we have the idea that big brother knows best?

The Hon. Neil McNeill and I had an interesting luncheon the other day with the ex-member for Kalgoorlie (Mr Tom Hartrey). We were talking about the introduction of the Western Australian Arts Council Bill. I was in another place in those days. I said, "The one thing we cannot do if we are going to run the Western Australian Arts Council is let the bureaucracy take it over". I quoted sheaf after sheaf of advertisements from many Australian magazines and papers where arts organisations were advertising for filing clerks and assistant filing clerks, and a director for this and a director for that.

I have a great deal of admiration for the Whitlam Government, because it understood that the arts needed money. Unfortunately, it fell into exactly the same hole as this Government is falling into in the way it administered the matter and wasted a huge amount of money on the bureaucracy.

I will not read out what *Artlook* said, because I am sure most members have seen the magazine. However, *Artlook* claimed that 31.81 per cent of the total amount of WA Arts Council money was spent in administration. That is ridiculous.

I shall now have a shot at another area. I hate inaccuracies and I should like to point out that in the 1981 summer edition of a booklet published by the Department of Industrial Development reference is made to His Majesty's Theatre and it says, "... when the restoration was first proposed in 1977 ..."

If members read the speech I made in 1973, they will see I proposed the restoration of His Majesty's Theatre at that time. Mr MacKinnon relinquished the Education portfolio in 1977 and he was the prime mover in the negotiations to buy and refurbish His Majesty's Theatre. However, this sort of information is distributed and represented as being official, accurate news of Western Australia. It is quite wrong.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You know why it is wrong, don't you?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Some people want to take credit which is not really due to them.

Time after time Mr Withers has commented on the "glossies"—the reports which are distributed by departments. This year I kept a few of them and I have here the Library and Information Service Report 1980-81, which is probably not as flash as the report issued by the Main Roads Department. I need a few roads in my electorate and I am sure a magazine such as that uses up money which could be spent on the provision of roads.

The Government argues the reports are not very expensive. However, I implore the Government to look at the sensible report of the national parks committee and I suggest the Government compare that with this sort of thing which has been issued by the Main Roads Department.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: I hope you are impressed by my Rottneest Island report.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: We will deal later with Rottneest Island.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Don't encourage him!

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: It must have been so modest that he did not even notice it.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I did not even know it had been tabled.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: The first report ever written and you did not see it!

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I have here a report on research and other advanced studies issued by the University of WA for 1979. Reference has been made to cuts in education expenditure, but I wonder how many members receive copies of these reports.

The Hon. H. W. Olney: I wonder how many members read these reports.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: At a guess, it would cost approximately \$7 to publish each one of these reports issued by the University of WA. Four members gave me their copies, because they knew I intended to speak on the subject and they said they were going to throw them in the wastepaper basket. These reports are circulated to members, and as the Hon. Howard Olney said, they are not read. They are a waste of public money. The education vote should not be used for that sort of publication.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: The Act demands that they be published.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: That may be true, but simple paper could be used to produce modest publications rather than the lavish "glossies" which we see so frequently.

Each copy of the annual report of the Australia Council for 1979-80 would cost approximately \$8 or \$9. It is sent to every member of Parliament in Australia and there is no reason that it could not be printed in a less lavish way.

Members may have received this latest gem which is headed "Australia Council—What it is and what it does". I commend the Whitlam Government for setting up the Australia Council, but it is trying to promote itself in this booklet. Instead of doing that, it should give the money to the artistes who deserve it. Indeed, this booklet is probably worth only a couple of dollars, but it is sent to all members.

Another report issued by the Australia Council is titled "Australians' Attitude to the Arts". All members have received a copy of this report. Each copy is headed personally and I do not think I have been picked out for any special reason as a person who should receive it.

The Hon. P. H. Wells: I did not get that one.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Mr Wells may be too new a member. This report is dated 24 August and it contains a study prepared for the Australia Council by Kenneth Tolhurst of the Tavistock Research Centre in an endeavour to ascertain what people want to see, how much they want to pay, and the sorts of attitudes they have. It refers to classical ballet and modern dance and contains the following comments—

	per cent
I am not interested at all. It is not my scene	50.1
I am interested and go occasionally	15.9
I would like to go, but circumstances prevent me	13.2
I would like to go, but never get around to it	10.6
I used to go, but don't now	5.2
I take an interest and go fairly often	3.8
I go to nearly everything that is on	0.9

We produced one of these reports for 4.7 per cent of the community and I will bet the people who were surveyed went to the theatre in any case.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: As has been said previously, "I don't know nothing about art, but I know what I like".

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Mr MacKinnon can read the report, because there is a section on just

that. I read it myself, because I knew I was going to make this speech.

I shall return now to the sacred cow of education. Indeed, it is probably a fair cow for most of those who have been involved in it.

This year there was much yelling and screaming across the Chamber about education cuts which did not come to pass and which should have happened. Indeed, they may well now happen in the pre-primary area.

If members really looked closely at the structure of education in this State they would find 93 of the corporate management people at head office receive a salary in excess of \$30 000 a year. I will not vouch for the accuracy of that, but I simply went through the figures presented in the Budget.

There is an allocation of \$2.7 million, which is more than the total national parks budget, for the salaries of people who sit in head office. Mr Berinson asked some questions about the new building, because it appears it will not even be able to accommodate the full staff of the Education Department.

Cuts could be made to the top-heavy structure of the department. I am sure all the people involved are dedicated and work very hard, however, the figure appears to be excessive.

The Leader of the Opposition asked a question about salaries in the education area in 1980-81 and the answer provided indicated that total staff salaries amounted to \$330 756 635. The amount for teachers was \$264 million and for non-teaching staff it was \$65 million. It is clear that we must have cleaners and all sorts of other people, but it appears non-teaching staff—

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: That may include other support staff such as those assisting teachers.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: That may be so, but I really wonder whether we are overloading the system with support and research staff. I receive complaints that the curriculum changes too frequently. When Mr Berinson and I attended school, books were passed down from one child to the next and frequently were used by three children. If there was a change in the curriculum, a chapter of the book was removed and some one typed or wrote in the changes involved.

I urge members to travel to the country where they will see school books which have never even been opened thrown into the rubbish bins. On many occasions text books are sent to the rubbish tip by the schools, not by the children. The books

have been ordered, but have not been used, so they have been taken to the tip.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Have you ever pursued a particular instance of that?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I have, but I got absolutely nowhere. I even took back some books, but that did not get me anywhere either. That sort of waste should not occur.

We talk frequently about good government and good administration, but surely we should be looking at cutting down on waste which occurs in many areas.

If we are going to be dinkum about having razor gangs and cuts in expenditure, let us make cuts where they will have the minimal adverse effect such as in the areas of waste to which I have just referred.

I should like to refer now to the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife. I will not deal with him harshly, because I am sure all the members of the Select Committee inquiring into national parks are hoping the Minister will implement the recommendations in the report before the next Budget. I am horrified to see that, under his portfolio, the Waterways Commission will receive an increased allocation of 22 per cent; conservation and environment will receive an increase of 12 per cent; fisheries will get an increase of 16 per cent; but national parks will receive an increase of only 3 per cent.

Is the minister dinkum? Is he really going to allow the Treasurer to allot to the National Parks Authority 7 per cent less than the rate of inflation? He is failing in his duty.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: It does not say much for our committee.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I said earlier, Mr McKenzie, that I hope the Minister makes great changes by this time next year or else we might make great changes.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: He is not showing any sign of remorse.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I know he is not. He thinks it is funny, not drastic. I have heard of just being at the inflation level and have heard schoolteachers squeal because they got a 13 per cent increase, yet the park system in Western Australia is our heritage, not for one, three, or five generations, but the whole future. It is not as though we are doing a fantastic job. We need only to read *The West Australian* of Monday 19 October where Mr Collins of Dianella talks about the Yanchep Park conditions. My committee can agree with me in respect of an authority which had six or seven tennis courts which could be

hired out and it ripped the wire off to make kangaroo enclosures and so lost the income from the tennis courts because of bad maintenance, and now it will have to build new tennis courts.

We see the golf course in respect of which everybody says, "It is too hard to collect money". I wish the Minister would talk to the Minister sitting next to him, because the Rottnest Island Board had a very sensible way of collecting the money for its golf course; but there is no communication. The situation at Yanchep is drastic and a disgrace and the Minister should realise that and get up there and, apart from being bitten on the ear by a koala bear and having his photograph taken, he should kick some bottoms and get the thing going. It is alright going to Yanchep for publicity, but its not good enough for the future generations of this country.

It is interesting that the world is fairly interested in the environment, and for those people who think I have become a raving "greeny", I would like to quote from a magazine article as follows—

Some want to keep our land unspoiled. Some want to explore it.

We want to explore without spoiling.

There's a strange either-or proposition building up in this country.

It's one that says either we completely preserve our public lands by turning them into permanent wilderness, or we tear them up and exploit them to the fullest for their natural resources.

We've got to believe there's an acceptable middle ground between these two extremes.

At least that's what all of us at Atlantic Richfield believe. And so do the many Americans who have invested with us.

Look at the facts. Our public lands currently supply an estimated 10 per cent of our energy. Yet they actually contain about one half of all our known domestic energy resources—vast amounts of coal, oil shale, tar sands, crude oil and natural gas.

Over 40 per cent of the 760 million acres the federal government owns has been withdrawn from mineral mining or leasing.

Another 25 per cent has been placed under regulation that effectively precludes oil, gas and mining operations.

All without ever finding out first, through preliminary exploration, what the resource potential of that land really is.

The desire for land that stands pure and pristine is certainly understandable. But, surely in these times of scarcity, our need for energy and mineral resources is just as pressing. We know for a fact that exploration can easily be conducted in an environmentally sound manner.

Doesn't it then make sense that we invest in exploring and evaluating our public lands before classifying them as wilderness or otherwise, and locking them up forever?

At least then we could make sure we're doing the right thing.

That was an advertisement that I think is quite good; it appeared in the *New Yorker* of 27 July. It sums up pretty well the feeling of the Select Committee when it was dealing with people who were biased one way or the other. I think the committee members would agree with me that the feeling we got as we took evidence was that everybody was mellowing and trying to understand the other person's position. It would be a good idea if the Government in the future gave some thought to a certain amount of public relations in trying to explain to people what it is doing and how it was going about things. At present we have forms of public relations such as the koala bear biting the Minister's ear.

I do not think that is the only scare the Minister is going to get, if he does not go out and sell, and sell well, our product of private land. I am sure the Conservation Through Reserves Committee has done a good job, but it must be taken further.

Finally, I look at one of the Minister for Forest's responsibilities—the Bush Fires Board. The Minister will say, "You got what you wanted out of them as far as exhaust systems were concerned last week. Why don't you leave them alone?" I guess I could, but I just feel, with the number of staff the board has and the problem that the Wildlife Authority and the National Parks Authority have in relation to burning forests, the Bush Fires Board's men could be doing some protective burning in a major sense for the future of the country rather than going around, in many cases, instructing local government how to suck eggs, because local government knows how to do it far better than they. Local government people know far better how to control fires, in my belief, than the Bush Fires Board does. I know the Minister has attempted to get more local government influence and responsibility into this field, but the time has come when we should really criticise this Budget and save some massive expenditures, when one

considers the 10 million hectares between national parks and the wildlife organisations.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: More than that, about 14.5.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: We look at sums of \$50 000 in both organisations, so \$100 000 to do protective burning when the Bush Fires Board is sitting on over \$1 million dollars—

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: You are making comparisons of areas. Just look at the vacant Crown land.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Just look at it. What is the Bush Fires Board doing about it? What is the Minister doing about it?

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: Quite a lot.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Nothing, absolutely damn all! It is all very well screaming about Crown land—do something about it! Let us get off our backsides and get the Bush Fires Board into protective burning in all these places, because the shires in most cases can protect themselves. That is exactly what I am explaining to the Minister. That \$1 million could be used for fire prevention. We should get rid of the establishment at the top and get people out doing protective burning of Crown land and reserves. Every country member understands the problem. Every authority one talks to is undermanned and underfinanced and could do with protective burning. I do not wish to stir up the House in any shape or form.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Do try.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I do not really think the Hon. Robert Hetherington would like me to try.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I am feeling stirry tonight.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: In *South African News and Views* of 6 June I came across some comments on South African trade with the black nations around it. We have a Prime Minister who seems to have a great hatred for South Africa. I disagree with him and think South Africa is a great country. On the other hand, when Mr Muldoon allowed the Springboks to play rugby union in New Zealand, we criticised New Zealand. Not all the members of this House are so young that they do not remember at least one world war. Some might remember two world wars. Where are we going as a nation when we criticise apartheid in South Africa and then criticise New Zealand for playing football with a country that practises apartheid and yet has very good relations in its own country? Then we look at our history and look at our defence and people

say, "It is purely selfish". Maybe I am selfish about Australia and about its defence; I cannot see any of those third world Commonwealth countries coming to protect Australia if we are attacked; but I can see South Africa and New Zealand doing so. I just want to comment about the countries that got stuck into South Africa. At last count 47 States were buying from South Africa—Nigeria, Egypt, Kenya, Mozambique, Ghana, Malawi and the Congo.

Some of them trade through the third world countries and the amount of trade that is undertaken amounts to 100 million rand a year. That is the amount of trade that the black nations are doing with South Africa. If we continue to knock South Africa and things go wrong in South Africa, from where will those countries obtain their food and their goods? Of course there would be suppliers looking for markets—the Russian bloc countries, but the food and goods would not be of the same standard.

It seems to me that as members of this House we should look at the situation as far as South Africa is concerned. If the Federal Government keeps on the course that it is pursuing at the present time we should inform it that we cannot support that course. It is not only because we are concerned about our own protection, but also it is because of our concern about the protection of those third world countries and the people in them. Without the aid of South Africa many of those countries would not be able to feed their populations and for us to think that we could

provide food ourselves would be even more selfish. I remind members that while the Republic of South Africa remains as it is, it will continue to provide food. If there is a total break down of the situation—and this will mean tribal warfare—the whites will get out. However, if a number of the tribes fight each other, they will reduce that magnificent land to chaos. I do not believe we should stand by and let this occur.

As I said before, I support the Budget. It is a technical one and one of the best Budgets I have seen. I am concerned however with the cutbacks that have occurred perhaps without due consideration being given to their effects. Do we always have sufficient knowledge of the subjects when we decide to make these cuts?

There are still areas of waste; there is still fat to be cut. However, I believe this Budget will serve the State very well for the next 12 months.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. F. E. McKenzie.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

THE HON. I. G. MEDCALF (Metropolitan—
Leader of the House) [10.03 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until
Tuesday, 17 November.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.04 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

EDUCATION: NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Budget Provisions

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

Further to the Treasurer's reply to question 636 of 4 November 1981, I ask—

- (1) Is it a fact for at least the four previous Budgets, the procedure of providing a functional statement of proposed expenditure has never resulted in any deviation from the expenditure estimates as regards the item Assistance to Private Schools?
- (2) If so, will the Treasurer provide an explanation of why specifically for this year's Budget, a substantial deviation has arisen?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) Yes, because in each of those years the figure shown in the item, assistance to private schools, was also included in the functional analysis.
- (2) The difference arose because the pro-rata approach explained in my previous answer was applied to this and related items instead of taking the identifiable figure from the Estimates.

EDUCATION: PRE-PRIMARY AND PRE-SCHOOL

Centres: Closure

699. The Hon. W. M. PIESSE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

Regarding the publicised proposed economies in early childhood education—

- (1) Has a decision been made to close certain pre-school/pre-primary centres?
- (2) If so, for which centres has a decision been made?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) and (2) There is no intention as such on the part of the Government to close any centres. However centres which are mainly composed of children 3 plus years of age will no longer have staff paid for by the Government. If parents decide to continue such centres, the Government would make some financial assistance available to them.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS: MUSEUM OF WA

Sacred Sites: Survey

700. The Hon. PETER DOWDING, to the Minister representing the Minister for Cultural Affairs:

- (1) Has the WA Museum received repeated requests for a sacred site survey to be carried out over an area of land which includes the area of Temporary Reserve 7788H in the Kimberley goldfield?
- (2) Has such a survey been carried out?
- (3) Why has such a survey not been carried out if requested?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes, there have been requests for a survey.
- (2) A survey of sites in the area is currently being carried out by a research officer from the Museum of WA.
- (3) Not applicable.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Australian Iron and Steel Pty. Ltd.: Retrenchments

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

In view of—

- (a) the 700 retrenchments at the AIS facility at Kwinana;
- (b) the distinct possibility of 100 retrenchments early next year at Koolyanobbing; and
- (c) reported statements by a BP spokesman to the effect that BP cannot now guarantee that current production at its Kwinana refinery will be maintained;

Will the Minister now, as a matter of urgency, institute a study into the full

effects of such retrenchments on the Kwinana region?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (a) to (c) Since the recent AIS announcements were made, the Minister has had discussions with the management of that firm and officers of the Department of Labour and Industry and Commonwealth Employment Service are pursuing matters closely in order to render assistance to those who may become redundant. Any other similar situations, if they arise, will be afforded similar urgent attention and should any definite and specific information be given to the Minister he will have it attended to promptly.

Departmental officers have spoken already to BP management and offered to have discussions if difficulties arise concerning staff retention. Different firms can have different marketing problems in different areas which are not directly related. Overseas economies, market demands and international competition can cause situations to arise where adjustments may be necessary because production may not be warranted at past levels. Various firms could be affected accordingly. This Government will have discussions with any businesses where difficulties are likely to occur and assistance may be sought.

EDUCATION: NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Registrations: New

702. The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

Further to question 670 of 4 November 1981, for each of the new non-Government schools registered in WA in 1980 and 1981, will the Minister give its name and indicate its affiliation or type?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

1980	Orana Catholic Primary School.....	Catholic
	Woodbury Boston Primary School.....	Non-denominational
	Avon Valley Seventh Day Adventist School.....	Seventh Day Adventist
	The Kingsway Christian Academy.....	Non-denominational
1981	Aboriginal Community College.....	Non-denominational
	Ammaus Christian Primary School.....	Non-denominational
	Pioneer Village School.....	Non-denominational
	Christian Aboriginal Parent Controlled School (Coolgardie).....	Non-denominational
	Bethel Christian School.....	Baptist

Northside Christian School.....	Non-denominational
The Family Primary School.....	Non-denominational
All Saints' College.....	Anglican
Lombardina Catholic School.....	Catholic
Fremantle Alternative School.....	Non-denominational
Direct Instruction Centre.....	Non-denominational
Universal Brotherhood School.....	Non-denominational
Speech & Hearing Centre (reconstituted 1981).....	Non-denominational

HOSPITAL

Merredin

703. The Hon. J. M. BROWN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Was a beeper system originally approved for the use of the doctor and the St. John Ambulance Association at Merredin by the Department of Hospital and Allied Services?
- (2) When was the approval given?
- (3) As the service was for emergency only, and of particular help to members of the St. John Ambulance at Merredin, why was the offer withdrawn, particularly in view of the Government's decision not to proceed with the upgrading of the Merredin Hospital in 1981-82?
- (4) Is the Minister aware that the offer for the installation of the beeper system was at no cost to the Government?
- (5) Will the Minister reconsider the installation of a beeper system at Merredin Hospital?
- (6) If "No", why not?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Approval was given only in principle for a beeper system on the request of the wife of the doctor. It was explained to the doctor's wife that approval by the licensing authority and the State headquarters of the St. John Ambulance Association was necessary before this could proceed.
- (2) 4 August 1981.
- (3) The offer was withdrawn as the hospital was unable to provide continuous monitoring of the system. This was confirmed by both telephone and letter to the doctor's wife.
- (4) Yes.

- (5) Yes. The Minister is prepared to consider the installation of a beeper system at Merredin Hospital provided the system is shown to be effective to contact medical and ambulance services in emergencies as has been requested. It is emphasised that hospitals cannot act as the primary point of contact for after hours calls to private doctors.
- (6) Not applicable.

EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS

Students

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

For each year in the period 1977-78 to 1980-81 inclusive, what has been the average cost in a Government school of a primary student and a secondary student?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

Based on net recurring expenditure—

	Primary \$	Secondary \$
1977-78	847.83	1 581.36
1978-79	939.96	1 740.04
1979-80	1 048.95	1 977.01
1980-81	Not available	Not available

TRAFFIC: MOTOR VEHICLES

Government: Fuel

705. The Hon. H. W. GAYFER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

A radio news item on Monday, 9 November 1981, nominated Mr Rushton as saying that as a result of following advice of a committee, in excess of \$200 000 has been saved in fuel costs by the Government this year—

- (1) What does this figure represent as a percentage in savings?
- (2) What was the Government's fuel bill for each of the last three years?
- (3) How many road vehicles, and how many off-road vehicles, were included in the survey?
- (4) Does the survey include all outlets from which the Government uses fuel?

- (5) What are the contributing factors towards a reduction of fuel usage?
- (6) What is to be the policy of the Government in respect of further fuel saving?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) to (6) The information released to the media by the Minister for Transport, Mr Rushton related only to the Main Roads Department and its efforts to improve the performance in fuel utilisation.

In the first year of a programme aimed at reducing fuel usage and hence costs, the department achieved a reduction of 10 per cent in petrol used by the MRD's vehicle fleet. This occurred at the same time as there was an increase of 4.5 per cent in kilometres travelled during the same period.

In the second 12 months ending 30 September 1981 there was a further significant fall in consumption of petrol from 3 518 744 litres to 2 767 300 litres, or a reduction of 21.4 per cent. However, part of this reduction in petrol used was also accompanied by a reduction in distance travelled by the vehicle fleet from 20.452 million to 18.028 million kilometres in the previous 12 months, or a reduction of 11.6 per cent in the total distance travelled. This is partly due to a smaller number of vehicles.

Based on the assumption that an 11.8 per cent reduction in distance travelled should also bring a corresponding reduction in petrol consumed and on the fact that consumption of petrol actually reduced by 21.4 per cent, then it would appear that there has been a significant saving in petrol which must be attributable to other causes.

The department has been making a conscious effort to educate its employees in fuel conservation and in addition there has been a policy of moving towards small four cylinder vehicles.

The monetary saving of about \$250 000 in one year was based on the total reduction in petrol used during the 12 months under review compared with the previous period, calculated at the Government metropolitan petrol price. It will be recognised that this saving results not only from the education programme, the switching to smaller

vehicles, but also the reduction in the distance travelled.

The department believes that all these factors have made a contribution towards achieving this better performance.

The member would be aware of the Government's decision to employ consultants in the area of vehicle fleet management and until the information relating to that survey has been collated and analysed, it is not possible to readily provide an answer to the overall Government position.

The example of the Main Roads Department does however indicate that significant savings can be achieved when the problem is tackled in a systematic way.

SWIMMING POOLS

Subsidies

706. The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON, to the Minister representing the Treasurer:

- (1) Is it a fact that the Cabinet expenditure review committee has recommended that the pool subsidy scheme be terminated?
- (2) Is it also a fact that Cabinet has approved that recommendation?
- (3) In what year is it likely that no further payments will be made under the scheme?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) Yes, as has been publicly announced following discussions by the Premier and Minister for Local Government with representatives of local government.
- (2) Yes, subject to it not applying this financial year and discussions of this and other proposals with local government authorities.
- (3) 1982-83 as currently proposed.

RAILWAYS: EMPLOYEES

Beverley

707. The Hon. H. W. GAYFER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has there been a decrease recently of Westrail staff stationed in Beverley?
- (2) Are there proposed to be any further reductions in staff?

(3) If so, what is the proposal?

(4) Is it proposed to reduce Beverley from its present status as a recognised station?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

(1) Yes. Due to changed circumstances with train operating requirements the positions of assistant station master and night station master were abolished in April 1981.

(2) to (4) The Minister is advised that there are no current proposals for further reductions in staff at Beverley.

Should Westrail enter into a suitable joint venture, as is proposed, the line haul of consolidated "smalls" and parcels freight may be retained on rail. However, there would still be an effect on Westrail's staff requirements for this task.

HOUSING: RENTAL

Emergent: MRD House

708. The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that the woman and her four children living in a house in Albany Highway, Bentley, belonging to the Main Roads Department, remain there only because of the patience, forbearance, and humanity of the Main Roads Department?
- (2) Is the Minister yet in a position to inform me when the family will be provided with adequate alternative accommodation?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The family is listed as "emergent" with the Aboriginal Housing Board and will be offered the first available suitable accommodation.

POLICE: PERSONNEL

Beverley

709. The Hon. H. W. GAYFER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) How many staff are stationed at Beverley Police Station?

- (2) Has there been a reduction in staff stationed at Beverley over the last three years?
- (3) What is the future staffing proposal for this station?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) 1 general duty constable,
1 traffic patrolman.
- (2) Yes. A general duty constable was recently withdrawn due to the low requirement for police services.
- (3) No change is envisaged.

COURTS: TRANSCRIPTS

Availability

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

- (1) Is there any restriction on the availability to convicted persons personally of transcripts of cases against them in the Supreme Court, District Court and Courts of Petty Session?
- (2) If so, what restrictions apply, and what are the reasons for them?
- (3) If "No" to (1), what is the correct procedure in each court for an application for transcripts by such a person?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) to (3) A running transcript of criminal trials is provided to accused persons—or their counsel—in the Supreme Court or District Court sitting in Perth.

Facilities are not available in country centres for provision of running transcript of Supreme Court or District Court sittings: such proceedings are tape recorded but not generally transcribed. Transcript can be provided upon application in writing to the registrar of the court where a sufficient reason is demonstrated. (Copies of depositions in committal proceedings are made available to all accused, or their counsel, prior to trial in the higher court.)

In the larger Courts of Petty Sessions, proceedings are tape recorded, and transcript is prepared only where circumstances require it—e.g. for the magistrate or for purposes of appeal. Transcript may be made available upon application in writing to the clerk of the appropriate court where sufficient reason is demonstrated.

COURTS: CLERKS

Beverley

711. The Hon. H. W. GAYFER, to the Attorney General:

- (1) Is he aware that the Clerk of Courts has been removed from Beverley?
- (2) Is he aware that a car travels from Northam at certain periods of the week to collect certain fees at Beverley?
- (3) What are the nature of the fees collected?
- (4) What fees are collected, apart from those pertaining to police matters, by the local police staff?
- (5) Why will not the department allow for a cash register to be placed in a convenient part of the town, such as the shire council, and a contribution be made for the operation of it?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) Yes. The full-time Clerk of Courts was withdrawn from Beverley some years ago. A similar service is now provided by the police officer in charge.
- (2) No.
- (3) Not known.
- (4) Collections are made on behalf of Crown Law, Department of Agriculture, Main Roads, SGIO, RTA—drivers' licences. (Vehicle licensing is attended to by the shire.)
- (5) Because of the small number of payments to be recorded it is not considered that the provision of a cash register as suggested is warranted at present.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER ACT

Amendment: Recommendation

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

The 1981 report by the Ombudsman expresses concern that recommendations for amendments to the Parliamentary Commissioner Act made by him to the Attorney General in May and November 1980, have not been acted upon—

- (1) Will the Attorney General make public the terms of the Ombudsman's recommendations?

- (2) Does the Government propose to implement the recommendations?
- (3) If so, when?
- (4) If not, why not?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) to (4) I am informed by the Premier that the Parliamentary Commissioner's recommendations comprise matters for consideration by the Government and are presently receiving attention.

It was proposed to introduce some legislative amendments during this session, but this has been deferred because of the amount of business already introduced or listed for introduction.

RESEARCH STATION

Avondale: Closure

713. The Hon. H. W. GAYFER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Of the seven married couples and single employed persons proposed to be stood down from the Avondale Research Station—
 - (a) how many are to be transferred to other research stations;
 - (b) which persons are to go, and to what research station;
 - (c) of these, who are married, and what is the size of their families;
 - (d) what happens to the others being stood down, and what is their marital status and size of families involved?
- (2) Which research stations are situated under the control of the Agricultural Department, where are they, and in what year was each acquired for this purpose?
- (3) What is the nature of research of each station?
- (4) What is to be the increase and decrease of staffing arrangements of each of these research stations?
- (5) If the operations are to be scaled down at the Avondale Research Station so drastically as suggested, what is to be the ultimate future of the station?

- (6) How much has been spent by the Agriculture Department on the museum at the Avondale Research Station?
- (7) How many visitors were attracted to the station last year?
- (8) With the knowledge that staffing is to be reduced at the Avondale Research Station, would the Government in hindsight admit that the building of the museum and restoration of the old buildings would not have got off the ground under the present proposed circumstances?
- (9) Has the Government a policy in respect of research stations?
- (10) If Avondale is to be turned into a commercial proposition, with limited staff, what are the logistics of the proposed venture, such as acreage and variety of crops planned, and numbers and type of livestock to be carried, to bring the exercise into reality?
- (11) Will the Minister table the cash flow and farm budget that is being used to make Avondale commercially viable?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) It is planned to stand down eight persons—
 - (a) Two positions are available at this time.
 - (b) P. Jenkin is to go to Wongan Hills or Merredin. A position at Northam will be offered to one of three other staff.
 - (c)

Married Family	Size of Family
P. Jenkins	One
A. Sweetman	Two
R. Boladeras	Four
R. Ridley	One
B. Howell	Four
T. York	Nil
M. Wilson	Three
 - (d) No other positions are available at the moment within the department.
- (2) Department of Agriculture research stations—

	Established
Avondale—Beverley	1924
Badgingarra— Badgingarra	1959
Bramley—Margaret River	1950
Chapman—Nabawa	1902
Denmark—Denmark	1912

Esperance Downs—	
Gibson	1949
Gascoyne—Carnarvon	1932
Animal Breeding Research Institute, Katanning	1980
Kununurra Irrigation Research Station, Kununurra	1965
Manjimup—Manjimup	1966
Medina Pig Station—Medina	1963
Medina Vegetable Station—Medina	1963
Merredin—Merredin	1904
Mt. Barker—Mt. Barker	1968
Newdegate—Newdegate	1955
Northam—Northam	1970
Ord River—Ord River	1965
Salmon Gums—Salmon Gums	1926
Stoneville—Stoneville	1955
Swan Valley—Swan Valley	1954
Wokalup—Harvey	1950
Wongan Hills—Wongan Hills	1924
Fox River—Ord River	1965

(3) Nature of research on each station—

Avondale:	cereals, sheep farming, plant breeding (wheat), pastures and crops.
Badgingarra:	mixed cereal-sheep farming, pastures, lupins plant breeding (lupins, oats, wheat)
Bramley:	crops, pastures, vines.
Chapman:	cereals, pasture, lupins, sheep, plant breeding (lupins, cereals).
Denmark:	beef, dairy (dry land), pastures.
Esperance:	cereals, alternate crops, pastures, sheep, beef, plant breeding (lupins, cereals).
Gascoyne:	vegetables, bananas, fruit.
Katanning:	sheep genetic and breeding studies.
Kununurra:	crops, irrigation, fodders.
Manjimup:	fruit, vegetables, pastures, livestock, oilseeds, legumes.
Medina Pigs:	pig husbandry and nutrition.

Vegetables:	vegetable varieties, nutrition.
Merredin:	cereals, pastures, rotations, sheep, plants breeding (wheat).
Mt. Barker:	cereals, pastures, rapeseed, other crops, sheep, beef, vines, plant breeding (cereals, rape, lupins).
Newdegate:	cereals, pastures, sheep, plant breeding (barley).
Northam:	beef, principally nutrition studies.
Ord River and Fox River:	beef, arid land pastures.
Salmon Gums:	cereals, pastures, sheep, rotations.
Stoneville:	fruit.
Swan Valley:	vines.
Wokalup:	beef genetic and nutrition, dairy (irrigation), pastures.
Wongan Hills:	plant breeding (all crops), cereals, lupins, sheep, cattle, animal nutrition.

(4) The decision to close Woodlands Research Station has already been announced. No other decisions have been taken although advice has been given that all of the Department's current research stations are under review.

(5) The property is being retained and will be used for research purposes but at a lower level than at present.

(6) \$367 400.

(7) During 1980, visitors to the project were—

Adults	2 080
Children with parents	520
Students	2 202

from 53 schools.

(8) This is a matter of conjecture. Nevertheless the project which is now established is an important State historical display.

(9) to (11) Comments will be provided to the member in due course.

HEALTH: NURSING HOME

Penn-Rose

714. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

In answer to question 511 of Wednesday, 16 September 1981,

concerning matters relating to Penn-Rose Lodging House, the Minister said *inter-alia*—

From the foregoing it would appear that there may be breaches of the Business Names Act and accordingly, the matter will be referred to the Attorney General for investigation.

There is a possible breach of the Trade Descriptions and False Advertisements Act and the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs has been directed to investigate. Finally, the entry in the telephone directory may constitute a breach of the Telecommunications Act and, on that basis, the matter will also be referred to the State Manager of Telecom—

- (1) Can the Minister now advise the result of the action taken?
- (2) If not, when will the Minister be in a position to advise me further?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) and (2) Replies received from the State Manager of Telecom Australia and the Attorney General indicate that there were no breaches, in this instance, of Telecommunications (General) By-laws nor of the Business Names Act. There was also no breach of the Trade Descriptions and False Advertisements Act.

HEALTH: NURSING HOME

Penn-Rose

715. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

Referring to question 518, part (4), of Wednesday, 16 September 1981, concerning the investigation by the Public Health Department into Penn-Rose Lodging House, the Minister has said *inter-alia*—

The report is still confidential and receiving consideration—

- (1) Will the Minister advise—
 - (a) whether consideration of the report has been completed; or
 - (b) is it still confidential?
- (2) If consideration has not been completed, when is that consideration likely?
- (3) When and where will access to the report be possible?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) Yes.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) These investigations are conducted under the Health Act and the reports are confidential. The Minister for Health did supply information on the gist of the report which is repeated—

In general, officers reported that the premises and grounds were clean, tidy and well maintained and that it appeared to be a well run home catering for dependent frail aged persons. It was evident that the proprietors were not trying to conduct a nursing home as defined in the Private Hospital Regulations of the Health Act. The frail aged residents appeared to have had adequate supervision and care but some reservation was expressed in regard to the timing of the transfer of Mr R. Berryman to hospital. There were no recommendations in regard to the structure of the premises, but it was recommended action be taken to stop the use of the term "Nursing Home" and regulations regarding the conduct of rest homes in other States be studied.

The only other comment which was made was a recommendation that a departmental pharmacist should inspect the drug stocks at Penn-Rose, which has been done and nothing exceptional was noted.

The Minister for Health wishes to respect the confidentiality of the report itself, but the member is welcome to inspect the report at the department, if he so wishes.

INCOME TAX

Zone Allowances

716. The Hon. W. R. WITHERS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Regional Administration and the North West:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that my extensive personal submission made directly to the federal committee of inquiry into taxation zone rebates was not acknowledged in the official committee's report?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that the submissions made by Western Australians through the State committee also were not acknowledged?
- (3) Where did the Federal committee hear submissions in those areas of taxation zone rebate in Western Australia?
- (4) Were the findings of the Federal committee in keeping with the findings of the State committee?
- (5) In view of the limited hearing, lack of acknowledgements, and the findings made by the Federal committee, will the Minister appeal to the Federal Treasurer to reconvene a Federal committee to properly investigate the zone rebate anomalies in the north of Western Australia?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) On 2 April, the Chairman of the Federal Committee of Inquiry into Taxation Zone Rebates confirmed receipt of individual submissions made to our State committee. However, acknowledgement of only some of these individual submissions was made in the Federal committee's report of June 1981.
- (3) The Federal committee held hearings in Perth. That committee did not hear submissions in any of the tax zone areas. Arrangements for a hearing in Port Hedland had to be cancelled due to industrial action affecting the airlines.
- (4) No. The Minister for Regional Administration and the North West's Press release at the time outlined this State's dissatisfaction with the findings of the Federal committee.
- (5) This matter is being considered by the State Government.

HEALTH: NURSING HOME

Penn-Rose

717. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

Referring to question 559 of Wednesday, 30 September 1981, concerning matters relating to Penn-Rose Lodging House and the provisions of the Mental Health Act, the Minister replied *inter-alia*—

The authority to examine persons resident in accommodation which may be operating in conflict with existing legislation relative to this area will be examined by departmental officers . . .

Could the Minister now advise the outcome of the investigations and whether any amending legislation to correct the existing situation will be forthcoming?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

The Minister for Health is unable to report on the investigation which is not yet complete.

HEALTH: FOOD VENDORS

Itinerant

718. The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is the Minister satisfied that itinerant food vendors' vehicles plying their trade at various building and demolition sites within the City of Perth, comply with all health and hygiene requirements?
- (2) Will the Minister arrange for inspections of these vehicles to ensure that the wares they offer for sale, and their vehicles, are of the required health standards?
- (3) As the area is well covered by high quality delicatessen shops, will the Minister ensure the vehicles operating in the area follow the same high standards that are laid down for these premises when selling food or beverages?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes, the Minister for Health has had no reports to the contrary. The standards of these vehicles are supervised by Perth City Council health department officers and the Minister has been advised that they comply with health and hygiene requirements for their specific operations.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Yes, insofar as is necessary to comply with the appropriate regulations.

TRANSPORT: BUSES

Private: Speed Limits

719. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that private bus companies are issuing timetables which clearly provide for the speed limit of 90 km per hour to be exceeded?
- (2) Does the Transport Commission examine and approve these timetables?
- (3) If not, why not?
- (4) Will the Minister take any action to ensure this breach of safety regulations for passengers is ceased?
- (5) If so, how will it be achieved?
- (6) If "No" to (4), why not?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) The Minister's understanding is that the time allowed by the operators for bus journeys within Western Australia enables conformity with speed limit regulations of the Traffic Act. If the member has any specific evidence to the contrary he should advise the Minister and the matter will be investigated.
- (2) and (3) Yes, for intrastate services only.
- (4) to (6). Answered by (1).

INSURANCE

State Government Insurance Office

720. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

In the case of the collapse of a wall onto property owned by the Perth City Council in Lake Street, Perth, known as No. 8 Car Park, both insurers, State

Government Insurance Office (for Perth City Council) and the insurers for Century Motors, whose property adjoins the car park (Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce Insurance Company) have denied liability—

- (1) As much private property was damaged, and personal injury was suffered, could the Minister advise what assistance the Consumer Affairs Bureau can give to those claiming damages?
- (2) If it is unable to assist, what avenues are available to those persons who have relatively minor claims to pursue, but who do not wish to become involved in heavy legal expenditure?
- (3) Is the Small Claims Tribunal competent to deal with claims amounting to less than \$2 000 or any part thereof?
- (4) For those who have claims, on whom should they be served?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) to (4) I am advised that the legal situation in this case is quite complex. The private persons concerned are advised to lodge details of their individual cases with the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs. The commissioner will assist individuals to pursue claims if it is legally possible to do so.

INSURANCE

State Government Insurance Office

721. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

Following the collapse of a wall onto property owned by the Perth City Council in Lake Street, Perth, known as No. 8 Car Park, both insurers, State Government Insurance Office (for Perth City Council) and Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce Insurance Company (for Century Motors) have denied liability—

- (1) As adults and children were injured, and much private property damaged, some extensively, will the Minister advise whether any inquiry into the accident was carried out?

- (2) If so, could the Minister advise the result of such inquiry?
- (3) Why was the wall left in such a hazardous situation without warning signs being erected to warn the public of the danger in this heavily used public facility?
- (4) Was it the responsibility of the Perth City Council, Century Motors, or both, to ensure adequate protection from danger was afforded the general public in this matter?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) to (4) The matter is outside the jurisdiction of the portfolio of the Minister for Consumer Affairs or other portfolios which he administers. It is understood that building officers from the Perth City Council made an investigation.

ROAD

Great Eastern Highway, Rivervale

722. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the poor condition of Great Eastern Highway, Rivervale, between Orrong Road and a point south-west of Cornwall Street, in both directions?
- (2) Is any work, repair or resurfacing, programmed for this section of road in the near future?
- (3) If so, can the Minister provide details?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) The Minister is advised that improvements to this road are warranted.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) It is anticipated that resealing with bituminous concrete will be undertaken early in the new year so as to take advantage of lower traffic volumes during the holiday period.

TRANSPORT: BUSES

Disabled Persons

723. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has the Minister studied the article in *The Sunday Times* on 12 July 1981,

which states that Leyland has specially designed a bus which will carry up to 23 disabled passengers?

- (2) As the MTT bus which is to be modified to help the disabled will be of no assistance to those the Leyland bus has been designed for, will the Government purchase a bus for use by various recognised disabled groups in the community?
- (3) If not, why not?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes, the Minister has seen a Press article on this matter.
- (2) The committee which studied the problems associated with transporting disabled persons came to the conclusion that the best way to adequately serve severely disabled people was by providing specially modified vehicles incorporated into the taxi network to allow a door-to-door system.

The Minister has asked the Chairman of the Taxi Control Board and the Managing Director of the MTT to investigate ways and means of testing out this sort of service for the severely disabled.

- (3) See answer to (2).

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

EDUCATION: PRE-SCHOOL

Centre: Wickham

203. The Hon. F. E. McKenzie (for the Hon. PETER DOWDING), to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has the Minister received a petition from concerned parents about the possible closure of the Wickham Kindergarten due to lack of State Government funding?
- (2) How many signatures were on the petition?
- (3) What action, if any, is the Minister taking as a result of the petition?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

I am advised—

- (1) Yes.
- (2) 664 signatures.
- (3) Responses from pre-school centres throughout Western Australia are currently being evaluated.

INSURANCE

State Government Insurance Office

204. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:

I refer the Minister to question 721 I asked of the Minister for Consumer Affairs. I now ask that same question of the Minister for Labour and Industry:

Following the collapse of a wall onto property owned by the Perth City Council in Lake Street, Perth, known as No. 8 Car Park, both insurers, State Government Insurance Office (for Perth City Council) and Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce Insurance Company (for Century Motors) have denied liability—

- (1) As adults and children were injured, and much private property damaged, some extensively, will the Minister advise whether any inquiry into the accident was carried out?

(2) If so, could the Minister advise the result of such inquiry?

(3) Why was the wall left in such a hazardous situation without warning signs being erected to warn the public of the danger in this heavily used public facility?

(4) Was it the responsibility of the Perth City Council, Century Motors, or both, to ensure adequate protection from danger was afforded the general public in this matter?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (i) to (4) I take it the honourable member is seeking to place his question on notice. I refer him to the answer given already. He seems now to be addressing the same question to the same Minister in another place. However, I will refer the matter to the Minister concerned and have some inquiries made for the member.

