

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 18 September 1984

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

PARLIAMENT WEEK

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER: I draw to the attention of honourable members that this week is Parliament Week. I invite all members to participate in the spirit of Parliament Week.

This week differs from previous similar exercises in the sense that it is not a celebration of a parliamentary coming of age, but has as its sole purpose the education of the public to the parliamentary system of government.

I acknowledge that this Parliament Week has engendered some controversy. Clearly, any undertaking such as this has the potential for political partiality. I assure members that the President of the Legislative Council and I, together with officers of both Houses, have scrutinised the programme throughout the planning period to ensure that it is Parliament, and not a partisan view of it, that is the central theme of Parliament Week.

Parliament as an institution should be understood and vigorously supported. The parliamentary system has evolved over hundreds of years; it has outlasted politicians, Governments, and political parties. The basic systems have stood the test of the past years. In a similar way, the privileges of Parliament have been hard won and successfully defended.

We have a responsibility as members to preserve this Parliament and all that it stands for. As present day custodians we have a responsibility to uphold our parliamentary system, not to abuse it, so that future generations will respect the institution, not reject it. We have a responsibility to ensure that the public attain a greater faith in the parliamentary system. Confidence and respect for this institution can be obtained only by greater public participation and by increased awareness.

The example, conduct, and participation of members will certainly help to achieve this desirable aim. Parliament Week has been specifically implemented to focus public attention on the parliamentary system. I have been greatly impressed by the programme and I seek your participation to ensure its success.

Members: Hear, hear!

HEALTH: DENTAL

Technicians: Petition

MR BRADSHAW (Murray-Wellington) [2.19 p.m.]: I present a petition which is couched in the following terms—

To the Honourable Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament Assembled.

1. We the undersigned are opposed to the lowering of the standard of Dental Care in this State and call upon the Parliament to ensure that it does not pass laws that will erode those standards.

2. We believe Western Australia is best served by a system of family dental Care provided by professionally trained personnel.

3. We believe no member of the public should be exposed to Dental Technicians who have not undergone additional tertiary training in Biological and clinical sciences.

The petition bears 4 840 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 49.)

PORNOGRAPHY: VIDEO FILMS

Banning: Petition

MR GORDON HILL (Helena) [2.20 p.m.]: I present a petition in the following terms—

TO:

The Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned plead that because it will cause serious harm to the community the Parliament will not legalise the sale, hire or supply of any video tape, video disc, slide or any other recording from a visual image which can be produced, which portrays scenes of explicit sexual relations showing genitalia detail; acts of violence and sex; sexual perversion such as sodomy; mutilation; child pornography; coprophilia; bestiality or the use and effect of illicit drug taking.

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

The petition bears 24 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 50.)

HEALTH: DENTAL

Technicians: Petition

MR SPRIGGS (Darling Range) [2.21 p.m.]: This petition is addressed to the Honourable Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled. It asks Parliament to support the amendments to the Dental Act 1939-72, and is couched in similar terms to previous petitions placed before the House. It bears 74 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 51.)

TRANSPORT: SCHOOL BUSES

Contracts: Petition

MR McNEE (Mt. Marshall) [2.22 p.m.]: I present the following petition—

TO:

The Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned residents of Mukinbudin and environs, wish to protest at the new contract system to be introduced by the Education Department under which the rate of remuneration to school bus contractors will be negotiated on the basis of approved costs and a profit margin.

We believe that, if the new system is not acceptable to school bus contractors and subsequently the contracts are put out to open tender, that the safety of the children will be put into jeopardy.

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

The petition bears 138 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 52.)

BILLS (10): ASSENT

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills—

1. Justices Amendment Bill.
2. Parole Orders (Transfer) Bill.
3. Public Trustee Amendment Bill.
4. Legal Practitioners Amendment Bill.
5. Legal Aid Commission Amendment Bill.
6. Audit Amendment Bill.
7. Stock Diseases (Regulations) Amendment Bill.
8. Plant Diseases Amendment Bill.
9. Acts Amendment (Abolition of Capital Punishment) Bill.
10. Rural Housing (Assistance) Amendment Bill.

DENTAL PROSTHETISTS BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 15 August.

MR BRADSHAW (Murray-Wellington) [2.30 p.m.]: The background to this matter concerning dental technicians evolved from the need to replace teeth which have been lost through either dental problems or physical injury. Originally dentists replaced these teeth with the aid of dental technicians, but dental technicians have, over the years, entered into this type of work in an endeavour to make more money and to become more sophisticated. As a result, a limited number of dental technicians have become involved in setting up an illegal, disfranchised status. It is a status which they see as a means to making more money without having to rely on work being sent to them by dentists. A limited number of dental technicians have evolved in this way over the last 10 years.

It appears that a small number of dental technicians who have been operating under a disfranchised status have been applying pressure to Governments over the years in order to receive recognition of their work and to obtain a licence to allow them to deal directly with the public. I realise it will be better for dental technicians to have access to a licence rather than living in fear of being prosecuted.

I believe that the Government has, in some ways, moved in the right direction by introducing this Bill. I cannot see any reason that qualified people should not be able to practise within the ambit of their qualifications. This applies not only to dentistry, but also to the legal and medical professions. It is a fact of life that people who have achieved the level of tertiary education necessary to become lawyers, should be licensed to act on behalf of the public. Similarly, there are certain criteria in respect of dental technicians becoming prosthetists, and there is no reason that they should not deal directly with the public after suitable training. However, if those dental technicians

who have been practising illegally for five or more years do not undergo any training in biological science or in dental procedures, it seems strange that the Government is prepared to license them. It is like granting a person a driving licence because he has been driving illegally for five years. It makes a farce and mockery of the universities and tertiary education institutions which operate in Western Australia. The Government might as well say that it will do away with this education and that a licence will be granted to a person simply because he managed to practise illegally as a dental prosthetist for a certain length of time.

It will be necessary for dental technicians who have been acting illegally to undertake a full training course. They should be subject to an examination or some kind of training to show that they are of the accepted standard and are competent to look after the oral health of Western Australians.

It is rather hypocritical of the Minister that he was prepared to back the Federal Minister for Health in respect of the heavy penalty imposed on a doctor in Pingelly, yet he is prepared to grant to dental technicians who have been operating illegally for the last five years or so, a licence to operate as prosthetists. It is difficult to understand how a huge penalty can be dished out to a doctor who committed a minor offence, yet the Government is prepared to grant licences to dental prosthetists without their undergoing any sort of training.

The Bill allows for two forms of licence and I refer members to clause 19(1) of the Bill, which reads as follows—

Subject to this Act, a licence is of unlimited duration and authorizes the person to whom it is issued—

- (a) to engage in the practice of dental prosthetics to the extent that it relates to the fitting, constructing, inserting, repairing, or renewing of full artificial dentures or mouthguards; and
- (b) where the licence has an endorsement, but not otherwise, to engage in the practice of dental prosthetics to the extent that it relates to the fitting, constructing, inserting, repairing, or renewing of artificial dentures that are not full artificial dentures, but only if he has been provided with a copy of an appropriate certificate in respect thereof as required by subsection (2).

A dental prosthetist must ensure that a prospective patient has, not more than one year before the proposed work is carried out, been examined by a dentist who has certified in writing that the mouth

cavity and existing teeth of the patient are in a fit state to have the proposed work carried out. The certificate must be kept for seven years from the last date on which work was carried out on a patient who wished to have a partial denture made by a dental prosthetist.

If dental technicians have been operating illegally over the last seven years I wonder why it will be necessary to ask for a certificate in the future.

It can be imagined that if a patient wants partial dentures made by a dental technician he will feel embarrassed going to the dentist asking for a certificate giving him a clean bill of oral health. The dentist must certify there are no dental caries or other biological diseases in the mouth so that the patient can then go to the dental technician and ask for a prosthesis or a partial denture to be made. Because of this potential for embarrassment it can be foreseen that people will go to the dental prosthetist without first going to the dentist for a certificate. Some pressure will be put on the dental prosthetist to perhaps overlook the provisions contained in this part of the Bill and to not insist upon a certificate.

The Minister in reply may be prepared to indicate whether inspectors will be appointed to ensure that certificates are insisted upon by the dental prosthetist or technician before work is carried out. Alternatively, will it be a provision contained in the Act about which no action is taken in the event that the dental technician does not ask for a certificate?

It is interesting to note the following comments regarding fabrication of removable partial dentures from the submission made by the Faculty of Dentistry in UWA, which read—

The diagnosis and treatment of caries and periodontal disease is essential before removable partial dentures are inserted into the oral cavity.

Failure to do this will lead to a quicker breakdown of the remaining teeth and supporting structures.

An understanding of biomechanics is essential for the proper fabrication of removable partial dentures.

Failure to make a removable partial denture with the proper biomechanics will lead to a quicker loss of the remaining teeth and may lead to muscle and temporo-mandibular joint problems.

The dentures could create aches and pains in other parts of the body in cases where they had not been fitted properly and were not sitting correctly in the

mouth. The submission from the Dental School at the University of Western Australia also stated the following—

In a majority of cases there is a requirement to adjust natural teeth so that a proper removable partial denture can be fabricated. (At the Dental School, University of Western Australia, clinical records indicate, almost without exception that all removable partial dentures inserted required modification to natural teeth before the removable partial denture was fabricated.)

It is a fact of life that before a partial denture is made some degree of adjustment or modification to the existing teeth is required. It is highly unlikely that the education programme instigated by this Bill will bring dental prosthetists to a standard where they will be able to do this type of work; that is, modify the natural teeth. Work must also be done on the prevention of further breakdown of teeth, and maintenance of oral health must be aided by proper dentures and oral maintenance procedures. Until now the dental technicians have not had the training to give such advice and only dentists with basic training have been able to issue advice on how to best look after one's oral health.

A certificate is mentioned in the Bill, but no indication is given of who will be held liable for the certificate. It is all very well for the dentist to inspect the mouth and issue a certificate, but if the patient goes to the dental technician or prosthetist and eventually he is not happy with the result or something untoward happens as a result of the fitting of the partial denture, does the onus fall on the dentist or the dental prosthetist? This area is of concern, particularly to dentists. They will be in a situation where they sign certificates on the one hand and another person will carry out the work. The Bill will allow dental prosthetists to make partial dentures for patients. Perhaps it should also make provision for them to be trained to a standard where they can do the whole job without needing a certificate from a dentist.

Clause 18(1) states—

Where the Commissioner receives an application made under and in accordance with section 17 and the Commissioner is satisfied that—

- (a) the applicant is a person of good character and repute and a fit and proper person to hold a licence;

It seems a little strange that a person who has acted illegally for the previous five or more years, should be classified as a person of good character. I have met a number of dental technicians and found them to be reasonable people. However,

many of them have been breaking the law for five or more years and I do not see how that fits into this clause specifying that the applicants must be persons of good character. If a person has been breaking the law for a certain time there must be a little doubt about his good character. That provision should perhaps be removed because it puts a damper on licensing people who have been acting illegally.

This is a fairly complex Bill. On the surface it seems straightforward, but it contains many hidden aspects. People who do not necessarily have formal training will be licensed and I find this very worrying. In his second reading speech the Minister said that the Bill will provide the public with the opportunity for substantial savings and at the same time it will protect the oral health of all Western Australians. I wish to refer to two points from that speech. Firstly, with regard to cost saving, it is always easy for one person to undercut another person's price. However, once dental technicians or prosthetists are able to perform more work, they will need to upgrade their rooms, employ a receptionist, and incur other costs. This could increase their overheads to the stage where their charges will be increased. Also, as the number of patients increases, possibly the dental technicians' charges will gradually increase. There are recorded cases of some dental technicians currently charging as much as dentists charge, so that is a nebulous point.

I refer to the Minister's comment that safeguards will be provided to protect the oral health of the public. This is also a little anomalous; the Government is prepared to allow people who have had no formal training to become licensed because they have been working illegally for five or more years. Of course, there is every chance that some of these dental technicians are competent, but surely some examination should be required to ensure that their work is of a sufficiently high standard to deal with the public. It makes a farce and a mockery* of the Dental School of Western Australia. Dentists are required to undertake an extensive period of study, to be examined, and to demonstrate that the standard of their work is sufficiently satisfactory for them to work on the teeth of the people of Western Australia.

It is ludicrous for the Minister to include such a provision in the Bill without dental technicians having to undergo some form of training and examination.

Clause 19 provides for a licence of unlimited duration. That is a little strange. I do not know of any other profession, business, or organisation which has a licence of unlimited duration; although there may be some. Pharmacists and also

doctors and solicitors must be licensed every year; yet here dental prosthetists are to have a licence of unlimited duration.

Once the prosthetist is licensed, will only that person be able to deal with the public, or will he be able to run a business with unlicensed persons working under him? This may lead to a prosthetist being accused of being a front man.

Even though a small band of dental technicians are keen on this Bill and they have managed to persuade the Minister to introduce it, quite a few are not happy to become licensed; they are happy to work hand-in-glove with the dentists. There is not necessarily a universal acceptance of this Bill by dental technicians.

In fact an article in *The West Australian* mentions technicians concerned about dentures. Some technicians are quite keen; no doubt they are those who have been acting illegally over the years.

This Bill will discriminate against people who do not want to deal direct with the public—dental technicians who have been obeying the law and working with dentists. It is unfair that these people who have obeyed the law should be suddenly discriminated against. Why should they not have similar privileges to those who have been dealing direct with the public in the last 5 years?

The Minister is here setting up another system of education in a declining market. In my area the local dentist who used to work full time in Harvey now works part time in Harvey and part time in Waroona. He does not employ any therapists. There is a school therapist at Harvey Primary School. The reduction in work is due largely to the good work done by dentists.

Therapists push for fluoridation. They have maintained a programme to educate the public to look after their teeth; to ensure oral health; to clean their teeth regularly using the right type of toothbrush and the right type of toothpaste. They also encourage schools to take on therapists to make sure that the children receive the right type of assistance at the school. If the children have any caries the therapists fix them up straight away. We have a declining need for dental technicians due to the health programmes instigated over the years, yet here we are setting up another programme which will be a cost to the taxpayer. Even if technicians have to pay to go through the process, there is a good chance this will not fulfil the whole cost of that programme.

In Victoria and Tasmania there are very few applicants for this programme this year—I think two applied in one State and none in the other—yet here we are setting up a programme to train dental technicians.

Will inspectors check to see whether dental technicians are still acting illegally, or will those who have been licensed be checked on to see whether they are doing partial dentures without obtaining certificates?

It seems logical to me that instead of setting up another board which the Government plans to administer, it would be much cheaper and just as efficient to have the Dental Board administer these people. We are setting up another board which will cost taxpayers money when we already have a board in existence which is capable of administering dental prosthetists.

In the Minister's second reading speech he said anyone making a false statement or producing false documents in relation to an application for a licence would face a penalty of \$200. In this day and age \$200 is a fairly paltry fine. It should be increased to a reasonable amount so that people will think twice about producing false documents or making false statements.

Leave to Continue Speech

I seek leave to continue my remarks at a later stage of the sitting.

Leave granted.

Debate thus adjourned.

PARLIAMENT WEEK

Grecian Urn: Presentation

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I draw the attention of members to the fact that as part of Parliament Week a Grecian urn will be presented to the Premier at the front of Parliament House at 3.00 p.m. In order to give members an opportunity to witness the presentation I will leave the Chair until approximately 3.15 p.m.

Sitting suspended from 2.58 to 3.30 p.m.

DENTAL PROSTHETISTS BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR BRADSHAW (Murray-Wellington) [3.30 p.m.]: Previously I said the penalty in the Bill for people who make false statements or produce false documents in relation to an application for a licence, is a paltry amount; namely, \$200. That does not count for very much at all these days. There should be a much larger deterrent so people think twice before they apply for a licence when they should not.

This Act discriminates against technicians who wish to work for dentists and not work directly

with the public. These technicians will not have a licence and unqualified people will still be able to call themselves dental technicians.

Possibly the Minister might look at setting up a system under which dental technicians who wish to remain working with dentists can be licensed and undergo some form of examination to show they are competent in their job, and after they have completed a reasonable apprenticeship they could become licensed as dental technicians as distinct from dental prosthetists. The Minister may also like to indicate what sort of education programme he envisages for these prosthetists to become licensed; whether it be a course at WAIT or some other tertiary institute. It is very important that dental caries and any other mucosae oral infection be detected before partial dentures are inserted. It has been proved that any dental caries or unhealthy oral cavities can lead to a rapid loss of natural teeth left there after the partial denture has been inserted.

It is very important that the people dealing with the public have had sufficient training to recognise these problems. Also, it has been pointed out that in most cases where a partial denture is used, some manipulation or work has to be done on the natural teeth. Therefore it is vital that the people are trained to a stage sufficient to enable them to do this. There is only one person who can do this. He is the dentist who has gone through quite an extensive training course and who can, in most cases, recognise these problems which exist and can make sure that the health of the person is maintained.

We wish to move a few amendments in the Committee stage. For example, we feel there is not enough dental expertise on the committee to set the exams and exams should be set by an independent body with the necessary dental education to set them. The committee includes a dental technician who is working with the public; we do not feel that is necessary. Why is a dental technician who works with a dentist to be excluded from this committee? Surely he is suitable as well to be on this committee. We do not believe that the grandfather clause, as such, is acceptable. Some form of examination is necessary to show that the dental technician is competent to be licensed as a prosthetist; therefore we would like to see that changed.

All in all, we are in favour of the Bill and the fact that dental technicians can become licensed to deal directly with the public in the fitting of full sets of dentures and also mouthguards; but there are some facets of the Bill that leave a lot to be desired and in the Committee stage we will move some amendments.

The Minister is prepared to amend clause 3(3) which virtually gives dental technicians open house to do any dental-type work on a mouth, to prepare a mouth for partial dentures, or for a set of dentures. It is good that an amendment to that provision will be forthcoming from the Government; it will have our support.

MR LAURANCE (Gascoyne) [3.37 p.m.]: The whole question of health care in this State is a matter of grave public concern. This Bill deals with a particular aspect of health care. Before dealing with the specifics of the Dental Prosthetists Bill, I point out this Minister is presiding over a disastrous period in the history of health care in this State. Some Ministers opposite will be remembered for having an innovative approach in achieving considerable advances, but not this Minister for Health. He will be remembered for bringing our fine health system to its knees. Government intervention and control, heavy-handed bureaucracy, diminishing health standards, and longer waiting times for treatment are going to be the hallmarks of his administration. There will be more about that as the health system grinds to a halt and the Opposition is called upon in the interests of the people of this State to attack the Government more and more for its failing health system.

However, in regard to dentists and dental prosthetists, the reason the Bill is here at all is that it seems this policy is a political pay-off.

The Minister indicated this policy had been in the ALP platform for some time, and that may well be the case; however, no secret was made of the fact prior to the last State election that the ALP went to as many groups as possible and said, "What do we have to do for you in order for you to support us to get into Government?" The dental technicians said it was very simple: They wanted this Bill and that was the price that they asked for its support of the ALP. Then the ALP won Government and it had to pay the piper, and so we now see this Bill before Parliament.

I am not saying that the Bill is wrong; the Opposition intends to support it. However, it does cast a shadow over the whole question about where we should be going in relation to the dental profession when we know the reason for the Bill being here is that it is a political pay-off.

My colleague, the member for Murray-Wellington, has indicated already that changes to the conditions relating to dental technicians may be necessary. However, it is rather unethical that the proposed changes have been presented in this manner. The Opposition does not want to be caught in the situation of taking sides in respect of

the two aspects of the dental profession; that is, the dentists and the dental technicians. Both those areas of the profession have important roles to play in the delivery and maintenance of oral health standards.

Therefore, the nub of the issue is the roles which those areas of the dental profession should play, the degree to which they should involve themselves in the exercise of oral health, and the standards of training they must attain.

In the lead-up to the introduction of this Bill, members have been bombarded with an enormous amount of material by people representing both sides of the issue. Those people have tried to influence, advise, and educate members in respect of this matter.

After receiving and studying all that information, the prime responsibility of members is to the public of this State. As members of this Parliament, we have an obligation to ensure that the health care standards in this State are maintained, that adequate training is carried out, and that people are trained properly to provide the service before they start practising in the community. That has been the traditional and appropriate role of Parliament.

If we are to be the custodians of the standards of health care and professional services, we must ensure that the essence of maintaining those standards is an approved form of training. Dentists have a form of training that is well known to the public. Our system of training dentists has stood the test of time and has delivered a very fine service to the people of this State.

One must look very carefully at the situation before changing a system which has stood us in good stead in the past. If that method of training is appropriate and if it is declared by the public to be a minimum, it would be wrong to change it in such a way that people who have not attained that level of training are able to provide a service to the public in respect of oral health.

The crux of the matter is the level of training people must attain before they may carry out certain work in the field of oral health. That is where we, as members of Parliament, have a role to play. We must determine that training standards are appropriate and are adhered to and that high standards of efficiency and ethics are maintained in the dental profession.

I do not say dentists are the only people who should be able to provide those services. However, I do say that anyone should be able to provide the service as long as he has acquired the necessary level of training.

In addition, we should remain flexible. Although we have had a good system of training in the past with two different areas practising dentistry—that is, dentists and dental technicians—that does not mean we must continue to maintain those roles forever. All systems should be dynamic, flexible, and open to change. Therefore, the Opposition will not oppose the Bill.

The Bill has some serious drawbacks and shortcomings, but the Opposition will support it, because it believes we should have a dynamic and flexible society and it is appropriate to examine standards from time to time. Because a system has worked well in the past, it does not mean it cannot be improved. That is the reason members on this side of the House were prepared to look openly at this legislation and to discuss with dentists and dental technicians their views on the proposed changes.

My colleagues, the member for Kalamunda, who is the Opposition spokesman on health matters, the member for Murray-Wellington, and a number of other Opposition members have had lengthy discussions with the people directly involved in and affected by this legislation. We realise that roles can change and I repeat that, although we have a good system of training and the delivery of oral health services by dentists and dental technicians has been first class in this State, there is always room for improvement. One must be careful when one seeks to make such changes and one must ensure the changes are appropriate, but that does not rule out change *per se*. We should be able to accept some change.

However, to allow dental technicians to carry out dental work without first attaining the appropriate training would make a mockery of our system. It leads one to ask why we have developed our system of education for dentists, if we are now seeking to change it. Has that system of training been inappropriate? I do not believe it has been. I do not believe any shortcomings in that system have been demonstrated, nor do I believe that our dentists are not trained adequately. If it is intended to dispense with that level of training for dentists, why do we not follow the same trend in other fields? Why should we insist on the same level of training for doctors, lawyers, and other professionals?

We should not allow semi-professionals or untrained people to operate in those fields. If we intend to allow people to set up their shingles and practise in an area in which we are accustomed to demanding certain standards and high levels of education, adequate training should be a prerequisite.

Therefore, one would not want to change the system without looking at the position carefully after it had been demonstrated that it was seriously deficient or not working properly. I do not believe such shortcomings have been demonstrated in the fields of oral health or dentistry.

Perhaps the Minister can indicate that when he responds, but in his second reading speech he certainly did not indicate any flaw in the current set-up. He pointed to ALP policy as the reason for this change and the acquired support of the dental technicians as being a prerequisite for the legislation, rather than there being a perceived need for it as far as the public or the dental profession are concerned. Therefore, we are a little sceptical of the need for change.

It is difficult to ascertain the stance of the dental profession as a whole to this Bill, despite all the propaganda we have received. For example, according to my reading of the correspondence, dentists believe that technicians should be able to do more in the field of oral health. Nevertheless, dentists seem to be unanimous in their opposition to the Bill. On the one hand the dentists take the attitude that dental technicians should be allowed to change their methods of operation, but, on the other hand, they oppose the Bill.

Mr Bateman: What about the ophthalmologists and their spectacle matters?

Mr LAURANCE: I shall come to that aspect in a moment. I shall make a point in respect of it which should cover the member's interjection. If it does not, I would like him to interject again and tell me whether my explanation is adequate.

Mr Bateman: Rest assured that I shall.

Mr LAURANCE: I appreciate the member's co-operation.

Not all dental technicians agree with the provisions of the Bill. The dentists would have us believe that only approximately 25 dental technicians are particularly seeking the provisions in the legislation, while the vast majority of dental technicians want some change, but it would not necessarily go as far as the provisions contained in the Bill.

Therefore, it is a little difficult for us, as legislators, to ascertain exactly the stance of the dental profession. I repeat that dentists agree generally that dental technicians should be allowed to do more than they may do currently under the law. However, we are told only some dental technicians want these changes and others do not believe it is appropriate that we should legislate in this way.

So there are some grey areas. The position is not black and white, as far as the dentists and dental technicians are concerned, as to the situation we should reach after the legislation is passed.

I will not review all the public arguments in respect of this matter, but I refer to a statement made earlier this year by Justice Michael Kirby.

Justice Michael Kirby is credited as being an academic and an intellectual and his comments are very often quoted in the media in this country. Earlier this year in Melbourne he spoke about parodontal personnel and the dental profession when delivering the Wilkison oration at the tenth congress of the Australian Society of Orthodontists. In his oration he criticised dentists and said that there had been a significant and powerful body of resistance to any change on the part of the dental profession.

I challenge his comments. Quite frankly, I think Justice Kirby is way off the beam in that comment. In the past, I have taken it on face value that he was an intellectual and an academic; but having read extracts of his oration, I have come to the opinion that he is rather short of professional expertise.

He spoke about the need for change in the dental profession and said that there was a request for change in professional standards in all areas. He said that change had been forced on the legal profession and that a lot of public debate had centred on the work of lawyers. I quote as follows—

"Much of the attention in this debate has focused on the legal profession in respect of its claim, in some Australian states, to a monopoly in paid land titling conveyancing", he said.

"But other professions have also come under scrutiny, notably the medical profession and the engineers.

"Now, it is dentistry's turn".

He said that other professions have had to open up to new thoughts and ideas and people with different training, and that dentists should now take their turn. But there is a tremendous amount of difference between a lawyer who wants to take and keep unto himself the conveyancing of land and a person who wants to operate in the profession of dentistry. If one makes a mistake in the conveyancing of land, it can be fairly painful and difficult to correct; but when one is operating inside a person's mouth it is a whole lot different from a person operating on a piece of paper.

Mr Bateman: That analogy is very wide of the mark.

Mr LAURANCE: I thought it covered the point. Here we have Justice Michael Kirby, a person often spoken of in this country as someone of high standing, saying that lawyers have had to open up their profession, and that although dentists have tried to keep dentistry to themselves, they now have to open up their profession to everyone. He has missed the mark completely.

As an aside, I point out that on occasions I have had reason to be upset with people who have done conveyancing for me. In a recent land transaction, the conveyancer put in "loc" for "location" instead of "lot" for "lot". I was the vendor in this transaction, and by the time the error was discovered the purchaser happened to be in central Africa. It proved to be almost impossible to contact him and have the error corrected. It was of considerable inconvenience to me and I was rather upset about it. Eventually we were able to correct the error, and the property transaction went through.

However, let us take the case of a person who was suffering because someone had not done a dental job properly. It would be a lot more painful and difficult to correct an error in dentistry than one in conveyancing, and this is something that has been overlooked by many people in the whole debate on this matter, and it is this which has been overlooked by Justice Michael Kirby.

I will now take up the other point mentioned by different people, including Justice Kirby and perhaps the member for Canning; that is, the argument that dentists have been resistant to change. I have no particular brief for dentists; nevertheless I feel that the charge is unfair. As the member for Murray-Wellington has already pointed out, in recent times there have been very significant changes in the practice of dentistry in this State. From my observations, these changes by and large have been supported by dentists. These changes include such things as the fluoridation of our water and the education of the public to help prevent dental decay. These are among the changes that have been strongly supported by the dental profession, even knowing that if the changes were accepted by the public, the dentists would lose work. The dentists have been extremely professional in trying to help people have better teeth.

We must also consider the question of Government involvement. As in many other parts of the world, in this State the Government provides dental care for young children during their primary years up to the age of about 12½ years. I do not like Government-controlled services of any kind, be they professional or any other; nevertheless Government-provided dental care has been accepted in this State. By and large dentists have

supported these changes and worked in very well with them, even though they have lost a considerable amount of work because of them.

This indicates that the dental profession is not reluctant to accept changes when these changes have been in the interest of the public by providing better oral health care. The dentists have been very professional.

Mr Bateman: What about the school dental scheme which provides a service to outback areas, a service which was never provided by private individuals because it would not pay?

Mr LAURANCE: I thought I had really covered that point. We do have visiting dentists who go to very remote localities such as small mining communities and outback homesteads. I was at Useless Loop on Thursday last and asked the people there what a certain caravan was for, and I was told it was brought by the travelling dentist. This is the only way to provide a service like that to remote areas.

Mr Bateman: It was supported by both sides of the House.

Mr LAURANCE: Yes. In some remote localities we have child care services provided at the schools. The provision of dental therapists there by and large is supported by dentists even though the system takes work from them. It has been provided at taxpayers' expense and not by private dentists. The dentists could have got upset about that, but by and large they accepted the change and worked with it. Dentists are members of a profession which is prepared to accept change.

What they are saying in their opposition to this Bill is that it will give an opportunity to people who really are not properly qualified to carry out work that it is generally believed should be restricted to those who have appropriate training—trained dentists. My colleague has already indicated areas where dental technicians should be able to do more, but we reject the Government's plan to go all the way to allow dental technicians, particularly with their current standards of training, to have open access to the public.

I have had correspondence from dental technicians indicating that this happens already. But it is not unusual to have a referral system operating in a paramedical field; it seems to work well in the field of surgery. People do not go direct to surgeons; they go to a general practitioner first and he refers them to a surgeon. There are many areas where the referral system works extremely well.

I am concerned particularly about the field of partial dentures where a mistake has been made by an untrained person. The dental technicians say that there are very few recorded cases of problems.

However, we have had one or two cases cited to us, and we do not need many. We are here to protect the public; not just the 95 per cent who visit trained dentists, but also the five per cent who might be treated by dental technicians who are not trained technicians.

We have a responsibility to the public to ensure that anybody carrying out dental work is properly trained and holds the necessary formal qualifications. It is necessary for us to ascertain what change we are prepared to accept and what level of training should be adhered to for people who are carrying out the work, particularly in respect of partial dentures and other areas of oral health care which require the services of trained dentists.

If a change is proposed, what form should that change take? In this regard the Bill appears to have many deficiencies which the member for Murray-Wellington has detailed in a general way and we will have a further opportunity to discuss those deficiencies and our proposed amendments during the Committee stage of the Bill.

Briefly, the composition of the committee requires close attention and I ask the Minister whether it would not be more appropriate to amend the composition of the existing Dental Board of WA. If we are to widen the scope could we not widen the scope of the board that currently looks after the standards of dentistry to encompass the work of dental technicians, particularly if their ability to service the public will be widened under this legislation? It would seem to be perhaps more appropriate to retain the existing Dental Board of WA rather than to establish the body proposed under this legislation, the Dental Prosthetists Advisory Committee. I also ask the Minister about the composition of the committee. The proposed composition of the committee seems to have faults. Under it, no-one really has the ability to set standards; one would expect an advisory committee to recommend standards to the Minister and so on. We will deal with that in greater detail in the Committee stage, but I really believe that—

Mr Cowan: Why not do it now? I would be very interested to hear it?

Mr LAURANCE: If the member is aware of the situation he would know it is really a balance between the dentists and the dental technicians with a chairman as the umpire in the middle. I do not really believe that it is an appropriate way of dealing with this.

Mr Cowan: I do not agree with you. I do not think that will necessarily be the case.

Mr LAURANCE: No, not necessarily, but three bodies represent dental technicians and they will each have a member. One person will be a

dentist appointed by the commissioner; so there will be a dentist, the representative of the Australian Dental Association, and the Education Department's TAFE director who will not necessarily support all the proposed changes. People involved in the educational process who have written to me, and obviously to the member who has just interjected, would have support for the stand taken by the dentists. They are the only letters I have seen from those involved in the educational process, and the situation seems to be three in one corner and three in the other corner with the referee in the middle, being the chairman. I do not think that structure is appropriate for setting standards.

The grandfather clause is insufficient; in fact, we believe it should be deleted because it is inappropriate. We noted elsewhere in the Bill mention of people being of good character and who have conducted that business for a period of five years. Really, what is being said is that a person who has acted illegally for a period of five years or more is a person who can be of good character and therefore can be licensed. Here is a fundamental paradox of definitions.

Really, a person cannot be said to be of good character if he has in fact blatantly broken the law for a period of five years. My colleague has already mentioned the definitions or interpretations which we would like to see amended. We require changes to the schedule of exemptions. We do not like the fact that there is no limitation on the duration of licences. That situation does not occur in many fields and it seems quite inappropriate for a person to be licensed for all time, particularly in the dental field. I would like to see some way of regularly reviewing that licence.

As has already been said, the penalties in some areas appear to be particularly light. They seem very inappropriate when one is talking about treatment that runs into hundreds of dollars for a particular patient, but the penalty for an offence is only \$200. It is inappropriate to set a low level of penalty if one is trying to prevent people carrying out a particular activity when that activity or conduct stands to make them a great deal more than the penalty will cost. Those penalties seem to be inappropriate.

To sum up, we support this measure. We believe it requires considerable amendment. We are not trying to enter the argument between the dentists and the dental technicians, because they both have a role to play in this field. It is fairly difficult to be able to judge just where the differentiation should be and where the dividing line should be drawn between the sorts of practices that they carry out. Nevertheless, we support their work, particularly

when it is done in a professional manner. We want to work with the Government to ensure that we achieve the best results for the people of this State and so that we get a very fine dental health service.

I support the Bill.

MR PETER JONES (Narrogin) [4.07 p.m.]: I ask the Minister to tell us in his response why he stated so definitely and strongly that the dental technicians came out very much at war with the ADA. I have no brief for either group of people, but I have heard some comments made by the Minister and I have read some letters that have been forwarded to all members and, as the member for Gascoyne has said, we have been barraged with material on this subject. We have received letter for letter, blow for blow, and we have had a situation where if the ADA makes some comments, within 24 hours we receive a letter from one group or other, whether it be the technicians or somebody else, trying to immediately tear down the ADA. The Minister has been very critical of the ADA to the point where I certainly became very confused about the arguments that were being waged on one or two specific points.

One question relates, for example, to whether technicians should be allowed to become associated with diagnosis and the fitting of partial dentures and one or two other aspects about which we as laymen, and certainly I as a layman, have no knowledge or competence in this field; yet we are told by the Minister that one group is lying and the other group is sweetness and light.

Three or four weeks ago while travelling on the Great Southern Highway I happened to hear the Minister being interviewed on radio. He responded to some comments that had been made by the Australian Dental Association representative regarding a deficiency contained within the Bill. The criticism that had been levelled at the Bill was that it was very open-ended and would allow technicians to become involved in providing a service for which they were wholly and totally untrained and unsuited; and more particularly, the Bill was against what the Minister himself had previously said would be the case. The Minister's response was, "Look, if it does say that, and I don't think it does, but if it does, I will have it looked into and I will have it amended". There is nothing at all wrong with that. The Minister was saying, "I certainly don't think that is what I wanted the Bill to do, but if it does do that I will have a look at it".

He proceeded to attack the ADA again. Instead of dealing with the matter with an unbiased and clinical approach by saying "A problem may occur or will occur, so it will be looked at again,

because it appears that a selfish group of people are trying to pursue their own interest in the industry" the Minister has brought forward this legislation. I do not know whether that group is looking after its interests for selfish reasons—I doubt it very much—but it is clear to people who have taken the trouble to look at the legislation what the Minister is trying to achieve.

The Minister has not been able to give satisfactory reasons for this legislation. The reasons he has given simply boil down to three matters: Firstly, it has been in the policy of the Labor Party for some years. Indeed, this matter was brought forward at the last two State elections. It is a clearly known fact that the Labor Party undertook to bring forward such legislation. Secondly, a group of people have asked for this legislation. What a stupid reason to hang one's hat on when bringing forward such legislation! Groups of people ask for lots of legislation. Some do so for selfish or sectional reasons, and it is often unnecessary and generally unwanted. It is hardly a justifiable reason for such legislation: "Because there is a need". Those reasons do not constitute a need.

The third reason given by the Minister—perhaps it is a defence—is that similar legislation exists elsewhere. The Minister continued to quote Tasmania, where legislation of this type has existed for some 30 years. He has mentioned also new legislation in Victoria and South Australia. That hardly constitutes a reason for our discussing this legislation.

Those reasons hardly justify the introduction of this Bill, because it is not identical legislation. The South Australian legislation is new and has not been tried for a certain period. As I understand it the legislation has some good factors in it, but one or two of them are not included in our Bill.

It has been suggested to us by a group of technicians that 90 per cent of dentists in this State and 90 per cent of technicians do not want this legislation. If members have read the material forwarded to them, they will be aware of that fact. I ask the Minister why he has not been prepared to indicate the reason this legislation has been brought forward, and why he is not prepared to challenge the statement that 90 per cent of dentists do not know what is in the legislation. What is even worse, they do not know what it might do for them. The suggestion has been put forward, in the information sent to members and in various interviews, that the pressure for this legislation came from approximately 25 technicians. That is all!

If the Minister has information, which is valid, to prove that the statement that 90 per cent of the technicians are against the legislation is wrong, let him do so. Unfortunately, he has not.

As I understand it, the ADA has indicated that it does not oppose some of the initiatives in the Bill, but it is opposed to one or two of the basic principles. For example, it is opposed to the involvement by technicians in the making of partial dentures. The amendment the Minister has put on the Notice Paper does not address that matter, it merely clarifies the situation to which I have already made reference. It merely defines the parameters within which technicians can work. I note also that the amendment is open-ended as well.

If the Minister and his committee wish to administer this legislation positively and strongly the amendment will have to be looked at further, because it may cause some headaches. The Minister overcomes the situation which exists now by saying, "You have been disobeying and breaking the law for years, but now you can be good boys and we will let you come within the confines of the Act if you are a person of good character and standing in the community". What sort of prerequisite is that? To be qualified to deal with the public, to enter training, undertake employment, and to gain qualifications—as well as do additional sweeping up—a person must have been breaking the law for some time. On that basis it seems the Minister considers that dental technicians practising currently within Western Australia, and capable of diagnosing various problems, may be able to do so legally and will be capable of carrying out the activities involved in their profession. That is what the legislation will provide.

The Bill will now provide for people, whom the Minister must think are already available and practising within Western Australia, to diagnose patient problems and provide some form of remedial treatment.

Every member will have received a letter from the Australian Dental Technicians' Society dated 27 August 1984. I did not hear the Minister rebut what was in this letter. Perhaps if he did, he may care to correct me. This letter refers to the grandfather clause in the Bill and says in respect of it that any applicants will need to have over five years' experience, in addition to trade training. What does that mean in terms of the capacity of dental technicians to diagnose patient problems? Any applicant will need to have over five years' experience, in addition to trade training. In other words, if a technician breaks the law for five years to get the experience, and has trade training, he is in. What sort of nonsense is that?

The letter refers to partial dentures and to the fact the ADA insisted that the clause pertaining to a certificate of oral health be included in the proposed legislation.

I would have thought that was quite basic and mandatory, but here the society is virtually criticising the ADA for insisting that a clause pertaining to oral health and the provision of a certificate of oral health be contained in the legislation. They do not want it; they wanted to skip through as quickly as possible, but they have been forced to accept a clause and a requirement which quite clearly they do not want.

The letter then identifies the fact that in Victoria an amendment has been proposed to allow prosthetists to fit partial dentures. The letter goes on to say—

A demand by dentists that this be the type of Legislation we have in Western Australia is obviously again through self interest and not in the interests of better public dental health.

I do not see what right, entitlement, or basis the Australian Dental Technicians' Society in Western Australia has for saying that the proposed restriction on being able to fit partial dentures is not in the interests of better public dental health. Putting it the other way around, would it be in the interests of better public health in Western Australia to allow dental technicians to fit partial dentures? I would have thought that was completely ridiculous. Perhaps the Minister will correct me if I am wrong, but I do not remember his coming out and criticising the technicians for that statement.

There is more in the letter about grandfather clauses, illegal trading, and so on, but further on it says—

A small group of outspoken self-interested persons does not have the right to monopolise the denture market at the frustration and inconvenience of the majority.

I would have thought that was exactly the kind of emotive statement for which the Minister attacked the Australian Dental Association. Yet nowhere does he attack this group for making what is virtually an identical claim—one that has certainly not been proved, as it has not been proved by the dentists. The society makes an unsubstantiated claim about a "small group of outspoken self-interested persons" when on the figures suggested by some of the information made available, and some interviews I have heard, the reverse could apply. Such a statement could not only sit easily in relation to the technicians, but also could be seen to be even more applicable to them if it is

true that a great number of persons practising as dental technicians do not want this legislation in its present form.

The letter concludes by saying, "... we believe are selfish reasons rather than looking at the broad spectrum and the advantage to the public generally in Western Australia". I am not satisfied that the measure the Minister has put forward is necessarily to the advantage of all people in Western Australia. It may be to their disadvantage in some respects.

I would like some information from the Minister as to the real need for this legislation and the pressures and claims being made, particularly regarding the numbers of people who want it and have asked for it, and who can justify the fact that it will be beneficial to the people of this State. If we are to have it, let us do so for the right reasons, not because the Labor Party promised this legislation in its policy speech and a small group of 25 technicians want it, or more particularly, because the Australian Dental Association says it should not be and that it will come out against it.

If the Minister put as much time into trying to make some of the dental subsidy schemes work—where an enormous backlog exists—as he does in trying to register technicians, the dental service in this State would be of far greater benefit to the public than at present. I refer in particular to those areas where delays occur in processing applications for the dental health subsidy scheme, and where the subsequent paper work is causing considerable delay and hardship. If more time were put into that to make it work, instead of trying to satisfy the pressures relating to this legislation, we might have an opportunity to discuss something worthwhile, instead of this nonsense.

MR GORDON HILL (Helena) [4.26 p.m.]: I support the Bill with pleasure, but with a great deal of confusion after having heard the Opposition speakers this afternoon. Members of the Opposition either have not read the Bill and have not gone through the clauses in detail, or they are just plain ignorant.

Mr Burkett: It is the latter.

Mr GORDON HILL: It probably is.

It is amazing to hear Opposition members support the Bill and then attack it. This is particularly so when it comes from a political party which purports to be a free enterprise party. This Bill does nothing more than provide freedom of choice. It provides Western Australians with the freedom of choice and competition in this area that the dental industry has not delivered in the past. The main reason for the Bill's introduction is that it

will result in a better and cheaper service to consumers.

As the previous speaker pointed out, similar legislation has considerable support around Australia. For example, it has been on the Statute books for some 30 years in Tasmania, and similar provisions have been enacted in New South Wales and Victoria. I understand the Western Australian parliamentary Liberal Party's health committee in the past also has given support to this proposal, so it should have total bipartisan support.

Mr Clarko: Where did you get that information?

Mr GORDON HILL: It is widely held information around the lobbies of Parliament House.

Mr Clarko: It is dreamed-up. I was chairman of the Government committee on health, education and welfare for five years. It came before us and was rejected every time.

Mr GORDON HILL: The information I have from other members of the same committee is that that is not the case. I am not surprised the former Minister for Education is out of touch on this issue, as he has been on many other issues.

Mr Clarko: You may not be responsible, but that statement is false.

Mr GORDON HILL: Irrespective of whether the statement is false, that is the information I have. I am putting it on the basis that that is the information I have been given.

Apart from that, it seems to have support from the Liberal Party generally, and members of the Opposition have supported the Bill today with some qualifications. That stance is rather confusing because the Opposition speakers then set about denigrating the legislation.

Similar legislation has been in force in Tasmania since 1957, I am told, and a former Minister for Health in that State (Hon. M. G. Everett) in a letter to the New Zealand Minister for Health advised that the legislation had been an enormous success. He said in his letter that the Bill's introduction was strongly opposed in Tasmania by the dental profession but that opposition had waned over a period of time and the profession was now fairly co-operative.

I venture to say that the situation which applies in other States of Australia will, in due course apply in Western Australia. Dentists will have to realise, as is the case in Tasmania, New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, that there will be no loss of income to them as a result of the enactment of this legislation. Dentists have claimed there will be a drop in standards, but that simply will not be the case. This legislation has a

number of safeguards built into it which will ensure that the standards are not reduced.

Members opposite have referred to problems concerning standards and have suggested there is a need to ensure that proper qualifications are held by dental prosthetists. In fact, this legislation has taken that into account and that is why I am disturbed about whether members opposite have actually read the legislation.

In one clause of the Bill reference is made to the role of the committee which will make recommendations to the Commissioner of Health. Part of its role is to liaise with the medical profession to ensure that adequate training facilities are provided for dental prosthetists. Members opposite also referred to the qualifications required by people seeking a licence. That is clearly spelt out in the Bill and I am puzzled to hear members opposite speak like that, particularly the member for Gascoyne. It is a pity he is not in the Chamber to participate in the debate. Like many of his colleagues he makes a speech occasionally and then runs from the Chamber.

Several members interjected.

Mr Clarko: Why have you been allowed to speak today?

Mr GORDON HILL: The member for Gascoyne made a remark about the standards and said that they will be diminished and that the qualifications necessary are not set out in the Bill. He also said there is no guarantee that certain qualifications will have to be attained. However, the Bill spells out clearly that in order to gain a licence to operate as a dental prosthetist an applicant will have to meet certain standards and have the required qualifications. This has been the case with the legislation which has been enacted in other States of Australia.

It is interesting to note that in New South Wales in order to obtain registration as a dental technician a person must undertake two years of full time study, and two years in job training, and must sit for an examination by the Dental Technicians Board.

I do not know what will be the intention of the advisory committee in addressing this measure, but the standard which applies in New South Wales appears reasonable and it is the sort of standard that the Minister for Health has anticipated, because under the Bill a dental technician must have certain qualifications.

I go back to the point I made earlier; that is, this legislation will give Western Australians freedom of choice. It is a free enterprise Bill and it is puzzling to hear members opposite speak in the manner in which they have. However, it is pleas-

ing to hear that the Opposition will support the Bill.

I refer again to the question of qualifications which have been clearly spelt out in the legislation. If members opposite will take the time to read the legislation, they will understand it. The legislation will provide pensioners and disadvantaged people with the opportunity of greater choice when obtaining dentures or partial dentures.

Mr Clarko: Using the same argument you would let a butcher do open-heart surgery on a person because it would be cheaper.

Mr GORDON HILL: That is nonsense.

Several members interjected.

Mr GORDON HILL: The comment made by the member for Karrinyup was absurd and does not warrant a response.

The Bill does spell out the need for qualifications.

Mr Clarko: A slaughterman would be cheaper. The blokes at Robb Jetty would be able to do it cheaper.

Several members interjected.

Mr GORDON HILL: The question is whether the legislation demands certain qualifications, and clearly it does.

I am amazed at the member for Karrinyup making such an inane statement. I would have thought he had more intelligence and that he would have made the effort to read the legislation rather than make half-witted comments.

As a result of safeguards that have been built into the legislation—

Mr Clarko: There are no safeguards. You will allow people with no qualifications to work.

Mr GORDON HILL: That is not the case. The member for Karrinyup has not taken the time to read the Bill.

Mr Clarko: I have read it.

Mr GORDON HILL: The member for Karrinyup would be enlightened if he listened to the debate.

Mr Clarko: Is there a grandfather clause in the Bill?

Mr GORDON HILL: There is a grandfather clause and if the member for Karrinyup would read the reference to it he may be enlightened further. From the comments he is making, the member for Karrinyup, is obviously not interested in the debate or the Bill.

This legislation will give people in my electorate—the disadvantaged people and pensioners—the opportunity of a wider choice in re-

gard to dental attention which will result in cheaper dentures and partial dentures. It will also stamp out an illegal operation in Western Australia—

Mr Clarko: What a time to solve a problem.

Mr GORDON HILL: —which was going on during the time of the previous Government and it did absolutely nothing about it.

Mr Tonkin: Nine years of nothing.

Several members interjected.

Mr GORDON HILL: Similar legislation has reduced the number of illegal operations undertaken by dental technicians in other States and it has received the support of Governments, Oppositions, and the community.

I have great pleasure in supporting this Bill because it will be to the benefit of Western Australians. It is really a question of giving a choice to the public. It is a free enterprise Bill and I am amazed to hear the comments of the Opposition.

MR WATT (Albany) [4.38 p.m.]: Before I make a few observations I will refer briefly to the comments made by the member for Helena, because he confuses support from the Opposition with constructive criticism.

Mr Gordon Hill: I have not heard any constructive criticism.

Mr WATT: The member for Helena has suggested that members on this side of the House have denigrated the Bill, but I do not think that that is the case. Genuine queries have been raised and the member should welcome them rather than criticise.

A number of professions are involved in the area of dentistry. These include dentists, dental therapists, dental technicians, and, of course, prosthetists. I wonder whether it would have not been better to combine all activities of the dental profession under one Act to bring them under the one umbrella. It would have been a good thing, rather than to fragment the industry under different Acts.

This Bill seeks to legitimise what has been happening for a long time. I must admit that this illegal activity has been occurring for longer than I thought. I was not aware of the extent of the illegal denture making that has been occurring in this State.

One person told me that he had been having dentures made illegally for more than 20 years and that a dental technician had extracted teeth for him. Obviously it is a practice that has been occurring for a number of years. Whether it is good or bad depends on the person concerned. If

the treatment turns out to be all right, it is good. However, if that is not the case, it is bad.

Mr Hodge: I am sure there are members in this Chamber who have had teeth made illegally.

Mr WATT: That may well be.

I do not intend to oppose this Bill, but I must admit that I have much more sympathy with the proposition that dental prosthetists should be licensed to make full dentures, at least initially, rather than partial dentures. If there is a problem area, I can see it is much more likely to occur in the matter of partial dentures than full ones. That reservation also has been expressed by the Australian Dental Association. I do not know whether there is a possibility of limiting the activities of dental prosthetists to that extent for a period while the whole thing settles down. That would be my preference.

Dentists, through their association, are not wildly enthusiastic about the legislation, but they have been pragmatic enough to realise that this is the way the industry is going. They have said they will not oppose the Bill, although they obviously have some reservations about it.

As has been brought out in some of the debate on this side of the House, I think it is fair to say that in recent years various improvements in dental care have been effected, such as the introduction of fluoride into water supplies, the introduction of dental therapists and health programmes in schools. This has resulted in a great improvement in the dental health of people generally, but particularly children. This is demonstrated by statistics which have shown a dramatic reduction in caries in the various age groups since the introduction of fluoridation and dental therapists. That is commendable, but at the same time it has resulted in a much greater competition for the available dental work. Perhaps that is especially so for dentures, because obviously those programmes have meant that the community generally has better teeth and therefore less need for dentures.

Like the ADA, the Opposition has some reservations, one at least of which has been recognised quickly by the Government. I refer to clause 3, which is related to the preparation of the mouth for denture work. I am perfectly happy with the amendment in the Minister's name on the Notice Paper. Dental technicians with whom I have spoken have indicated that they never intended to be licensed to do that sort of work anyway, so I am quite sure they too would be happy to see that uncertainty clarified.

Clause 17 of the Bill deals with the application for a licence. It provides that a person who is not a

dentist may apply to the Commissioner for a licence.

The Bill goes on in clause 18 to deal with the issuing of the licence. Paragraph (1)(b) says this—

the applicant has, upon assessment by examination, gained from an educational authority a qualification so prescribed or is otherwise qualified in a manner considered by the Commissioner to be at least equivalent to a qualification required by the regulations for the purposes of this paragraph,

I am happy about that. But I am very concerned about clause 18(2). I have discussed this with other people and they interpret it in the same way as I do. It says—

(2) Where on the coming into operation of this Act a person is actively engaged in the practice of dental prosthetics in the State and has been continuously so engaged for a period of not less than 5 years he shall, for the purposes of dealing with an application made under section 17 within 1 year after the coming into operation of this Act, be taken to be qualified as required by subsection (1)(b).

Unless I am wrong—and the Minister will no doubt comment on this when he makes his response to the debate—that provides that the applicant must apply, and if after a year he has not been qualified by the examination process, he can be licensed anyway. If I am reading it wrongly, others have read it wrongly too. I suggest to the Minister that while I do not consider myself to be qualified in legal interpretations—although I suppose, like most members of Parliament, one looks for ambiguities in some of the wording—I suspect others might read it wrongly also.

Mr Hodge: It means he has a year to make an application.

Mr WATT: I do not believe that is the case. I ask the Minister to consider whether this clause is as watertight as it is meant to be. I ask him to take this up, because in my mind it constitutes a doubt.

I have a further problem in relation to clause 18, in that it refers to a person who has been actively engaged illegally in fitting dentures. I want to know why it does not include a person who has been actively engaged in making dentures legally for five years or more. That person should also be entitled to apply for a licence so that he too can engage in the process set out in clause 18(1)(b), and also become entitled to become licensed.

It seems an unusual state of affairs, to say the least, when we are attempting to legitimise the activities of those who have been breaking the law for five years or more, that those who have been complying with it are not even permitted to apply for a licence. They would have to start from scratch and go through the entire process from day one. That seems to be discrimination, although I do not know whether it was intended as such.

My final reservation on which I would ask the Minister to comment relates to clause 19(2)(a), where it says—

(2) A dental prosthetist who engages in the practice of dental prosthetics as referred to in subsection (1)(b) shall first—

(a) ensure that the prospective patient has, not more than 1 year before the proposed work is carried out, been examined by a dentist who has certified in writing that the mouth cavity and existing teeth of the patient are in a fit state to have the proposed work carried out.

I think one year is too long. I am not sure how long a referral by a doctor to a specialist lasts. My recollection is that it is six months. I would be happier with six months. My own suggestion would be something more like three months, because things can change in the tissues of the mouth and other areas of oral health. It seems to me that one year is a long time for a certificate to remain valid. It would be much safer and in the interests of the patient if, after that examination is carried out and the certificate issued, that person has the opportunity of getting to the dental prosthetist in less than one year.

With those comments, I indicate my support for the Bill and hope that the Minister will answer the queries I have raised.

MR COWAN (Merredin) [4.50 p.m.]: I will be brief because I have only two or three queries to put to the Minister. The first relates to clause 18(2), the alleged grandfather clause. I would like the Minister in his reply to indicate whether my interpretation, which differs from the interpretation of other members on this side of the House, is correct. Will this subclause allow any person who has constructed, manufactured or repaired artificial dentures to be entitled to apply for registration if he has done this work for five years? Is it a fact that the subclause does not allow only those technicians who have been dealing directly with the public to apply for a licence?

My second query relates to the clause which is invariably included in legislation these days, and I refer to the one dealing with the power to make

regulations. Clause 32(a) deals with fees. I am very concerned that the Minister is to have the power to determine by regulation what dental technicians will charge. I hope I have misinterpreted this clause, because I feel that the prerogative to set fees should be with the board the Minister is to establish.

It has generally been the practice with professional groups for their governing body to recommend fees, and it has been up to the members of the profession to charge a fee close to the recommended schedule of fees. I will be disappointed if the Minister wants to regulate this profession to the extent that he is able to prescribe what fees it charges.

There is one matter on which I would like to commend the Minister, and it involves the setting up of the committee. I do not commend him so much on who is to be appointed and from where they are to come, because I am not competent to comment on that, nor on whether it will be well-balanced with dentists and dental technicians. Nevertheless, it has been the practice in other legislation for Ministers to require a panel of names to be submitted from which the Ministers have the final choice. I am very pleased to see that in this Bill the Minister has given the various bodies the right to nominate a single person whom he will appoint. That is commendable and I would like to see more of this with the appointment of people to various controlling boards or bodies.

I support the legislation.

MRS HENDERSON (Gosnells) [4.55 p.m.]: Firstly, I indicate to members that I support this legislation. The key characteristic of the Bill has been the preparedness and the willingness of the Minister to consult with members of the dental profession and to seek to incorporate changes in the Bill to make it more acceptable to dentists.

I will refer briefly to some comments made by Justice Michael Kirby when earlier this year he criticised the dental profession for resisting reform that would enable parodontal personnel to perform various dental procedures. He berated dentists for resisting the inevitable benefits of new technology. Justice Kirby referred to a significant and powerful body of resistance on the part of the dental profession. I quote as follows—

The question I raise is whether the resistance is based on a true evaluation of the public's interest in dental hygiene or upon an introspective, and selfish perception of the self-interest of the dental profession.

Justice Kirby challenged the need for various procedures to be performed by dentists. He pointed to the emergence of parodontal and paramedical per-

sonnel as being intended to enable dentists, doctors, and other professionals to devote additional time to the more complex aspects of treatment. Justice Kirby compared dentistry to other professions where changes have resulted in a greater sharing of responsibilities and greater specialisation, and he urged dentists not to resist this trend.

I suggest that if it were not for the success of the fluoridation of our water supplies in reducing dental decay, we might not be finding resistance to the Bill before us today.

I emphasise the fact that this Bill gives people a freedom of choice: No-one has to deal directly with a dental technician; he can go to a dentist if he feels more comfortable.

I emphasise also that the Bill brings Western Australia into line with other States. As has been said previously in this debate, Tasmania has had this sort of legislation for 30 years, Victoria for 12 years and New South Wales for nine years. To my knowledge there is no evidence in those States of gum cancer, permanently damaged jawbones, or any of the other calamities foreshadowed in fairly extravagant claims to be the likely outcome of this legislation.

I turn now to safeguards included in the Bill and to clauses which demonstrate the Minister's flexibility and his willingness to adapt the legislation in response to representations from interested groups.

The first thing the Minister has incorporated is an advisory committee to consider applications for licensing, which committee will include two dentists out of a panel of seven. The committee will advise on qualifications necessary for licensing, and will issue licences.

The second area where the Minister has shown a sensitivity to the needs of dentists is the requirement that after 12 months, each new applicant must have formal qualifications gained by examinations, and these examinations will be determined by the advisory committee.

A third area is one that requires dental prosthetists who wish to fit partial dentures to have an endorsement on their licences. The commissioner must be satisfied that the applicant has undergone an examination as prescribed before the endorsement is made.

The fourth area relates to patients wanting a dental prosthetist to fit partial dentures. These patients must have a certificate of oral health from a dentist.

These four areas demonstrate very clearly the Minister's sensitivity to the concerns of dentists

and his real desire to incorporate changes to allay their fears. There is nothing new or radical about this legislation; it has been in Australia for many years and is accepted public practice in other Australian States. There has not been any of the outcomes foreshadowed by the dentists in this State.

I commend the Bill to the House.

MR MENSAROS (Floreat) [4.58 p.m.]: I shall prolong the debate for only a few moments to say a few words, because in my memory there has scarcely been a case during the time I have been a member of the House when so many representations have been made to me on a piece of legislation. Accepting that only a very small proportion of my constituents could be involved in the dental profession, the number of representations then appears to be even larger.

These representations almost unanimously—with one very notable exception—come out against the intention of the Government. Even if they do reluctantly accept this legislation to allow dental technicians to practise directly with patients, every one—except for that one exception—would like to do away with the so-called grandfather clause which ultimately allows practitioners to be registered. It could hardly be called a grandfather clause, because it implies, as the member for Gascoyne pointed out, that if someone has done something for a certain number of years illegally and he has a good character, he can be registered. I do not think anyone or anything has made a bigger ass of the law than this proposed Statute is going to do.

Before I sit down, I will tell members of this notable exception. He is a very good friend of mine. He is a dentist and he is very liberal, not necessarily in the political connotation, but in the real connotation of the word.

Mr Tonkin: I am glad you recognise the difference and admit it.

Mr MENSAROS: He is a liberal in the real connotation of the word in that he says, "Why should we want to prevent anyone from doing any business? Why should we prevent anyone from practising dentistry? After all, we live in a free country".

He added one condition—that anyone who wishes to practise dentistry without qualifications, should have a huge sign in front of his surgery, visible from 100 feet away, stating "I am not qualified". I commend that good thought to the Minister and the Government.

MR HODGE (Melville—Minister for Health) [5.01 p.m.]: I thank all members who have contributed to the debate on this Bill. I am pleased

the Opposition has indicated its support, albeit with a number of reservations.

I was surprised to hear the lead speaker, the member for Murray-Wellington, indicate to the House that he proposes to move a number of amendments to this legislation. That was news to me. I was not warned previously that any amendments were forthcoming. No amendments from the Opposition appear on the Notice Paper. As yet, I have not been supplied with a copy of the amendments.

Mr Tonkin: They should be on the Notice Paper. They have had three weeks in which to do that!

Mr HODGE: If Opposition members are serious about the amendments and expect the Government to consider them seriously they should have arranged to have the amendments put on the Notice Paper. I have not even been sent a copy.

I know that sometimes Oppositions move amendments to make a political point, or to underline a particular point, knowing full well they will not be accepted. That is done often as a debating point.

Mr MacKinnon: The Opposition has limited resources.

Mr HODGE: I know that well, but if the Opposition were serious about the Government looking at its amendments it would have provided me with a copy some weeks ago. This Bill has been on the Notice Paper for more than four weeks. It was certainly on the Notice Paper before the recent recess.

Someone has just thrust a sheet of amendments under my nose. Obviously I should cast one eye over them while I speak about other matters.

Several members interjected.

Mr HODGE: If the Opposition expects the Government to consider amendments, it is most unsatisfactory to thrust them under my nose during debate.

Mr Tonkin: That is the idea of the Notice Paper.

Several members interjected.

Mr HODGE: This Government has a very good record for accepting amendments put forward by the Opposition. I am sure we have accepted more amendments in the brief time we have been in office than were accepted during the now Opposition's nine years in Government.

Several members interjected.

Mr HODGE: I have been prepared to accept a number of amendments from the dental profession

and they have been incorporated in the legislation. I have been prepared to make further amendments, following further representations. I have shown a great deal of flexibility in this respect.

I would like to have an opportunity to study these amendments: it is a pity the Opposition did not present them to me a few weeks ago.

Mr Laurance: You should acknowledge the fact that the Opposition spokesman in this area has been ill and is in hospital. We have had some difficulties, in addition to the normal lack of resources.

Mr HODGE: I am aware the member for Kalamunda is in hospital. I have inquired regularly about his welfare. I even attempted to visit him, but unfortunately he was in the shower when I arrived.

Mr Clarko: He must have heard you were coming.

Mr HODGE: I understand surgery was successful; they even found that he did have a heart after all.

Members have put forward a number of points. A point was made about the grandfather clause. I believe there is nothing unusual or outrageous about having a grandfather clause in legislation. Grandfather clauses are in many pieces of legislation. Indeed, I am advised the Dental Act had a grandfather clause in it when it came into force.

The point made by some members was that the so-called grandfathers should have to pass an examination or have certain prescribed qualifications. If that were the case the clause would no longer be a grandfather clause. That is not a sensible approach.

Some people have derided the fact that if the grandfathers have been practising for five years, obviously they have been practising illegally for some of that time; therefore, they should not be able to be registered. I point out to the House that the clause merely says that the Commissioner of Health has to be satisfied that the applicant is a person of good character and repute and a proper person to hold a licence; that is, in addition to the requirement that he has practised dental prosthetics for at least five years.

If a dental technician has been practising illegally on occasions it does not appear to me that reason is sufficient to render him unsuitable for registration. This situation has been farcical for a number of years. The Liberal Government knew of this; dental technicians were operating illegally for some time. I have been given some estimates from reliable sources which indicate that up to 50

per cent of the dentures worn in the community have been made illegally.

Mr MacKinnon: Do you believe that?

Mr HODGE: I cannot verify that.

Mr MacKinnon: Do you believe that?

Mr HODGE: Stop shouting me down. I listened in total silence to the Opposition speakers. It is common knowledge that about 50 per cent of dentures have been made illegally.

Mr Clarko: How can you know that if it is all done illegally?

Mr HODGE: Because I have spoken to many dentists and many technicians in previous months. I think everyone agrees that a substantial number of dentures have been made illegally.

Mr Clarko: There are only 35 of them.

Mr HODGE: That is not correct. If the member gives me a chance I will cover all the points made. I have taken copious notes.

Mr Watt: It is obvious a percentage of dentures have been made in South-East Asia or Hong Kong. What is the percentage when compared with Western Australia?

Mr HODGE: I do not know the answer to that question. One other point raised during debate by the member for Merredin was that he was concerned that any person could apply under the grandfather clause and that he did not have to be a person who had been practising dental prosthetics for five years. The definition of "dental prosthetics" is in clause 3(3) of the Bill, which states—

For the purposes of this Act the practice of dental prosthetics shall be taken to mean the giving of advice to, or the attendance upon, a person—

- (a) for or in connection with the fitting, constructing, inserting, repairing, or renewing of artificial dentures or mouth guards; or
- (b) in preparation for the doing of any of the things mentioned in paragraph (a).

That clearly illustrates what dental prosthetics include, and the status of a person who makes and inserts dentures. The point the member for Merredin was making was that he was concerned that technicians who were not practising dental prosthetics could be included under that clause. That assertion is incorrect.

Mr MacKinnon: Don't you intend to amend that?

Mr HODGE: I intend to amend clause 3, and my amendment is on the Notice Paper.

It is a small technical amendment designed to set at rest the concerns expressed by the dental profession. I am not convinced that it is necessary. I have sought legal advice to set that anxiety at rest; and to put it beyond any doubt, we had an amendment drawn up, and I will move the amendment at the appropriate time. Hopefully, that will satisfy the dental profession.

Mr Laurance: You were using that in your argument in answer to the member for Merredin when in fact you intend to amend that clause.

Mr HODGE: That does not alter the argument. We are only putting a further safeguard into the clause. It is not a fundamental alteration to the clause.

The member for Murray-Wellington mentioned many points in his contribution. He highlighted the two categories of licence, and he was correct in that. The general licence will enable dental prosthetists to fit full dentures. An endorsement on the licence will enable prosthetists who have done additional training to the satisfaction of the advisory committee and the commissioner, to fit partial dentures. That will apply only after the provision of a certificate of oral hygiene by a dentist.

The member for Murray-Wellington mentioned the inspection of certificates and seemed to be suggesting some sort of inspectorate be established. I am not prepared to create a special inspectorate. I am not even sure that dentists will co-operate and issue the certificates. Some comments have reached my ears suggesting that the dentists will boycott the legislation and will refuse to co-operate in the issue of certificates. I do not know whether that statement was made in the heat of the moment or whether it is the coolly-considered position of the dental profession and whether its members will go through with it.

Mr Court: We could end up with all doctors and dentists boycotting the health system. That will be a great problem.

Mr HODGE: The member for Nedlands sounds like a prophet of gloom and doom, about which his father was always talking.

The member for Murray-Wellington also criticised the proposed study requirements in the legislation, but I am at a loss to understand that criticism. We have left the extra educational requirements entirely in the hands of the advisory committee. The members of the committee have not been selected, and the committee, therefore, has not begun to study the further educational requirements that will be necessary, so it is hard to understand how people can criticise or suggest that inadequate educational requirements will be established.

The member for Murray-Wellington predicted the continuation of illegal practices by dental technicians after the legislation is enacted. That is an entirely pessimistic view, and I am confident that that will not occur.

Mr Clarko: How can you be confident?

Mr HODGE: If the member will listen for a while, I will explain.

I have spoken to the health authorities in most of the other States. I questioned them about how the legislation works, and it has done so successfully in the other States. Indeed, I have a letter from The Dental Mechanics' Registration Board in Tasmania addressed to the Vice President of the Tasmanian Dental Mechanics and Dental Employees' Association. I will read one extract from the letter as follows—

I have my ear pretty close to the ground and I would say categorically there is no illegal dentistry being practised by registered dental mechanics in this State, nor for that matter anyone else. The last case was a New Australian some fifteen years ago and that wasn't very difficult to detect.

The prediction by the member for Murray-Wellington is an unnecessarily pessimistic one, and I do not believe that will happen.

Leave to Continue Speech

I seek leave to continue my remarks at a later stage.

Leave granted.

Debate thus adjourned.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.15 p.m.

DENTAL PROSTHETISTS BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR HODGE (Melville—Minister for Health) [7.15 p.m.]: Before the tea suspension I was responding to remarks made by the lead speaker for the Opposition, the member for Murray-Wellington. The member made the point that he believed it is unlikely that there will be a worthwhile difference between the charges levied by prosthetists for dentures and the charges imposed by dentists. He gave a number of reasons he considered that to be so.

In reply I can only say that that has not been the experience in the other States, and I would like

to quote the example of Tasmania. I have a letter addressed to me on 13 August 1984 by Mr Rex Edwards who was the President of the Australian Dental Technicians' Society in Tasmania. I will quote from a section of his letter which stated as follows—

It is repeatedly claimed by those opposed to registration, that there is little difference in fees charged by dentists and registered mechanics, and therefore no benefit to the public. I draw your attention to the fee recommended by the Australian Dental Association in 1983:—

Full upper and full lower dentures \$532

Full upper or full lower denture \$285

The average fee charged by registered mechanics in Tasmania during 1983 for full upper and lower dentures was \$280.

That shows fairly conclusively that in those States, and particularly Tasmania, where technicians are licensed, the cost of dentures to the public has been maintained at a substantially lower rate than that charged by dentists. I am told also that in New South Wales a substantial difference—about 30 per cent—exists between the charges of prosthetists and dentists.

The member for Murray-Wellington laboured the point, as did a number of other Opposition members, about licences. They seem to be quite amazed that the licence for dental prosthetists is to be issued once and not reissued each year. I am surprised the Opposition members adopted that stance. I would have thought they would be pleased that the Government is not trying to raise additional revenue by the unnecessary issuing of yearly licences.

I draw members' attention to the fact that this is a licensing arrangement and not a registration board. There will be very little cost to the Government, and hopefully the cost will be covered by the once-only licence fee. I suppose we could have attempted to make some revenue and a profit out of introducing this licensing system, but that was not the way I chose to approach it.

As it is a licensing arrangement, there is no need for a licence to be reissued each year. I do not wish to imply, or have the Opposition imply, that once a licence is issued under this arrangement it is necessarily issued for life. The commissioner has full powers under this legislation at any time to withdraw, suspend, or impose conditions on any licence he so determines.

The member for Murray-Wellington resorted at one stage to a general round-up of predictions of gloom and doom about the operation of this legis-

lation, as did a number of his colleagues. As I said earlier, I have checked with the health authorities in other States of Australia, particularly those which have this sort of legislation, and I can find no despondency or gloom and doom there about the way registration has worked. In particular, I have a number of glowing references from Tasmania where similar legislation has been in place for the best part of 30 years. I would like to quote from a number of letters that have come into my possession on the subject of dental mechanics, as they are called in Tasmania, and their registration.

The first is dated 12 April 1973 and is over the signature of the then Premier (Hon. Eric Reece), and was addressed to Mr R. P. Edwards, President of the Australian Dental Society in Tasmania. The letter states—

Dear Mr Edwards,

In reply to your letter of the 29th March, 1973, it gives me great pleasure to indicate to you the complete satisfaction of my Government with the services being provided by State Registered Dental Mechanics.

Further on the letter states—

It is also pleasing to know that both dentists and dental mechanics appear to be working in close co-operation.

I would like to quote from a letter from another Premier of Tasmania (Mr D. A. Lowe), dated 26 February 1980. It is also addressed to Mr Edwards, and states—

I consider that the decision to register Dental Mechanics in Tasmania has proved to be most successful, and I believe that Dental Mechanics, as a group, have responded in a responsible manner to such registration. I am quite sure that the public has benefited by the step to register Dental Mechanics.

Further on the letter states—

I understand that the 'Dental Mechanics' Registration Board are in the process of updating the Tasmanian Dental Mechanics' course, but this in no way detracts from my view that the registration of Dental Mechanics in Tasmania has proved to be a successful venture.

I have another letter dated 18 April 1973 from the then Deputy Premier of Tasmania (Mr M. G. Everett), to the Minister for Health in New Zealand. Part of the letter reads as follows—

At the time the Bill was bitterly opposed by the dentists, who claimed that no mechanic could possibly have the expertise to understand all the requirements for fitting a pros-

thesis to the mouth because of their lack of anatomical knowledge and their absence of scientific training.

It goes on—

There is no doubt whatever that the initial hostility which the profession showed to the mechanics has almost entirely subsided. There is a degree of co-operation and peaceful acceptance of the situation. Prior to the amendment of the legislation in 1958 illegal dentistry by mechanics was rampant in Tasmania. Now, there is reason to believe that it has ceased.

I hope the member for Murray-Wellington is taking note of these letters, and in case he is thinking that all the authors were Labor politicians, I point out that I also have letters in a similar vein written by Liberal members of Parliament, some of them quite distinguished. I have one from Sir Geoffrey Foot, who was a distinguished member of the Tasmanian Parliament. They are all in a similar vein to those I have quoted. It is fair to summarise them by saying across the political spectrum in Tasmania there is enthusiastic support for the registration of dental mechanics.

The member for Murray-Wellington also mentioned penalties and seemed to imply he thought they were too light. I do not believe that is so. I gave the question of penalties a fair bit of thought. Where an offence involves doing something that affects a member of the public, perhaps working illegally on the public, penalties are severe—in the order of \$2 000. However if the offence involves incorrect paperwork or filling in a form incorrectly, or something of that nature, the penalty is relatively low—about \$200. The member has not given any indication that he intends to amend any of the clauses dealing with penalties, so I take it he is not too upset by these matters.

Mr Bradshaw: Some of our other amendments overcome that problem.

Mr HODGE: The member for Gascoyne spoke, and most of his speech was fairly standard political rhetoric. He predicted gloom and doom, the system grinding to a halt, and referred to a socialist plot, etc. It was the usual rhetoric we have come to expect from him. He indicated the only reason the Government introduced the legislation was because in his view the dental technicians supported the Labor Party at the last election and this was a pay-off to them. I thought I made it plain before, but I repeat, that it has been Labor Party policy for at least three general elections. An undertaking was given prior to the 1977 election in which I entered Parliament that on coming to office a Labor Government would bring this

State into line with other States and legislate to register dental technicians.

Mr Clarko: That does not make it right.

Mr HODGE: I did not say that. I happen to believe it is the correct course of action, but I am putting to rest the inaccurate claim made by the member for Gascoyne.

I would also like to put to rest the claim that this Bill results from a personal fetish of mine. The party adopted the policy before I entered State Parliament. I am an enthusiastic supporter of the party's policy, and it is my job while Minister for Health to implement the party's policy, and that is what I am doing.

Mr Clarko: It is a very weak policy.

Mr HODGE: If that is so we are in good company. It has been successfully introduced in most other States with variations from State to State.

Mr Clarko: We support the principle of qualified people doing the job, but you are allowing in unqualified people.

Mr HODGE: I deny that; we are not.

Mr Clarko: The Dental Association has always supported the view that if people are properly trained and qualified it does not oppose such a move.

Mr HODGE: The question we could argue all night is what is "properly qualified"? I have a relatively short time and I am trying to respond to all the points made by members.

Mr Clarko: You are not doing too well.

Mr HODGE: It would help if the member stopped interrupting.

Mr Clarko: It will not make any difference to the quality of your speech.

Mr HODGE: The member for Narrogin made a number of political comments. He did not canvass the Bill at all but seemed to imply that I had a duty to respond every time the dental profession or technicians made a public statement on the matter. He implied I should jump in and act as an umpire, and say "Yes, what you are saying is correct", or incorrect as the case may be.

Obviously there were lengthy arguments from both sides and I do not think it is my job, and I do not have the time, to act as an arbitrator. I did respond on some occasions when claims were made by the spokesman for the Australian Dental Association that were misleading, alarming to the public, and highly inaccurate. I did respond on those occasions and I make no apologies for that.

The member for Narrogin said that I made a lot of claims, including comments that the dentists

were wrong, that they were a group of crooks, that none of their claims was correct, that they were a selfish group trying to perpetuate their position, and that I was declaring war on that profession. I want it placed on record that those statements are not true and were never made by me, and that they are a figment of the imagination of the member for Narrogin.

The member for Narrogin also claimed that 90 per cent of the dental technicians apparently did not want this legislation. That is not correct. No-one is quite sure how many technicians operate in Western Australia, but I know that about 200 technicians at a recent meeting voted unanimously in support of the legislation.

The member for Narrogin was fairly critical of the Bill and criticised the Government for introducing it. I remind the House that the Opposition was in office for the best part of a decade and did nothing to resolve the situation. It allowed the situation to run rampant and the illegal practice of dental prosthetics to flourish; it made no attempt to come to grips with the situation.

I appreciated the support given by the member for Helena. He spoke as though he was one of the few members who had read the legislation and understood it.

The member for Albany expressed surprise at the extent to which illegal dentures are being made. I do not think that should come as a surprise because it is fairly common knowledge that a substantial number of dentures are being made illegally at the moment.

Mr Clarko: You cannot give us any example or evidence of it.

Mr HODGE: The member for Merredin generally supported the legislation. He raised a question concerning the grandfather clause which I answered earlier. He also raised a question about clause 32 which is the final clause in the Bill. He expressed some concern about the provision that enables the Governor to make regulations. As members will be aware when one reads about the Governor making regulations, for practical purposes it is really a case of the Minister recommending to the Governor what the regulations should be.

I draw the member for Merredin's attention to clause 12(1) paragraphs (d) and (e), where the advisory committee has the power to make recommendations to the Commissioner of Health on all matters to do with licensing. That will not restrict the committee from giving advice to the commissioner and thence to the Minister on what the licence fees should be. Again, the member for Merredin may be under the misapprehension that

licence fees will be charged on an annual basis. I draw his attention to the fact that a licence fee will be a once-only charge.

The member for Gosnells also supported the legislation and I thank her for her support.

The member for Floreat raised a question about the grandfather clause. He did not raise anything new but merely recapped on areas raised by other speakers.

I thank all members for their general support. I am disappointed that the Opposition is not genuine in trying to amend the legislation and that it did not give me some warning of its intent. I have not had the opportunity to study the amendments and I will have to make decisions off the cuff, which I do not think is the best way of legislating.

I would sincerely have appreciated the opportunity to study the amendments and have advice from my advisors and the Parliamentary Counsel. However, I was not extended that courtesy by the Opposition, which is a pity. Nevertheless, I am prepared to listen to its arguments and make a judgment on the merits of the amendments which will be put forward.

This legislation is long overdue. It will bring Western Australia into line with the other States. The most important point, which was made by the member for Helena, is that the legislation will not make it compulsory for the public to deal directly with dental prosthetists. They will have the freedom of choice and they can go direct to a dentist or a dental prosthetist.

I make one final point regarding the suggestion that a dentist should issue a certificate of health before a partial denture is fitted to a patient by a dental prosthetist. The Government has given dentists a captive market by inserting this clause in the Bill. Any person who wishes to go to a prosthetist for partial dentures will be required to obtain a certificate of health from a dentist. The Government is legislating to give dentists a captive market and if the dentists are not able to persuade their patients not to seek treatment from a prosthetist, I do not know what more dentists should expect. The Government is bending over backwards to attend to the dentists' concerns and to attend to their requests.

Two amendments will be made by the Government to the legislation. One is the result of concerns expressed by the dental profession and the other is a minor technical change because of the change of name of the chamber of commerce.

With those provisos I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr Burkett) in the Chair; Mr Hodge (Minister for Health) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

Clause 3: Interpretation—

Mr BRADSHAW: I move an amendment—

Page 2, line 14—Insert after the word “a” the word “removable”.

The Opposition believes if the word “removable” is not included it will mean that dental prosthetists can carry out work on fixed bridges and on implants. I am sure the Minister does not intend that dental prosthetists carry out this type of work.

Mr LAURANCE: The Opposition takes on board the comments made by the Minister. I hope he will understand the points that were raised by way of interjection before the tea suspension.

It has been difficult for the Opposition to debate this legislation, because of the unfortunate hospitalisation of its spokesman on this subject. He undertook a lot of work, held discussions with various groups, and was in the process of drafting amendments before he was hospitalised. The Opposition has endeavoured to take over the work from him. I am only making a point.

The Opposition apologises to the Minister for not giving him adequate warning in order that he could discuss the amendments with his draftsmen. Nevertheless, the Opposition would like the opportunity to debate the amendments in this Chamber and to listen to the Minister's response as to whether the Government is prepared to accept the amendments, even if they were to be moved at a further stage.

There will be other opportunities to amend the Bill and members of the Opposition in another place have taken a keen interest in this matter and will be seeking to have amendments made. I say this by way of explanation and not as a veiled threat. I do not want the Minister to get the impression that the Opposition will lower the boom in another place. The Opposition will have an opportunity to discuss the matter with its Legislative Council colleagues in order to ascertain whether they should proceed with amendments.

As the member for Murray-Wellington, myself, and others mentioned during the second reading debate, the dental profession is seeking an assurance that the Government is absolutely sure that the legislation it is drafting does not widen the powers of dental technicians when working with the public.

The Opposition believes that the definition of “full artificial denture” would be better expressed if the word “removable” is inserted before the word “dental”. The Opposition has received advice from the dental profession that if the legislation is to proceed as it is drafted it would be deficient and would be open to wrong interpretation. If the word “removable” is inserted in this definition it would more clearly define what is a desirable position on the part of the dental profession. The Opposition has accepted the arguments put forward by the dental profession and, as a result, has moved this amendment.

Mr HODGE: The Government accepts the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr HODGE: I move an amendment—

Page 2—Delete subclause (3) and substitute the following—

(3) For the purposes of this Act the practice of dental prosthetics shall be taken to mean—

- (a) the giving of advice to, or the attendance upon, a person for or in connection with, or in preparation for, the fitting, constructing, inserting, repairing, or renewing of artificial dentures or mouthguards; and
- (b) the fitting, constructing, inserting, repairing, or renewing of artificial dentures or mouthguards,

but the fitting or inserting of an artificial denture or mouthguard shall not be taken to include any adjustment or alteration to the natural teeth or any tissue of the mouth.

Mr BRADSHAW: Mr Chairman, I seek your guidance. I would like to move an amendment to the amendment, if possible.

The CHAIRMAN: You may move that amendment now, but I point out that what we are actually doing is dealing with the clause that is the subject of the amendment. If you want to amend what the Minister has moved to insert, the opportunity is available to you at a later stage.

Mr LAURANCE: It was the intention of the Opposition to move an amendment to this clause, but on looking at the amendment that has been moved by the Minister for Health, we believe it achieves what was desired. I think the Minister has an indication from the amendments we provided to him of what we are trying to achieve. Once again it is this clarity of definition which is at stake. We accept what the Minister has put

forward as being an improvement, and for the time being we will not move our amendment.

Mr HODGE: This amendment is a direct result of concern expressed by the dental profession. I am still of the view that the original clause was adequate. In deference to the profession and its concern, I did ask the Parliamentary Counsel to redraft the clause in this way.

Some criticism was made in the media about sloppy drafting and sloppy legislation. I want to set the record straight. The Parliamentary Counsel did not do a sloppy job; in fact he did an excellent one. He did as he was directed to do by the Government. Any concern that the dental profession expressed about the clause was not as a result of sloppy drafting or sloppy legislation. I hold the Parliamentary Counsel who drafted this legislation in the very highest regard.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 4 put and passed.

Clause 5: Dental Prosthetists Advisory Committee—

Mr HODGE: I move an amendment—

Page 3, line 32—Delete the passage "Perth Chamber of Commerce Inc." and substitute the passage "Western Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Inc.)".

The CHAIRMAN: I would ask the member for Murray-Wellington if he wishes to proceed with his amendment.

Mr Bradshaw: Yes, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister's amendment does come first, as it so happens.

Mr HODGE: The reason for this amendment is that the Perth Chamber of Commerce has undergone a name change since the draft legislation was prepared. I was informed a few days ago, so we might as well take the opportunity to correct the name at this stage.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr BRADSHAW: I move an amendment—

Page 3—Delete paragraph (b).

We believe there should be equal numbers of prosthetists and dentists on the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Would the member please resume his seat? Members must appreciate in future that it is not an easy job to sort out the amendments that come forward. If members want to move amendments it is preferable, to give reasonable notice; but if this is not possible, at least members should sign their amendments, and there should be some indication of the member by

whom the amendment was submitted. I have a piece of paper with an amendment which is something like what the member has moved, but I have not the slightest idea who it is from, and there is no signature on it. Not only that, it is extraordinarily difficult to read. I want to co-operate with members as much as possible, but it is not possible if this sort of thing is handed in. I regret we have now passed the opportunity to amend that part of the clause.

Mr BRADSHAW: That is all right, Sir.

The CHAIRMAN: I am prepared to pause now for a moment to give the member an opportunity to resubmit anything that is on this piece of paper so that I can give it proper consideration.

Mr BRADSHAW: I will leave this one.

Amendment thus withdrawn.

Mr LAURANCE: I appreciate your difficulty, Sir, but the same remarks apply as applied to the Minister a moment ago when I indicated the difficulty the Opposition had in preparing these amendments in the correct form. I did not know whether to interrupt before; I thought you had seen them all when you said the Minister's amendment came first. Now we find that it did not. There will be another opportunity to debate this in another place. Nevertheless, we should take the opportunity as an Opposition to point out what we are seeking in respect of this committee.

We would like to point out to the Minister that it has been indicated to us that the composition of the committee is inappropriate for a number of reasons, particularly relating to the setting of standards. If one has a situation now where work is carried out by trained dentists, and other people who are not doing that work legally now are to be allowed to practise in this way, one must be careful about whom one sets up to oversee that operation and administer it. If it is an activity which has been conducted under the auspices of the Dental Board, or trained dentists, then the dentists themselves believe they should have a considerable amount of influence over the activities of that advisory committee. That is what is being sought by the amendments proposed by the Opposition.

The Minister may be able to make suggestions of his own. He is in favour of the way the Bill was presented to the Chamber, but in view of the arguments we are putting forward, particularly on behalf of the dental profession, we do not believe the composition of this committee is appropriate. If we had our way we would remove subclause (2)(b), taking out the person who is for the time being the Director of Technical and Further Education, and replacing him with two people under paragraph (c). Then we would have two dentists

appointed by the association and one dentist appointed or nominated by the commissioner. So we would have three trained dentists on the board. We would also have three prosthetists.

The chairman would be somebody who was a non-dental academic with a background in health sciences or medicines. The chairman would not be a dental technician, but somebody who had expertise in a related area. In that way the profession believes it would be able to set proper standards. There is a worry at the moment that the composition of the committee could be unsatisfactory in that five out of seven members need not necessarily have any qualifications in dentistry or matters of oral health. That would be of concern to the existing dental profession. I do not know whether the Minister is prepared to agree to that.

The Opposition makes the point it would be better to have at least three trained dentists on that committee, and they would be in a position to judge and advise the Minister of the day on the required qualifications, training, standards, and so on, of the people involved in this work.

At the moment we accept the argument that there could be too many people who really do not have dental qualifications. If they are to carry out work that at the moment must be done by people with dental training, then under the new arrangements a majority of the committee—or a substantial number of the committee—should hold those qualifications and be competent to sit in judgment on what should happen in this area. Those are the reasons for the amendments. I seek your guidance, Sir. The amendment we propose is to delete in line 23 the numeral "1" with a view to inserting the numeral "2". Are we in a position to debate that amendment?

The CHAIRMAN: Unfortunately, we are not. We have gone now to line 32. I would prefer to have done it.

Mr LAURANCE: I understand that. Nevertheless we have had the opportunity of making the point.

I would point out to the Minister that we would be talking about a committee of eight, because we would be leaving out the TAFE person. I believe the TAFE person is there to oversee the setting of examinations. Perhaps the Minister could respond by way of interjection if that is the case. If further consideration was given to this, and if the Minister is prepared to consider that further, perhaps we could have three dentists and a chairman, which would, of course, increase the number to eight. That may be unacceptable to the Minister. Nevertheless it would probably achieve what we are hoping to achieve on behalf of the dental pro-

fession. They would prefer to see the TAFE person replaced by another trained dentist.

Mr HODGE: The Opposition's handling of this matter has been quite disgraceful. I know the excuse the member for Gascoyne has put up several times. The member for Kalamunda has been off ill, but I introduced this Bill on 15 August. We had a three-week recess. The member for Kalamunda knew before the House adjourned that he was going into hospital.

Mr Clarko: The way you are carrying on, one would think the member for Kalamunda had a cold.

Mr HODGE: I have had three or four bits of paper with handwriting on them thrust under my face in the last 15 or 20 minutes and I cannot understand any of them. The member for Kalamunda knew three weeks ago that he was going into hospital. It is a disgrace for the Opposition to come in here in such disarray. It shows disrespect to the Chair and to the Parliament.

Mr Clarko: If your case was any good you would put forward a sound argument.

Mr HODGE: If the member's argument were any good I would be prepared to consider it.

Several members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr HODGE: The point the member for Gascoyne has made is that there should be an additional dentist on the advisory committee and that the person representing the Director of Technical and Further Education in the Education Department should not be there. I do not agree with that suggestion. The composition of the committee was given a lot of thought. It was not arrived at lightly or overnight; and I do not think it does the Opposition any credit to come here this evening and lightly off-the-cuff suggest quite major and radical changes to the composition of the committee. I think the matter should be given a lot more thought than that. It is quite essential that the director of Technical and Further Education be represented on that advisory committee and it is my view that the chairman of the committee should be a lay person, a consumer's representative. I would like to think that the Opposition agrees with the Government that there should be consumer representatives on all sorts of committees, boards and authorities; and I intend to appoint a consumer representative to be chairman of the committee. I believe that the committee is there basically to serve the public and I think that at least one member of the public should be on it.

The appointment of two dentists on the advisory committee is more than adequate. I remind the

Opposition of the name of the advisory committee and that is called the "Dental Prosthetists Advisory Committee". It is not the Dental Board. There are no technicians on the Dental Board. There is a majority of dentists on the Dental Board; and this is the Dental Prosthetists Advisory Committee. There should be a majority of prosthetists on the committee. After all, they are going to be making recommendations to the Commissioner of Health on ways that the profession should be guided and regulated. I think two dentists is more than adequate. I originally considered appointing one dentist but because of the expressions of concern from the dental profession I was prepared to insist that the person representing the commissioner should be a dentist. That was not my original intention. I am not being intransigent on that matter. I have moved from my original position and there are now two dentists. It should not be a matter of numbers.

One dentist could give the committee the benefit of his professional advice. Two dentists can emphasise the point. If one is going beyond that, one is not talking about rendering professional advice. We are talking about a numbers game: "Who has got the numbers on the committee?" I do not wish to put the committee in a position where there is likely to be a feud between three technicians and three dentists. I do not see that as constructive. Two dentists and will be adequately able to give their professional guidance and professional knowledge to the committee.

Mr MacKinnon: You could not say the same about the prosthetists.

Mr HODGE: If one examines the Bill one finds three areas are represented. One is the union, one is the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the other the Australian Dental Technicians' Society. They are three distinctly different areas. There is no duplication in that sphere.

I indicate to the member for Gascoyne, who seems to be taking over the running of this debate for the Opposition, that I am not prepared to agree with the sorts of changes that he is proposing.

Mr BRADSHAW: I move an amendment—

Page 4, lines 5 to 12—Delete subclause (3).

The reason for this amendment is that we cannot see any reason that a non-dental technician who has not been dealing with the public should be exempted from this area. It is a provision which seems to be biased towards the people who have been practising illegally for the past five years or more and we cannot see why a dental technician who has not been dealing with the public should be allowed to sit on this committee.

Mr HODGE: I am opposed to this amendment. It really does not make sense. One cannot appoint a person to the committee who is not a dental prosthetist or who is not eligible to be a dental prosthetist, and I cannot see why a person would want to be a technician who is not a dental prosthetist or not eligible to be a dental prosthetist.

This Bill does not require that all dental technicians in the State be registered. Only those people who wish to work as prosthetists dealing directly with the public will be licensed. There will be many technicians who will not wish to deal directly with the public but who will be perfectly happy to work under the direct supervision and control of a dentist and I see no role for that sort of technician on the prosthetists' licensing committee; therefore I am not prepared to accept the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I did allow some flexibility the last time the member for Gascoyne spoke and I think that was more than reasonable because we had a mix-up with amendments. I do not want to extend that sort of leniency right throughout the debate and while I will allow the member to make some initial remarks, I do not want him to dwell on anything outside that which the committee is currently debating.

Mr LAURANCE: I have been debating clause 5 and all these amendments relate to the composition of the committee. I certainly shall not stray from that task. The Minister has responded to what we are trying to do in respect of changing the composition of this committee, by indicating our position has not been thought through. It certainly has been thought through. There may have been some difficulty in bringing the amendments in correct form before the Chamber, but not in respect of the intent of what is proposed. We need to understand a fundamental difference between the approaches of the Government and the Opposition when we are talking about the composition of the committee which is very important to this whole legislation. We have a Bill that is supported by the Opposition, yet the Opposition seeks to have it amended in certain ways. We are supporting the legislation, but there are some fundamental differences. One relates to the composition of the committee and to the way the Minister has responded to debate in clause 5 and our suggested amendments.

The fundamental difference is this: He maintains that the committee, however it is structured, will represent the interests of the public. We would agree with that. Therefore if the committee is to advise about dental prosthetists, dental prosthetists should represent a majority on the committee. I can understand only that line of reason-

ing and that would be perfectly fair and reasonable if the committee dealt only with work the prosthetists did and the Dental Board dealt only with work the dentists did. One board, the Dental Board, would have a majority of dentists. Prosthetists would be in the majority on a different board. That is where we would run into problems. If dental technicians are to do work previously done by dentists, that is the difference; and that is why we would run into this problem.

We want the Minister to understand that he needs to be able to delineate them. Dental technicians are not going to do work legally done by dentists. The dentists would not care how many technicians were on that board. We are here to protect the dentists; we are here to protect the public. If these people are going to do work traditionally done by dentists, qualified dentists should have a powerful influence on this committee. That is a straightforward point and we believe the composition of the committee should reflect those views.

If it does, the Minister will need a substantial number of qualified dentists on that advisory committee. It is all very well for the Minister to say that someone else is handling the Bill or that something has been put forward in the wrong way. He is being a little unfair, because he knows the member for Murray-Wellington is handling the Bill as a stand-in while our regular spokesman is in hospital, and he knows that the member is not the most experienced person in the Chamber. The member received assistance to put forward the amendment in the correct form. When he gave the amendment to the Chairman, the Chairman made a ruling. The member for Murray-Wellington waited until the Chairman gave his ruling, which was to the effect that the Minister's amendment came first. The problem is not the fault of the member for Murray-Wellington, and the Minister is being a little churlish in saying that these things are out of order. It was not necessary for the Minister to have made those comments. We have made it clear what we are seeking to achieve. It is unfortunate that the Chairman did not have things in a clear form and that the handwriting of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was not sufficiently clear for the Chairman to be able to understand it. I thought it was quite legible—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr LAURANCE: —but perhaps I am more accustomed to reading his writing than the Chairman.

Mr Parker: Even if we assume that your argument is 100 per cent correct—

Mr LAURANCE: I do.

Mr Parker: —which we do not—the point made is that it is not a question of the member for Murray-Wellington's being in difficulties this evening, which obviously he is, and I can understand that. What we are saying is that you have had weeks in which to prepare these amendments and to put them on the Notice Paper.

Mr LAURANCE: It is almost as frustrating for the Government as it has been for us wanting to ask the Minister for Minerals and Energy a question, only to find that he has been overseas.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I fail to see what this has to do with the Bill.

Mr Parker: From the point of view of your own cause, you are not doing it justice.

Mr LAURANCE: We believe we have made our point adequately. Despite assurances from the Minister that he has given these matters consideration, we believe these changes are necessary. It is fundamental to our argument to understand that we are not talking about prosthetists as being separate from the dental profession, but it must be understood that work previously done by the dental profession will now be done by dental technicians, and therefore the public need to be protected by having qualified people on the committee. It could not be clearer than that and we are asking the Minister to reconsider his decision. He was prepared to be co-operative earlier by accepting our first amendment, and we accepted the second amendment; so there has been a tremendous amount of harmony and goodwill, despite a few difficulties. We would like the Minister to indicate now that he is prepared to review his decision and to take into account the points raised in debate by the Opposition so that we have a fair representation of qualified dentists on the committee.

Without our amendments, the Minister will have unqualified dental prosthetists advising on matters beyond their qualifications, and I do not think the Minister would want that. He would find it difficult to substantiate his stance in front of the public. The Minister would leave himself in a most vulnerable position were he to allow unqualified technicians to monitor and advise on work that was beyond their qualifications. It is therefore imperative that we have a sufficient number of qualified people on the committee so that the interests of the public will be protected. If the Minister reflects on this he will see there is a need for further consideration of our request.

Mr HODGE: I remind the member for Gascoyne that I have at least a dozen or more similar statutory boards or committees responsible to me, boards dealing with chiropractors, physio-

therapists, psychologists, doctors and so on. None of those boards has a majority of members from another profession. I can think of no board that has even a substantial number of members of an outside profession. The dental board has a legal practitioner on it and it is soon to have a consumer representative on it.

Mr Laurance: But dental technicians are not qualified to be on a dental board.

Mr Hodge: I am talking about the Dental Prosthetists Advisory Committee. It would be ludicrous to have a majority of members of another profession on that committee, and I know of no other advisory committee, authority, or board with a majority of members of another profession.

Further, the member for Gascoyne must live in splendid isolation if he is unaware that at least over the last decade a substantial proportion of dentures made in this State have been made by dental prosthetists. This work has not been carried out by most dentists for many years. The vast majority of dentists arrange for dental technicians to make their patients' dentures, so it is not the case that suddenly dental prosthetists will be carrying out this work. I am sure that some members of this Chamber have dealt directly with dental technicians to have dentures manufactured or repaired, and this work will have been at least theoretically carried out illegally. This has gone on for years and years. We are seeking to regularise a position that is most unsatisfactory, a position which the previous Government allowed to continue without tackling it.

It is ludicrous for the member for Gascoyne to suggest that dentists should form a majority on the Dental Prosthetists Advisory Committee. The experience and expertise of dentists will be represented not by a single voice, but by two voices. I cannot understand why the member believes their expertise would be more effectively presented with three rather than two representatives. It gets down to a question of who has the numbers, and I reject the suggestion that dentists should have a majority on the Dental Prosthetists Advisory Committee.

Mr Bradshaw: One of the main reasons we feel this clause is unfair is that many dental technicians have for many years been working lawfully and have not been doing work which has been illegal. They may now wish to deal directly with the public and to be licensed to carry out the work after undergoing an examination. Why should they be precluded from having representation on the committee?

They have been disadvantaged in other ways in this Bill, and this clause represents another form

of unjustifiable action against them, merely because they have acted legally all the time.

Mr Laurance: I think the Minister has missed the vital point, because in his concluding remarks he said that it would not be right for dentists to have the numbers on the committee, and that it should not be a battle of numbers. I agree, because we are not talking about a battle of numbers; we are talking about qualifications. We are concerned on behalf of the public, and it is the public who demand that this advisory committee have on it people who are properly qualified.

Mr Hodge: How is extending their number from two to three going to change that?

Mr Laurance: Because we will have more qualified people on the committee.

Mr Hodge: Do you really think the other two dentists need another dentist to keep an eye on them and to see that their advice is correct?

Mr Laurance: The Minister has extended the number from one to two, which indicates that he has been convinced of the need for further qualifications. He did this before the Bill was brought to the Parliament.

Mr Hodge: I did that in a spirit of co-operation and to appease the concern of dentists. I didn't think it was necessary, but I went along with them.

Mr Laurance: The Minister must have believed there was some need to look at this concern.

Mr Hodge: I wanted to allay their concern.

Mr Laurance: We are further emphasising the point that people believe it is imperative that qualified professionals be on the committee. If dental technicians had the qualifications, there would be no need for the Bill. We are concerned about unqualified people moving into an area where they are not trained to give advice; therefore the Minister needs to have people on the committee who are highly qualified in dentistry. Fully professional people are in a better position to oversee the work involved. It is true that some work has for some time been carried out by technicians and not by dentists, but other work has been carried out by dentists; therefore dentists should be involved on the committee.

Already in the Bill the Minister has a provision which provides that a patient must have seen a qualified dentist in the previous 12 months before a dental technician will be able to do some work.

Mr Hodge: That is another concession I made.

Mr Laurance: As the Minister for Health, the Minister is responsible for protecting the well-being of the public in this area. I know he is trying to do that, but more needs to be done. In some

areas it is not clear-cut, and it is accepted that technicians need an involvement by dentists. We are saying that the Minister should extend the committee by appointing an additional person who is qualified in dentistry. The profession indicates to us that two might not be enough.

Mr Hodge: Use your own judgment. Don't you think that two fully-qualified dentists would be able adequately to represent the views of the dental profession?

Mr LAURANCE: The Minister mentioned that there are a whole host of other boards, but the work done by them does not impinge on another area.

Mr Hodge: Yes it does.

Mr LAURANCE: But not in this way.

Mr Hodge: There are very blurry demarcation lines with other boards and professions.

Mr LAURANCE: I take the Minister's point.

Mr Hodge: None has felt the need to have on its board a lot of members of other professions. Some have one, but I know of none with two or even three.

Mr LAURANCE: If the Minister were to consider the history of this matter he would understand that things are not as clear-cut as in the examples he has given. I think he has tried to draw a red herring across the trail. He has already indicated that this legislation has been ALP policy since 1977. It has been tackled by other States, and the Minister has taken his examples of those States very selectively. He did not mention South Australia.

Mr Hodge: The ink is not dry on that legislation yet. I am looking at States with 30 years, 12 years, and 10 years' experience.

Mr LAURANCE: Why did South Australia's legislation not work in the same way as the Tasmanian legislation?

Mr Hodge: Because they were conservative and as slow as your mob.

Mr LAURANCE: Is the Government of South Australia not of the Minister's political colour?

Mr Hodge: Yes, it has taken a Labor Government to do what your mob would not do.

Mr LAURANCE: The South Australian legislation does not have a grandfather clause.

Mr Hodge: We are entitled to adopt different approaches.

Mr LAURANCE: I am surprised by the Minister's approach. Why did he not decide to follow the example of the Labor Government in South Australia rather than to copy the legislation in Tasmania, which happens to have a conservative

Government anyway? Why did he not say that because the South Australians were forward looking and were reviewing their legislation, he would follow them rather than the Tasmanians so that he would follow a more modern model?

Mr Hodge: Our legislation is the best. We are taking advantage of the experience in all those States.

Mr LAURANCE: The Minister has been very selective.

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: I am just putting the opposing point of view, which the Minister would expect from this side of the Chamber.

Mr Wilson: It just happens to suit you for the time being. You would not normally support the South Australian Labor Government.

Mr LAURANCE: I can conjecture that there might have been a bit of jumping up and down about Farrington Road, and so on, if the present Premier had been on this side of the Chamber. However, he is keen to fill in the swamp now. These things change. Times change, and people change their attitudes, depending on what side of the Chamber they happen to be. On this occasion, the Minister has quoted the example of Tasmania. I ask why he did not quote the example of South Australia, because the dental profession in this State would be far happier, and the Opposition might be able to co-operate far more with the Minister, if he was prepared to look at the South Australian situation rather than the Tasmanian situation.

Mr Wilson: What is more pertinent is that while you were in Government, you were not prepared to tackle this at all.

Mr LAURANCE: We were prepared to look at the needs of the public in the way we saw fit. I do not make any apology for that. Not even the Minister for Housing has a God-given right.

Mr Wilson: You are being forced to address the matter now, simply because this Government has raised it.

Mr LAURANCE: How does the Minister for Health know this legislation will provide a better system? It may be a damned sight worse. We have heard of virtually no cases in which dental technicians have mucked up people's mouths. Yet I have documentation of pretty horrific cases, and I made the point in my speech on the second reading debate. From the point of view of the Minister, one bad case would be one too many, would it not?

Mr Hodge: Do you want me to document a few dental cases that have gone off the rails?

Mr Parker: Every profession has its faults. That is why they have professional indemnity insurance.

Mr LAURANCE: It comes back to qualifications.

Several members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I will not sit here and listen to cross-Chamber chit-chat. The member for Gascoyne is on his feet. If members wish to interject, I will accept orderly interjections put to the member for Gascoyne, but I will not accept cross-Chamber chit-chat like that.

Mr LAURANCE: Thank you for your help, Mr Chairman. My time has almost expired.

Here we have the kernel of the problem. The Minister will say that the public need to be protected and overseen by people with the proper professional qualifications. Our concern on behalf of the public of this State is that that is not being done. It is common knowledge that we agree generally with the legislation, and prosthetists should be allowed to proceed in this area, but under proper oversight by people with dental qualifications. That is not too much to ask. We believe it is proper to ask that on behalf of the public of this State.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 6 to 11 put and passed.

Clause 12: Functions and powers—

Mr MacKINNON: I would like the Minister to explain the situation relating to clause 12(1)(b). I have not tabled my draft of an amendment because I want to hear from the Minister first.

When we consider the make-up of the committee which we have just discussed, one could not say a majority of the people would be qualified to conduct examinations to assess whether a person has the proper knowledge or ability. It would be better to leave out the portion of the subclause which gives the committee the ability to conduct its own examinations. That procedure is fraught with danger. I know of no area in which committees conduct examinations, but perhaps the Minister can advise me otherwise.

It would be better if the committee arranged for the conduct of the examination and supervised the procedural arrangements, without doing the work itself.

Mr HODGE: I understand the point, but the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is worrying unnecessarily. In normal circumstances, I would not envisage the committee conducting its own examinations. The Deputy Leader noted the words "or arrange for the conduct of such examinations"

and I would envisage that the committee would have an educational authority carry out the examinations.

This is a common clause in most registration board Acts. The one that immediately springs to mind is the Chiropractors Act, of which I made a close study some years ago. Under that Act, the board has the theoretical power to conduct examinations, but never in its history has it used the power. It is merely a reserve power in case a set of unusual circumstances necessitates the committee's conducting some form of examination.

I cannot give an exact example of the circumstances that might arise; but the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is worrying unnecessarily. It is not unreasonable to have a flexible approach in the knowledge that such a provision would probably never be used.

I cannot think of any board that would conduct an examination voluntarily when it could have an educational authority conduct it on its behalf. I am sure it would not want the extra workload.

There may be exceptional circumstances in which, for some reason out of the ordinary, the committee may need to conduct some form of examination of an applicant seeking a licence or the endorsement of his licence. I suggest that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition allow the committee to retain the flexibility and not be inhibited unnecessarily in its powers by seeking to delete words. He is reading more into the subclause than is intended.

Mr MacKINNON: During the last sitting week, I had a debate with the Minister for Housing concerning the credit unions legislation, and we were talking about whether the Government should have the power to control interest rates. The Minister for Housing assured me that the power had never been used and it was never likely to be used. I was of the view that we should remove the clause as it was not likely to be used at any time. It is strange that we should persist with such a clause which will not be used.

The board will consist of three dental prosthetists. If the nominated, independent chairperson of the committee had leanings one way or another in relation to dental prosthetists, the committee could well carry out examinations that were not up to standard. That view has been expressed to me, and I must say I have some sympathy with it.

In his comments, the Minister for Health did not give me any indication of where the clause might be used. In fact, everything he said led me to the view that we should remove the words "conduct or" because in legislation where it

exists—for example, in the chiropractors legislation—such a provision has never been used. The fact that it has never been used is a damned good reason for leaving it out. Therefore, I move an amendment—

Page 7, line 14—Delete the words “conduct or”.

Mr LAURANCE: I support the amendment. This continues the debate we have had in the last half hour or so in relation to the composition of the committee. If untrained people are to give advice in an area for which they were not previously professionally qualified, it is not appropriate for them to give that advice. That being the case, they should not conduct examinations.

We are bogging down on this point because the Minister seems to be going overboard in order to give unqualified people the say in an area in which previously only qualified people have been able to deliver services or to give advice to the Government.

Mr Hodge: You keep making that statement, but it is not correct. Who else would be more qualified to give advice on the work of dental technicians than dental technicians?

Mr LAURANCE: We are talking about prosthetics, and as far as I can determine dentistry and dental prosthetics are one and the same thing. The Government is allowing technicians into an area in which they have not been involved before. We agree with that, as long as they are qualified or overseen by qualified people.

Mr Hodge: You are wrong. Look at the definition of “dentistry” in the Dental Act and the definition of “dental prosthetist” in this Bill, and you will see you are wrong.

Mr LAURANCE: The dental profession indicates that the Minister is trying to split the delivery system into two separate parts when in fact it is one operation and one profession. The Minister is dividing it in a way that has not been done before. That may be appropriate in the interests of the public, but the composition of the committee and the conduct of the examinations should involve people who are qualified in dentistry.

The Minister is allowing people who are not qualified to oversee their colleagues, who also are not qualified. Some of them may have been conducting a practice illegally in this area. They may have been doing it satisfactorily, in which case no-one would have heard about it. However, if they have been doing it unsatisfactorily, the public are entitled to protection.

If the Government accepted the amendment it might, hopefully, allow for a different composition

to arrange for the conduct of such examinations but to not conduct the examinations themselves. The amendment, if passed in its present form, will mean that unqualified people on the committee will be advising in an area in which they are not qualified and conducting examinations in an area in which they are not qualified. We believe that that is not appropriate and will not serve the best interests of the people of this State. That is why we are seeking to amend the clause. We hope that the Minister will see the need for the amendment.

We believe it would be a better Bill if the Minister agreed to take out the two words. We would then hope that the conduct of the examination would be arranged by suitably qualified people. That would protect the interests of the public.

Mr Cowan: You can still do that.

Mr LAURANCE: Yes, but it gives them the opportunity to conduct examinations and we do not feel that that is appropriate.

Mr Hodge: You say you have no confidence in the committee.

Mr LAURANCE: That is not quite right.

Mr Hodge: Those people on the committee do need to be qualified.

Mr LAURANCE: Under the grandfather clause, they could go onto the committee and not be qualified. If the Government is going to alter the situation, by all means alter it. It may be cheaper and better for the public of this State. It may improve the delivery of oral health services to the people of this State. We are not disputing that. We have doubts, but the Minister may be right. However, no matter how right he is, he can ensure, on behalf of the public, that he is moving in a correct manner. He will ensure that only by seeing that the whole operation is carried out by people who are properly trained and qualified.

We are dealing with only a small group of people. I think there are 25 dental technicians in this State. That is the number that has been given to the Opposition. Only 25 dental technicians want to become licensed. Many of them are practising that way now. However, they want to have the situation legitimised.

The simple answer to this problem would be for those technicians to obtain the necessary qualifications. The Minister has said that, for some reason or other such as their being too old, they cannot do that. Because of that he has said, “We will open up the dentistry profession to those people”. We are prepared to go along with that provided he puts suitably qualified people in charge of the profession. He can do that by allowing for an appropriate composition of that

committee and ensuring that all examinations are conducted by professionally qualified people. Surely that is a necessary safeguard to insert on behalf of the people of this State. That is not too much to ask for.

When I was Acting Minister for Health, somebody always seemed to be on strike. My memories of my time as Acting Minister for Health are not pleasant. However, if I were in the position of being Minister for Health, I would not want to be overseeing such a change for the first time in the history of this State. The Minister is leaving himself at risk. He could be red-faced at some time in the future if the dental profession brought to his notice a situation in which a person who is qualified purely by means of this so-called grandfather clause, commits an act which causes embarrassment to the Government.

Mr Hodge: That has nothing to do with this clause.

Mr LAURANCE: Yes, it does. The Minister would be very red-faced and embarrassed if that were to happen. He would not want that to happen.

The Minister has a policy commitment to change this area. We accept that. However, the public deserve some safeguards. The Minister should ensure, for his own protection, if for no other reason, that the whole operation is overseen by properly trained and qualified people.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 13 to 17 put and passed.

Clause 18: Issue of licence—

Mr. BRADSHAW: I move an amendment—

Page 11—Delete subclause (2).

Traditionally a grandfather clause is included when a Bill is being enacted for a new purpose. In this case, we are definitely not introducing legislation for a new purpose. The activity which the Bill has been introduced to control has been in practice for quite some time. It is incredible that the South Australian Bill which was introduced after an inquiry makes recommendations about full upper and lower dentures and mouthguards, but does not contain a grandfather clause. It allows for a training course to be undertaken for two years before the prosthetist can be recommended.

It is amazing that these people who have acted illegally for the last five years are now able to come along, without any form of training, and do a specialised type of work.

Mr Hodge: That is the whole purpose of the grandfather clause.

Mr BRADSHAW: Yes, it is traditional that a grandfather clause be introduced when a particular matter has not been legislated for previously. The activities which are the subject of this Bill have been in operation for a long time.

Mr Hodge: That is your view.

Mr BRADSHAW: It is important that people who deal with the public in such a personal situation should be appropriately trained and should undergo some form of examination. Under this legislation there will be no such training or examination. These people should have to prove that they are competent to deal directly with the public. The Dental School of the University of Western Australia pointed out, in its submission, that, in the majority of cases, there are some alterations to teeth or tissues after the fitting of partial dentures. Poorly designed dentures can lead to gum diseases or decay. If the jaw bones do not fit together properly, other complications can result. It is therefore fitting that this clause be deleted from the Bill.

Mr LAURANCE: I support the amendment moved by the member for Murray-Wellington. Clause 18 deals with another difficult area. The Opposition wants to bring home very clearly to the Government that the opening up of the profession could lead to many difficulties and should be approached with great caution.

I said earlier in the debate that we believe it is appropriate that people should do this work after they have been properly trained and that safeguards must be provided for the public.

The Australian Labor Party might have, as part of its policy, the introduction of this legislation. However, that does not mean that unqualified people should carry out this type of work. Just because one has been doing this type of work for a certain period does not mean one is properly qualified. I do not believe that that qualification alone would give the public confidence.

There is a paradox in this clause. If one looked at the existing laws of this land and said that people could not carry out certain dental work because it was illegal, then they would not be covered by the grandfather clause. However, if a person were flouting the law, I would not blame him. I acknowledge that the solving of this problem has not been pursued by any Government. However, these people have been acting outside the law. We are now saying that the dental profession must open its arms so that these people can operate within the law. That is wrong.

The Bill refers to people of "good character". I think the Minister needs to qualify that. The Bill refers to people being "otherwise qualified". That

leaves the matter open. Subclause (2) of clause 18, which we want to delete, refers to people who have been "so engaged for a period of not less than 5 years". Those people will suddenly be able to become licensed and be fully qualified. We feel it is not appropriate for people thus qualified to be on the committee and it is not appropriate for them to be licensed.

If the Minister agreed to delete this sub-clause it would then be up to the committee, which would have the power to conduct examinations or to arrange for the conduct of examinations and to see that adequate tests are set down for these people.

I come to the point that I made earlier: Surely that is the way the Minister would want to have it. It is difficult to stick to this amendment because one cannot discuss this matter without relating it to other aspects of the Bill.

Clause 19 allows for an unlimited duration for the period of the licence. Once again, I do not think that is appropriate.

Mr Hodge: Does the member think that once the licence is issued it cannot be cancelled or suspended? Does the member think that the purpose for issuing the licence every year is to gain revenue?

Mr LAURANCE: But it will not be issued every year.

Mr Hodge: You are criticising it because we will not be ripping off members of the profession.

Mr LAURANCE: I think the Minister is missing the point. We are not trying to shoot him down in flames. If he is going to allow people to be automatically qualified under a grandfather clause, he could have problems.

It may be appropriate to have a review at some stage if the Government has let people in virtually without any qualifications.

Mr Hodge: It would be reviewed if there was the slightest suggestion that anything was wrong. There is plenty of power within the Bill to review, cancel or suspend any licence at any time.

Mr MacKinnon: Do dentists have an annual licence?

Mr Hodge: They have a board to fund and that is the reason they pay an annual licence fee. It is to fund the organisation.

Mr MacKinnon: Why not a 10-year licence?

Mr Hodge: They are all self-financing. The Government does not pay the board.

Mr LAURANCE: Why not have a board in this instance?

Mr Hodge: Because of the concern that has been expressed it was considered that a separate

statutory board was not the way to approach this matter. It was considered that we should keep it well and truly under the control of the Commissioner of Health because it was a new scheme and so much concern has been expressed. We thought it was an extra safeguard to keep it within the confines of the Minister for Health. It may be that in due course there will be a registration board.

Mr LAURANCE: I appreciate the explanation given by the Minister. Whether it is right to move in that way is a different matter, but at least he has explained his stance on this.

We believe it is appropriate for people to be allowed to practise in this way subject to proper safeguards and examination of their conduct over that period.

Mr Hodge: The commissioner will satisfy himself that they are persons of good character and repute, and fit and proper persons to obtain a licence.

Mr LAURANCE: How will he do that?

Mr Hodge: That is up to the commissioner. He is a very resourceful person and I am sure he will find the way.

Mr LAURANCE: That is wide open. I do not think that the Minister would have accepted that explanation when he was the Opposition spokesman on health. He would never have accepted the explanation that the commissioner is a good chap and, therefore, is bound to do the right thing.

Mr Hodge: You obviously have not read the Health Act, the Hospitals Act, and dozens of others where the commissioner has very wide powers.

Mr LAURANCE: I ask the Minister to review his own feelings had such an explanation been given to him when he was in Opposition. He has said that the commissioner is a wonderful chap. Why not call the Bill the "Commissioner of Health's Dental Prosthetists Act"? The commissioner has duties and responsibilities and so too does the Minister to detail in legislation how the provision will be carried out. I gave the Minister credit for greater intelligence than to face a Parliament with a very active and dynamic Opposition with such an explanation. Fair go! The Minister is not a born-again Minister; he came out of the Opposition into Government. He has criticised previous Governments on many occasions and he should not bring this to the Parliament and treat the members with contempt. He should try telling the dental profession that it does not need legislation because the Commissioner of Health is a good chap.

Mr Troy: Are you saying he is not?

Mr LAURANCE: I am saying he is probably a wonderful chap and the Minister is probably wonderful too if I had time to consider that point. However, we are here to consider legislation brought forward by the Government. It is not our job to say whether the commissioner is a good bloke.

Mr Wilson: You are doing a good job and you should go on doing it for a long time.

Mr LAURANCE: The assurances given by the Minister about what a wonderful fellow the commissioner is do not carry any weight. There is a need to define in legislation how these people will be able to demonstrate to the public, the Minister or the Commissioner of Health their suitability to hold a licence. The commissioner is not in place as a person; he is there to watch over the interests of the public. Members of Parliament as legislators are here to see how it will be written into the legislation that those duties are carried out. It is the Government's duty to bring forward legislation and convince the Opposition that these people will be suitably qualified, tested and examined to ensure that they are qualified in a way that is acceptable to the public or to the guardians of the public interest—that is, the Government, the Commissioner of Health and the Opposition.

The grandfather clause is not a suitable test of the qualifications. On the one hand technicians can be included if they have been around long enough and on the other they can be licensed for ever. When in Opposition, Government members would not have accepted this and we do not accept it now. It is not suitable, acceptable or appropriate. The Government is showing a fundamental weakness. It does not have a divine right to be correct every time. It is appropriate for the Opposition to bring forward the same criticisms brought forward by Government members when in Opposition. The Government cannot say to the public of Western Australia that they can rest assured that dental treatment will be fantastic in this State on the simple assumption that the Commissioner of Health is a good bloke. That is a preposterous proposition. I do not think the Minister would have swallowed anything like that in the past and it will not be swallowed by this Opposition, the dental profession or the public of this State.

The Government should withdraw the Bill and perhaps bring the commissioner before the Parliament to tell us how the provisions will be applied. The Government should toughen-up the legislation. Five years' practice in an illegal way is not

enough. Where is the consensus the Government talks about? The recent ALP Conference decided that the Government must take such matters to the people concerned. Have the unions agreed to this legislation and has the Government done what is required of it by its masters? I doubt whether it has and therefore the members have been naughty boys. The legislation has not been before the dental profession or prosthetists in consultation with the Government. I wonder whether the Government could get more than 50 per cent of the dental technicians to agree that the only qualification required should be to have been around for long enough.

Other details have not been included in this legislation with regard to how the provisions will be carried out. The Opposition also does not agree with the way the committee will be set up. The Government does not allow for suitably qualified people to check things out along the way. In the past we have needed highly qualified people in this area and they should be allowed to oversee the operation. The Government will then have the full support of the Opposition because we think it will be looking after the interests of the public of Western Australia. It is a fundamental weakness in this Bill and the Government appears to have retreated on this matter.

Although the commissioner may be a good bloke, how long will he be around? Will the next commissioner be an equally good bloke? Suppose he does not have the interests of the people at heart? We can legislate only on what is before us in the Bill. The Bill could be improved by deleting the grandfather clause or negotiating a better clause with the dental profession. Some other test should be required of technicians. The dental profession, the public of Western Australia and the Opposition would then be happier.

Mr CLARKO: I strongly support the amendment moved by the member for Murray-Wellington in regard to the deletion of subclause (2) of clause 18. I want to make it clear from the start that I am not asserting that dental technicians are incompetent. The legislation has nothing to do with whether they are competent. In fact, the Government has set up a remarkable situation where in the first part of clause 18 it requires people to have a very specific and deliberate set of qualifications in order to be issued with a licence. Amazingly, in regard to the people who are not qualified it has the weakest possible form imaginable to make them available for receipt of a licence.

Last Sunday morning with great difficulty I forced myself to watch "World of Sport". I was in a state of mourning because even though

Claremont had won the little league grand final the day before, they had lost a couple of other matches that I would rather they had not. Mark Jackson, the Geelong footballer, was on that programme and he smiled at the cameras showing a magnificent set of teeth. They are not his own because I have seen the angular shape of his jaw and a degree of significant ugliness in the lower part of his face as he glares at the people who try to take the ball from him. I take it that Jackson lost his natural teeth by the age of 20 and I suspect that if Barry Beecroft had been the height of Michael Mitchell, he would have needed dentures after the incident when Boucher gave a huge shove with his arm that would have destroyed any ordinary person. That must have happened to Jacko in his younger years and I suspect that he travelled to Ned Kelly country following that.

A Government member: What clause are we dealing with?

The CHAIRMAN: In order to help Government members I indicate that we are dealing with clause 18.

Mr CLARKO: I believe that Jacko travelled to Ned Kelly country and he met the grandson of the blacksmith who made the best mouth guard ever produced in Australia. It was of a better design than the knee guards used by Ned Kelly because that is where he came to grief. Ned Kelly was protected by the mouth guard and that is where Jacko needs protection.

While I cast no aspersions on the 35 or more people who the Minister says will benefit from the grandfather clause, we do not know whether they are as good as the blacksmiths of Glenrowan and associated districts. That is the real problem.

We have the most pathetic requirements imaginable which make all these people eligible for licensing merely by having been actively engaged in the practice of dental prosthetics in the State and continuously so engaged for not less than five years and having worked in the last year. For example, if one went to Wiluna and the local blacksmith was in the practice of once a year making a set of dentures for someone in the district, even if it were the local draughthorse, he would qualify for a licence under the Bill. It is absolutely ludicrous in the extreme to set down that all these people need as a qualification is to have been doing this work for five years. Where will the evidence for this come from? Will these people sign a statutory declaration that they have been illegally active for the past five years?

Do these dental technicians ask their customers to come along and swear some sort of affidavit to the effect that they have been involved in that

activity for the past five years? Will the blacksmith in Wiluna who has been making one set of dentures a year for the past five years be allowed to be registered? There is nothing here which says he will be debarred, yet, in the same clause, the Minister requires that a normal applicant be of "good character and repute", whatever that means. I suppose that means one may go along to one's local Labor member of Parliament and ask him to write a reference.

An applicant is required to be a "fit and proper person," whatever that means. Apart from those who are incarcerated in Fremantle gaol, I would take it everyone in the community is a fit and proper person.

The main requirement in the first part of the clause is that the person must be qualified by examination so prescribed. That is the key to the matter. The people who are covered by the first part of clause 18 will need to pass an examination. The Opposition has said from the start, and will continue to say, that it is not opposed to properly qualified people doing this work. However, we are seriously concerned about this pathetic grandfather clause the Government seeks to introduce.

If the Government had a serious desire to provide for these people who have been working illegally for five years or more, it could have created a situation where a practical test of some sort was conducted and special experts could evaluate and assess these people.

A fellow could come up from Glenrowan and say that not only could he make suits which would protect Ned Kelly and his heirs, but also he could do a first-class job of providing some form of apparatus for one's mouth. However, the Government has not done that. It has simply said that, if the dental technician has been actively engaged in this illegal practice for the past five years in Western Australia, he may be registered.

The best bloke in the world from outside the State's boundary will not be allowed to register under that provision. That is a closed shop arrangement. I ask the Minister why he chose five years. Why did he not choose 15 years, three years, or half an hour?

If this Bill seeks to produce an item of the highest standard, which is what one would want if one is to put it in one's mouth, the Government should have taken steps to assess the quality of work of these people. I am sure many of these people would like that to happen. Possibly they are competent in what they do and they would be happy to face such an examination. However, the Government has not done that. It has slid out the door and created a situation in which the Wiluna

blacksmith or the blacksmith from Glenrowan, whether they are at the bottom or the top of their field, will be able to apply and obtain a licence. The Government has not laid down any constraints.

This Bill occupies many pages and has all sorts of provisos, but there are no provisos in respect of this issue. Why has the Government gone out of its way to look after these people? Why did not the Minister say, "From here on a dental technician who meets a satisfactory level of examination can operate from his own little shop"? Why did the Minister want these people to be included? I put it to the Minister that he believes—I do not think he is dishonest in this—that these people can carry out the work properly. I do not know that I agree, and the reason I say that is that I have no evidence one way or the other.

If the Minister believes that these people can carry out the work properly, why did he not construct this clause so that he could test their abilities? If he did that, when members from this side of the Chamber say, "We are not happy about these people", he could say that they had all been required to appear before an examining board, they had passed the examination, and, therefore, they were appropriate to work in our community. The Minister failed to do that, and that would have been the core of his argument. Had he done that, our position would have been totally destroyed, but he did not do so.

Instead, the Minister introduced this weak subclause which will allow a person to do almost anything. If he wanted to, a person could produce a letter. I do not know the percentage of the people in our community who are liars. If a couple of people among 100 are liars, what is to stop someone from saying he has been doing this work for five years?

Were I to be affected by the grandfather clause, had I been operating for only four years and nine months, I would be sorely tempted to do that. The Government has created the weakest foundation possible for the creation of this new world of dental prosthetists. It has required ordinary people to be qualified, to be fit and proper and of good repute, but presumably these people do not need to be of good repute, fit and proper to hold a licence and qualified by examination; all they need is to have operated in this field for five years.

Some of these people could be totally incompetent, but that does not seem to concern the Minister. In order to protect the people who come under the grandfather clause, why did he not arrive at a situation where they could be tested so they could prove whether they were good or bad?

If the Minister were concerned with competence, what would it matter whether these people had worked in this field for three or five years? It would not matter at all if they had the capacity to do the work.

I have a letter here, parts of which I shall quote. It is written by a consultant oral surgeon and he talks about a lady whom I shall not name. She went to an unqualified person for replacement of a broken tooth on a part upper denture she was wearing, but she was talked into having made for her a large, nine-unit bridge on her remaining teeth.

The letter goes on to say—

She had been having pain around 72 prior to the technician starting work and the tooth had been sensitive to hot and cold for a considerable amount of time before the preparation was begun. Being unable to diagnose that there was an abscess on the tooth at that time, the technician apparently administered local analgesia and proceeded to reduce the teeth and place a very poorly constructed and designed bridge.

Since the bridge was cemented, she has had three episodes of pain and large swelling in the infra-orbital area which has at times completely closed up her eye. She has had to see her doctor on several occasions for provision of antibiotics to resolve this problem of acute infection.

It goes on to say that subsequently the woman had treatment, but it appears she will never overcome the problems caused by this incompetent work performed on her.

I am not saying all the people who will come under the grandfather clause are of that type, but there would need to be only one and he would destroy what the Minister has set out to do. That is the problem. The Minister has undermined not only those people, but also everyone else involved in the dental profession.

I look forward keenly to seeing how many shops will be set up in metropolitan Perth and elsewhere on which notices will be erected saying, "Come in and have your choppers made". They will probably have a photograph of Jacko with or without his teeth and wearing his Geelong jumper.

What will these people charge? The dental technicians who set themselves up in this way and carry out their work in the same way as a conventional dental technician who is currently associated with dental surgeries and the like, I believe, will not charge fees significantly different from those charged by others in the profession.

If a dental technician does the same amount of work and has the same equipment as others operating in his profession, if he pays the proper commercial rents for his premises and so on, it will be interesting to see what he will charge.

The Minister suggested that pensioners will be able to obtain cheap dentures. However, that is entirely the wrong way to go about this matter. It is disgraceful to suggest that pensioners should be put in a position where they will get a second-class product shoved in their mouths.

Mr Watt: How much do pensioners pay at the moment?

Mr CLARKO: Why does not the member tell me?

Mr Watt: They probably get their dentures free.

Mr CLARKO: Surely the Minister would not want to rest his argument on the fact that pensioners will get cheap teeth.

Mr COWAN: The National Party supports the amendment moved by the member for Murray-Wellington, not because Ron Boucher may be able to get some work for dental technicians or Mark Jackson wears dentures, but simply because of the fact that this clause, as a result of the amendment moved by the Minister for Health earlier this evening, excludes from qualification as dental prosthetists those very people who have abided by the rules of this State. There may not be a lot of them and they may have preferred to do crown and bridge work rather than deal with dentures, but those people, by the very fact that this clause exists, are being excluded from becoming dental prosthetists under the definition of this Bill until they pass an examination.

It is not new that people, by their experience in a particular field, can suddenly, through legislation, assume a higher qualification. I remind members that some time ago in the education system teachers who were two-year trained, provided they had 10 years' continuous service, were suddenly recognised as being three-year trained and they went up the promotional classification ladder accordingly. Therefore, it is not unusual to have this type of grandfather clause, but it is unusual to be specific in that clause and exclude those people who, in this instance, have been prepared to abide by the law.

Mr Hodge: How would you suggest dealing with it?

Mr Watt: We would treat everybody in the same way.

Mr COWAN: It would be necessary to have some form of assessment, but I would insist everyone be treated equally.

Mr Hodge: The reason I asked you was that I gave the matter a great deal of thought.

Mr COWAN: I am sure every member of the Chamber knows the Minister is a reasonable and deliberate person when it comes to dealing with matters of this nature; but, in this case, he has excluded a percentage of people from being eligible to apply.

Mr Hodge: I have excluded only people who are not eligible, who have not been practising dental prosthetics.

Mr COWAN: And they are equally well qualified.

Mr Hodge: No, they are not, because they have not been practising dental prosthetics. You have not read the definition of "dental prosthetics".

Mr COWAN: I have read the definition, but any person who has not had a chairside experience with a patient will be excluded by the subclause we are debating.

Mr Hodge: That is right, and that is what dental prosthetics is all about.

Mr COWAN: No, it is not, because the first part of the Minister's definition deals with a person who has had chairside experience and the second part deals with the fitting and construction of dentures. I specifically asked the Minister that in the second reading debate and he gave me the answer.

Mr Hodge: If they have been actively engaged in the practice of dental prosthetics as defined in this Bill, they are eligible under the grandfather clause.

Mr COWAN: That is right, and at the moment it is illegal for a person to become involved in what is described as a chairside practice if one is a dental technician. Because of the Minister's definition, if a person decided he was not going to break the law and was not going to have a chairside practice, but filled every prescription that a dentist gave him and was equally competent—

Mr Hodge: But he would not be performing the work of a dental prosthetist if he did that.

Mr COWAN: He would be performing the work of a dental technician—

Mr Hodge: But not of a dental prosthetist.

Mr COWAN:—and complying with the second part of the Minister's amended definition of the practice of dental prosthetics. If the Minister has decided there is a difference between a person who has a chairside practice and one who is a dental technician and does not have a chairside practice, surely there must be some brains in this State

which he could tap to obtain a necessary test requirement to ascertain that a person has an accomplished chairside practice or ability to conduct himself properly and he should be subjected to that test.

As it is at the moment the Minister has excluded those people who have been prepared to act within the law.

Mr Hodge: He can apply if he thinks he has the ability but he has not demonstrated it by his experience.

Mr COWAN: I am sorry, but I do not agree. I do not see where the five years' experience will make him acceptable. The Minister is talking about dental technicians who will suddenly be elevated to the status of dental prosthetist:

Mr Hodge: Which they have already been for the last five years, but without the formal title.

Mr COWAN: Without any qualifications at all, but just based on—

Mr Hodge: Their experience.

Mr COWAN: —some sort of experience. Why cannot we base it on the knowledge and the ability they have gained from that experience?

Mr Hodge: That defeats the purpose of the grandfather clause. It is no longer a grandfather clause if we do that.

Mr COWAN: That is precisely the reason for our amendment.

Mr Hodge: I thought you said you supported the grandfather clause.

Mr COWAN: I did not say I supported the grandfather clause at all.

Mr Hodge: If you don't support the grandfather clause, fair enough; but that is a different argument from that which I have been making.

Mr COWAN: The argument I am making is that the Minister has excluded a small proportion of dental technicians from immediately becoming prosthetists.

Mr Hodge: You have been arguing for the widening of the grandfather clause for the last five minutes and now you are arguing that there should not be a grandfather clause.

Mr COWAN: I have not been arguing for that at all. I am terribly sorry, but the Minister has been a little narrow in his attitude.

Mr MacKinnon: He is trying to mislead.

Mr COWAN: He has not understood what I have been talking about. I am not arguing for the widening of this clause; I am saying that this clause is exclusive. It should be removed. If we want to elevate someone from a dental technician

to dental prosthetist, there needs to be some sort of assessment of his ability, not the fact that he has just had five years' experience, because the people who have that experience may very well be the people who have chosen to abide by the law.

Mr Hodge: And still have the experience?

Mr COWAN: No, they have not got the experience but they may very well be as competent as those people who have had five years' experience.

Mr Hodge: Competent as technicians but not competent as dental prosthetists?

Mr COWAN: Would the Minister please define for me the level of competency in terms of being a dental prosthetist, because it certainly is not contained in the Bill and it is the point we are arguing about? The Minister is saying that five years' experience represents a degree of competence.

Mr Stephens: It may have been bad experience.

Mr COWAN: I point out to the Minister for Health that he and I know many people in this Chamber have had a lot more than five years' experience in politics and I would venture to suggest that the Minister would be the first person to say they are not competent politicians.

I wholeheartedly support the amendment moved by the member for Murray-Wellington.

Mr HODGE: The arguments advanced by the Opposition speakers tonight are the same arguments that have been advanced on numerous occasions to me directly, to the media, and in all sorts of forums by some sections of the dental profession. It boils down to the fact that they do not believe there should be a grandfather clause in this Bill and I accept that as their right. We just disagree on that point. This legislation, along with numerous other measures, contains a grandfather clause. As the member for Merredin pointed out, numerous Bills have come before this Parliament containing similar grandfather clauses and I am sure that when the Opposition was in Government it introduced such Bills. There are many of them; they are quite common. In fact, I am advised that the Dental Act when first introduced contained a grandfather clause. Some of the grandfather clauses I have looked at commonly contain a five-year qualifying period. The member for Merredin quoted an instance of teachers who have been recognised by Parliament and have had their status changed.

Mr Watt: The problem with the teaching example is that they have been doing something in a full-time capacity and in a professional way. The

five years' experience we are talking about here could be once a month, once every three months' or something like that.

Mr HODGE: No, the commissioner must be satisfied. The words, "the Commissioner is satisfied" appear in the legislation and the commissioner will not be satisfied unless he is convinced, firstly, that the person is of good character and repute, and, secondly, that he is a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

Mr Clarko: It does not say that in the second part at all.

Mr HODGE: It applies. The member has misread it.

Mr Clarko: It does not say that at all.

Mr HODGE: The member can shout me down if he wants to. I am telling the Committee the facts about paragraph (a).

Mr Clarko: It does not read that way. Where does it say that?

Mr HODGE: The member might not read it that way, but that is the way it reads. That is the fact. I have checked this with my legal advisers. I am not going to shout—

Mr MacKinnon: Do not shout, just explain to us in words of single syllables how it works.

Mr HODGE: The applicant must satisfy the commissioner that he is a person of good character and repute and that he is a fit and proper person to hold a licence. Obviously, if a person worked half a day a month, as the member for Albany suggested, he would not meet that criteria and it would not satisfy the commissioner. I respect the point of view of the dental profession in not wanting a grandfather clause. That is their view, but it is not the Government's or my view. We do not share that view and we will just have to agree to disagree on that point.

I was interested in listening to the argument of the member for Merredin because he often comes up with very sensible arguments and constructive criticism. I genuinely misunderstood him because I thought he supported the grandfather clause but felt it was too narrow. I thought he was complaining that it was preventing certain people from applying. Obviously I misunderstood him. He does not believe a grandfather clause is necessary on this occasion. I take it the member is not opposed to grandfather clauses in principle?

Mr Cowan: I am not worried about the principle of it. In this case I do not think it is warranted.

Mr HODGE: One important point I want to make is that this ability for grandfathers to apply lasts for only 12 months. It is purely a transitional

arrangement for 12 months from the date of this Bill coming into operation and then the application of the grandfather clause ceases. It is purely a transitional measure to try to come to grips with reality and to reintroduce a realistic situation. A very substantial number of dental technicians at the moment are working in the community adopting the role of dental prosthetists. Some of them have been doing it for years. In fact they are probably making the majority of dentures being worn by the public at the moment.

Mr MacKinnon: You said that earlier and you agreed that you did not have a basis on which to make that sort of statement. You said earlier it could be 50 per cent and now you say "the majority".

Mr HODGE: Stop misquoting. I said many people claim it is at least 50 per cent.

Mr MacKinnon: You then said you believed it was the majority.

Mr HODGE: I believe it is the majority, yes.

Mr MacKinnon: What do you base that on?

Mr HODGE: I base it on my discussions with the dental industry.

Mr MacKinnon: On your discussions?

Mr HODGE: Yes. If the member can come up with any statistics that disprove that I would be happy to hear them.

Mr MacKinnon: We are not moving the legislation; you are.

Mr HODGE: I know. During the 10 years the Opposition was in office it did not do anything.

Mr MacKinnon: You mentioned this would be only a temporary measure.

Mr HODGE: Yes, for 12 months. This clause will self-destruct in 12 months' time. It is purely a transitional measure.

Mr Cowan: Where is the provision for that?

Mr HODGE: It is in line 23 which provides, "may under section 17 within one year after the coming into operation of this Act". After the year has expired a person cannot make application. It is purely a transitional measure to recognise and to be realistic about the fact that these people currently exist and are making dentures.

Mr Cowan: It is not temporary for the person who is making the application.

Mr HODGE: It is not open-ended. People will not continually come in and obtain licences under the grandfather clause. It is designed to recognise that a new system is coming into operation. We must be realistic and not overnight suddenly put out of work and close down the operation of many

dental prosthetists who are currently manufacturing dentures for the public. That is all we are seeking to do. We want to regularise the unsatisfactory situation that currently exists. We all know that currently dentures are being made illegally. I do not think anyone in this Chamber could deny that dentures are now being made illegally and that situation is not satisfactory.

Mr Clarko: That is no argument at all. That is like saying thieves, murderers and all sorts of terrorists are out in the community.

Mr HODGE: I know it was the member's Government's policy to allow illegal gambling, prostitution, and other things to go on under a policy of toleration and containment.

Mr MacKinnon: Are they going on today?

Mr HODGE: They went on under your Government under a policy of toleration and containment.

Mr Clarko: People exceed the speed limit every minute of the day.

Mr HODGE: I do not want it to continue. I want to legalise the situation. The member raised the point that people might make false applications to the commissioner and stretch the truth in doing so. I draw members' attention to another clause of the Bill. I think clause 25 provides that they will be liable to a fine of \$200.

Mr Clarko: How can you prove a person has done something illegal? How can you prove he has worked for 12 years, 364 days, or one day?

Mr HODGE: He will have to satisfy the commissioner to that effect.

Mr Clarko: How can he do that? If he is a liar he could say that he has been doing it for—

Mr HODGE: If he signs a false statutory declaration he will be in trouble.

Mr Clarko: How can you prove it? How can you prove a person has done something which is illegal?

Mr HODGE: The member has a closed mind and I am wasting my time arguing with him.

Mr Clarko: You have not heard the last of me. I will give you another serve in a moment.

Mr HODGE: The member has a closed mind and it is not worth arguing with a person of his stature.

Mr MacKINNON: This clause is a most important one. Of all the representations that have been made to me on the legislation from both sides of the spectrum, both from the technicians and the prosthetists, this clause has caused me the greatest concern. As the Minister is probably aware, one of the largest dental laboratories in Perth is in fact located around the corner from my electorate office and I have visited that office and I know the

people who work there quite well. I have a great respect for them, but that does not alter my concern about this part of the legislation. In fact, I have had discussions with them and I have indicated to those people, as well as to the dentists who have approached me, my attitude to the legislation, which is, as members are already probably aware, one of general support, provided that the public are protected.

It is difficult for me as an accountant and a professional person to see how one could say that a person may or may not have been operating illegally; the Government has given us no indication of what tests will be applied to these people. We understand that they must prove that they have been practising for the last five years. How can we tell whether that experience was very good or very bad? Are they very good professional people or are they not? Are they up to date with the latest techniques, as they need to be? Are they aware of all the ins and outs of the profession? The Minister knows as well as I do that everybody in a profession these days is undertaking courses to continue his professional development.

In the field of accountancy, for example, to maintain one's qualification one has to complete something in excess of 80 to 100 hours a year in other professional training to ensure he maintains his qualification. That applies to someone dealing with people's books. Equally, if one were dealing with people's bodies, I would hope the profession demands that its members keep up to date. How are we to determine whether those people are qualified—because they have been practising something illegally for five years? Has anyone kept track of that illegal activity? I would say the commissioner has not done so. Nobody has. The Minister came back continually in his arguments tonight saying that the commissioner will determine it; the commissioner is a good bloke. Can the Minister tell me the commissioner's qualifications? No, he cannot do so. Is he a qualified dentist? Is he a qualified dental technician? Here we have a matter of real concern where, in a field in which he is supposed to be the judge of whether somebody has been practising something illegally for five years the commissioner has the qualifications.

We may as well say, as someone indicated to me once, that illegal abortionists may now become gynaecologists, because they have been acting illegally over the years and are now skilled at something they have done for at least five years. Now the commissioner may have a test to determine whether they will be qualified, but we have no detail of it.

I think the member for Merredin made a very good point when he raised the matter of the grandfather clause. This situation has been before the

Parliament before, and I have no doubt that other States in Australia have supported legislation which contains grandfather clauses, where appropriate. However, in this instance it is difficult to say how we can frame a grandfather clause which, firstly, would be appropriate and, secondly, can be applied to all concerned.

As the member for Merredin has indicated, there are many very good dental prosthetists in this town who have been law-abiding citizens, I would dispute the Minister's claim that the majority of dentures are made illegally. I think the case would be the opposite; the majority are provided through dentists.

Mr Hodge: That is your personal opinion.

Mr MacKINNON: It is my opinion against the Minister's opinion. That is the point I make: The Minister has no basis on which to make that claim.

Mr Hodge: I happen to be the Minister for Health. I can make a better decision on health, with the information I have available to me.

Mr MacKINNON: That comment indicates the attitude we were talking about five minutes ago. The Minister told the member for Karrinyup that he had a closed mind, therefore, he was not prepared to debate with him. The Minister now has the hide to say that as the Minister for Health he knows best.

Mr Hodge: Don't you think I have access to information?

Mr MacKINNON: I am pleased to hear he has that attitude, because it has been evident throughout the medical profession. In all of the related areas with which the Minister has come into contact he has not been a popular Minister. He is perceived, just as he has said tonight in the light, "I know best".

Mr Hodge: I was saying I know more than you.

Mr MacKINNON: The Minister was saying he knows best.

Mr Hodge: I was saying that I have access to more information than the member.

Mr MacKINNON: We have heard the Minister say he knows best. Can he explain to me how the Commissioner of Health can know about this matter? What qualifications does he have?

The Minister has said that if we do not agree to this grandfather clause many dental prosthetists will be out of work.

Mr Hodge: Don't bother being accurate.

Mr MacKINNON: How many dental prosthetists would be out of work if the legislation allowed them to carry out their work illegally?

How many grandfathers will be involved? I would say only a very small number.

We are sincere in addressing this legislation; we do not want to stand in the way of dental prosthetists dealing directly with the public. We want to make sure, however, that they have the proper qualifications and skills to do so, and we wish to ensure proper protection is given to the people they service. We do not believe this clause gives that protection, as has been indicated already by many speakers from this side of the Chamber.

I reject the argument put forward by the Minister. He may be a more clever man than I in many aspects, but with this area of the legislation he will place many hundreds of Western Australians at risk if he allows it to go through.

I am not prepared to support the clause, which is the reason I have great pleasure in endorsing the amendment moved by the member for Murray-Wellington.

Mr MENSAROS: I feel obliged to enter the debate, because so many illogical statements have been made, and I think they must be corrected. The Minister is correct in saying that many grandfather clauses have been brought forward by previous Governments, including our Liberal Government. I would be one to support them very much, as it seems to be utterly inequitable to take away the occupation of someone who has carried out that work for a long time with the blessing of the community and the law of the State.

The Minister said that many grandfather clauses have been introduced. I wonder whether he can point out one case of a profession where someone was involved in an illegal activity which would have been legalised by registration. That is the whole crux of this question, because when the Minister is quoting the grandfather clause he is simply legalising what has been illegal in the past.

One presumes there has been a reason that the activity has been illegal. If it was Labor Party policy that it was wrong, the party should have explained, in the past and now, why it was illegal to deal with patients.

Mr Hodge: One example which comes to mind is that of the Chiropractors Act. It was illegal to practise as a chiropractor and charge people before the legislation in 1964. That was illegal, and the grandfather clause allowed those people who had been practising—I think for five years—to be registered without having to have the normal qualifications. That is a direct comparison.

Mr MENSAROS: I suppose the Minister is referring to the legislation which came about as a result of a Select Committee, or Royal Com-

mission which his predecessor as the member for Melville either chaired or was a member of.

Mr Hodge: A Liberal Government brought in the 1964 legislation.

Mr MENSAROS: That might have been so, but I am still saying that the illegal practice is being made legal.

Mr Hodge: I gave you a specific example. The medical profession claimed that chiropractors were in their scope and people who were practising chiropractic were impinging on the Medical Act.

Mr MENSAROS: Again, there is a difference. There have been cases in professional occupations which have been illegal. Before the University of Western Australia was able to produce lawyers, and even after that, a legal practitioner did not have to have a university degree. All that was required was five years' practice, and it was not until the mid-1950s, that legislation was introduced to make it compulsory for legal practitioners to have a university degree. Those who practised until that time, without university degrees, did not do so illegally.

Mr Hodge: I think the Dental Act was written to allow dental auxiliaries who came back from the war, and who had great knowledge and skill, to be registered.

Mr MENSAROS: I am quite sure that in all other professions, returned servicemen were registered to practise as architects, lawyers, etc., but only after adequate training. I think the member for Balcatta was one of those people.

However, there is another aspect to this matter which is important too. People can be practising illegally for many reasons. The Minister said during the debate that he doubts whether that there will be a difference between the professional fees of a qualified dentist and someone acting illegally. If that is so, we must consider the reason that these people practise illegally.

If they are not cheaper, and if they are good enough, they can work for dentists as indeed most of the dental practitioners are using their services and getting dentures or part dentures from them. I submit that those who are successful service the professional people, the dental practitioners. Those, however, who are not good enough to do the job for the dentists could not do anything else but practise illegally. So, the Minister wants to elevate not only the people who worked illegally but also those who are least skilled to be registered. He chooses, automatically by the nature of things, those who are less skilled in this occupation. That is one additional reason that the amendment moved by the member for Murray-Wellington should be accepted.

Mr COWAN: The Minister did not comment on one matter when he was replying. I did not comment on this matter, because it had already been covered by members on this side of the Chamber. I refer to the fact that the commissioner has to be satisfied that a person is competent to practise as a dental prosthetist.

The Minister may be prepared to give the Chamber some indication as to what skills the commissioner possesses to make that assessment. If he does not have those skills—and from my knowledge of the commissioner I am quite sure he does not—perhaps the Minister can give some indication as to from where he will obtain his advice.

Mr Hodge: The Commissioner of Health is responsible for a vast multitude of Acts of Parliament which call for a whole range of skills and qualifications. He is the person responsible, but he does not hold a whole range of qualifications; he employs professional people within the department to advise him. It is a huge department which encompasses a huge dental service. We employ highly qualified dentists, so the cover is adequate. The sources of advice are available to the commissioner to cover any contingency which may arise. That is the normal way the department operates.

Mr COWAN: I accept the commissioner will accept advice from his officers, but let us assume that I wear dentures. If the person who made them wanted to become elevated from a dental technician to a dental prosthetist, will someone invite me to wrap them in a brown paper bag and send them to the department for examination to ensure they are properly constructed; or will I be asked to present myself to show that they have been properly fitted? How will the commissioner's officers be able to make an assessment?

Mr Hodge: Those sorts of nuts and bolts issues are not normally covered in legislation, they are covered in regulations. The member knows that.

Mr COWAN: I did not know that.

Mr WATT: I want a couple of assurances from the Minister. After I made my speech in the second reading debate, I discussed with the Ministers, on the floor of the House, my concerns about clause 18(2). That subclause is the nub of the grandfather clause. The way I read it is that there is no way that it does not mean that, if at the end of a year after this Act comes into operation, a person who has been engaged in dental prosthetics for five years, and has applied for a licence, has not met the qualifications by examination or assessment as set down in subclause (1)(b), he is taken to be qualified as required by that subclause. I want the Minister to assure me that,

because of the uncertainties that exist—I have discussed this with a number of other members and with dentists who have all felt that the subclause says what I believe it says—he will check this matter with the Parliamentary Counsel to ensure that the Bill says what he intends it to say and not what I believe it says.

Mr Hodge: I have already given you that assurance. I repeat: I will have it checked.

Mr LAURANCE: I want to take up a point made by the Minister in an earlier response. It relates to his enthusiasm for the grandfather clause. He said that he feels grandfather clauses are appropriate. In many circumstances I could agree with him. However, I feel there is a fundamental difference when one is looking at the operation of dental prosthetics and what dental prosthetists do to people. I feel that that differs immensely from many other areas in which grandfather clauses have been felt to be appropriate.

In the second reading stage I referred to comments made by Mr Justice Kirby who said that, at one time, the legal profession had monopolised the conveyancing of land and we had to open up that field. He said, because of that, dentists should do the same thing. He said that they have had a monopoly on prosthetics and that other people should be allowed to operate in that area. I disagree with Justice Kirby and I disagree with the Minister when he says that it is appropriate to have a grandfather clause. We say that it is not appropriate.

Earlier, I used the example of real estate agents and business brokers. The legislation relating to those professions included a grandfather clause. If a person had been operating in the real estate field for some years the legislation stated that he was entitled to qualify under a grandfather clause. If that person made a mistake, he could cause difficulty for the people with whom he was dealing. That may occur simply because that person was unqualified. Even though it may prove to be a little messy, not much harm can be done. However, it is a little different with people who are operating on other people's mouths.

The member for Karrinyup gave an example. One does not need many examples like that. One is one too many.

Recently, I had a dealing in real estate in which the purchaser went to a very inaccessible part of the world. He took a job in the Sudan in central Africa. One letter was incorrect in the conveyancing document and I had to contact the purchaser in the Sudan. That held up the transaction for some weeks. The person with whom I dealt in the real estate field may have been qualified under the

grandfather clause. At least I was not physically harmed because of his mistake. If my mouth had been affected I may have been sorrier for much longer.

This Bill deals with a medical service and with people's bodies. I believe that that situation deserves a much tougher qualifying requirement than for a person to have been practising in a field for five years.

I contend that the grandfather clause is not appropriate without some other form of test being applied as has now been called for by many members on this side of the Chamber. I therefore indicate my strong support for the amendment.

Mr CLARKO: Do we have two classes of prosthetists? When one goes to one's shopping centre and strolls around, will one see two businesses providing dentures? Will one see, written up outside a business "Qualified having attended the Mt. Lawley Technical College on a part-time basis for three or four years" and will one also see written up on the other business "Qualified under the grandfather clause"? The latter person's only qualification would be that he had been acting illegally for five years. Will that be printed outside his business? Will this Government, which has introduced this legislation, be happy to receive legal complaints against it for allowing people who are totally incompetent to operate in this area?

Tests will never be taken by people wishing to operate in this area because of this clause. All somebody is required to be is a person of good character and a fit and proper person to hold a licence. That could cover everybody in the community, bar Ned Kelly. If everyone in this room were required to answer the question as to whether they were fit and proper people and whether they were people of good character, there would be no difficulty in describing them in that way. If one walked down St. George's Terrace and bumped into somebody one had not seen for 20 years and that person requested a reference, one would have no hesitation in supplying that reference. This legislation requires only that a person be of good character and repute and a fit and proper person.

Mr Hodge: Have you read the legislation? The commissioner has the power to suspend or revoke licences.

Mr CLARKO: Clause 18 requires that a person who has been making dentures illegally need only be a fit and proper person. That person may have been making only one set of dentures a year.

Mr Hodge: You are talking rubbish; you have not read the Bill.

Mr CLARKO: I am saying that to be qualified under this legislation, a person could have made

one set of dentures a year for five years for a prison escapee on his way out of the country. A technician has only to have made one set of dentures every year for five years to qualify under the Bill, as long as he is a fit and proper person and a person of good character and repute. Everybody in Western Australia could be described in that way except a person who has a criminal record. The Minister should tell me how many people in Western Australia are not of good character and repute or are not fit and proper persons.

Clause 18 requires only that a person meet two requirements. He has firstly to meet the double requirement of being of good character and repute and a fit and proper person. Secondly, he is allowed a licence if he has, upon assessment by examination gained from an educational authority prescribed for the purposes of this paragraph a qualification so prescribed. Why should they not all be required to attend an examination or to prove their competence? Subclause (2) states that a person should have been actively engaged in the practice of dental prosthetics and has been continuously so engaged for a period of not less than five years.

I might be exaggerating when I say that a person would be qualified if he has produced one set of dentures every 12 months. Perhaps he has produced 50 a year. How is the commissioner to assess a person? Will he ring up Mrs Smith who was provided with dentures three years ago by a dental technician and ask her to prove that she can eat a piece of tough steak? Is that dental technician qualified if she says that she is happy with her dentures? What is the test for competency of someone described in clause 18?

As far as I am concerned, the only thing that will debar Ned Kelly's grandson who is operating a blacksmith business in central Victoria from operating under this legislation is the fact that he is working in Victoria. If he went to Wiluna and knocked up some teeth for a couple of passing camels, he would be qualified under this Bill. That is what is wrong with the legislation. People are already highly qualified in this field. Many dental technicians do not want this legislation.

After the legislation is enacted I wonder whether the Minister will have the gall to prosecute anybody who has not obtained a licence but who has been working as a dental technician for five years. I hope that the legislation is not enacted with this clause included in it.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Mr Bradshaw
Mr Clarke
Mr Court
Mr Cowan
Mr Grayden
Mr Laurance
Mr MacKinnon
Mr Mensaros

Mr Barnett
Mr Bateman
Mrs Beggs
Mr Bridge
Mr Bryce
Mrs Buchanan
Mr Carr
Mr Evans
Mr Grill
Mr Hodge
Mr Jamieson

Ayes

Mr Coyne
Mr McNee
Mr Thompson
Mr Hassell
Mr Peter Jones
Mr Blaikie
Mr Trethowan
Dr Dadour

Ayes 15

Mr Old
Mr Rushton
Mr Spriggs
Mr Stephens
Mr Tubby
Mr Watt
Mr Williams

(Teller)

Noes 21

Mr Tom Jones
Mr McIver
Mr Parker
Mr Pearce
Mr Read
Mr P. J. Smith
Mr Tonkin
Mr Troy
Mr Wilson
Mr Gordon Hill

(Teller)

Pairs

Noes

Mr Bertram
Mr D. L. Smith
Mr I. F. Taylor
Mrs Watkins
Mr Davies
Mrs Henderson
Mr Terry Burke
Mr Brian Burke

Amendment thus negated.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 19: Effect of licence—

Mr BRADSHAW: I move an amendment—

Page 11, lines 28 and 29—Delete the words "of unlimited duration" with a view to substituting the words "to be reviewed annually".

Mr HODGE: I was hoping that the member for Murray-Wellington would give an explanation of this amendment, but he obviously does not intend to. I can conclude only that there are possibly two reasons. One is that he is worried about the loss of money to the Treasury by not receiving an annual licence fee. If that is his reason, I thank him for his concern; but I can assure him that the cost of collecting the money would far exceed the amount raised. If that is the case, he is worrying unnecessarily.

The other possible reason for his amendment is that the licence should be granted for only 12 months and be reviewed accordingly. That is not logical. I am not aware of any other profession that is subject to that imposition. It is natural to assume that once a person is licensed or registered to practise a certain profession, provided he does not breach the law or act in an improper way, he should be allowed to continue the practice of his chosen profession.

The reason annual licences are charged is to fund registration boards. All the registration boards for professions in this State are self-funded. They do not cost taxpayers or the Government any money. Annual fees are paid in order to keep the board running.

Under this Bill, the licence system will not provide this type of drain and there is no necessity for funds to be raised.

The Opposition is suggesting that dental prosthetists should have their careers put on the line every 12 months, whether or not they have acted improperly or whether or not complaints have been levelled at them in regard to the way in which they have operated. In other words, their professional career would be put on the line every 12 months, and I reject that.

I draw the member for Murray-Wellington's attention, as I did the member for Karrinyup, to the other clauses in the Bill which give the commissioner sweeping powers at any time to suspend, invoke, or cancel a licence which has been issued to a prosthetist.

Mr Clarko: You cannot do that retrospectively. If a fellow comes before you and says that he has been operating for five years—

Mr HODGE: The member for Karrinyup is harping back to his old argument. He is not listening to what I am saying. The member is trying to convey to the Chamber the possibility of a person inflicting himself on the public as a dental prosthetist even though he is incompetent. The point I am making is that if an inappropriate person slipped through the net and became licensed, the moment a complaint was made about that person to the commissioner his licence could be revoked, suspended, or cancelled. If that is the basis of the Opposition's amendment, it really is not a legitimate concern.

The Opposition has not explained its reasons for the amendment and I cannot believe that it is seriously suggesting that a dental prosthetist should have his career reviewed every 12 months. That is not fair. There is ample provision in this Bill for a person who has had a complaint laid against him to have his licence reviewed at any time by the commissioner. If the Opposition is worried about this matter, I suggest that its concern is not warranted.

Should the Opposition be worried about the money involved, the amount which is expected to be raised would be insignificant and as a result, there is no need for worry in that regard.

Mr LAURANCE: There is no need for the Minister to be facetious. The Opposition is trying to follow a logical line of argument. It is con-

cerned about the qualifications of people who will carry out work under this legislation.

The Minister may have won an argument in this Chamber, but that is the nature of Parliament. Those members who sit on your right, Mr Deputy Chairman (Mr Burkett), tend to win the votes. The Government won a vote that was taken a moment ago and that has become a part of history. However, it is a fact that people outside this Chamber will not accept the legislation. They will have their say through the media and the fact that the Government has won a vote is neither here nor there.

The matter of whether a grandfather clause is included in this legislation is inappropriate under the circumstance. So, too, is the further provision in clause 19 that licences will be of unlimited duration. The Minister referred the Opposition to other clauses in the Bill, but I will refer him to some other clauses.

The Opposition wants to amend clause 19. Dentists say that their careers are put on the line every 12 months, as happens in many other professions.

Mr Hodge: You misunderstand the Dental Act.

Mr LAURANCE: If that is the case dentists must misunderstand it, too.

Mr Hodge: The only way their careers are put on the line is if they refuse to pay their licence renewal fee.

Mr LAURANCE: That is for the running of the board.

Mr Hodge: If they refuse to pay the licence fee they are still recognised as dentists, but they are not permitted to practise.

Mr LAURANCE: Dentists would doubt what the Minister is saying. The Minister is saying that a dentist must be registered and pay an annual fee to the board and if he does not he is not permitted to practise, but if a person is operating illegally as a dental prosthetist, under a grandfather clause he will be permitted to carry on that practice.

Mr Hodge: Are you saying that dentists should not have to pay a fee and that the board should be funded some other way?

Mr LAURANCE: How can the Minister sit in this place and defend the proposition that is before the Chamber? He must withdraw the Bill immediately.

Mr Hodge: Do not talk rubbish. I stood up and defended it.

Mr LAURANCE: To give them a licence of unlimited duration—

Mr Hodge: I explained the reason to your colleague who moved the amendment. Why do you not listen?

Mr LAURANCE: The Minister has put himself in an untenable position. He has put a stupid proposition before this Chamber. On the one hand a dentist can lose his licence because he refuses to pay an annual fee and—

Mr Hodge: If they do not want a registration board let them tell me. I have not had any representations from them.

Mr LAURANCE: A Minister of the Crown does not need to have qualifications.

Mr Carr: You were in that position for a while.

Mr LAURANCE: I think we should have a registration board for Ministers.

I ask the Minister to think seriously about this matter. I know that the hour is late, but it does not mean that he should be illogical. He is trying to tell us that dentists who have had several years of professional training must pay an annual licence fee if they do not want to lose their licence. However, on the other hand newly appointed prosthetists can be granted a licence under the grandfather clause and retain it forever. How can that be justified?

Mr Hodge: I just did it, you idiot.

Mr LAURANCE: Only an idiot would try to defend it. It is an indefensible position. The Government cannot give dental prosthetists a licence under the grandfather clause and say it will apply forever when the same situation does not apply to dentists. It is a fundamental paradox and the Minister cannot see it.

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: The Minister is going to take his marbles and go home.

The Minister must support this amendment. He supported amendments earlier this evening when he was of a clear mind, but he is becoming increasingly intransigent as the night goes on.

We take the point. Perhaps an annual review is not appropriate. Make it three years. Give them an adequate test and review every three years. We should then be consistent and treat the Dental Act in the same way. The Minister is not showing much consistency on this point at the moment, but when he thinks about some of the statements he has made he will obviously change his mind. The principle of unlimited jurisdiction is totally unacceptable. If he had agreed to an amendment to withdraw the grandfather clause, perhaps we could have agreed to leave this clause as it is. If there was an appropriate test before these people were allowed to call themselves dental prosthetists,

the Dental Act could be treated consistently so that the same sort of condition applied to dentists. They are operating in the same field; they should operate under similar conditions. To bring this thing to the point where people do not really need to be qualified at all except by their prior illegal activities—words fail me!

Having rolled the Opposition, and used the weight of numbers in the Parliament in order to retain the grandfather clause, the Minister now compounds the error by not accepting this amendment. There should be some form of review. The Minister says it is catered for in other parts of the Act. We believe some time limit should be put in here. The Minister has taken his bat and gone home. He should say what other period would be suitable or appropriate if it is not to be reviewed annually. The Minister can move another amendment of his own.

I want to make the point, while I have the opportunity, that on this clause and other clauses the Minister has referred to how much work has been done by unauthorised people—people who are acting illegally. He says probably 50 per cent or even more of the dentures being made in the State at the moment are being made by dental technicians operating illegally. The dental profession itself says the Minister is way out of court on that. He is not even in the ball park. Members of the profession say probably only three per cent of the materials used for dentures dispensed through warehouses in the State go to illegal operators. It is a very small amount, which would indicate that only a small number of dentures are made in this way. Therefore it begs the question: Why go to all this trouble? Why upset the dental profession? Why upset a system which is working very well to cater for a very small number of people, probably fewer than 25? The Minister is throwing caution to the winds by allowing these people to come in without proper qualification, testing or examination.

The Minister must have a conscience. I have watched him for some years now and I believe that if he searched he would find he had a conscience. He will wake up in the cold light of day and feel guilty about this. Any person with a conscience would have to. He will say, "I should have put in some test in addition to that grandfather clause, and there should be some review; this thing should not be open-ended". It is not open-ended for dentists; they are subject to regular review.

The Minister said that in a fairly short period there would be a move towards a registration board instead of this advisory committee. It would be appropriate for the Minister, when he gets that twinge of conscience, to say that he is prepared to

look at it again in the Legislative Council, because it would be appropriate to look at that, as well as what we are talking about now; namely, a regular review—even if the Minister changes it to a regular review, or changes the grandfather clause to one which gives recognition to prior service of this nature.

This is not to satisfy me; I have very good teeth, and I hope I do not have to be involved in a personal way in this legislation for a long time. This is a little reminder for the Government, on behalf of the public, that it cannot do all it wants; that it is not the repository of all knowledge. The Government acknowledged that earlier this evening. It even accepted one of the Opposition's amendments. The first amendment on the Notice Paper the Government agreed to. The second we withdrew in favour of the Minister's amendment. There was a great amount of co-operation at that stage. This seems to have vanished and the Minister has become more intransigent. Perhaps the first amendments were easier; he could understand them. Now we have come to serious, philosophical differences. The Minister is at odds with the whole dental profession.

There is a way in which the Minister can get onside with the Opposition and gain the full support of the Parliament and the support of the dental profession, and that is if he is prepared to include a test in addition to the grandfather clause. Then we may be prepared to have this unlimited licence jurisdiction. But we would ask him to be consistent and make a similar arrangement for dentists.

I think you will understand, Mr Chairman, being a fair man, as I know you are, and you would see the consistency of that approach.

The member for Murray-Wellington will be able to elaborate on this matter. It was not appropriate for the Minister to fire off in a facetious manner. He knows that is not part of the debate. It did not do him any credit to take that sort of line. Now he has a chance to hear the Opposition again he should think the matter through carefully and give us a more considered response in answer to our very worthwhile amendment, one that I commend to the Government.

Mr BRADSHAW: As I said earlier in the debate, I cannot think of any other professional organisation where one does not have to register each year to keep up one's qualification. This is a similar situation. That is no reason to say we have to do this with dental prosthetists. The Minister said earlier that in due course a board would be set up to administer dental prosthetists. It is reason-

able that if the dentists have to pay an annual fee to provide funding, so should dental prosthetists.

Mr Hodge: If they have a board they will have to pay an annual fee.

Mr BRADSHAW: But the Minister has already told them they will have an indefinite licence.

Mr Hodge: That is only while they are licensed. If and when the legislation ever changes—and I have no definite plans, I just said it is a possibility—and if and when there is a registration board, it will have to be funded by the profession.

Mr BRADSHAW: They are told now they can be unlimited members.

Mr Hodge: Parliament can change the law at any time it chooses.

Mr BRADSHAW: We have an example with the case of the Yunderup canals, where licence fees are imposed for jetties which do not exist. We will have a similar situation here. If we suddenly start a board and say to these people who have had unlimited jurisdiction that they now have to have a licence—

Mr Hodge: This is something to be negotiated with the profession, if they want a registration board, which I suspect they probably will in due course.

Mr Laurance: How much discussion has there been with the profession on this?

Mr Hodge: There has been a lot.

Mr BRADSHAW: Another reason for this annual licence is that it helps keep a check on the number of dental prosthetists in Western Australia. Once they have an unlimited licence they could change their premises, and go from Perth to Albany or to Port Hedland.

Mr Hodge: This licence is in relation to prosthetists.

Mr BRADSHAW: They could still move from one end of the State to another and remain licensed. We would not have a clue where they were.

Mr Hodge: Are you worried about that?

Mr BRADSHAW: There are clauses in the Bill which say they must conform to certain criteria. How is one to check on that if one does not know where they are? If inspectors are appointed in the future, or if the board decides to check on them—

Mr Hodge: That situation could be easily overcome by regulations requiring them to notify change of address.

Mr BRADSHAW: It does not say that in the Bill.

Mr Hodge: You do not put regulations in the Bill, you draft them after the Bill has gone through the Parliament. These are nuts and bolts issues. It would not be an insurmountable problem to require them to notify change of address.

Mr BRADSHAW: In that event does the Minister feel the Dental Board should be done away with and dentists should be given unlimited licences?

Mr Hodge: If the dental profession makes that submission to me I will give it consideration.

Mr BRADSHAW: All in all I believe there should be an annual licence, as with any other profession. I cannot see the need for starting a precedent for this situation. As I said, it definitely keeps a check on where the people are and the numbers working in Western Australia as dental prosthetists.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr BRADSHAW: I move an amendment—

Page 12, lines 1 to 30—Delete paragraph (b) and subclauses (2) and (3).

This section of the Bill deals with partial dentures. As we said earlier, in very few cases of partial dentures is some form of preparation not required in the mouth. This obviously requires a dentist to do this work, therefore it is not a dental prosthetist's job either to drill or to change the tissue in the mouth in any way.

Mr Hodge: That has been outlawed. We have already agreed to that amendment.

Mr BRADSHAW: In almost 100 per cent of the cases some form of preparation is required, whether by drilling the teeth or—

Mr Hodge: We have just outlawed that.

Mr BRADSHAW: Therefore this part of the clause is not required?

Mr Hodge: Yes, it is. You have just said in many cases, but not in all.

Mr BRADSHAW: I said in most cases.

Mr Hodge: There will still be a lot of cases where it won't be.

Mr BRADSHAW: Very few.

Mr Hodge: That is no reason to take out the clause.

Mr BRADSHAW: The clause is unnecessary because there will be so few cases where it will not be necessary to have some preparation of the teeth or tissue. All partial dentures are attached to the teeth, which therefore require preparation.

Mr Hodge: If they require preparation it will need to be done by dentists. Your argument is out

of date. You drummed up this argument before we amended the Bill.

Mr BRADSHAW: If any preparation needs to be done it will be necessary to go to a dentist, then to a prosthetist and then back to the dentist.

Mr Hodge: I have already read you a letter from Tasmania which indicates that after 30 years' experience they have found it has not happened.

Mr BRADSHAW: It is strange then that Victoria and New South Wales have not followed.

Mr Hodge: New South Wales, our most populous State, has.

Mr BRADSHAW: South Australia has just had a Select Committee inquire into this field and that State certainly has not come up with the findings this Minister has. We have had illegal work being carried out by dental technicians and this could still continue because preparation will be required before partial dentures can be inserted.

Mr HODGE: I oppose the amendment. It is not necessary and I have pointed out by way of interjection why it is not necessary. The only reason the member has put forward in support of the deletion of the subclauses is that he believes dental prosthetists will be illegally engaged in drilling teeth, cutting gums or other dental work. Under this legislation they will not be allowed to do that.

Earlier this evening we agreed to strengthen clause 3 to make the position crystal clear. We included the words "but the fitting or inserting of an artificial denture or mouth guard shall not be taken to include any adjustment or alteration to the natural teeth or any tissue of the mouth". If a dental prosthetist carries out any of that work he will break the law, and I do not think he will be prepared to do that, because he would lose his licence if he did.

The experience in Tasmania, which has had similar legislation for nearly 30 years, and in New South Wales, our most populous State, is that dental prosthetists are not prepared to risk breaking the law. I do not believe they will in this State. Once they realise how reasonable this legislation is to regulate the whole industry and to clean it up, something which has been desperately needed for many years, those licensed prosthetists will have a vested interest in ensuring the law is supported. They will actively engage in policing the legislation and reporting any person they know or hear of who is illegally doing dental work on patients. As the responsible Minister for many statutory boards, I find that most professions rely on members of the professions or members of the public to report any practitioners who are acting

improperly or illegally. Most statutory boards rely on this method of policing their legislation.

Members of the professions and of the public are excellent policemen when it comes to this sort of thing, because they have a vested interest. The members of the profession have a vested interest in seeing that their peers obey the law. The Opposition's concerns are unnecessary, particularly as we have agreed to amend the legislation already. The member might have had a slightly stronger case with the original wording. I do not believe there was anything wrong with the original wording, but that is an academic argument because I agreed to the earlier amendment. The member's argument does not hold up.

Mr LAURANCE: We acknowledge that the Government introduced an earlier amendment, one with which we agreed and which changed the definition of the work. However, it did not involve partial dentures, and this clause does. The Minister's words about work having been done illegally in the past could come back to haunt him, because if 50 per cent of the work up to now has been done illegally by these people, why could not other work be done illegally in the future?

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Burkett): Order! Members, there are meetings on either side of me, and I would prefer just to hear the member for Gascoyne at the moment.

Mr LAURANCE: The profession is rightly raising another concern that leaving this clause as it is will allow people to use it in order to work with partial dentures, and if they do we believe the best interests of the public will not be served. The Minister should remove the concern of the profession by agreeing to this amendment. Certainly the earlier wording of the Bill has been strengthened, but there is still a concern, and a real one. How can the Minister say that the prosthetists will not act illegally? People are acting illegally now under the present legislation and they may act illegally under this Bill. They could use this very clause to justify their actions, and that is why we have moved this amendment.

With respect to clause 3, if someone is doing work and something goes wrong, will a dental prosthetist immediately cease work and refer the problem to a dentist? It is most unlikely. I am sure he will decide to do just a small amount of work and then continue. The dentists believe there will be a bit of professional jealousy involved, which will prevent a prosthetist referring the problem to a dentist. That could very likely occur. There will be pressure on the prosthetist to continue with the work he has commenced, other than on full den-

tures, under the terms of the earlier amended clause.

The Bill would be improved were this amendment to be accepted. The Minister said that he accepted the earlier amendment because he saw the need for it and did not believe prosthetists should be able to work on partial dentures. If his concern is real he will agree with the Opposition that this amendment should be accepted.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 20 to 24 put and passed.

Clause 25: Offences as to licensing—

Mr LAURANCE: In clause 25 we are talking about penalties, and the particular penalty prescribed is a fine not exceeding \$200 for offences outlined in the clause. In many cases that could be an entirely inappropriate figure. If a person is operating and charging substantial fees, a fine of \$200 really does not seem to be appropriate. We made that point during the second reading debate and I repeat it now during the Committee stage of the Bill, that a person who makes fraudulent statements or misrepresents the facts will do so in order to continue in a profession which will bring him considerable financial gain. The penalty should be an appropriate one. These penalties tend to get out of date very quickly anyway, but if we start off with an inappropriate penalty it will of course become more and more inappropriate as time goes on.

Mr Hodge: What fine do you think would be appropriate?

Mr LAURANCE: That is the question I want to pose to the Minister, because he would have some idea. He has already told us how many of these things are already being done illegally, and he must know the sorts of incomes earned and the fees charged by people doing this work.

Mr Hodge: I would have thought it was obvious I regarded the penalty in the Bill as acceptable, otherwise I would not have introduced it. However, if the member makes another suggestion I would be happy to consider it.

Mr LAURANCE: I just make the point that it could be, say, a maximum of at least \$5 000, with a minimum of, say, \$500, or \$1 000. An amount of \$2 000 is prescribed for other offences; certainly, \$2 000 seems to be a minimal amount when talking about quite substantial offences. Therefore the penalty should be in excess of \$200 and in many cases probably much more than that. In the case of a person making fraudulent statements it would be in respect of an activity that would bring in a lot of money and the penalty should be a

deterrent. I question whether a penalty of \$200 would be a deterrent.

Mr HODGE: I am prepared to have another look at the penalty for the reasons that the member for Gascoyne has raised.

Progress

Progress reported and leave given to sit again, on motion by Mr Hodge (Minister for Health).

BILLS (2): RECEIPT AND FIRST READING

1. Juries Amendment Bill.
2. Bail Amendment Bill.

Bills received from the Council; and, on motions by Mr Grill (Minister for Transport), read a first time.

BILLS (3): RETURNED

1. Acts Amendment (Abolition of Capital Punishment) Bill.
2. Rural Housing Assistance Amendment Bill.
3. Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Amendment Bill.

Bills returned from the Council without amendment.

ACTS AMENDMENT (INSOLVENT ESTATES) BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Council; and, on motion by Mr Tonkin (Leader of the House), read a first time.

House adjourned at 11.03 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH: HOSPITAL

Osborne Park: Medical Services

628. Mr THOMPSON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Could he advise what medical services are not available at Osborne Park Hospital now that were available before salaried-sessional appointments were introduced to that hospital in May this year?
- (2) Could he inform Parliament of the estimated annual cost of providing medical services under the salaried-sessional appointments system implemented at Osborne Park Hospital from May this year? Please include the costs associated with medical administration.

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) Currently eye surgery and plastic surgery are not being offered at Osborne Park Hospital. The previous specialists were offered these positions, but did not take up these appointments. These positions have now been readvertised.
- (2) The cost is \$826 500 per annum which also includes \$60 000 for the family medicine programme appointments. The figure of \$826 500 should be compared with a cost of \$848 700 in 1983-84 for fee for service payments which were projected to rise to between \$950 000 and \$1 million in 1984-85.

HEALTH: HOSPITALS

Osborne Park and Wanneroo: Patients

629. Mr THOMPSON, to the Minister for Health:

Could he advise why patients wishing to be admitted to Osborne Park or Wanneroo Hospitals as private patients are in some cases being denied access to the hospitals under the care of a doctor of their choice?

Mr HODGE replied:

No, but if the member gives me details of any individual cases I will have the matter investigated.

HEALTH: HOSPITAL

Bentley: Salaried or Sessional Appointments

630. Mr THOMPSON, to the Minister for Health:

(1) Could he advise—

- (a) whether any requests have been received from the community in the Bentley area for the Government to introduce salaried-sessional appointments at that hospital;
- (b) whether he has received any expressions of concern about the Government's proposed introduction of salaried-sessional appointments at Bentley Hospital;
- (c) why the Government proposes to change the existing arrangements at Bentley Hospital?

(2) What will be the annual cost of providing a comprehensive out-of-hours service at Bentley Hospital under the salaried-sessional arrangements?

(3) What complaints have been received about the after-hours medical service presently being provided at Bentley Hospital?

(4) What is the annual cost of providing after-hours care for in-patients to Bentley Hospital under the existing fee for service arrangements?

(5) The Minister has been reported in the *Southern Gazette* as saying that "... less than 10 per cent of Bentley Hospital's patients now come from the Bentley postcode area." Does this mean that only 10 per cent of Bentley Hospital's patients now come from postcode area number 6102?

(6) Is it not a fact that approximately 80 per cent of patients admitted to Bentley Hospital are admitted under the care of a doctor from the area—not limited to the Bentley postcode area—and come from within the general area of Bentley Hospital—i.e. East Victoria Park, Bentley, Cloverdale, Welshpool, Cannington, Thornlie, Maddington, Como, Lynwood, Belmont, Victoria Park, Rivervale etc.?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) (a) It is the Government's long-term objective to have appointed medical staff on a salaried or sessional basis at all Government hospitals, and

this policy was made clear in our election undertakings;

- (b) yes;
- (c) see (a) above.
- (2) The total cost of fee-for-service payments at Bentley Hospital in 1983-84, including out-of-hours services, was \$606 800. A salaried-sessional arrangement, including out-of-hours services, would be expected to cost about the same amount.
- (3) The implementation of Government policy at Bentley Hospital is not as a reaction to complaints about after hours service for inpatients.
- (4) Separate financial statistics in respect of after hours medical services for public inpatients are not maintained. See also answer to (2).
- (5) Yes. However, the important point that was being made was, that of all the people from Bentley postcode—6102—who were hospitalised during 1983, less than 10 per cent were actually hospitalised at Bentley Hospital. In other words, 90 per cent of acute hospital workload generated by patients from the Bentley postcode were not accommodated at their local hospital.
- (6) No. The claims made in the question are not accurate. There is a gross distortion in the pattern of admissions to Bentley Hospital. Over 60 per cent of patients are admitted for surgical procedures whilst less than 4 per cent are medical type cases which must be referred for admission to other hospitals.

ABATTOIRS: LAMB

Export

631. Mr OLD, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Are any lamb carcasses taken from those originally designated for export sold on the local market after being broken down by the Western Australian Lamb Marketing Board to various cuts?
- (2) If "Yes", are these cuts strip branded before being distributed to retailers?
- (3) If "No" to (2), is the retailer liable to prosecution for selling unbranded lamb?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) Yes.

- (2) No. It is impractical to unwrap and strip brand the product as prepared for export.

- (3) Under the Marking of Lamb and Hogget Act the retailer is technically liable to prosecution by selling unbranded lamb as lamb. However, because of the practical problems associated with branding these carcasses and the small amount of product involved these provisions of the Act have not been enforced. Such carcasses are, however, branded with the "Australia Approved" lamb brand.

The Marking of Lamb and Hogget Act will be repealed when the recent amendment to the MIA Act is proclaimed. The MIA is currently investigating means of satisfactorily identifying export product re-directed to the domestic market.

PENSIONERS: INVALID

Travel

632. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Health:

What travel arrangements or concessions are made for invalid pensioners to travel from country towns to the city for specialist treatment and after treatment, on returning home?

Mr HODGE replied:

The Commonwealth Government provides travel assistance under the isolated patients' travel and accommodation assistance scheme (IPTAAS) to people who need to travel more than 200 kilometres from their home to obtain specialist medical treatment or specialist oral surgery.

For persons who do not qualify for assistance under IPTAAS, the State Government—through the Department for Community Welfare—provides assistance to pensioners and low income earners who cannot afford travel expenses involved in keeping medical appointments.

HEALTH: INSURANCE

Medicare: Bulk Billing

633. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) As I have had many inquiries regarding the addresses of doctors who bulk bill for

Medicare, how can such a list be obtained in order that members can advise their constituents?

- (2) Will he also advise whether he has considered following the New South Wales Government's example of allowing doctors who bulk bill to advertise this fact?
- (3) If not, why not?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) As Medicare is a scheme administered by the Commonwealth, this question should be addressed to the Federal Minister for Health.
- (2) and (3) The Medical Act is under review and consideration will be given to this aspect.

HEALTH: DRUGS

"Bong"

634. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is he aware that there is an instrument called a "bong" used in the smoking of illegal drugs?
- (2) Is he also aware that this instrument is freely available for purchase in shops in Western Australia without question?
- (3) If the answers to (1) and (2) are "Yes", why is the instrument not classified as illegal in the same way as the drugs for which it is designed are used?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) and (2) No.
- (3) The member may wish to refer this question to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

HEALTH: HOSPITAL

Pingelly

635. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What would be the total cost of establishing a salaried medical service associated with the Pingelly Hospital so that it provided a 24-hour, seven days of the week service at the hospital for all persons in the area to be provided with requisite medical services?
- (2) In particular, what would be the estimated cost of—
 - (a) salaries (medical);
 - (b) salaries (staff);
 - (c) other support requirements?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) No solo medical practice can or does provide a 24 hour service, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. The appointment of a salaried medical officer to the Pingelly Hospital would ensure that medical service would be available in a similar fashion to that provided by the present practice incumbent. After hours services would be provided by an on-call system. The total cost of such a full-time practitioner would approximate to \$65 800 per annum.
- (2) (a) The salary cost of the medical officer would depend upon the qualifications and experience of the appointee, but could be expected to be \$57 000 per annum.
- (b) There would not be any additional costs for non-medical staff.
- (c) The cost of providing a salaried medical officer with subsidised rental accommodation—\$2 300 per annum—and Government vehicle transportation—\$6 500 per annum—would amount to approximately \$8 800 per annum.

SOIL: SALINITY

Area Affected

636. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What is the estimated total area of salt-affected agricultural land in the State?
- (2) What is the estimated annual rate of growth?
- (3) What Government programmes are being carried out at present to deal with the problem?
- (4) What is the current budgeted allocation towards this item?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) In 1979 the estimated area of secondary salinity—i.e., man induced salinity—was 264 000 ha.

A survey was carried out by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in March 1984 to determine current area but results are not yet available.

- (2) Estimated growth rate 25 000 ha per annum.

- (3) and (4) Government programmes include—

CLEARING CONTROLS

Clearing controls enacted under the Country Areas Water Supply Act limit and control the clearing of natural vegetation on privately owned land in the Helena, Collic, Warren, Kent and Denmark Rivers. Landowners are compensated for loss of potential production from land affected by this legislation.

Clearing controls, compensation and reforestation programmes are carried out under the authority of the Minister for Water Resources.

NEW LAND RELEASE

No new land is being released for agriculture at present. Land release procedures are being reviewed so that potential land degradation problems, including salinity, can be better identified before land is released for agricultural development or any other type of land use.

SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Soil conservation districts are being encouraged as a means of focussing local attention and outside expertise on specific problems, including salinity. In several districts so far established one of the major concerns is salinity in the lower parts of the catchments. District committees are working on the development of overall catchment management programmes aimed at increasing water usage on the upper slopes in order to control salinity in the lower areas.

In 1983-84 \$125 000 was allocated specifically to assist with projects in soil conservation districts.

RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

An active programme of salinity research is being conducted by the Agriculture Department:—

Quantification of the hydrologic processes causing secondary salinity.

Salinity mapping by remote sensing (LANDSAT and airborne scanners).

Reduction of recharge by changing crop rotations.

Reduction of recharge by strategic tree planting.

The role of agroforestry in salinity control.

Drainage of saltland.

Aquifer pumping to reduce the level of saline groundwaters.

Revegetation of saline land using salt tolerant vegetation.

Grazing of salt tolerant shrubs and pastures.

The main thrust of the salinity research programme is aimed at developing a catchment management approach to salinity control which incorporates both engineering and biological control.

Budget allocation to salinity research in the Department of Agriculture in 1983-84 was \$872 251 inclusive of salaries and operating costs.

The Commonwealth Government has recently announced that \$610 000 will be made available to Western Australia in 1984-85 under the national soil conservation programme for additional research.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Wages Cut: Savings

637. Mr HASSELL, to the Treasurer:

- (1) What actual savings have been achieved by the 10 per cent pay cut imposed by the Government on members of Parliament, public servants, and judiciary officers?
- (2) How many exemptions to the cut have been granted?
- (3) Were any members of Parliament exempted?
- (4) Specifically were any Ministers of the Crown exempted?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) A precise calculation of the actual savings achieved, given the variable factors involved, is not available. However, indications are that savings in the order of \$10.7 million have been made.
- (2) 110.
- (3) No.
- (4) No.

638. *Postponed.*

The committee has given further investigation to this area of very high priority in its ongoing planning for this financial year.

COMMUNITY SERVICES: CHILDREN

Child Care Centre: Wanslea

639. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Community Services:

What level of priority for funding for a child care centre at Wanslea in Cottesloe has the child care advisory committee recommended to the office of child care?

Mr WILSON replied:

The child care planning committee concentrated its initial efforts in recommending the development of new children's services in the following order of priority.

- (1) Services requiring capital development—
 - (a) which required immediate services and which were likely to be operational in the forthcoming financial year,
 - (b) others of very high priority where further investigation was needed, or where it was possible that extension of existing services could meet the existing need without substantial capital expenditure,
 - (c) other areas of high priority where considerable further investigation was needed.
- (2) Extension of other services not requiring capital expenditure but helping to meet current needs.
- (3) Recommendations requiring establishment of further resources, structure or research facilities.

The committee recognises a very high need for child care services in many areas of the State. The area serviced by Wanslea is recognised by the committee as one of very high priority, but in which further investigation is required. In view of the limited funds available for the development of new services in the State and the lack of land immediately available for the development of a new service, the committee was not able to recommend capital expenditure for a new service this financial year.

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN

Staff: Overseas Travel

640. Mr HASSELL, to the Premier:

- (1) Since the present Government came to office, on how many occasions have ministerial advisers been sent on overseas trips at Government expense?
- (2) On how many occasions have ministerial advisers been accompanied on such trips by their wives?
- (3) What has been the total cost of such trips:
 - (a) in relation to ministerial advisers;
 - (b) in relation to the wives of ministerial advisers?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (3) The Government has adopted the same practice as its predecessor with respect to questions concerning ministerial travel.

This practice, outlined by the former Premier in answer to question 1043 of 1982, is, in part, as follows—

As considerable research will be required to extract and collate the information requested, I am not prepared to place any further demands on staff who are otherwise fully committed. However, should the member have any reason to believe that travel or other expenditure of an unauthorised or unnecessary nature has been undertaken, then he should let me have specific grounds for his beliefs and I shall have them investigated.

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN

Travel: Overseas

641. Mr HASSELL, to the Premier:

- (1) Since the present Government came to office, on how many occasions has a Minister been accompanied on an overseas trip at Government expense by his wife?
- (2) What has been the total cost of overseas travel by Ministers' wives at Government expense in the period referred to?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1) and (2) See reply to question 640.

MINERALS: IRON ORE

Consultative Council

642. Mr HASSELL, to the Premier:

Adverting to question No. 464 of 1984, can he now indicate the cost borne by the State Government for the iron ore industry consultative council launching?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

The cost presently identified is \$13 230.17, which represents 50 per cent of the overall cost in accordance with a cost sharing arrangement with the Commonwealth Government.

SUPERANNUATION

Voluntary Retirement Scheme

643. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister representing the Minister for Administrative Services:

(1) Further to my question 540 of 1984, and his written answers by letter dated 3 September 1984 and specifically in regard to item 5 of the 1984 scheme, will the Minister advise whether participants are entitled to use severance entitlements to purchase superannuation entitlements?

(2) Are they advised of this entitlement?

(3) What is the cost of purchasing 25 units?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1) Employees aged over 60 years who participate in the voluntary severance scheme are able to purchase up to 25 units of superannuation if they are not already contributors or have less than 25 units.

Application for the units must be made prior to termination of employment but participants may use severance payments to purchase the units of superannuation.

(2) Yes.

(3) Age next birthday

Cost
\$

61	2 086.76
62	2 769.26
63	4 127.76
64	8 118.76
65	8 255.26

ROAD

Mitchell Freeway: Extension

644. Mr HASSELL, to the Treasurer:

(1) Has he received or is he aware of a joint submission from the Wanneroo Shire Council and the Joondalup Development Corporation proposing that the Mitchell Freeway be extended to Joondalup Drive by 1988?

(2) Has the Government given consideration to these proposals and if so, what conclusions have been reached in regard to:

(a) the need for this section of the freeway by 1988;

(b) the proposed method of funding;

(c) alternative methods of meeting the proposed target date?

(3) If no conclusion has been reached will he indicate when a conclusion is expected?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) (a) to (c) The 5.25 km stage 4 extension of the Mitchell Freeway to Erindale Road will be opened to traffic on Friday, 21 September.

Stage 5 will extend this freeway a further 3.35 km to Warwick Road. Tenders have been called, closing on 16 October, 1984. Work is planned for completion in mid 1985.

Possible stages 6 and 7 would take the Mitchell Freeway to Hepburn Avenue—2.75 km—and Joondalup Drive—5 km—respectively.

While the need for these further works are appreciated, there is not an unlimited amount of money available for roadworks. Therefore, they need to be compared with other competing projects to ensure a reasonable balance is struck.

(3) Discussions have taken place with the Wanneroo Shire Council and the Joondalup Development Corporation and funding options are currently under review. I expect to be in a position shortly to make a response to the submission.

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

Marriage Guidance Council of WA (Inc.)

645. Mr THOMPSON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Budget Management:

- (1) Is it a fact that a recent request for financial support for the Marriage Guidance Council of Western Australia has been refused?
- (2) If so, will the Minister give the reasons for such refusal?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Marriage and family law are governed by Commonwealth legislation and the funding of marriage counselling is regarded as primarily a Commonwealth Government responsibility.

DEBORAH McCULLOCH

Fees and Expenses

646. Mr HASSELL, to the Premier:

- (1) Referring to the answer to question 459 on 15 August, what was the total amount paid to Deborah McCulloch as consultancy fees?
- (2) What was the total amount paid for air fares, accommodation, removal and other expenses?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) Deborah McCulloch's consultancy involved a total package covering fees, air fares, and accommodation expenses.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL

Swanbourne

647. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Education:

What level of priority has the proposed Swanbourne Senior High School hall-gymnasium been given?

Mr PEARCE replied:

Information concerning projects to be funded in the 1984-85 capital works programme will be given when the Budget is presented to Parliament.

GOVERNMENTS DEPARTMENTS AND INSTRUMENTALITIES

Accommodation: Geraldton

648. Mr MacKINNON, to the Treasurer:

What departments will be going into the proposed State Government Insurance building in Geraldton?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

At this stage the following departmental district offices are planned to be accommodated in the SGIO building to be constructed at Geraldton—

Department for Community Welfare;
Education Department;
Government Stores Department;
Health Department of WA;
Department of Industrial Affairs;
Department of Industrial Development;
Department of Lands and Surveys;
Police Department;
Public Works Department;
WA Tourism Commission; and,
Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN

Oath or Affirmation of Office

649. Mr MENSAROS, to the Premier:

- (1) Have Ministers of the Crown in his Government taken the same oath or affirmation as Ministers in previous Governments?
- (2) If so, how can he reconcile the result—if carried—of a reported resolution co-sponsored by himself, to his party's recent State conference for Australian Labor Party State executives to have a greater influence in choosing appointments to statutory bodies which is either the duty directly or indirectly of his Ministers?
- (3) Is it proposed that the said Australian Labor Party State executives involved in the resolution will be requested to take the same oath or affirmation to ensure appointments in the interests of the State instead of a political party?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) I am unaware as to the oaths taken by the Ministers of previous Governments.

- (2) Unlike the previous Government, the present Government consults widely with the community on matters of public importance.
- (3) See (2) above.

PLANNING: CANAL DEVELOPMENT

Dawesville: Commencement

650. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Works:

When is it proposed to commence and to complete the construction of the canal between Harvey Estuary and the ocean, the building of which was announced recently by the Government?

Mr McIVER replied:

The Government has decided to proceed with further detailed investigations concerning the feasibility of constructing a channel between the Harvey Estuary and the ocean.

The commencement of construction has not yet been approved and will depend on the successful outcome of this study and the satisfactory resolution of all environmental issues.

Should the project proceed it is envisaged that the construction period would be approximately two years.

PLANNING: CANAL DEVELOPMENT

Dawesville: Location

651. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Pertaining to the recently announced decision by the Government to cut a channel from the Harvey Estuary to the ocean, would he please inform the House and also table a map about the exact position of the proposed channel?
- (2) Would he also tell what freehold properties are concerned and which of these properties will be acquired by the Crown based on negotiated transfer of land settlement and which by resumption?

Mr McIVER replied:

- (1) As mentioned in my reply to question 650, the commencement of construction of the proposed channel from Harvey Estuary to the ocean has not yet been approved and is subject to further detailed

investigations in respect to its feasibility and environmental impact.

It is therefore not possible to indicate the exact position in which the channel will be constructed. Several possible sites for the channel are being investigated as shown on figures 1 and 2, which have been tabled.

- (2) There are 12 freehold properties involved in the investigation and at the appropriate time every effort will be made to purchase any property required by negotiation.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 21).

PLANNING: CANAL DEVELOPMENT

Dawesville: Contracts

652. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Works—

- (1) Will the proposed project to cut a channel connecting Harvey Estuary to the ocean be executed through:
 - (a) “turn-key” contract including the preparation of plans and specifications by contractors; or
 - (b) will it be done by contract based on plans, specifications and contract documents prepared by others than the contractors?

- (2) If (1)(b) is the case, who is going to prepare the necessary documents?

Mr McIVER replied:

- (1) (a) No;
- (b) Yes.
- (2) This will not be decided until the investigations are complete.

PLANNING: CANAL DEVELOPMENT

Dawesville: Retaining Walls

653. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Works:

What type and material for retaining walls are going to be constructed with the proposed channel connecting the Harvey Estuary with the Indian Ocean?

Mr McIVER replied:

Details such as this have not yet been resolved.

PLANNING: CANAL DEVELOPMENT

Dawesville: Siltation

654. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Works:

How is it proposed to prevent silting the ocean end of the proposed canal between Harvey Estuary and the Indian Ocean?

Mr McIVER replied:

This is an issue which is being considered as part of the current investigations.

PLANNING: CANAL DEVELOPMENT

Yunderup: Dredging

655. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Works:

Adverting to his reply to question 620 on 23 August 1984, would he please say whether any dredging is going to be executed at the entrance channel to Yunderup Canals as foreshadowed by him in answer to an earlier question last session?

Mr McIVER replied:

Recent soundings of the Yunderup channel indicate that by repositioning existing channel markers together with positioning additional markers, a channel of 15 metres width, and depth of one metre of water at summer low tides, can be achieved, without immediate dredging.

This maintains the channel access as agreed with the original developer.

The position will be kept under review.

656. *Postponed.*

PLANNING: CANAL DEVELOPMENT

Dawesville: ERMP

657. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for the Environment:

Will he ask for an environmental review and management programme giving full specifications and all required data such as marine biological chemical etc. in connection with the proposed canal between Harvey Estuary and the ocean?

Mr DAVIES replied:

Section 55 of the Environmental Protection Act provides for the referral of projects of this nature to me and for subsequent referral to the EPA.

The EPA would then give its advice to me as to whether an ERMP should be prepared. Because the present studies are at the feasibility stage only, there is at this time no proposal.

EDUCATION

Tertiary Institutions Governance Committee

658. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What are the terms of reference of the recently announced Hetherington committee inquiring into the structure and appointment of the Governing bodies of Western Australia's tertiary institutions?
- (2) Who are the members of the committee?
- (3) What time schedule has been given to the committee to make its inquiries and to report back to the Minister/Government?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) To examine the structure and constitution of the Senates of the University of Western Australia and Murdoch University, the councils of the Western Australian Institute of Technology and the Western Australian College of Advanced Education; to recommend changes, if appropriate, to these bodies to ensure that there is a proper level of representation of community, academic staff, non-academic staff and students.

To examine the extent to which the Senates and councils are able to effectively fulfil their role in the institutions for which they are responsible; the extent to which they are accountable to the community for the use of public funds and for the wider educational role of the institutions.

To recommend improved structures and processes, including amendments to the relevant Acts, if appropriate.

- (2) Hon. Bob Hetherington, MLC (Chairman)
Dr Bill Pullman
Ms Wendy Silver
Professor Peter Reeves
Mr Colin Lockhart
Mr Robert Hillman.
- (3) 31 January, 1985.

TRANSPORT: WESTRAIL*Employees: Katanning*

659. Mr OLD, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has a date been determined for the movement of Westrail employees from Katanning?
- (2) If so, what is the date?
- (3) What arrangements have been made for alternate employment for the more senior members of the Westrail staff in Katanning?
- (4) What range of options are available to employees who are surplus to requirements?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) and (2) Surplus Westrail employees will be moved from the town as operationally advantageous around 11 November 1984, when Katanning ceases to be a crew depot.
- (3) Some have elected to leave Westrail under the selective voluntary severance scheme. The remainder will continue employment within Westrail at other locations.
- (4) Relocation.

Retraining and relocation, for example as driver's assistant. Selective voluntary severance.

TRANSPORT: WESTRAIL*Employees: Katanning*

660. Mr OLD, to the Minister for Transport:

Were Westrail employees from Katanning given an assurance by him at an Australian Railway Union meeting that it would be approximately two years before any action to reduce staff in Katanning would take place?

Mr GRILL replied:

No. I have made it clear on a number of occasions that transfers could start to take effect late this year.

WATER RESOURCES*Country Towns Water Supply Improvement Programme*

661. Mr OLD, to the Minister representing the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) Is it envisaged that any further Commonwealth employment programme funds designated "country towns water

supply improvement programme" will be made available?

- (2) If so, when is the next allocation likely to be made?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) and (2) No; \$0.53 million has been allocated to Western Australia in 1984-85 for expenditure on the country towns water supply improvement component of CEP (COWSIP) to fund existing commitments approved during 1983-84, but there are no funds available for new project approvals.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING: CEP*Project No. WCW 001*

662. Mr OLD, to the Minister representing the Minister for Employment and Training:

Would the Minister please advise full particulars of project No. WCW001 under Commonwealth employment programme to Public Works Department, designated "upgrading of potable water supply facilities" and entailing a grant of \$100 477?

Mr PEARCE replied:

Approval was granted on 9 April, 1984 for a grant of \$100 477 to be provided to the Public Works Department for the upgrading of potable water supply facilities on Rottnest Island under the Country towns water supply improvement segment of CEP. The project is managed by the Rottnest Island Board. The project provided for the employment of eight persons for a period of 25 weeks. The first of the employees commenced on 27 April, 1984.

The project is proceeding satisfactorily and is due for completion at the end of October, 1984.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT: COOROW SHIRE COUNCIL*Ballot Papers*

663. Mr TRETOWAN, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Is he aware of concern expressed by one of the candidates on the method of transmission of some of the postal ballot papers for the coastal ward of the Coorow Shire during the local government elections last May?

- (2) Has any action been taken in this matter?
- (3) Will he ensure that provisions of the Local Government Act in regard to postal votes are adhered to during the by-election for the coastal ward of the Coorow Shire due to be held on 13 October?

Mr CARR replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes. The Chief Inspector of Municipalities began an investigation some time ago. He will visit the Shire of Coorow in the week beginning 24 September and will investigate the matter during his inspection.
- (3) The conduct of the extraordinary election is in the hands of the returning officer whose responsibility it is to ensure that the provisions of the Local Government Act are adhered to. Any concern about the conduct of an election may be taken to a Court of Disputed Returns, or brought to my attention for me to discharge any responsibilities that are appropriate.

FISHERIES

Swan-Canning Estuary

664. Mr TRETHOWAN, to the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

As the closing date for public, industry and local government submissions to the working group on future management options for the Swan-Canning estuary fishery was 14 months ago on 25 July 1983, how much longer will it take the working party to consider the submissions and finalise its report?

Mr EVANS replied:

The report is in its final draft stage. It will be presented to me shortly.

PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Tours

665. Mr MENSAROS, to the Speaker:

- (1) Is it a fact that he has allowed other than employed parliamentary staff to conduct tours of Parliament?
- (2) If so, has there been a precedent of this kind ever in the past?

The SPEAKER replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes. 150th celebrations of the Legislative Council in 1982.

ROTTNEST ISLAND

Land Resource Survey

666. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Who commissioned the Department of Agriculture land resource survey of Rottne Island bulletin 4086?
- (2) When was the report completed?
- (3) When was the report released?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) The Rottne Island Board requested a land resource survey of Rottne Island by the Department of Agriculture.
- (2) The report was sent to the printer in March 1984 and received back from the printer on 17 August 1984.
- (3) The report was released as bulletin 4086 on 21 August 1984.

HORTICULTURE

Cashews

667. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) With respect to the proposed development of the cashew nut industry on the Ord River by 20th Century Foods Pty Ltd. when was the first public announcement as to whom the successful applicants for the project were?
- (2) When were the applicants advised as to the outcome of their application?
- (3) Which company, or companies, will now proceed to develop the project?
- (4) Are any of the successful applicants involved in developing cashew nuts elsewhere in Australia or the world?
- (5) Were the Australian-based applicants encouraged to lodge a joint submission for the project?
- (6) If not, why not?
- (7) Was 20th Century Foods Pty Ltd. encouraged to lodge a joint submission with other parties?
- (8) If so, who encouraged 20th Century Foods to do so?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) 20 August, 1984.
- (2) Letters were dated 23 August, 1984.
- (3) 20th Century Foods Pty Ltd.
- (4) Yes.
- (5) No.
- (6) Only they could estimate whether it was in their interest to arrange a joint submission.
- (7) No.
- (8) See (7).

CHARITABLE ORGANISATION

Human Resources Foundation: CEP Grant

668. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) Has a community employment grant been paid to the Human Resources Foundation?
- (2) If so, for what purpose was the grant made?
- (3) When was the grant paid to the foundation?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) A CEP grant of \$94 324 was approved for the foundation on 2 March, 1984.
- (2) The grant was to enable the foundation to establish and run a one year self-help skills programme for 20 disabled persons.
- (3) An advance of grant funds of \$40 000 was paid to the sponsor on 6 June, 1984. The sponsor advised on 2 August, 1984 that it was unable to proceed with the project and returned unexpended grant funds of \$38 877.

TOURISM

Bungle Bungle: Working Party

669. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) When does he anticipate that the work of the working party reporting on management plans for the Bungle Bungle area will be completed?
- (2) Will the report be made public?
- (3) If not, why not?

Mr DAVIES replied:

- (1) It is anticipated that the working group will have completed its report to the EPA by the end of September.

- (2) Yes. The report will be made available for a four-week public comment period, before being considered by the EPA.

- (3) Answered by (2).

EDUCATION

Four-term School Year

670. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What is the closing date for submissions on the proposal for a four-term school year?
- (2) Who will review these submissions?
- (3) When will a decision be made on whether or not this proposal will be implemented?
- (4) Can he detail for me the relative number of weeks which will be allocated to each term under such a proposal?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) 30 November, 1984.
- (2) The Minister for Education.
- (3) No decision will be made until there has been full and proper consultation with all the parties affected.
- (4) The length of each proposed term has yet to be determined.

WASTE DISPOSAL: LIQUID

Canning Vale

671. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What action is the Public Health Department taking to seek alternative sites to Canning Vale for liquid waste disposal?
- (2) Where are the sites to which the more offensive materials, which were being disposed of at Canning Vale, are now being diverted for disposal?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) This matter has been investigated by consultants; trials on alternative methods are being conducted and a design for upgrading of the Canning Vale site is being studied.
- (2) Canning, Gosnells, Cockburn and some other sites where the material can be immediately buried so as to avoid nuisance.

EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOL

Burrendah

672. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Has work yet begun on the improvements to the withdrawal area at Burrendah Primary School, the funding for which was approved under the minor works programme in August 1983?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) When is it anticipated the work will commence?

Mr McIVER replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) and (3) Not applicable.

EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Computers: Subsidies

673. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Education:

What amount of funds was allocated to provide primary schools with a subsidy to purchase computing equipment during the financial year 1982-83?

Mr PEARCE replied:

\$40 000.

ENVIRONMENT

Peel Inlet: Algae

674. Mr MacKINNON, to the Premier:

- (1) Who gave the Government advice that the algae problem in the Peel Inlet would become much worse with even moderate rains in the next few years, assuming no changes were made to current management plans in the inlet and its tributaries?
- (2) Will he table that advice?
- (3) If not, why not?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (3) The advice has been provided by the Peel Inlet study group over a considerable period of time as the intensive study has progressed. Advice has been given by way of briefings to Government, and the ongoing results have been published in a series of reports, pamphlets and newsletters which are publicly available.

PLANNING: CANAL DEVELOPMENT

Dawesville: Location

675. Mr MacKINNON, to the Premier:

- (1) Will he table a map showing the proposed route or routes that the proposed channel between the Peel Inlet and the Indian Ocean will take?
- (2) If not, why not?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) Two alternative channel alignments are under investigation and maps of these are tabled. Studies which are under way in the area will decide the final preferred channel route.

Copies of these maps were given to the affected Dawesville landowners when I met with them on Saturday, 8 September.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 121).

GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

"WA Government Notes": Cost

676. Mr MacKINNON, to the Premier:

- (1) What has been the total cost to date of publishing and distributing *WA Government Notes*?
- (2) How many subscriptions have been received for the notes?
- (3) How many of those subscriptions are from Government and departments or statutory authorities?
- (4) When will the free distribution of those notes cease?
- (5) Will anyone still receive free copies after this date?
- (6) If so, who?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) The total cost of printing to date is not known as not all accounts have been received.
- (2) 179.
- (3) to (6) Free copies are distributed to Government departments, statutory authorities, organisations, tertiary education institutions and public libraries.

PARLIAMENT WEEK

Political Parties: Letters

677. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform:

- (1) Were letters sent to Australian Labor Party branches by the Government encouraging them to become involved in Parliament Week?
- (2) Were letters sent to Liberal Party branches encouraging them to become involved in Parliament Week?

Mr TONKIN replied:

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

HOUSING: SHC

Staff: Flexitime

678. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Housing:

Did the General Manager of the State Housing Commission consult with him prior to the decision he made to withdraw flexitime arrangements for State Housing Commission staff?

Mr WILSON replied:

The general manager advised me as a matter of courtesy of his decision to modify—not withdraw—flexitime arrangements in the interest of optimising staff resources to better serve the public.

HOUSING

Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement

679. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Housing:

Which areas of the new Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement disturb the Minister?

Mr WILSON replied:

The Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement has been the subject of considerable discussion between the States and the Commonwealth. The resulting consensus agreement gives a new direction to public housing. With this agreement we have moved away from the concept of welfare housing, which had the effect of stigmatising tenants and exacerbating resultant social problems.

During the course of negotiations, I expressed concern about the proposals

for introducing a system of cost rents, and a system of recouping subsidies offered under the home purchase assistance scheme. However, the States were able to negotiate the final form of the agreement to provide for maximum flexibility in respect of the conditions for implementing these proposals.

TRANSPORT: WESTRAIL

Staff: Narrogin and Wagin

680. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Transport:

With regard to the proposed reduction of Westrail staff in Narrogin and Wagin—

- (a) has any final decision been made regarding the actual reduction in staff numbers;
- (b) what are the actual reductions in jobs, by category;
- (c) has any final timetable been determined for staff reductions to become effective;
- (d) have interviews been conducted with personnel whose employment will be affected; and
- (e) if “yes” to (d), how many staff have chosen to:
 - (i) accept relocation;
 - (ii) accept early retirement?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (a) No;
- (b) actual reductions by job category are currently being calculated. I shall be pleased to let the member have this information when it is available;
- (c) no;
- (d) some discussions have taken place and follow up interviews are expected to commence shortly;
- (e) not applicable.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

Powers

681. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister representing the Attorney-General:

- (1) Is it proposed to increase the powers of justices of the peace in dealing with minor offences?
- (2) Did the Government previously limit the powers of justices of the peace by reduc-

ing the level of penalty which they could determine?

(3) What alteration is now proposed?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) The Law Reform Commission recently issued a discussion paper on Courts of Petty Sessions which, *inter alia*, sought public comment on the powers of justices of the peace. The Government will wait on the Commission's final report before determining its position.
- (2) No. The Justices Act establishes the powers of justices. Under the Act justices have the same power as stipendiary magistrates, except in Family Court matters able to be dealt with in courts of summary jurisdiction.
- (3) See (1).

TRANSPORT: FREIGHT

Grain: Report

682. Mr WATT, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) As he has personally advised me and others that if it could be demonstrated that a substantial number of people stood to be disadvantaged by a grain freights steering committee proposal to transfer seven grain bins in the Albany region, currently served by road, to rail, then in that event he would intervene, would he please advise if he has yet received the report requested from the Co-ordinator General of Transport?
- (2) If so, what are its findings?
- (3) In what way would he be prepared to intervene if the claimed disadvantage is demonstrated?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) and (2) I received the Co-ordinator General of Transport's report a few days ago. It will be released to the public after appropriate consultations with executives involved in the production, storage and transport of the State's grain harvest. These are in progress and should be completed this week.
- (3) The member, as a supporter of efforts to make Westrail an efficient, viable and commercial transporter, will be aware that no Government can lightly embark on any intervention in Westrail's proper market negotiations with its clients. Nevertheless, I repeat my firm assurance

that I will not allow any proven and unacceptably great side-effects of the proposed freight rates agreement to go unchecked.

683. *Postponed.*

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Secondary Mortgage Market

684. Mr COURT, to the Premier:

Will the Government support the establishment of a secondary mortgage market in Western Australia by the private sector?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

The Government would support the establishment of a secondary mortgage market in Western Australia as part of a national scheme.

TECHNOLOGY: INFORMATION

Strategy

685. Mr COURT, to the Minister for Technology:

- (1) Has the Government tendered for consultants to assist in the formulation of an information strategy for Western Australia?
- (2) If "Yes", has the Government put a time frame on having this strategy completed?
- (3) Does the Government employ any advisers whose responsibility it is to oversee such a strategy?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) No. The Government has sought expressions of interest to assist in the formulation of an information technology strategy for Western Australia. A locally-based firm of consultants has been selected to proceed with the development of this strategy.
- (2) There is an agreed completion date for the information technology strategy. A draft document will be available for public comment in December of this year.
- (3) No. The Government employs a full-time consultant in the Technology directorate who will oversee the information technology strategy. A SITCO working party on information technology

will act as steering committee throughout the project.

ALUMINIUM SMELTER

Investment: Western Australia

686. Mr COURT, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

(1) Will the level of Western Australian content on the new south-west smelter be less than that achieved on other major Western Australian projects over the past 10 years?

(2) If "Yes", by how much?

Mr PARKER replied:

(1) and (2) The proposed aluminium smelter will be constructed under an agreement Act with similar local content provisions to those that have applied to previous resource projects.

It is expected the Western Australian content should be in the same order as achieved on recent projects.

DEFENCE: SUBMARINES

Designers

687. Mr COURT, to the Minister for Defence Liaison:

When the Federal Government issues a short list of two designers for the new submarines, will the Government provide financial assistance to the Western Australian group to prepare further submissions?

Mr BRYCE replied:

The Federal Government is still evaluating submissions by overseas contenders.

The Government will take whatever action it considers appropriate to ensure that the Western Australian group has the maximum level of support on this vital project.

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN

Staff: Screening

688. Mr COURT, to the Minister for Health:

With the Government's plan to screen all general practitioners before allowing them to work in public hospitals, as public funds are involved, is the Government considering screening Government advisers under a similar system?

Mr HODGE replied:

Any Government advisers applying for positions as medical practitioners in Government hospitals will be subject to the same screening by the appointments committee of the hospital.

ALUMINIUM SMELTER

Investment: State Superannuation Fund

689. Mr COURT, to the Premier:

(1) Will the State superannuation fund be asked to invest in the new south-west aluminium smelter?

(2) If "Yes", what percentage equity would it take?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1) and (2) The possibility of the State investing in the south-west aluminium smelter by taking an equity position is the subject of current analysis.

No investment decision has been made.

TAXES AND CHARGES

Lowering: Government Land Sales

690. Mr COURT, to the Premier:

(1) Will the Government use funds raised from selling Government land inventory, such as the Perth Technical College block in St. George's Terrace, to lower Government taxes and charges?

(2) If "No", will the Government use the funds received to increase Government spending on the provision of services?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1) and (2) The proceeds from any sales will be utilised having regard to both community demands for essential services and the need to hold down the level of Government taxes and charges.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Prices and Incomes Accord

691. Mr COURT, to the Premier:

Is the prices and incomes accord improving employment opportunities in Western Australia and resulting in higher living standards?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

Yes. The member should note that the purpose of the prices and incomes accord

is to facilitate growth in employment, reduction in unemployment and reduction in the rate of inflation through measures and arrangements between all levels of Government and the community. The achievement of this in Western Australia is reflected in State Government initiatives formulated in the context of the Prices and Incomes Accord.

It is pleasing to note—

- (i) In Western Australia since February 1983, employment has grown at a rate of 4.3 per cent—24 500 persons—compared to employment growth for Australia as a whole of 3.1 per cent. In addition to this, Western Australia had for the same period, a labour force growth rate of 2.5 per cent compared to a national average of 0.7 per cent;
- (ii) despite very high labour force growth in Western Australia, the Western Australian unemployment rate has fallen for the year to the end of August 1984, from 9.8 per cent to 8.9 per cent;
- (iii) for the 1983-84 financial year the Consumer Price Index increased by 6.9 per cent for both Perth and the eight Australian capital cities average compared to a 10.2 per cent and 11.5 per cent increase, respectively, for 1982-83.
- (iv) During the last 19 months, money wage growth has slowed with money wage increases, in the main, being tied to average prices changes.

TAXES AND CHARGES

Resource Rental Tax

692. Mr COURT, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) Has the new resource rental tax—RRT—been responsible for the decline in offshore exploration in Australian waters?
- (2) Will this decline in exploration affect the operations of the new offshore support vessel "Blue Nabilla" in Australian waters?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.

HEALTH: HOSPITAL

Armadale-Kelmscott Memorial

693. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is it intended that doctors are to be contracted to service, on a sessional basis or fee, the Armadale-Kelmscott District Hospital?
- (2) If "Yes", will the terms and conditions be similar to those applying at Wanneroo, Osborne Park and Bentley Hospitals?
- (3) If "Yes" to (1), when will the sessional service be introduced?
- (4) If "No" to (2), what will be the conditions and terms?
- (5) If "No" to (2), is it intended to continue to service the Armadale-Kelmscott District Hospital as at present for at least another two years?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) to (5) It is the Government's long-term objective to have an appointed medical staff on a salaried or sessional basis in all Government hospitals. Salaries and conditions of service have recently been arbitrated between the AMA and the Government for both general practitioners and specialists at two non-teaching hospitals i.e. Osborne Park and Wanneroo. The same arbitrated salaries and conditions will apply at other hospitals.

PASTORAL INDUSTRY: LEASE

Mt. Anderson: Transfer

694. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Lands and Surveys:

- (1) What financial arrangements have been agreed for the transfer of Mt. Anderson Station?
- (2) What conditions are to apply for the transfer of Mt. Anderson Station?
- (3) What compensation has been paid to Mr Blair of Serpentine for the Government negotiating the transfer of Mt. Anderson Station to him on his winning the tender for the station?

Mr McIVER replied:

- (1) A purchase price has been agreed between the vendor and the transferee in respect of the transfer of the pastoral lease.
- (2) The lessee company will be expected to comply with the normal pastoral leasing conditions as prescribed under part VI of the Land Act 1933.
- (3) Negotiations for the payment of Mr and Mrs Blair's costs are still in course.

MOTOR VEHICLES

Drivers' Licences: Alcoholics

695. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Under what authority is a person, who is convicted and loses his driver's licence for driving under the influence of alcohol, required to produce a medical certificate that he is not an alcoholic before he will have issued to him a renewed driver's licence?
- (2) Will he please table the law or regulation that requires a medical certificate that a person is not an alcoholic before a renewal driver's licence will be issued?

Mr CARR replied:

- (1) and (2) Section 48(1)(b) and (2) of the Road Traffic Act. Copy of relevant legislation attached.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 145).

HEALTH: DEPARTMENT

Principal Social Worker

696. Dr DADOUR, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has an appointment been made in the Health Department of Western Australia of a person who graduated in social work in April 1980 to the position of Principal Social Worker on \$41 673 per annum?
- (2) Did the advertisement dated Saturday, 9 June 1984 in *The West Australian*, specify at least eight years' experience, and therefore deter other applicants?
- (3) Did the Australian Association of Social Workers write to him complaining about the composition of the interviewing panel that selected and recommended this appointment?

(4) Did he reply to them that he would not take any action to hold other interviews?

(5) Was the successful applicant previously a ministerial appointment?

(6) (a) Can he ascertain whether sexist remarks were made by one of the interviewing panel;

(b) If "Yes", what action does he intend to take?

Mr HODGE replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) I am advised that the advertisement inserted by the Public Service Board did contain such a specification.

(3) Yes.

(4) Yes. Selection panels for Public Service items recommend to the Public Service Board, not to the Minister.

(5) Not in the Health Portfolio.

(6) (a) and (b) Allegations of this nature were received and were referred to the Commissioner of Health who had discussions with the officer concerned and received assurances that there would be no recurrences.

HEALTH

Community Health Service

697. Dr DADOUR, to the Minister for Health:

(1) What is the reason for maintaining the difference in rates for nurses performing the same level of work in the community health service?

(2) Is anything being done to redress the difference?

Mr HODGE replied:

(1) Nurses employed within the community nursing services branch of the Health Department are paid in accordance with award rates under the nurses (public health and industrial) award; and nurses (infant and pre-school health) award.

(2) Negotiations are taking place with the Royal Australian Nursing Federation in respect to the wages and conditions of service for these nurses.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN

Staff: Overseas Travel

188. Mr HASSELL to the Premier:

I refer to the answers that he gave me today to questions 640 and 641 which dealt respectively with overseas travel by ministerial advisers and their wives and overseas travel by Ministers and their wives. I point out to the Premier that he told me he is following the practice adopted by the Government's predecessor with respect to questions concerning ministerial travel. I understand that practice, and I accept it. However, I ask the Premier whether he does not see a clear distinction between questions about ministerial travel and questions about overseas travel by ministerial advisers and their wives and whether, in view of that distinction, he would reconsider his answer to a question about ministerial advisers and their wives and their overseas travel.

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

May I say, firstly, that it is very pleasant to be back enjoying the company of everyone. I thank members of the Opposition for their solicitations about my health. They will be pleased to know that I am fighting fit.

In keeping with the attitude of this Government towards matters raised in such a conciliatory and accommodating way as that adopted today by the Leader of the Opposition, I am perfectly happy to inform him I will consider his request and take into account the points that he made in respect of ministerial advisers and their wives, and any other relations, etc. However, I underline the point that was attempted to be made in the reply given to the Leader of the Opposition. That point was made repeatedly by a former Premier, Sir Charles Court.

If members have a specific case that is causing them concern, and if they proffer the details of that case or refer to it in the broadest general terms, we will do our best to provide the information sought. However, as Sir Charles Court was wont to say, it is not the Government's job to embark upon wild-goose chases on behalf of the Opposition; it is not the Government's job to assist the

Opposition in the matter of fishing expeditions. We do not propose to divert from Sir Charles Court's practice in respect of wild-goose chases and fishing expeditions.

However, I will have another look at the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition, and in the meantime, if he has something of pressing urgency worrying him, if he whispers into my ear outside the Chamber or yells into it inside the Chamber, that specific instance will be attended to immediately.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Perth Mint: Role

189. Mrs BUCHANAN to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

Can he outline the role of the Western Australian Development Corporation in relation to the Government's plans to expand and upgrade operations at the Perth Mint?

Mr PARKER replied:

As the Premier has previously stated in Parliament, the State Government has received a number of various submissions regarding the future of the Perth Mint. These submissions have included proposals for a direct sale of the Perth Mint, a joint venture with the State Government, as owner of the Mint, and an offer to conduct a study into the feasibility of a joint venture.

However, in view of the importance of the independence and integrity of the Perth Mint and its acceptability to the gold mining industry, as well as its historical and architectural value, the Government does not intend to sell the Mint. Rather, our aim is to develop the full marketing potential of this important State asset.

The current strong growth in the gold mining industry, and the recent advances in processing and refining technology, provide an opportunity to reassess the future of the Perth Mint, and more broadly, the role of Perth in the Australian and international gold market. For example, the geographical location of Perth provides a number of favourable opportunities. Perth is the capital city to which the majority of gold

producers look for infrastructure services and, in my view, should be developed to accommodate production from new mines such as Kidston in Queensland as well as potential dump treatment plants. Perth also enjoys trading hours which readily coincide with those of Hong Kong and Singapore.

With this in mind, the Government has decided upon a course designed to improve the market position of gold refined at the Mint, subject to retaining the integrity of the Perth Mint, and it has invited the WADC to participate in this area. Specifically, the Government has appointed the WADC as manager of a proposed tender arrangement in which qualified parties would submit proposals to enter into a joint venture with the Perth Mint.

The WADC will call for tenders from a list of organisations that have already declared an interest in the development of the Perth Mint and others which have the necessary reputation and independence. The WADC has been requested to evaluate such submissions and make recommendations to me.

At this stage, however, it is pertinent to stress that the Mint's refining operations are outside the scope of the tender. The Mint's "core" asset is its integrity and any new marketing arrangements will be built upon this base.

COMMUNICATIONS: TELEVISION

Licence: Applicants

190. Mr MacKINNON to the Premier:

- (1) Has the Government supported any of the applicants for the third commercial television licence in Perth?
- (2) If so, which of the applicants has it supported?
- (3) Is the Government directly or through any Government agency seeking to share the ownership of that licence?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) The Government is approached, from time to time, by people seeking support for their positions in respect of different matters, such as the use of the satellite and the way in which its use might best benefit the State. I know that the Government has provided general letters of support for the laudatory aims

of almost all of the applicants. I have no knowledge and no recollection of ever supplying any letter of support for the applicants for the third television licence. I am not sure whether that applies to any of the Ministers who might have been approached. However, I am prepared to have the matter looked at and I will let the member know of the results of that investigation in due course. To the best of my recollection no letter of support has been issued to anyone in respect of the third television licence who is opposed to those people who are interested in using the satellite that will be propelled to circle overhead.

- (3) No, the Government is not seeking to share in any application or any licence that might be issued as a result of any application. The Government believes that it would be unwise for Governments to become involved in licences to be issued to applicants for the third television station. In general terms, it would not support the involvement of any of its agencies in that television licence, whether it be the Western Australian Development Corporation or some other agency.

MOTIONS: URGENCY

Agreement

191. Mr GORDON HILL, to the Leader of the House:

Would the Leader of the House please advise the House as to what agreements were entered into with the Opposition in respect of urgency motions following discussions between him and the Opposition?

Mr TONKIN replied:

I was most concerned at the debate which took place in this House on 22 August 1984 in which I made the following comment in relation to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—

He and I have agreed—and I have received no contradiction from the Opposition to indicate that he has not been backed up—that there should be an urgency motion once a week.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition interjected and said, "No way." That in-

terjection appears at page 1092 of *Hansard*. A few moments later, I said—

... the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked if we could have an urgency motion once a week. I agreed to that request.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition again interjected and said—

There was no agreement whatever that urgency motions would be restricted to one a week.

That appears at page 1093 of *Hansard*. With your permission, Mr Speaker, I will table, for the remainder of today's sitting, a letter from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr MacKinnon, dated 29 March 1984 which states, *inter alia*—

Urgency Motions. In relation to Urgency Motions we would ask that consideration be given for an urgency motion to be considered each week and for a one hour time limit to be imposed on such a motion. Bearing in mind the limited time already available for private members we would ask that this one hour not come from the time currently allocated to deal with private members' business.

Alongside that paragraph members will see that I have written "total?" That referred to the matter of an hour for the speakers from all sides of the House. As a result of a subsequent meeting I wrote the word, "yes". I also wrote the word "agreed" alongside the words relating to the time not being taken from private members' time.

Members will see from that letter why I was concerned in that debate to hear that we had promised the Opposition two urgency motions a week. My recollection is quite clear: We had agreed to one urgency motion a week and that is supported by the letter from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

The letter was tabled for the information of members.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mini-steel Mill: Queensland

192. Mr HASSELL, to the Deputy Premier:

- (1) Is the Deputy Premier aware that Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd. is to

establish a new mini-steel mill in Queensland?

- (2) Further, is he aware that the mini-steel mill will commence operation as a rolling mill and then later be further developed?
- (3) Is he concerned that its development is to take place while the BHP facility at Kwinana remains idle?
- (4) Has the Deputy Premier investigated the matter?
- (5) Has he entered into negotiations with any of the parties concerned? He is probably aware that there has been considerable controversy between New South Wales and Queensland about this matter.

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) to (5) To be perfectly in order, I think it would be reasonable for me to point out to the Leader of the Opposition that that question is clearly a responsibility of the Minister for Minerals and Energy. If the Leader of the Opposition places his question on notice, I am sure the Minister would be happy to respond.

TRANSPORT: SCHOOL BUSES

Contracts: Profitability

193. Mrs HENDERSON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has the Minister seen an advertisement that appeared in *The Sunday Times* offering for sale for the sum of \$80 000, a new bus contract which currently earns a net income of \$33 127 per annum for the present owner of the contract?
- (2) Does the advertisement provide the Minister with confirmation that high levels of profitability will be preserved for contractors operating under the new bus contract system?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) and (2) I am pleased to confirm for the member that I did see the advertisement, which appeared in the "Readers Mart" section of the *The Sunday Times* which some people would say is the best section of that newspaper. I happened to see it only because I looked at the boating section to see how the member for

Nedlands was going. I keep a paternal eye on the member. The following advertisement appeared in the newspaper—

**SCHOOL BUS
CONTRACT**

GROSS \$41,847 PA
NETT \$33,127 PA

Operates CLOSE TO MIDLAND
worth 3 YEAR CONTRACT as
from FEB. 1985. Also includes
small charter work.

PRICE \$80,000 INC
1978 Bedford Bus
PH MIKE PAPADOPOFF
322 1648 A/H 291 6050

Arc Realty Pty Ltd

I am advised that the maximum value of the Bedford bus would be between \$30 000 and \$40 000, which indicates a profitability which seems to me to be almost the yearly salary of a member of Parliament. The operator is seeking between \$40 000 and \$50 000 for the Government contract. He is seeking that in the light of all that is going on. I find it very difficult to accept arguments which are occasionally put to me that there is no profitability in this industry under the new arrangements.

When I meet with the Road Transport Association I shall ask it to explain how the proposals that it has put to me accord with this kind of advertisement from one of its members.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mini-steel Mill: Queensland

194. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy.

- (1) Is the Minister aware that Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd. is to establish a new mini-steel mill in Queensland?
- (2) Further, is he aware that the mini-steel mill will commence operation as a rolling mill and then later be further developed?
- (3) Is he concerned that its development is to take place while the BHP facility at Kwinana remains idle?
- (4) Has he investigated the matter?
- (5) Has he entered into negotiations with any of the parties concerned? He is probably aware that there has been considerable controversy between New South Wales and Queensland about this matter.

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) to (5) The Leader of the Opposition is not quite right when he says that BHP is proposing to construct a mini-mill in Queensland. I am aware there have been considerable discussions about the possibility of constructing a mini-mill, or several mini-mills, in Queensland. Certainly, the Queensland Government has exhibited in great force its desire for a mini-mill to be constructed. A mini-mill, as being discussed, uses scrap steel or iron, which is processed and rerolled for the local market. It usually has a fairly low volume of production and requires a number of components, including access to sufficient volumes of readily available scrap in a reasonably close market. It appears that the Queensland Government has had very little success in attracting anyone to build a mini-mill.

From time to time certain entrepreneurs have suggested the construction of a mini-mill; one suggestion involved back-to-back construction with a mini-mill in Western Australia to process coal from Queensland and a mini-mill in Queensland to process ore from Western Australia. This is rather surprising because ore is not used in mini-mills. However, putting that aside, BHP has not agreed to construct a mini-mill in Queensland. It has agreed to construct a steel rolling facility which is, in fact, very similar to the facility already existing and operating in Kwinana. I have had discussions with Brian Loton, managing director of BHP, and it appears that this plant will employ around 70 people. There are no intentions at BHP to upgrade it in any way; it is simply a rerolling facility.

Mr Hassell: The announcement I heard was that it was part of a very firm plan and the New South Wales Government was concerned.

Mr PARKER: After discussions with Mr Loton and other senior officers of BHP, the Premier of New South Wales has indicated that he has no opposition to, or concern about, the proposed rerolling facility. It is identical, although possibly more modern, to the plant which has been operating for many years at Kwinana, which is continuing to operate at Kwinana, and it will employ 70 people.

DRAINAGE, SEWERAGE, AND WATER RESOURCES

Pearce Air Force Base

195. Mr TROY, to the Minister for Water Resources:

Would the Minister advise the House whether he is prepared to co-ordinate efforts between the Swan Shire Council, the Federal Government and the various State authorities responsible, so that sewerage, drainage and water supply difficulties in areas adjacent to the Pearce Air Force base are addressed?

Mr TONKIN replied:

The Public Works Department has already provided the Swan Shire Council with detailed advice on sewerage and water supply matters. However, provision of these facilities has not proceeded, partly because town planning for the area has not yet been finalised by the shire council and the Town Planning Board. In the circumstances, it would be inappropriate for me to undertake a co-ordinating role until such time as town planning has been finalised and a clear need for the facilities is established.

However, I do recognise the need for co-ordination between the national, State and local governments, and I undertake to provide that co-ordination when the information is available.

HEALTH: HOSPITAL

Bentley: Salaried or Sessional Appointments

196. Mr WILLIAMS, to the Minister for Health:

Some notice of this question has been given to the Minister. Could the Minister please advise—

- (1) How many doctors have applied for salaried sessional service at the Bentley Hospital, and of those—
 - (a) how many are general practitioners;
 - (b) how many are specialists;
 - (c) what type of specialists have applied?
- (2) How many of the doctors who have applied normally use the Bentley Hospital?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) and (2) The member for Clontarf did give me some brief notice of the ques-

tion. However, I have not had an opportunity to get out of the Chamber to contact my department since he gave me notice.

I will obtain the information from my department and I will write to the member and provide the information he has asked for.

ROTTNEST ISLAND

Development Plans: Environmental Study

197. Mr BARNETT, to the Premier:

- (1) Is he aware of comments made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on the "Nationwide" programme on 6 September regarding Rottneest Island?
- (2) Did the Deputy Leader of the Opposition attack the Rottneest Island Board for commissioning a developing plan for the island without proper environmental study?
- (3) Did he also refer to a Department of Agriculture report about Rottneest Island, pointing to references in the report about high-risk development areas at Longreach and Geordie Bays?
- (4) What is the history of the Longreach and Geordie Bays developments and the environmental consequences of those developments?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (4) I am aware of the interview to which the member refers and I must say I was surprised by the comments of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. They appear to be a renewal of his repeated attacks on his colleagues on that side of the House over their handling of Rottneest Island matters.

The development projects at Longreach and Geordie Bays commenced under the previous Government and without any environmental study.

Mr MacKinnon: What has that to do with the interim report?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: It has a lot to do with the credibility of critics of the Government's actions when, as I will explain in a moment, environmental and land management studies, which were ignored when the Liberal Government proceeded to build the settlements at Longreach and Geordie Bays, are being done by this Government.

It has to do with the credibility of members of Parliament who will stand and say anything when it suits them, conveniently forgetting what happened when they were on this side of the House. They were prepared to create environmentally difficult developments without any prior study.

The development at Longreach Bay commenced in November 1978. The Chairman of the Rottneest Island Board at the time was K. A. Ridge, former Liberal member for Kimberley.

The development at Longreach and Geordie Bays was of poor design and quality and has brought with it serious environmental problems. The previous Government did not conduct any land use or environmental studies into the planning and impact of the development projects at Longreach and Geordie Bays.

The results of such neglect by the previous Government are self-evident. This Government is determined that the disgraceful situation will not be repeated. The Rottneest Island management planning group—under the leadership of Dr Robert Humphries—is in the process of carrying out a detailed study of the island, to include—

- (i) land management issues;
- (ii) management of vegetation;
- (iii) management of wildlife;
- (iv) management of water resources and aquatic habitats;
- (v) marine management; and,
- (vi) land use and services.

This independent group of professionals will provide a proper basis upon which any future development of the island may be properly assessed.

In this manner, the Government and the Rottneest Island Board aim to ensure that the mistakes of the past for which the Governments of which the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was a member were responsible, are not repeated.

Let me underline the point that we have before us a test of the credibility of people who will say, before anything apart from the production of an interim report, that this Government is guilty of environmental neglect while those people on the other side, were responsible not for the production of an interim report;

that is, for not doing anything to which we might plead guilty. However, while we are in that position, those people making the criticism are in the position of having created the environmental hazards associated with Geordie and Longreach Bays without one inch of print being produced that reads anything like an environmental study relating to that development. Now, when out of Government, it is saying, "Look at the disgrace created at Longreach and Geordie Bays!"

Mr MacKinnon: Who mentioned Longreach and Geordie Bays?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition mentioned Longreach and Geordie Bays.

Mr MacKinnon: I did not mention them.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition cannot remember what he said last week.

Mr MacKinnon: You bet I can. If you get the transcript and read it, you will see that I referred to Thomson Bay. You know what I referred to.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition was a member of a Government which did not bother to carry out any environmental or land management study before the developments at Longreach and Geordie Bays were commenced and completed. We have now detailed the most comprehensive studies that will take place before we do anything. The interim report is only a piece of paper.

Mr Court: It is a big piece of paper.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: It is a big piece of paper. The member for Nedlands beggars belief! He makes the point that it is a big piece of paper. I plead guilty to the offence of having prepared information which appears on a big piece of paper. But members opposite stand guilty of having created the Geordie Bay and Longreach Bay settlements which are an environmental disgrace. They stand guilty of failing to produce a big, or even little, piece of paper in respect of those settlements. The member for Nedlands stands guilty of being a member of a party which, when in Government, created the Longreach Bay and Geordie Bay settlements without doing an ounce of environmental work prior to doing so.

Mr Clarko: Did anything happen at Rottneest when the Tonkin Government was in power?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am informed that, when he appeared on television, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to the report of the Agriculture Department and references about the high-risk development areas such as Longreach and Geordie Bays. If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition says he did not refer to that report and those references, I shall accept his word; but I will not accept that he has the credibility to criticise a Government which has embarked on some of the most comprehensive environmental and land management studies ever undertaken by a Government when he was a member of a party which, when in Government, created the Longreach Bay and Geordie Bay settlements without doing any environmental work whatsoever.

STATE ENGINEERING WORKS

PA Consulting Services: Report

198. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Works:

Would he please enlighten me as to how PA Consulting Services was commissioned to prepare a report on the State Engineering Works, particularly—

- (a) has it received written terms of reference from the Government or only verbal instructions;
- (b) in either case what were the terms of reference or instructions;
- (c) was the "suggested term of reference for consultants" as contained in appendix "A" of the report originated by the consultants?

Mr McIVER replied:

I thank the member for adequate notice of the question, the reply to which is as follows—

- (a) to (c) In May 1983 the Government decided that there should be an independent study and in June 1983 the Under Secretary for Works met with the principal of P.A. Australia and, after discussion, the consultants were asked to put forward a proposal for a review of the State Engineering Works and to advise upon—

The future role if any to be filled by the State Engineering Works;

the appropriate management and board structure to control the enterprise; and

the future prospects on which the organisation should base organisational changes and facility rehabilitation.

In the same month PA Consulting Services submitted a proposal for a review which expanded the above terms of reference.

The final terms of reference as agreed between the consultants and the under secretary are as they appear in appendix "A" of the consultants' report.

WATER RESOURCES: WATER AUTHORITY

Residential Classification

199. Mr P. J. SMITH, to the Minister for Water Resources:

When the single water authority commences operation in 1985, will the same criteria be applied in determining residential classification in both the areas presently administered by the Metropolitan Water Authority and those currently under Public Works Department responsibility?

Mr TONKIN replied:

Yes. There is no intention to alter the criteria.

GOVERNMENT SECURITY: "LEAKS"

Shredding of Documents

200. Mr COURT, to the Premier:

- (1) Has his department successfully stopped "leaks" with its new shredding strategy?
- (2) Have the cardboard boxes used in the security clampdown been replaced by the different coloured plastic bins, as promised?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) The Parliament might be happy to know that we deliberately leak things to this member. It is one of our guarantees of success! Have members ever heard a question which is, I suppose,

meant to be facetious, but which is sillier than the one asked by the member for Nedlands? I am not sure whether the member expects to receive a serious answer.

Mr COURT: It is fully recorded that you sent the memo around asking them to shred all their—

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The member for Nedlands not only asks absurd questions, but also fails to read the newspaper correctly. I happened to support the sending of the memo by Mr Beggs. I was perfectly happy with it. I repeat: Does this member expect me to take that question seriously? It is an absurd question. One of the problems with this Opposition, apart from its continual infighting among its own rank, is that it fails to come to grips with matters more serious than that addressed by the member for Nedlands.

Under the Westminster system of which we are so proud, the Opposition has a responsibility. Due to the good efforts of the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform, Opposition members have the opportunity during Parliament Week to learn what it is all about, and I hope that, if the member for Nedlands' leader does not call him into order, he will bring himself into order in respect of asking questions. The question asked was patently absurd and I do not think the member himself expects to be answered seriously.

Mr Clarko: You can shred that answer!

DEFENCE: WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Federal Government's Role

201. Mr BURKETT, to the Minister for Defence Liaison:

- (1) Is the Minister satisfied that Western Australia's defence needs have been adequately catered for by successive Federal Governments over the past decade or so?
- (2) If not, what plans does the Government have to secure a better defence deal for this State?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) and (2) No, there is an appalling imbalance and it is one for which a series of conservative Governments have a great deal to answer. As I have said over the

years in respect of this matter, those conservative Governments were in office for 27 of the last 30 years and must accept twenty-seven-thirtieths of the responsibility for this appalling imbalance.

This year's Budget allocated slightly more than \$5 billion to the defence of this nation and scarcely more than \$107 million of that came in the direction of Western Australia.

In recent months we have done some homework and it is worth informing members of this place that, over a significant period, more money has been spent on Butterworth in Malaysia than has been spent in Western Australia. Despite the fact that Western Australia comprises one-third of this nation in area, has 10 per cent of the population, and 12 500 kilometres of coastline, the disturbing reality is that the "Brisbane line" mentality seems to be well and truly alive inside the decision-making circles of the bureaucracy of Canberra—

Mr Williams: What about the Yankee ships at Fremantle? You don't want them to come in.

Mr BRYCE: If the member asks some supplementary questions, I shall give him a response to that interjection. I say that because, if Opposition members want to look at where the basic responsibility for this matter lies, they should ask themselves about the long list of promises which were made on the eve of successive Federal elections during the 1960s and 1970s when defence Minister after defence Minister visited this side of the country and promised things ranging from patrol boat bases in the north-west to the basing of submarines in Western Australia and the provision of various armed forces defence facilities. The list is very significant indeed and it extends over a 20 year period.

The point is that countless promises have been made to this State and those promises have amounted to nothing. They were made by successive Federal Governments and the great bulk of those Governments have, of course, been conservative. The origin of that sort of thinking has been the defence department in Canberra which, I restate, indicates to us that the "Brisbane line" mentality is alive and well. We draw to the

attention of this House today, and to the State at large, the fact that the Federal Government has an excellent opportunity to set that record right.

We have asked the Federal Government to recognise the fact that Cockburn Sound is the most outstanding base in Australia for Australian submarines. We have asked the Federal Government to base—

Mr Clarko: Nuclear-powered submarines! Which branch of the Labor Party is rostered to attack American ships in Fremantle next month?

Mr BRYCE: The member for Karrinyup should not show his ignorance. No minor power in the world has squandered money on buying nuclear-powered submarines. The submarine base, HMAS Stirling, has been established at considerable expense—

Mr Hassell: By a Liberal Government.

Mr BRYCE: —and has literally been left empty.

Mr Clarko: Did you say this at the ALP Conference?

Mr BRYCE: That was a small part of the capital expenditure. Let me remind the Leader of the Opposition that in the national Budget—the Budget we inherited—for 1982-83, just 0.5 per cent of capital equipment expenditure came to Western Australia.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have asked that answers to questions be not too lengthy, but when members of the Opposition keep calling out for further elaboration or ask further questions, I suspect that the Minister answering the question wishes to have more time to answer those additional questions. However, I ask the Minister to attempt to wind up his answer.

Mr BRYCE: I will do so by underlining the point I was about to make before I was so rudely interrupted. My point was that the Commonwealth Government currently has a priceless opportunity to redress this wrong. We should have based in this State at Cockburn Sound, Australia's entire submarine fleet. Leave the surface fleet on the other side of the nation; be dinkum about a two-ocean defence policy, and in capital investment terms ensure that the actual submarine

construction programme worth \$1 500 million goes to this State.

Mr Burkett: Excellent answer.

HOUSING: LAND

Sale: Australian Labor Party

202. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Housing:

My question follows a question I asked the Minister prior to the three week adjournment, when I asked him whether he would table in the House the brochure produced by the State Housing Commission to advertise the sale of land now occupied by Herb Graham House, and if not, why not? He answered at that time that he would consult with the SHC and make a decision in regard to my question. I ask him now if he has had time to have that consultation and provide me with a response?

Mr WILSON replied:

"Yes". After consultation with the State Housing Commission I have decided that it is not appropriate to table the information.

Mr MacKinnon: A cover-up!

Mr Hassell: The Premier told him not to release it.

Mr Brian Burke: The Premier did not even know of the question.

LAND: MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

Legislation

203. Mr BLAIE, to the Premier:

- (1) Does the Government intend to introduce legislation to provide land management controls of private land by way of town planning changes that will include regional and rural planning?
- (2) Does the Government intend to rewrite the State's environmental laws?
- (3) When is it expected that those proposals will be before the Parliament?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (3) In reply to that general sort of question I suggest that if the member puts his question on the Notice Paper he will receive a considered response. Quite frankly, I cannot answer that question—

Mr Blaikie: My understanding is that they are all going to be subject to land management controls under the Bill.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I understand that that Bill is now before the Parliament. I do not understand that other legislation is to be introduced in parallel with it. In any case, if the member puts his question on notice he will receive a considered response within 24 hours of doing so.

Mr Clarko: If you put it in on Thursday!

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE

Changes

204. Mr HASSELL, to the Leader of the House:

My question relates to parliamentary sittings. One of my colleagues received a letter from the Leader of the House indicating that the parliamentary sitting weeks were to be changed. Although there was a mistake in that letter—apparently a week was omitted—there seemed to be incorporated the cancellation of a week which had previously been advised by the Government as not being a sitting week. Taking that, and what appears to be a mistake into account, it appears to me that it is the Government's intention to sit continuously to the end of the session with the exception of Royal Show Week. Is that a correct statement of the position? A number of members want to know. I cannot understand why the member for Katanning-Roe received a letter but nobody else did.

Mr Clarko: He must be a friend of yours.

Mr TONKIN replied:

I wrote to the leaders of all parties and the Leader of the Opposition's office would have that letter. He may not have received it to date. If not, I apologise. To make it perfectly clear, yes, the next recess week will be the one during the Royal Show early in October and there will be no recess thereafter. Members will be aware that it was an innovation of this Government to decide to have recess weeks.

Mr Hassell: It is now cancelling that innovation.

Mr TONKIN: That is correct. We have had three recess weeks in a row and this was due partly to the school holidays and to the fact that the Leader of the Opposi-

sition asked me whether I would not cancel the first week of the school holidays which we wanted to do because it was difficult for us to meet last week, so we have just had three weeks off. That being the case, we therefore will have that one week's recess early in October and there will be no further recess, on plans at the present time, until the end of the session.

Mr Williams: What about Christmas Day?

HOUSING: TENDERS

Award Wages

205. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Housing:

When will the State Housing Commission be implementing a policy of ensuring that the tenders it accepts for housing construction cover award wages?

Mr Brian Burke: There is no award for subcontractors.

Mr WILSON replied:

That is perfectly correct, of course, and I would have thought that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would have been aware of that also. Apparently he is not in touch with the realities of the building industry and the conditions that prevail within it.

However, in direct response to his question, I do not understand what is behind his question. If he is prepared to elaborate further—

Mr MacKinnon: Didn't your State Conference give you that direction?

Mr Brian Burke: Always the staff must be paid the award rate.

Mr MacKinnon: I am asking the Minister a question, Mr Premier. If I wanted to ask you the question I could have obviously done so.

Mr Brian Burke: It is such a silly question.

Mr WILSON: It is a silly question.

Mr MacKinnon: It is not a silly question when I understand the State Conference of the ALP gave you that direction.

Mr Brian Burke: You cannot apply award rates to people not covered by awards.

Mr MacKinnon: Why won't you let him answer the question?

Mr Pearce: Why do you keep changing the question?

Mr MacKinnon: I am not changing the question.

Mr WILSON: If what the member is asking, in his confused state, is related to something that happened at the State Conference of the ALP, he should have said so in the beginning.

Mr Brian Burke: He wasn't even there.

Mr Burkett: You don't know. He might have been.

Mr MacKinnon: Surprise, surprise!

Mr Brian Burke: Isn't he an environmental maniac?

Mr WILSON: In response to that which must be supposed to be related to the question that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked, matters raised at the State Conference of the ALP will be considered by the Government in due course.

HEALTH: MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

Geraldton

206. Mr TUBBY to the Minister for Health:

Referring to the problems being experienced by doctors in Geraldton with the operation of Medicare, I ask—

(1) Is he still refusing to meet with these doctors' so-called splinter groups?

(2) If not, when does he anticipate being able to meet with these doctors?

Mr HODGE replied:

(1) and (2) I advise the member that I have never refused to meet the doctors. What I have advised the doctors on a number of occasions and what I have indeed advised the member for Greenough is that

it has been my policy since becoming Minister as agreed with the AMA, that on all matters of industrial working conditions, rates of pay or matters to do with Medicare or the medical profession in general, any negotiations would be conducted with the AMA. The message I have sent to the Geraldton doctors is that if they approach the AMA and the AMA asks for a meeting with me and the meeting is conducted under the auspices of the AMA, I would be perfectly happy to meet the Geraldton doctors or the Bentley doctors or doctors from any part of the State, as long as the request comes through the AMA and the meeting is held under the auspices of the AMA. I recently met with a group of doctors from the Bentley area who wished to discuss certain things with me. That was arranged through the AMA and the meeting was held in the presence of the Vice President and Secretary of the AMA. The AMA represents the majority of doctors in this State. One of the undertakings I gave the AMA shortly after coming to office was that I did recognise it as the professional association representing the majority of doctors in this State. I renew my offer tonight to the Geraldton doctors or to any other doctors in this State who wish to talk to me about matters of general concern in regard to the medical profession or Medicare, that if they care to approach the AMA or the member for Greenough, I will agree to a meeting organised through the AMA at their convenience and as soon as it can possibly be arranged.