

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 28 September 1983

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

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Job Security Test Case: Petition

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Leader of the Opposition) [2.17 p.m.]: I present a petition from 29 residents of Western Australia in the following terms—

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

We, the undersigned residents of Western Australia, wish to make it known that we do not support the application known as the Job Security Test Case, which the ACTU has brought before the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission.

We believe that if implemented, the provisions of the application would have devastating ramifications on the free enterprise system, including an increase in unemployment.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Western Australian Government reject any similar application in Western Australia and that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

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

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

(See petition No. 32.)

BILLS (5): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Lotteries (Control) Amendment Bill.
2. Town Planning and Development Amendment Bill.

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

3. Appropriation (Consolidated Revenue Fund) Bill.
4. Appropriation (General Loan Fund) Bill.

Bills introduced, on motions by Mr Brian Burke (Treasurer), and read a first time.

5. Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Amendment Bill.

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Evans (Minister for Agriculture), and read a first time.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS: DISPUTE

Pilbara: Ministerial Statement

MR BRIAN BURKE (Balgas—Premier) [2.23 p.m.]: I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

MR BRIAN BURKE: The statement is a brief one, and it concerns the industrial dispute at Mt. Newman. I am advised that the Mt. Newman Mining Co. Pty. Ltd. employees will return to work tomorrow morning. The Port Hedland workers will meet tomorrow at 10.00 a.m. and they, too, are expected to resume work. A five-day amnesty has been declared to allow the workers who have left the area to return to work.

Commissioner Collier will determine the matter in Perth next Tuesday as a private arbitrator.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Leader of the Opposition) [2.24 p.m.]: I am pleased to hear that some action is being taken to achieve a result. The Opposition moved an amendment to the Address-in-Reply condemning the Government for its lack of activity in relation to this matter. Certainly the Government is guilty of that.

Every day the strikes at Mt. Newman Mining Co. Pty. Ltd. and Hamersley Iron Pty. Ltd. continue, the State loses millions of dollars in export income. It is a great pity that the people of the State will have to suffer from that action in due course. Not only will the State suffer a loss in income, but also the workers will suffer a loss of wages and the State will suffer a loss of royalties. If the State does not obtain the income it requires from those royalties, it must obtain it elsewhere, or reduce its services.

I hope that the commission is successful in having the men return to work, in the interests of the country. What has happened in the Pilbara has been to the detriment of us all. I have no doubt that if this sort of thing continues, Western Australia will suffer. We will feel the effect, not only in a decrease in iron ore sales, but also in the lack of confidence by overseas buyers in Western Australia as a reliable supplier.

I welcome the information that the men are to go back to work and that the strikes are over. I

sincerely hope that in future, in the interests of the State and of the country, they will consider the issues before any further strike action is taken.

ACTS AMENDMENT (CONSTITUTION AND ELECTORAL) BILL

Third Reading

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform) [2.25 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [2.26 p.m.]: The Opposition has made clear its position in relation to this legislation, and I will not delay the House unduly by repeating what has been said before. However, I place on record, at the third reading stage, the fact that we are opposed to the Bill and to every aspect of it.

We believe that the Bill diminishes the Parliament. It seeks to reduce the power, prestige, representative character, and effectiveness of the Legislative Council.

Mr Tonkin: How does it reduce the power?

Mr HASSELL: As members know, the Bill is part of a plan to eliminate the Council eventually; but, in the meantime, the move is to reduce its capacity.

Mr Tonkin: How does it reduce its power? Can you explain that?

Mr HASSELL: It will reduce the power of the Legislative Council because it will reduce its effectiveness. The reduction in numbers will leave it as a body which is incapable of exercising its role as a House of Review.

Mr Tonkin: That is nonsense.

Mr HASSELL: It will become a mere—

Mr Tonkin: I suppose because it has fewer than half the number of this House at the present time, it is—

Mr Clarko: Come on! You have said more than the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HASSELL: The Legislative Council will become a mere debating Chamber. It will become a place in which nothing of substance will be decided. When the other legislation of the Government is brought forward, the Government's full intentions will be revealed.

One of the intentions has already been announced, and that is to make the Legislative Council the House of Parliament which can be

bypassed whenever it is in conflict with the Legislative Assembly. The reduction in membership will reduce the quality of representation. It will reduce it to the point that members of the Legislative Council will lose the capacity to represent anyone.

This alteration in the Legislative Council will not be replaced successfully by the provision of additional facilities, for members, whether those facilities be telephone or transport. The people, especially those in distant areas, want a local representative—their representative; the man who makes the decisions; the man who puts forward their case in the Parliament. It is inadequate and insufficient for the Government to say that it will provide additional facilities for the fewer members.

The simple reality is that this Bill is directed at the very heart of the Parliament. It will not be supported by the Opposition in any of its aspects.

MR BRYCE (Ascot—Deputy Premier) [2.29 p.m.]: I take the opportunity at this stage of the debate to express my wholehearted support for the Bill which deals with an issue which has been close to my heart since the day I was sworn in as a member. I have not previously had the opportunity of participating in this debate.

At the outset, I congratulate the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform—

Mr Laurance: For his handling of the Bill on the second reading?

Mr BRYCE: —for the job he has done, and more particularly for the first-class work that his staff have done in helping him to put the legislation together.

This Bill will pass through this House and it will pass through the Parliament without any shadow of a doubt; whether that event occurs this week or at some time in the future, there is no doubt in my mind that it will occur. The only matter that will determine what happens in terms of a time frame will be the sense of shame and guilt that rests with members who sit opposite and with their colleagues in another place.

I have read the debates that relate to the reform of the franchise for this Parliament. Over a period of 50 or 60 years endeavours were made to introduce a democratic franchise for this Parliament. The basis of that move was the argument that each and every citizen in this State, irrespective of how much land he owned and irrespective of his means, was entitled to a vote. The friends and the forebears of the members who sit opposite us at this moment fought a rear-guard action that lasted 60 years. They trotted out these shameful arguments year after year.

Mr Hassell: Are you filling in time?

Mr BRYCE: Is the member objecting to my expressing a point of view?

Mr Tonkin: If you remember back to 1972 when a similar Bill was before the House, you will recall that this member spoke on that debate.

Mr BRYCE: I am perfectly happy for the cynics opposite to try to deprive me of my right.

Mr Hassell: Sob, sob!

Mr BRYCE: If it is their intention to seek to interrupt me, I can guarantee them I will be seeking their co-operation in about 39 minutes for an extension of time, if that is necessary.

Mr Thompson: It won't want to be longer, because you will be off out of the State after that.

Mr BRYCE: If the member cares to represent me at the next technology summit, he is welcome, since he is one of the brightest, starry-eyed members of the Opposition, almost someone bright enough to aspire to leadership prospects.

Mr Crane: Let's grant the extension and save the air fare.

Mr BRYCE: Before I was so rudely interrupted, I was explaining that the forebears of members opposite struggled for 60 years to find rational arguments to oppose the introduction of a democratic franchise that guaranteed every man and woman over the age of 21, as it was previously, the right to vote. The standard of argument, the level of rationality, we have witnessed over the last week represents exactly the same sort of tripe as was handed out in years passed. This is 1983, but one could imagine it was 1883.

Mr Crane: Who is denied a vote now?

Mr BRYCE: The member and some of his devious predecessors tried to deny a vote to the people.

Mr O'Connor: Have a vote now.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order!

Mr Laurance: One, two, three—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Tonkin: Toss him out!

The SPEAKER: Order! For the information of the member for Gascoyne, I had just called the House to order. It has been the practice of the House that as soon as the Speaker resumes his seat there is silence.

Mr BRYCE: I am accustomed to the member for Gascoyne's reacting in a fairly touchy way on this sort of Bill, because he is someone sitting opposite who is perched at the beginning of the

chute ready to disappear into oblivion if democracy in the truest sense is introduced into this House. He knows that during the entire length of his career he has represented less than about one-fifth of the quota that has been represented by some members in this Chamber.

Point of Order

Mr LAURANCE: Mr Speaker, I would like to abide by your ruling that I should not interject and should keep order in the House, but it is difficult when the member for Ascot keeps pointing his finger at me and using my name in debate. If he continues to do that it is only fair that I should be allowed to interject.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

Mr BRYCE: The extent of this man's sensitivity defies anyone's imagination. The reality of it is that members like the member for Gascoyne and the member for Murchison-Eyre run scared whenever there is an endeavour in this Parliament to examine the questions of democracy. These members have no right to be here, based on the most fundamental definition of democracy, which involves concepts of representation of people.

In reality, this Bill seeks to do two things which I totally support, and I am delighted to have this opportunity, however late in the debate, to express my support of them. It is meant to establish democracy in that other place.

Mr Hassell: You can sit down now; your colleague has arrived.

Mr BRYCE: I will go on for as long as I like; I do not need the next Leader of the Liberal Party to tell me when I should finish.

Mr Hassell: Your colleagues have arrived. The Premier is looking much less worried now.

Mr BRYCE: I do not think any of the members sitting opposite, who are opposed to this Bill, will be proud to explain to their grandchildren that as late in the day as 1983 they reacted like a handful of nineteenth century political relics, because that is what they are about to do.

Mr Court: It is the most democratic in the world. Give us an example of a country with a fairer system.

Mr BRYCE: The member for Nedlands is referring to the "Chamber of Horrors"; he is not referring to this House.

Mr Court: You can't and you won't.

Mr BRYCE: The other House is a disgrace.

Point of Order

Mr O'CONNOR: Mr Speaker, is the member allowed to cast aspersions against the other House?

The SPEAKER: It is against Standing Orders to reflect on the upper House in an offensive manner. I do not regard the word "disgrace" as being in that category.

Debate Resumed

Mr BRYCE: I would have thought that anyone who was the slightest bit interested in political structures, political philosophy, or politics generally anywhere in this country—even Liberals on the other side of this country—would concur that to refer to the other place as a disgrace in terms of its structure and the method by which its members are elected, was a compliment and not an insult. It is a disgrace as far as Australia's reputation is concerned. There is no place that I know of anywhere in the world where members can be sitting in a Chamber, with one member representing about 90 000 people and another representing fewer than 9 000.

Mr Laurance: What about that senator from Tasmania?

Mr Hassell: What about the Senate?

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order!

Mr BRYCE: I sat here and listened with a great deal of interest to the contribution from the member for Karrinyup. He and I have had this discussion on countless occasions. There is a perfectly valid reason, with a Federal structure, to institute that system which has been developed for the Federal House, a system which makes it a Parliament very different from this one.

If members opposite seriously suggest that we should carve up Western Australia into zones and regions based upon economic or political debates, that argument would be valid, but all they have done is to carve up the State in terms of who returns Liberal members and who returns Labor members. That is the basis of malapportionment. It has not been done the way it has been done in respect of the Senate based on State boundaries. If it is decided to retract something, the State should be drawn up into zones and regions. It should be done on that sort of basis, then the argument of members opposite would be consistent and to some extent relevant.

Mr Hassell: Would you support it?

Mr BRYCE: No, I would not support it.

Mr Hassell: Of course you wouldn't.

Mr BRYCE: Of course I would not support it.

Mr Hassell: Because you don't believe in fair representation.

Mr BRYCE: I would not support the system that was established in the 1890s for the Senate.

Mr Hassell: Of course you wouldn't. One House in one Parliament in Canberra in a republic is your objective.

Mr BRYCE: I am talking about the question of malapportionment so far as that is concerned.

Mr Old: That is what we are concerned with.

Mr BRYCE: So we have argued and argued consistently that the proportional representation system of electing representatives is one enormous step forward in the direction of democracy compared with that which exists in the other House at this time. The member for Karrinyup may be interested to know that I happen to agree with him on one thing.

Mr Old: Good Lord!

Mr Hassell: That worries him, actually.

Mr BRYCE: I agree with him that there is no perfect theoretical system of democracy—none whatsoever—anywhere in the world.

Mr Court: Give us a better example than that which we have in this State. Give us the name of another country that has a fairer electoral system.

Mr O'Connor: Russia!

Mr BRYCE: The scheme that has been provided for in this legislation in fact basically operates in South Australia and is vastly more democratic than the system which prevails in this State now. I am happy to say and I would guarantee it, that nobody asked the Hon. Mr Peacock what he thought about the now Opposition and its present stand on this question in this State in 1983 because, as I understand it, Andrew Peacock would want to distance himself from the political levelling man who opposes this Bill.

Mr Hassell: He would not interfere in a State matter, unlike your Prime Minister. He is a federalist. He would not interfere. It has nothing to do with Mr Peacock or anybody else over there.

Mr BRYCE: It is not simply a question of what is Federal or State. A very fundamental principle of democracy is at stake.

Mr Hassell: It has nothing to do with the Commonwealth Government.

Mr Court: It has nothing to do with that at all, and you know it.

Mr BRYCE: I would like the member for Nedlands to now indicate by way of interjection whether he believes that the system of

malapportionment which seeks representatives from those vastly different sized constituencies is in fact democracy.

Mr Court: I believe that the electoral system we have in this State is a very democratic system. You and the Minister introducing this Bill refused to give me an example of another country that has a fairer electoral system.

Mr Parker: Germany.

Mr BRYCE: I will respond directly to that member.

Mr Court: I thought you would know, if the rest are so bad.

Mr BRYCE: I could not find another country which has a so-called democratic system of electing representatives which would be as bad as this one.

Mr MacKinnon: Give us one, just one.

Mr BRYCE: In the United States of America there are a number of very enlightened States which, would members believe, have even managed to exist without that second Chamber. I know members opposite find that a fairly chilling thought. They totally exist without the second Chamber.

Mr Hassell: Do you want the Queensland system here?

Mr BRYCE: I am beginning to wonder whether the Queensland system that sees members traipse up to the old abolished Chamber for opening days and things like that—if that is what the member means by the Queensland system—is the right thing.

Mr Hassell: With no upper House. You want to get rid of the upper House; is that your policy?

Mr BRYCE: Our policy is to bring democracy to the upper House and that is exactly what this Bill does.

Mr Hassell: Your policy is to abolish the upper House.

Mr BRYCE: I congratulate the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform. We are proud that we have a Minister whose specific task it is to institute reform in this field. This Minister will effectively carry out that task.

Mr Hassell: You have asked for a long debate and we will oblige.

Mr BRYCE: As I indicated, it may not be next week, the following week, or the week after; it may be in a few weeks' time, but we could define how many "a few" will be, and predict how determined and embarrassed members on the other side of the House will be.

Let me conclude with a little suggestion about a scenario. After the Mundaring by-election when members will be worried about their standing in this community based upon this form—

Mr Hassell: We will know soon enough.

Mr BRYCE: —of opposition to step in the correct direction, we will see that upper House—

Mr Hassell: Will you apologise when we win?

Mr BRYCE: —have a very large-sized overdose of political indigestion. There is no doubt in my mind, despite the number of warnings that have come forward from this temporary Leader of the Opposition, that the upper House will go through a change of heart.

Mr Hassell: He is a silly fellow.

Mr BRYCE: It is just a question of how soon that change of heart will occur.

Mr Clarko: You are making it longer.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Leader of the Opposition) [2.47 p.m.]: It is a long time since I have heard so much nonsense from a man who has a knife in the back of his leader. For a man to get up and carry on the way he has done—

Mr Brian Burke: What have I done?

MR O'CONNOR: I do not reflect on the Premier; I reflect on the Deputy Premier. He carried on with such nonsense it was almost unbelievable. The only thing we could believe is that he had to carry on until the Government could muster sufficient numbers to again try to get this Bill through.

Mr Brian Burke: That is not right.

MR O'CONNOR: It is a great pity that the Government again did not have the numbers when it wanted to put a Bill forward.

Mr Brian Burke: That is not the case.

Mr Hassell: You know damn well it is.

MR O'CONNOR: The Deputy Premier carried on and indicated that nowhere else is there a system such as the one we have of 12 votes to one. He virtually refuted this in connection with the Senate. We all know that Tasmania has the same number of senators as has New South Wales with about 12 times the population. In that regard I think it is fair enough in more remote areas to give them the same opportunity of most built-up areas in a State or country. Our Senate system has operated fairly in that regard despite the disparity in numbers. The Australian Constitution has operated fairly and has kept this country on a right and proper course. The Government is now trying to tamper with the Constitution of this country and of this State.

The Government talks about the value of a vote. If this legislation goes through, no country people in these regions will be able to vote for anyone in their regions. This is despite the fact that the Premier recently indicated on television that this legislation will not affect country people. That is a lot of rubbish. Of course it will.

Mr Brian Burke: Now listen, I didn't say they won't be affected. I said it will improve their representation. In that way it will affect them. It will give them better representation.

Mr O'CONNOR: The statement the Premier made on the air was totally misleading because it indicated to the country people that they would get a proper vote. The Government is denying them a vote for their representative.

Mr Brian Burke: I said they will get better representation. You just said I said it wouldn't affect them.

Mr O'CONNOR: The Premier said they will get better representation?

Mr Brian Burke: Of course they will.

Mr O'CONNOR: Of members elected by the Liberal Party Executive or by the Labor Party Executive? No longer will a person know what is going on.

Mr Tonkin: You are endorsed for the party?

Mr O'CONNOR: Just a moment. No longer will people in the Esperance region have a vote to elect a representative for their region. They want a member who can represent them properly, and if a person did not represent them properly, and distances himself from the electors he represents they would dispense with him. No longer will the south-west of the State—places like Bunbury and Avon—or the Kimberley have this responsibility. The people will not be able to elect members of their choice in their regions. This will be a vital aspect when this legislation is passed. The indications are that the country people have nothing to worry about. However, there is no sign from the Government that it is taking away from the country people and the metropolitan people their right to vote for persons of their choice to represent their regions. For evermore that right will be gone. It is a great pity.

In the south-west of the State we have farming and forestry areas. The members of Parliament who serve those areas are required to know the difficulties of the areas in order to support the views of the people in Parliament. If they do not, they will be disposed of by the people. If this legislation goes through, these people will not have the right to elect members who will represent their districts. They will be overridden by

the vast numbers in the metropolitan area and the ALP executive. The 20 members of the Legislative Council, instead of 34 members, will more likely be elected because they pay attention to and work with the hierarchy of the parties.

I believe that in a country as vast as ours, where we have so many different types of industries—farming, forestry, and mining—we ought to elect members of Parliament in the various regions who know and understand the people of their areas. They should mix with the people all the time and in Parliament should represent the views of the districts. All this will go if this legislation is passed. I think it is a pity and I hope that the people in the country centres will realise what this Government is trying to do to them. It is not giving them value for their votes, but it is depriving them of votes for regions for which they have voted so often. The Government is taking away two out of three parliamentary representatives in most cases.

Currently in country centres there is one member of Parliament in the Legislative Assembly and two members of Parliament in the Legislative Council. Under this legislation, country centres will not have that representation and two-thirds of the vote for the Legislative Council will be virtually taken away. I had hoped the Government would consider this aspect and consider those people in country areas.

There will be no saving of money under this legislation. All the Government is trying to do is to give to the Executive of the party the power to elect a member of Parliament. Once this happens, the Government will take away the right from individuals to vote in this State.

It will be a sad day for Parliament if this Bill is passed. Therefore, I hope that at some stage sanity will prevail and the legislation will be rejected.

MR LAURANCE (Gascoyne) [2.54 p.m.]: The Deputy Premier said that he would use his allotted 45 minutes to prolong this debate. I thought that most of the debate on this Bill would have taken place during the second reading stage. However, I am happy to join in the third reading debate because it gives me the opportunity to spell out again, my opposition to the proposed legislation.

We believe that the Labor Party has introduced this legislation for its own ends. It is trying to say the legislation is for the people of this State. Let us make no mistake about it: It is not for the people of the State; it is for the Labor Party machine's—the ALP's—own interests.

The Government is trying to indicate to the people of this State that they will have equality in

their votes. People realise that by way of votes they have an equal say in the members they elect. The point the Opposition makes is that people are entitled to equality of access to members of Parliament. That means people who live far away from their country centres, or major centres of population, where their members of Parliament may reside, should have the same access to them as people in the metropolitan area have to their members.

In the metropolitan area people can ring their members of Parliament for a cost of 10c. We have had it thrown up at us that one person's vote is worth 11 times the vote of a person in a smaller electorate of the Legislative Council. I pointed out the fallacy of that in my second reading speech because it costs 11 times the cost of a local call for people in my electorate to ring me at Carnarvon or to ring their Legislative Council member who resides in the same area. They pay for that call whether or not their member is available. They must incur the cost of a three-minute local call through the exchange, when it is open. It is sometimes open for limited periods during the night and on Sundays and there are times when it is difficult to obtain access through the exchange at all.

At times my constituents have to drive hundreds of miles in order to make a telephone call. They have access to the Royal Flying Doctor Service communication facilities—fortunately that service is co-operative—although according to Telecom it is illegal. However, the service does relay urgent messages.

I had a case in my electorate a few days ago that concerns a young pastoralist who is what I would call a battler. He has an unviable pastoral property, but he makes a reasonable income from outside interests such as kangaroo shooting. He is placed in a difficult situation because he and his young family are situated approximately 180 miles from Gascoyne Junction. At the present time he is negotiating for a loan through the Rural Housing Authority. On several occasions he has had to drive, at his expense, from his property to Gascoyne Junction to ring the Rural Housing Authority office.

We have said earlier in this debate that we do not need extra members of Parliament in far-flung regions of the State; all we need is another electorate secretary or more allowance for members of Parliament. The Government's proposal is not on. It is crazy for the Government to suggest that it can make up for personal representation for people in this State. It will not replace representation by members of Parliament who are re-

sponsible to and elected by the people who live and work in these areas. They do not want to be represented by 11 members of the ALP who are drawn from the Executive of the Labor Party and they do not want to be represented by 11 members of the Liberal Party of whom they have never heard. That is not the representation they require. People have, and deserve to continue to have, personal representation in remote areas of this State.

Another point is that people in country areas suffer enormous difficulties because of distance, cost, and communication. They suffer now to the same degree as they have at any time in the State's history. It is found that when one problem is overcome another difficulty arises. At the same time, people in the city receive more and more benefits. The differences between city and country life are the same today as they have ever been. To take away the access of country people to an individualised and personalised member of the upper House would be doing a grave disservice to them, but that is what this legislation proposes.

Mr Jamieson: Anyone would think the people in these regions would want their own people to look after them but instead of that they send you and another city slicker to look after them.

Mr LAURANCE: That interjection is not even worth answering.

Mr Jamieson: Two of the biggest Liberal areas are represented by people with a predominantly city background.

Mr LAURANCE: Like whom?

Mr Jamieson: Like you and the member for Murchison-Eyre.

Mr Crane: You can see the grass growing out of their ears.

Mr LAURANCE: If the member would check he would find that he is totally wrong. I was born, educated, lived, and worked for most of my life in the country—most of it in the north-west. I married a woman from the north of the State.

Mr Jamieson: Then you went off insuring people.

Mr LAURANCE: For a brief period only.

Mr Clarko: The same as the member for Kalgoorlie. What is wrong with that?

Mr LAURANCE: I did come to the city at one stage in order to train for a country appointment as a teacher. It so happened that the only teaching college was in the metropolitan area and it is sometimes necessary for people in the country to go to the city. That point highlights the difficulties country people have in regard to educating their children, who often have to be sent to regional centres or to the metropolitan area. It is a

tremendous difficulty for country people. Country members and north-west members would agree with me, but if they do not, I would very much like to hear from them.

Mrs Buchanan: How many people do you have enrolled for Gascoyne?

Mr LAURANCE: I have twice as many as the previous member for Gascoyne.

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: I am pleased to have a chance to answer the interjection because the boundaries of Gascoyne have not been changed since 1890, a period of nearly 100 years. We had members representing that area, which is a vast area of the State and is a geographical centre of interest which binds those people together. I am happy to point out once again that the two members who represented the area before me were both Labor members. One represented the area for 21 years and the other for 18 to 19 years. For 40 years Labor members represented the area of Gascoyne; they did it well. They were both men of distinction. One rose to the lofty ranks of Speaker of this Chamber; I am sure you, Sir, will agree that it is a lofty position. The member before him was Premier of the State and, among many other portfolios, Minister for Lands and Minister for Works.

Mr Jamieson: And Minister for Agriculture.

Mr LAURANCE: They did not represent many people at all. I did not complain about that, because they represented the area well.

Mrs Buchanan: That is all very nice, but you still have not answered my question.

Mr LAURANCE: I think it is appropriate to have this discussion. I shall answer the interjection from the member for Pilbara because she represents a remote area of this State and would be aware of the various problems.

I point out that the member is not talking about the number of people represented and she obviously believes the previous members for Gascoyne should not have been in this House because they did not represent enough people. The member for Pilbara supports this legislation, although I have not yet heard her support it; obviously she supports it in a quiet way.

I refer to the previous member for Gascoyne (Mr Dan Norton). He gave tremendous personal representation to the area, and I am sure that is why he represented the area for 21 years. He was a legend in the area because of the things he did. I make no secret of the fact that many of the things I do in my electorate have been copied from the practices adopted by Mr Dan Norton, because I

believe he did them extremely well. For example, when I visit a remote mining camp, a Main Roads Department camp, or a pastoral property, I feel it is always good manners to call at the post office and pick up the mail, and pick up a couple of loaves of bread and a copy of the latest newspaper—because it may be 10 days before they receive them.

Danny Norton did those things for many people who never voted for him. I find that amazing and I enjoy talking about it. It is amazing that Danny Norton—at best—had 70 per cent of the vote, and that at one election in the last 10 years I enjoyed a vote as high as he did, although we were on opposite sides of politics. That demonstrates that many people who are normally supporters of the Liberal Party voted for Dan Norton. It is equally true that persons who would normally vote for the Labor Party vote for me. Dan Norton was able to swing the vote and obviously because we have now been able to obtain as many votes some people have swung back the other way.

I am not saying that because one takes the mail, bread, and papers people will give one their vote. Dan Norton did those things because it made up in some way for the difficulties country people faced. The Government wants to take away much of that representation. I have mentioned Assembly members but it is equally true of members of the Legislative Council.

Mr P. J. Smith: Why do you need another person to do your job?

Mr LAURANCE: That point was taken up by the member for Stirling in the Committee stages of the Bill. He said, "If we need this weighting in country areas and assuming we will have fewer electors and small electorates, why is it necessary for the Legislative Council to be divided on the same basis? Surely that must be duplication".

Mr Barnett: How many votes do you get from a 5'2" woman?

Mr LAURANCE: As the member for Rockingham would know, the number of votes a member needs is only one more than the other bloke; to date, both he and I have been able to achieve that number. That was a very annoying interjection, because I have lost my train of thought.

The SPEAKER: Both the interjections were disorderly.

Mr LAURANCE: Yes, Mr Speaker, but one was more disorderly than the other. However, one of the disorderly interjections was bordering on the orderly, and I intended to take up the point.

I will give the House an example: Last Saturday I attended a very important meeting held right in the heart of my electorate. The electorate of Gascoyne comprises some 69 500 square miles, yet it is the smallest of the north-west electorates and is only tiny in comparison with electorates like Murchison-Eyre and Kimberley.

Mr Clarko: It is nearly the size of the British Isles, and almost as large as Victoria.

Mr LAURANCE: Yes, Victoria is nearly 72 000 square miles, so it is just a smidgen bigger than my electorate.

Mr Jamieson: Gascoyne has a Victorian member, too.

Mr LAURANCE: The electorate of Gascoyne is almost square in shape and if one threw a dart at a map and hit the centre of my electorate, one would most likely hit Gascoyne Junction, which is about 160 kilometres due east of Carnarvon.

Last Saturday, I attended a picnic race meeting which is held once a year and is a very important event for Gascoyne Junction. I am not a gambler and I do not attend race meetings apart from when I have to attend on an official basis on behalf of the Opposition or—when we were in Government—as a representative of the Government. I have never been as a private citizen.

Mr Jamieson: Your education is sadly lacking.

Mr LAURANCE: It probably is. I have learnt a great deal about country racing in the time I have represented country areas.

Mr McIver: You don't call them country race meetings, do you? They are picnic races.

Mr LAURANCE: Yes, they are picnic races. I mention this matter, because it is very important to the people I represent. For a start, only one race meeting is held a year. Unless people belong to the Pastoralists and Graziers Association of WA (Inc.), or the local shire, I do not meet them more than once a year when I see them at the races. They go to the race meeting and frequently it is their main social outing of the year. Some of them seldom move from their station properties and this is the only occasion on which I see them in 12 months. The race meeting is a big event for them. They arrive on the Friday evening and have a barbeque at the racetrack. Ablution facilities have been established at the racetrack on a self-help basis, so at least they have the necessary facilities, even though they are used only once a year.

These people arrive on the Friday evening and the race meeting is conducted on the Saturday. That race meeting is not the type to which most members are accustomed. A stockmen's race is

held and I provide one of the trophies for it. The horse has to be bred in the north-west and the jockey has to be a bona fide station rider.

This year they had some of the biggest fields I have ever seen. Some of the people who are working on the pipeline—

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member to relate his comments to the Bill.

Mr LAURANCE: I am talking about country representation and the difference between city and country electorates and the access people have to their members.

Mr D. L. Smith: Why do you need to see them at the race meeting? I thought the reason for your small number of electors was to help you doorknock—not just see them at picnic race meetings once a year.

Mr LAURANCE: The member has missed the whole point of what I am saying. If I had the time I would start again. It would take a year to doorknock my electorate and then I would cover only the pastoral properties, not the towns.

The point is this: I could visit an elector in my electorate, and he could be in his backyard. I could be standing at that person's house and, if he were at the other end of his property, he could be further away from me than the area covered by the electorate of the member for Mitchell.

What would happen if the member for Mitchell were selected as one of the approximately 11 members elected to represent the Labor Party under this new arrangement? He would not be able to find Gascoyne Junction. He would not go as far as that on his long service leave. Never mind about Gascoyne Junction, the member for Mitchell would not be able to find Midland Junction!

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: Bearing in mind the stupid interjections being made by the member for Mitchell, it is obvious he does not understand the first thing about the north of this State.

I was talking about the race meeting, and I want to complete what I was saying. A race is conducted with horses bred in the north-west, a stockmen's handicap is held—that is a very unusual event—and then there is an event for lady riders, who have to be from station properties.

Mr Tom Jones: You are getting some good Press out of this!

Mr I. F. Taylor: This is one of the most irrelevant speeches I have ever heard in this House.

Mr LAURANCE: When the member for Kalgoorlie gets angry, his eyes get very close together.

A function is held on race night in the club pavilion and, on the Sunday, a gymkhana takes place. Then, on the Monday, everyone goes home. It is a four-day meeting and a very important event for the people in my part of the State.

Mr Bertram: Can you give us any favourites?

Mr LAURANCE: The member is welcome to come along to the event with me. It would be a real education for him.

Mr Bertram: You have 25 more minutes to waste.

Mr LAURANCE: Effectively, that might be the one day in the year when some of those people have access to their members of Parliament.

I am sorry I took so long to answer the interjections. It just so happened that last Saturday, in addition to the races at Gascoyne Junction, a race meeting was held at Leonora. One of my Legislative Council colleagues went to Mt. Magnet, and the other went to the Leonora races. Those towns are not in my electorate; they are in the Murchison-Eyre electorate. We are talking about an area which is almost equal to the area of New South Wales and Victoria combined. That is the sort of area to which one is referring when one talks about the Lower North Province.

I went to the Gascoyne Junction races and we arranged that one of the Legislative Council members would attend the function at Mt. Magnet and the other would attend the Leonora races. One could almost say those three places are thousands of kilometres apart.

Indeed, it might be 1 000 kilometres from Gascoyne Junction to Leonora. It would certainly be many hundreds of kilometres. That indicates how far the upper House member had to travel on that day in order to see some of the constituents in that part of his electorate.

Even members who are elected to this House who have large electorates do not understand that my two Legislative Council colleagues represent an area that stretches from Exmouth to Eucla. The same area in Europe would probably be divided into 20 countries, with numerous members of Parliament.

I ask members to use their imaginations to envisage the distance covered by these large electorates. The people in those electorates cannot pick up a telephone and ring their members of Parliament in their electorate offices, as can people in, for example, the Joondalup electorate.

It is very difficult for members of Parliament, who represent such large provinces, to see their electors. It is difficult also for the electors to contact their members of Parliament who travel hundreds of kilometres to get to the races, and that is the point I am trying to make.

Members opposite want to do away with that sort of representation; they want to concentrate all the power in Perth. Members opposite want to have a team of people in the Legislative Council who do not belong anywhere. They want to have an amorphous group of people in the Legislative Council. If one is the biggest party hack, one can be elected!

Several members interjected.

Mrs Beggs: Some of your members have their electorate offices in the city.

Mr LAURANCE: That point is worth taking up. Government members are trying to deny the geography of this State. Consider the locations of Exmouth and Eucla. I ask members: Where will I put my electorate office? What is the use of putting an electorate office at Eucla if one is trying to get to Exmouth?

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: I am trying to get members opposite to see the error of their ways and the foolishness of their argument. Members locate their electorate offices in the area in which they will best be able to service their electors. The member for Kimberley knows this, because he has been to my area. I have attended functions with him in my area and I have even put him on the plane to leave it. Last time the member for Kimberley was in my electorate he wanted to go further north and, by some fluke, he was able to do so. In about nine out of 10 flights out of my area, one normally has to travel back to Perth before one can go further north.

Mr Hodge: Poor representation on your part.

Mr LAURANCE: No, it is the geography of the State. My father-in-law who represented this area in the Legislative Council for 12 years—

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! There are far too many interjections while the member for Gascoyne is speaking. There is also another meeting taking place on my right. I ask that the interjections cease and the meeting stop.

Mr LAURANCE: Thank you, Sir.

I just want to make this point to give members an idea of what it is like to represent such an area. Like the Hon. Philip Lockyer, who succeeded my father-in-law in his electorate, my

father-in-law lived at Carnarvon and, indeed, he still lives there.

If he wanted to go to a meeting at Meekatharra on a Wednesday, he would have to leave Carnarvon on the Tuesday, stay overnight in Perth, fly to Meekatharra on the Wednesday, catch a plane back to Perth on the Thursday, stay overnight in Perth that day, and return to Carnarvon on the Friday. The airlines still operate that way today. To go from Carnarvon to an afternoon meeting at Meekatharra takes four days. That is why these members have an electorate office in Perth. The people of areas like Meekatharra must be able to contact their member, and that is the only simple way. The member for Kimberley has an electorate office in the city, but no-one would say he is a city person.

Mrs Beggs: That is the point I am making. You are saying that a country member with an electorate office in the city can well represent his electorate. Proportional representation will not alter that.

Mr LAURANCE: The member does not understand what she is talking about; she does not understand the size of the State.

Mrs Beggs: I come from the country, too.

Mr LAURANCE: She has not been in that part of the country by the sound of it.

Mr Bryce: When did you have an interest in the country?

Mr LAURANCE: That occurred the day I was born, which was in the country.

Mr Bryce: Where?

Mr LAURANCE: It was in the wheat-belt area of this State.

Mr Bryce: When did you adopt an interest in the Gascoyne?

Mr LAURANCE: As the Minister would know, I taught there for many years.

Mr Bryce: Many years would be about three.

Mr LAURANCE: No.

Mr Bryce: How many?

Mr LAURANCE: It was a lot longer than three years.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LAURANCE: I believe members opposite are trying to get me sidetracked.

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: This issue is serious. I do not want to be sidetracked. I have tried to give members an idea of the enormity of the State. In response to the Deputy Premier, who made a number of comments about this point of represen-

tation, I must tell him that 80 per cent of this State is represented by four members of the Legislative Council, who are the members for North Province and Lower North Province. The ALP machine has got its knickers in a knot about four members.

What is the argument? There is no argument against four old members representing 80 per cent of the land area of this State. The area extends from way in the south to Wyndham. In the Legislative Assembly another four members represent that area. Out of a total of 87 members in this Parliament less than 10 per cent of them represent an enormous area of the State, where it is so difficult to have contact with electors, and everyone has difficulties with communication and transport.

I have been through all these points before, yet the members opposite will deny the people of that enormous area of the State proper representation. That area contributes an enormous amount to the economy of this State, and enables this Government to buy fancy things like the Whitford nodes. It has taken money from the people of the Pilbara in order to buy some sandhills in the Whitford area, and that was designed to please the lady opposite.

Mr Parker interjected.

Mrs Beggs interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: That is the attitude of many people in the Kimberley—they have told me this—and I know that many people in the area of the member for Whitford do not support this move.

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: Money from the north of this State, and, in particular, from the iron ore industry will be used to buy the Whitford nodes. The iron ore industry pays royalties to this State Government so that it can buy fancy things.

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: We must remember that money comes from the farming community also.

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: I remind members that eight members out of the 87 in this Parliament to represent 80 per cent of the land area of this State is not great representation for those people, and to decrease the number would only shortchange those electors. If I were not supported in this argument by the members who represent that northern part of the State, I would be surprised.

I will confine my remarks to the Legislative Council. Only four of the total of 34 members, represent that large part of the State where the

people encounter many difficulties. The Labor Party is concerned about these electorates, but it has two of the four members, and the other two are from the Liberal Party. What is unfair about that? What fairer system could we have?

An Opposition member: They want the four of them.

Mr LAURANCE: I am responding to the remarks made by the Deputy Premier.

Mr Bryce: I hope so.

Mr LAURANCE: I am coming to them now.

Mr Bryce: That is the democratic nature of a debate; one tends to answer the substance of the points made by the other side.

Mr Rushton: We get on better in this House when the Deputy Premier is not present.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LAURANCE: The Minister in reply made the point that some voters in Lower North Province have 11 times the voting power of others. He said also that the Liberal Party set up these electorates as "rotten boroughs", or whatever he called them, to ensure conservative parties maintained power in the State. That is just so much bunkum. One of these seats in the Legislative Council has seesawed between the Liberal Party and the Labor Party. The Deputy Premier has political dyslexia; he is back to front. Most of the northern seats have seesawed between both sides of politics for most of this century, and that is political democracy and fairness. We must tell the people of Western Australia what the ALP is trying to do to the upper House. This is the first step to achieve what the ALP ultimately wants, and this step is totally unfair. I am totally against it.

Everybody in those areas gets an equal opportunity, regardless of the number of electors within that area, to return a member to this Parliament. That is the important aspect about our present system. Let us take it a step further. On the same day in some of those remote areas—and I have pointed this out to the House before—the same people have voted in the same election for a Liberal Party member in the Legislative Assembly and a Labor Party member in the Council, and vice versa. Members cannot tell me that is not democratic; it is a very democratic system. Those people know their votes are equal, but the Government wants to make them unequal. It wants to be unfair to country and north-west people, and I am very strongly opposed to this proposal.

I cannot do much about it from this side of the House, but I opposed it when speaking on the sec-

ond reading debate, and again in the Committee stage, and I am opposing it now during the third reading stage. I will use every opportunity and every bit of my time to do that. I spoke for the full length of time allotted to me during the second reading debate and in the Committee stage, and I will speak for my full time during the third reading stage.

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: I will make my protest in my own way. The debate will not finish here. We will get our argument across, and we will win it. We will not do it by putting it on billboards and spending money; we are not sure where all the Labor Party's money is coming from in that respect. The problem will not be solved by our throwing money at it as the Labor Party is doing, but by our convincing people that what the Government is trying to do is basically unfair. That is why it will fail.

Mr Gordon Hill interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: I do not care whether it goes to the Legislative Council or to a referendum; the result will be the same. It is an unfair system and it will not succeed.

Mr Bryce: Is it fair that the Liberal Party has always had a majority in that House?

Mr LAURANCE: The Government could have won the seats; it could not win a majority of the seats.

Mr Bryce: It is a little manipulated coincidence that the conservatives always have had a majority, and you call it fair.

Mr LAURANCE: The Minister cannot say it is because of the smaller seats; he is saying that is unfair.

Mr Bryce: It is strange to hear you talk about fairness.

Mr LAURANCE: Only half the members of the Council go to an election at one time; that is why the Government cannot win 54 per cent of the seats.

That is what makes a fair system. The fact that only half of the members stand for election at one time has stood us in good stead in this State. It has been an example to many other parts of the world of a system that provides basic fairness and maintains an amount of stability in our political system.

If the Government won a majority of the Council seats at the last election as I think it may have done, and if it wins a majority at the next election, it will probably have a majority in the upper House. It cannot say that, because some small

seats exist which do not have the same representation, it cannot gain control of the upper House.

Mr Bryce: It is a little accident, isn't it?

Mr LAURANCE: The seats which are referred to at the head of the Government's advertising are those it has held many times in history. It cannot say that because people in Meekatharra have, according to the Government's claim, 11 times the value of a vote of a person living somewhere else, it is prevented from controlling the upper House. That is not so because the Labor Party has had Legislative Council members from the Meekatharra area, or Halls Creek, or Gascoyne Junction.

The Government's argument falls down. I want to point out to people in the north and remote areas what they will get if the individualised, personalised members they select and elect now are replaced. They will get a system that gives them 22 party hacks, 10 from the Labor Party, most likely, and 10 from the Liberal Party, and one party hack each from two of the small parties. It is probable the last two members will decide what happens in that House. This is what country people will get—no individualised representation, but a list of people of whom they have never heard and whom they will never see. The House will be deadlocked most of the time and will be ruled by a minority party. A democrat or a member of another minor party will hold the balance of power.

The ALP will abrogate a lot of its responsibility or power in the upper House because it will be dictated to by a minority. That is tough for the ALP, but I ask: What about the people at the other end of the State? What sort of representation will they have if that type of system is introduced? Why do we want a system that creates a deadlock most of the time? Why do we want members who represent party machines rather than the areas of the State? Why do we want a system in which a minority dictates the terms most of the time?

If the Government had any sense of fairness, it would stick with the existing system. People in the country and the north-west, many of whom I represent, want to hang on to the system they have. They deserve at least their existing representation in the two Houses of Parliament, and they will be very sore at members of Parliament, particularly ALP members, if they support this measure which drastically reduces the representation of those people.

The third reading stage of this Bill has given me another opportunity to express my bitter opposition to the measure.

MR CRANE (Moore) [3.36 p.m.]: This is a very sad day for me as one who has respected the dignity of the Parliament, who has tried to live up to it in my time in this place, and who has seen it abused so many times. Today, 28 September, will go down as a very black day in the history of Western Australia. We all remember D-day, 6 June 1944, but I believe today is three-D-day—the "day democracy died". We should remember it as such because that statement is very true.

I know it is difficult for us because of our lack of numbers to win this particular battle, but I have no doubt we will win the war. I was reminded last night when I saw the Premier speaking on television in his party's advertisements—and it amazes me where the money is coming from to pay for those advertisements supporting the ALP's bad dream of one-vote-one-value—of a time many years ago. At that time, I listened to the same sort of propaganda from one who was a master of the art, Dr Goebbels, because that was the sort of propaganda to which the world was subjected. We are being subjected to the same sort of propaganda based on the same premise—a false premise.

At that time many years ago, there was another propagandist by the name of Joyce, later known more "affectionately" as Lord Haw Haw. He defected to the Nazi machine in the same way as the ALP has defected to the Communist regime. One of the broadcasts he made referred to the British people fighting the war and he said we were losing the battle in North Africa—we had just lost Tobruk—and we were losing battles in Europe and everywhere else. Finally, one very brave and sane person, Winston Churchill, said "England only ever wins one battle—and that is the last battle". Just as Churchill told Lord Haw Haw that it did not matter about the other battles, so it does not matter about this battle. We will win the last battle, whether in the upper House—

Mr Pearce: Or on the beaches.

Mr CRANE: —or out there among the people, and we will win it because our argument is right; right always wins over a temporary might, and the Government has a very temporary might in this place.

It is proposing to allow the upper House to be selected rather than elected. In this State and nation we have been fortunate to have people elected to Parliament.

It has been pointed out that if the Government is successful in this horrible deed, members of Parliament will be selected. They will be the party

hacks of the Liberal Party, the Labor Party, or any other party which is fortunate enough to have its hacks elected or selected, put forward, and voted into that place. Is that what the people in the vast areas of Western Australia want—people who are selected for them? I think not. They want and they deserve to have their own choice of representative selected.

That will not happen under this legislation. This is the greatest attempt at a gerrymander ever perpetrated in Western Australia. Sure, mistakes have been made in the past, and we know that the style and the way in which the members of the Legislative Council have been elected have changed. I do not say that is not correct.

A Government member interjected.

Mr CRANE: You can speak as much as you like, but you will never out-speak me!

Mistakes have been made, and those mistakes have been corrected.

I spoke about Churchill a while ago. I remind the House that he once said, "Our democracy is the worst system of all, after all the others have failed". That is quite true. It is also true that we have things wrong with our system. We can always find things wrong, because familiarity breeds contempt. However, we still have the best system in the world.

When the Deputy Premier was asked this afternoon to name a country which has a better system, he was unable to do so because no other country has a better system.

Like the previous member who spoke, I am speaking on the third reading. I spoke on the second reading, and I spoke during the Committee stage. This is not a dying fight. It is my responsibility to bring to members, and to others in the future, the wisdom that was given to us many years ago, and which many members on the Government side want to take away from us.

Where are all the members who support this legislation? I do not see them in their seats.

Mr Stephens: They are having afternoon tea.

Mr CRANE: Have any of those members spoken? Let us read *Hansard* to learn what those people said about this great legislation! I would like to hear from the member for Collie. I always enjoy his addresses, because he usually speaks with much commonsense. He speaks in a forthright and parochial way on behalf of his electorate, and that is very good. That is what members should do.

Mr Jamieson: You are the first one to have got rid of the whole of the Press Gallery at once!

Mr CRANE: That is not surprising. One of the problems in this place is getting through to the red network. It is very difficult. That statement will bring them back! That has been one of the hardest things to do in the last few years, and that started during the Whitlam era.

Mr Brian Burke: Can I ask you what you mean by "getting through to the red network"?

Mr CRANE: Getting through to the red network, because it seems it is no trouble for the Communist cause to be put forward in the newspapers and in the media. That statement ought to bring the Press back. That will give them something to talk about. The only way one can encourage the Press to publish anything is to come out with something which is way out.

As I was saying, we are faced today with what the Government regards as a walkover by numbers. However, it is not a walkover by numbers, and the Government will rue this day.

I have just been asking for the Government backbenchers who support the Bill to speak, yet they have not said one word against the arguments we have put up. They have not said anything because they do not believe in the legislation, and because they are not allowed to speak.

A Government member interjected.

Mr CRANE: If the member is allowed to speak, let him get up and make his address. I challenge him; I ask him; I plead with him—please get up and make an address!

Mr Read: I could not overshadow you.

Mr CRANE: That applies to all members opposite; but they will not take the opportunity to speak. I have every confidence they will not make a speech, because they are not allowed to do so. They have been given their instructions.

How many times in the last few weeks have we seen the Premier leaving this place early in the evening? He and the Deputy Premier have left it to the Leader of the House to do the leading. Goodness gracious me, he could not lead a randy dog to a bitch on heat.

Government members interjected.

Mr CRANE: That is the sort of thing we have seen in this place over the last few weeks. We have not seen support for the Leader of the House from the Premier and the Deputy Premier at the time he needed support. They have gone home to bed, or wherever they have gone, and left him to it. We have had to put up with a Government which not only is not prepared to listen, but also is not here to listen.

It is difficult for a member to address an empty room; it is the responsibility of members of the

Government to be here. I challenge them to be here a bit more often.

The other night I mentioned that the member for Perth used to occupy the seat I am now using, and I said that it has been sat on more since I moved to this side of the House than ever it was used in the nine years previously, when the member for Perth occupied it. It is perfectly obvious that he came back in for a little while for divisions. How often do we hear members of that type purporting to represent the people?

The Government is making an effort to remove democracy, which is our right. It has been given to us, and we on this side of the House will defend it to our last breath.

I conclude with the wise words of Abraham Lincoln, who said that one can fool most of the people some of the time, and some of the people most of the time, but that one cannot fool all of the people all of the time.

Mr Pearce: You cannot even quote accurately.

Mr CRANE: Did the Labor Party win the Wanneroo Shire Council election last Saturday? It did not. The Liberal Party will win Mundaring. The reason the Labor Party did not win in Wanneroo is that one cannot fool all the people all the time. The Labor Party did not fool them for very long.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I express my objection to the obnoxious legislation that the Government is trying to put through this Parliament by sheer weight of numbers.

MR CLARKO (Karrinyup) [3.48 p.m.]: I rise in response to the remarks of the Deputy Premier. I did not intend to speak at the third reading stage, but repeatedly he referred to my remarks on the second reading, so it is essential for me to respond.

This Bill aims at providing for the Western Australian Legislative Council a system of one-man-one-vote-one-value, as the Government has asserted repeatedly. It claims that a system not based on one-man-one-vote-one-value is undemocratic. At present members of the Government are flashing, on buttons on their suits and on badges on their cars, slogans about equal votes. They have advertisements in the newspapers and on television. They are trying to create a situation in Western Australia where the citizens of the State will take up the cry that everyone's vote should be equal; but the Labor Government is placing before us a package of electoral reforms which will not guarantee one-man-one-vote-one-value.

I challenge the Government and the Leader of the House to name other countries which have a system based entirely on one-man-one-vote-one-value. If they cannot name one, they should say so, so the people of Western Australia are not misled into believing that something is wrong with our system because it does not provide for one-man-one-vote-one-value.

If members opposite honestly believe in what they are saying, their entire political system must be based on the principle of one-man-one-vote-one-value. At the same time, *per se*, members opposite must be objecting to the system of government in Australia, because it is not based on the principle of one-man-one-vote-one-value. Even the Commonwealth system which has operated since the mid-1970s, as everyone knows, is not based on the principle of one-man-one-vote-one-value. Any system which has a Senate ignores the number of people and is based on regions or areas and is not based on the principle of one-man-one-vote-one-value. In the House of Representatives of Australia today, Tasmania has five members, irrespective of the number of people who live in Tasmania. That is not a system of one-man-one-vote-one-value.

As I said in my speech on the second reading, members opposite have made a grave mistake in seeking to establish the Legislative Council with 22 members. When the President is elected, most of the time the Legislative Council will operate in a situation of a hung Parliament, and that is bad.

As a result of inadequate and poor electoral systems, many countries have not been able to develop for their citizens a system of government which can respond to the people's wishes and needs. Who would want to have a system of government in Australia similar to that which has existed in France for most of this century? No clear direction exists under such a system, and in the days of Charles de Gaulle a dictatorship existed. De Gaulle was a soldier, who, as a result of his personal charisma, took over the political system, which was based on the principle of one-man-one-rule. Since the days of de Gaulle, France has had an inadequate system of government.

Italy has not been able to reach the heights normally expected of a modern European country, because its Parliaments last for very brief periods. In a system where a Government continually hangs on by its toenails, it is impossible to have a Government which can offer decisive leadership. Such Governments cannot make unpopular decisions, regardless of how desirable they may be for the good of the country.

I challenge the Government to provide the people of Western Australia with a list of six, 12, 20, or 30 countries which have a system based entirely on the principle of one-man-one-vote-one-value which, at the same time, have provided good government for their nation.

Even if we have a system of one-man-one-vote-one-value, it is not certain we shall have a good governmental system. The only way in which a system of one-man-one-vote-one-value can be achieved is for it to be based on proportional representation. As I have said on several occasions, this Government does not intend to have proportional representation for the Legislative Assembly and, therefore, it does not propose to have a system which is based entirely on the principle of one-man-one-vote-one-value. Even if we divide Western Australia into 57 Legislative Assembly seats with exactly the same number of people in each seat, it is possible for a political party to obtain 49 per cent of the vote in each and every one of those seats, but not obtain one seat in Parliament. That is the sort of system the Government has in mind.

The Government wants to have a system which will not ensure the number of members elected is directly proportionate to the number of votes cast. It is amazing the Government has such a system in mind, because for 30 years or more in Western Australia, on every occasion the Government of this State has been formed by the party or parties which obtained the greatest number of votes.

Despite the criticism levelled at our political system, I am told that over the last 30 years or more on not one occasion has a party which obtained the majority of the votes not become the Government. The system proposed by the Government will not ensure such a situation pertains. Therefore, it is clear the Bill is a giant hoax on the people of Western Australia.

I have said before, and I repeat very firmly, that without doubt the system proposed by the Government will ensure that long-time servants of the major political parties will become the future Legislative Councillors of Western Australia. As I have said, Legislative Councillors will increasingly and finally entirely be people from the city; those who are the key people in the Labor and Liberal Parties. People who are the key members of the Labor and Liberal Parties—that is, the lay parties—will become the Legislative Councillors of this State.

Of the 22 Legislative Councillors, one or two will be independents. If all the country parties got together, they could probably gain the requisite nine per cent to elect one, perhaps two, of the in-

dependent members. However, it is more likely the independents will come from a city-based party. The remaining approximately 20 members of the Legislative Council from the Labor and Liberal Parties will be what are crudely called "party hacks" and they will come from the city. Therefore, there will be no country representation.

Nobody who lives in the country in Western Australia will be able to say, "Joe Bloggs is my member of Parliament". It is essential we ensure the non-metropolitan area of Western Australia has first-class representation. It gets it today from both sides of the political spectrum, because first-class men and women represent country electorates and give first-class service to their electors. They represent the interests of their areas.

I challenge any psephologist to look at Western Australia and say that a system of government which is suitable for Singapore is, without question, suitable for Western Australia. Specific interest groups which are non-metropolitan based will lose out under the Government's proposed system. The Government has chosen a dreadful system. The 22 Legislative Councillors who will be roughly evenly divided between the two major political parties, will, if members opposite become long-time occupiers of the Government benches, be a thorn in their sides. Those councillors will prevent this State from having decisive leadership, and they will prevent the Government from making tough decisions. They will deny the Government the freedom it would have were the members of the two Houses elected on a sound system.

I have said before that it is virtually impossible to find a Government in any country which is elected entirely on the basis of one-man-one-vote-one-value. I have named Israel as a country of that nature, but Israel is a peculiar example of a group of people who were previously spread throughout the world and who returned to live in the place from which they came originally. They returned to Israel in a very determined mood after they had endured much suffering as a result of racial discrimination, and were prepared to give up their personal freedom in order to come together and fight to establish themselves as the country of Israel. Those people have a straight proportional system of voting. They have a direct one-man-one-vote-one-value system. However, I ask Government members to produce other like countries.

The member for Floreat discussed with me the other day the way in which the lower House in Austria has a system based on proportional voting. However, the upper House has not. Therefore, it does not have a system based purely on

the principle of one-man-one-vote-one-value. Some would say that the United Nations is the most important forum on this planet, but it does not have a system based on one-man-one-vote-one-value. Irrespective of the number of people in a particular country, the people get a single representative at the United Nations.

Mr Jamieson: You will convince us of that eventually.

Mr CLARKO: Secondly, other countries do not have one-man-one-vote-one-value. Australia does not have one-man-one-vote-one-value, because it is a Federal system. For all those reasons, and because the Government's system can and will produce an ineffective and ineffectual upper House, the Bill should be thrown away.

What is more, if members opposite are to be consistent in their argument for one-man-one-vote-one-value, it is essential they adopt a proportional system for this House. The Government does not intend to do this. What it is trying to do is to improve its political chances in Western Australia. The Government has taken up a simple theme of one-man-one-vote-one-value, something which in the history of its own party it has rarely practised.

More importantly, I take great interest in the comments made by Government members when I have argued that country people will not be able to become members of the Legislative Council. Some Government members have said that the Government will take steps to ensure that country people will become part of the Labor Party's Legislative Council tickets. Since country people are only a small minority in this State, what the Government is apparently trying to do is to work out a system that must be the antithesis of one-man-one-vote-one-value. This is obviously so, because the numbers lie in the Perth metropolitan area; it has the numbers, so in the purest sense of democracy, the city people are entitled to choose their own people, and they will choose city people. If the Government sets up a system to ensure country people are chosen as well as city people, it is using a system that is not one-man-one-vote-one-value. And any system other than that one is undemocratic in the Government's view, but I believe that is nonsense.

Democracy is not related to our having people divided into an electoral system where each electorate has the same number of voters. That is not a system which with certainty will always produce a representation which equates with the Government's ideal. The only way to do it is to have a total proportional representation system, but then we cannot get that so-called ideal.

This is a poor piece of legislation. It is simply a process to increase the Government's representation in this State and it is, as the Deputy Premier revealed—although this was partially denied by his colleagues earlier in the debate either when he was overseas or somewhere else out of the Chamber—a step to seek to abolish the upper House. What the Government is dealing with, these temporary measures to change the Legislative Council, is just a passing charade.

MR PETER JONES (Narrogin) [4.03 p.m.]: A lot of what Opposition members have said has been directed towards the mathematical examples associated with the Bill and trying to indicate that representation will move predominantly to the metropolitan area.

The Government has successfully managed a campaign of distortion, emotion, and half-truths. For example, it has not very successfully advertised the fact that the net result of what it is doing with this Bill is to make metropolitan electorates smaller. This Bill, along with all the electoral reform the Government has foreshadowed, and of which this Bill is a substantial part and the supposed first step, will mean that metropolitan electorates will become much smaller. That fact has not been advertised.

The Government's campaigning—its slogan—has been to the effect that one-vote-one-value should be adopted so that everyone has an equal vote. However, the Government has carefully avoided saying that this Bill does not include a provision for one-vote-one-value for this House. This Bill addresses only the Legislative Council. Nonetheless, the Government has tried to sell the argument that it is introducing a one-vote-one-value system throughout the entire State for the election of members of Parliament, Parliament as a whole. Plainly that is not only untrue, but also deliberately misleading.

Most of what I heard the Premier say the other night in a television advertisement was clearly questionable. He did not explain how one-vote-one-value would provide better, more, or special representation for country people. In fact, there will be a lessening of representation. As Opposition members have said, there can be no result from the passing of this legislation other than a diminishing representation of non-metropolitan parts of the State.

An extreme example would be the Federal electorate of Kalgoorlie, an electorate which places an impossible burden on the sitting member, regardless of which political party he represents. No party would disagree that it is virtually impossible to attend to all that electorate's needs, unlike the

situation faced by the member for Ascot and the Minister handling the Bill; they can represent their electorates easily because their electorates are geographically smaller and the needs of the people are very much different.

Government members with electorate offices will agree that a lot of work is done by their electorate staff without their knowing about it; that is, until they are subsequently told as I am sure they are. Their electorate staff assist people with problems dealing with pensions, migration, contacting Government departments, and so on. Certainly in my own electorate office a great deal of the general housekeeping arrangements are met by my electorate staff; they can usually deal with many people who call at the office. Clearly that cannot be done in most non-metropolitan electorates. There is no hope of this being achieved in the Federal seat of Kalgoorlie, yet that is what the Government is suggesting can be done in country electorates throughout the State.

The Government may try to counter that argument by saying it will increase the availability of services; that is, by saying country members can have two or three electorate offices, additional staff, additional equipment, special travel arrangements, and so on. Mr Speaker, I do not know how you could think this will meet the criteria of good representation; clearly it will not. If the Government believes it will, what the Government is saying is that eventually the people will not need members of Parliament and that all that will be needed are people in offices with certain business equipment.

The member for Gascoyne indicated the way in which his predecessor came to grips with representing the electorate of Gascoyne, although admitting it was absolutely impossible by any stretch of personal effort to meet all the electors and attend all functions. However, he still managed to represent the electorate very well, and he did that in a way that suited the requirements and the needs of the electorate. But that principle cannot now be matched by legislative or practical means that would still retain what the Government says it wants; that is, good representation. Clearly the Government will not be able to do that. We want all areas to have good representation. I do not know how the Government can support one-vote-one-value—I do not. It is impossible to solve Western Australia's electoral situation on a mathematical basis.

The Government keeps using the example of the Senate while very carefully avoiding answering points made by Opposition members that the Senate does not give true one-vote-one-value representation either, especially when we consider

that a State like NSW with about four million people has the same Senate representation as has Tasmania, which has about 400 000 people. The Government has not questioned that.

Mr Bryce: I did. I said I didn't think there was any democracy in that.

Mr PETER JONES: There is democracy in that. We do not want a system in Australia such as that which prevails in Canada, where the upper House is appointed on a people basis rather than a State or provincial basis. This means that the more populous eastern provinces in Canada control the nation while the western provinces just do not have any say in the national Parliament because they are outvoted by the more populous east. The Deputy Premier said he prefers that system.

Mr Bryce: I didn't say anything about Canada.

Mr PETER JONES: He said the Australian Senate system was not democratic.

Mr Bryce: I said it wasn't necessarily the best.

Mr PETER JONES: The Senate system protects States like Western Australia. If the Deputy Premier does not want to stand up in support of that system, which supports Western Australia and States like Queensland, South Australia, and Tasmania against the more populous States of NSW and Victoria, he does not belong in this place because he is not prepared to fight for us.

Mr Bryce: Have you ever seen the whips cracking in the Senate?

Mr PETER JONES: Clearly the Deputy Premier does not want the Senate to be a States' House that represents all the States equally.

Mr Tonkin: It is not.

Mr Bryce: It has not been for about 20 years at least.

Mr PETER JONES: The Deputy Premier does not want a States' House in the Federal Parliament.

Mr Tonkin: It is a party House, and you know it. Why don't you admit the truth? When did you last see the parties voting on a State basis? Don't worry about facts, get on with the bulldust.

Mr PETER JONES: I do not know why Government members get so sensitive about the upper House.

Mr Tonkin: Sensitive about the truth. You know it is a party House.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Narrogin has the floor.

Mr PETER JONES: The Government does not want to support the fact that the Senate is, consti-

tutionally, a State's House where, regardless of the political parties comprising its membership, there is equal representation, a system which does not apply in the House of Representatives, which is represented on a population basis.

I was discussing the protection we have in Australia which is not present in Canada; the upper House is elected on a population basis and it denies the western provinces of Canada the representation they should have. If my memory serves me correctly, presently the Federal Canadian Government or the Liberal Party—the party in power—does not have one single member from the western provinces. It does not need them because the provinces of Quebec and Ontario provide enough members to service their electoral and political needs. Indeed, it is an appointed House so it has been easy to make certain that it has the numbers.

I refer to the Premier's statement that the Government's Bill and electoral proposals—they are certainly not all in this Bill—in regard to one-vote-one-value and to the Parliament as a whole, do not include the manner in which the Government says it will be able to provide better representation in the non-metropolitan areas of the State. Announcements have been made about more electorate offices, more support, and so on, all of which aspects I have already mentioned.

How does the Government equate that with its earlier statement regarding the costs which will be saved, the costs of Parliament, members of Parliament, parliamentary offices, equipment, and offices which will be saved, by virtue of this legislation being passed by the Parliament? It appears that, on one hand, the Government tried to promote the concept that this Bill will save money. It may say, "Look, we have too many members of Parliament. We have too many people being paid from the public purse. Therefore we will cut down the Parliament somewhat. We don't want them. We don't need them, and we will save this amount of money".

On the other hand, when there was some outcry about that—no doubt, from members who would lose their seats—the Government rushed in and said, "We will fix that up by providing more facilities, offices, transport, support services, and so on". On one lot of figures it was going to cost the public just as much as it would save by the reduction of the number of members. That argument clearly is not sustainable. Where we can get better representation from, I have no idea.

The member for Ascot spoke about the Bill—how good it was, and so on. No doubt he would perhaps consider a different area. I do not

know how it can be considered to be a good Bill when the presiding officer in the Legislative Council will have double the value of votes of his colleagues. Even that embarrassed the Minister, and the Government amended it. Certainly the other provisions that have to be amended hardly give credit to the Government, even by its standards.

To return to the basic issue, I indicate that we cannot sustain any arguments on representation, support, and services to the people of Western Australia for an electoral system that is not geographically based.

Examples have been given today by various members who have spoken that clearly there could be no direct geographical electoral representation. In no way could this Bill provide that or even make an attempt to do so when it talks about the whole of Western Australia being the electorate so far as the upper House is concerned. If the system is applied in a logical way, it would simply mean that a panel of members would be selected—those good and faithful servants, those who are in need of some promotion or reward for services rendered—and they would know for the currency of the Government that the electorate at large in the State would be their entire electoral province. Indeed, anybody wanting to seek election, would not have to go campaigning, doorknocking, or anything like that. All he would have to do in his constituency would be to see who was on the State Executive or the State council for his party, and lobby like steam. That is all that is required under the Government's Bill.

However, the Government could suggest that that is not actually good legislation—we know that it is not; how that can comprise a fair and equitable electoral system, God only knows!

Therefore, the only basic reason for it to be promoted is that it suits the Labor Party and its position in the world. It bears no relationship to the needs and requirements of the non-Labor areas, particularly the more remote areas of the State which are now very clearly represented in some instances by the Government. I am talking about the Pilbara, the Kimberley, and areas comprising North Province and the eastern goldfields. How will they fare under this arrangement? How will the people in the Kimberley fare with a situation that will not give them a member related to their geographical area?

Not only is the Bill bad in terms of what it seeks to do, but also it is bad in terms of its drafting. The Minister has had to amend it again and come in and remove one or two clearly ridiculous—not just obnoxious—provisions such as the

President of the Legislative Council having a double vote. Clearly the Bill is not in the interests of this State. It does not provide what the State needs and deserves and clearly it should be opposed.

MR COURT (Nedlands) [4.22 p.m.]: I appreciate the opportunity at the third reading stage to make a few comments on the legislation before us. Country people in this State have become very suspicious of the Labor Party's so-called electoral reform of the upper House. If members opposite have driven through these country areas, or have spoken to people there, they would know that, for very good reasons, the people do not want their political representation cut. Yesterday in the "Nationwide" debate with our leader, the Premier when questioned about the problem of country people getting adequate representation, said that he would make sure that any Labor preselection process ensured that country people were put on the ticket. When he was asked, "Why change the present system if you are going to ensure that country people get on to the ticket?", he was lost for words. That is a very important situation to which the Government should front up. The Government knows that under its preselection process, and to some extent under our own, it is not possible to guarantee that a certain number of country people are put on to the ticket.

The other aspect which the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform seems to roll off the top of his tongue is this business about modern communications. He says with modern communications we do not need the sort of representation that is currently given in country and remote areas in general. It is said that, because of modern communications, people can get on the telephone and air their problems. It is interesting that the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform on a talkback radio show—I think it was Guilfoyle's show on 6WF—brought up the point that with modern communications it is quite easy for people throughout this State to make contact with their representatives, even if those persons happen to be based in Perth. I found it quite interesting because someone contacted me to say that he was listening to that radio programme—it was broadcast throughout the State—but he could not ring the Minister and tell him that he could make contact because he did not have a telephone. It was an area in the Kimberley. That highlights the fact that in remote areas communication is a big problem.

We would all know that in business dealings, whether in this business or any other business, often when dealing with people in the Eastern States, for example, with our modern communi-

cations technology, we can ring people, send them a telex, arrange a conference line on a telephone where a group of people can be talking from different locations, and with the latest technology we will even be able to sit in front of television sets and watch and talk to each other, but on a regular basis we still need to front up to those people personally to get the message across. It is one thing to talk to people on a telephone or through a telex, but we all know that to get proper representation and to get our message across correctly we must go to the east and physically face those people and talk to them in their offices.

Mr Bryce: So it is all right for the Deputy Premier to go over east once in a while, is it?

Mr COURT: Once in a while, but when this House is sitting, it would be nice to see him here a little bit.

Members would agree that we could talk with London, for example, to negotiate a contract for a new steel mill, but it is not the same as personal representation. We know we must get together and hammer out the finer points. When one looks a person in the eye, it is a different situation from speaking over the telephone. That is an example of a business situation, but the business of politics is no different.

Let us take another example and consider a farmer in Grass Patch. The Minister for Transport represents that area as do two upper House members. Let us say that he happens to have a problem with the State authority supplying electricity. I am not certain whether the State authority supplies electricity there. If a person has a problem and if the Minister is busy and cannot get to that town, under the new system—this is a hypothetical example where the representation has been cut down and there are no longer two members representing that area—with modern communications it is suggested one could either ring up or tap on a computer and say, "I am having a problem with my power bill. I think it is incorrect and I want someone to look into the matter". The computer would probably come back and say on a little print-out form, "Your power bill is 60 days overdue. Pay it up or go to prison". People do not want to talk to a machine or over a telephone. They do not want to feed information into a computer. They want to talk to their members. We are talking about remote regions and the need for personal representation. The alternative to dealing with a problem with a machine and the modern electronics which the Government believes it will give outback representatives, is the current system.

A person could ring up an upper House member; for example, Jim Brown who makes personal contact with the constituent who might say to him, "I am having trouble with my power supply. Come and have a look at this". The problem could be fully investigated by the member and something could be done about it. We will not get that type of service by relying on so-called modern communications. The success of any business is really the service that is given to people. Personal service just cannot be replaced by machines, no matter what business one is in.

The proposals as outlined by the Government for the country and remote areas of this State will amount to nothing less than electronic representation. The people of these areas do not want that. We often hear the Deputy Premier say, "What about the South Australian example?" No doubt he will try to think of a fair electoral system in some other country. What about Western Australia? As the Deputy Premier will admit, this State is quite unique in the world in regard to its size and the wide spread of the population. No other State has to face up to the problems that we have in establishing an electoral system. We all agree that it is difficult. There is no such thing as a perfect system.

Members would agree that we live in a very democratic State and we do serve all people well. A lot of people are concentrated in the metropolitan area and they all receive good representation. Most members can get around their electorates quite easily. The member for Gascoyne gave some very good examples of the problems faced when a member is trying to travel around this State and I am sure the member for Kimberley would also appreciate the problems faced in some of these outback regions. Personal representation could not be replaced by electronics or by a pretty false hope that with the Government's preselection procedures it will make sure that many of the people on the ticket are from country areas.

I would like to finish my brief comments by saying that in the course of this debate, which has been going for a couple of weeks, I have consistently asked members opposite whether they can tell me of a country which has a better and more democratic electoral system than we have in our State. To give the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform his just dues, I indicate that he has given a good run-down of what one would expect in a democratic society and he has also admitted that problems exist in any attempt to achieve an electoral system which is seen to be fair by everyone. It is difficult to come up with a country more democratic than this country.

Mr Bryce: No, it is not. The Canadian provinces are more democratic than this State and also the German provinces. Don't suggest for a minute that, because there has not been a storm of response, we cannot answer your question. I can draw up a list of a dozen States.

Mr COURT: I have been asking a simple question for several weeks and the Government has been reluctant to come up with a country which is more democratic.

Mr Davies: That is not the point. The point is there are deficiencies in this system which need attention.

Mr COURT: Not the type of surgery which is proposed in this Bill, the type of surgery which is a major change to our electoral system.

Mr Davies: And long overdue.

Mr COURT: Country people living in remote areas of this State are having parliamentary representation taken away from them. I do not support representation by electronics. I prefer representation by people and I am opposed to the Bill.

Mr O'Connor: Country people in this area, as the member knows very well from his travels, will be the most affected under this Bill, because they will not get a vote in their region at all.

Mr Bertram: I do not get a vote now; I get one-sixteenth of a vote, which is not much of a vote at all.

Mr COURT: I oppose the third reading of the Bill.

MR MENSAROS (Florcat) [4.33 p.m.]: For a long time—at least for some decades—the Labor Party has continuously complained about the Western Australian Constitution and the electoral system. However, for all the whingeing and complaining of members opposite, I cannot recall one instance in the comparatively recent history—definitely not in my experience during the last 33 years—when the Labor Party has tried to do anything about that system, particularly when it was in Government. Whether we are talking about an increase in the number of members elected to this Chamber from 50 members about 30 years ago to the present number of 57, about the very radical changes to the structure of the Legislative Council, about the change in the composition of the electorates, or about the change in franchise from a restricted to an entirely free basis, all initiatives in these areas were instituted by Liberal-Country Party coalitions and not by a Labor Government. From memory, at least neither the Hawke Government nor the Tonkin Government—and those are the only two Govern-

ments of which I have personal experience—would have even attempted to do anything about it. It is the first time that this Government has come to Parliament and it is trying to introduce via legislative measures—or what I would call tampering with the Constitution—a change which it calls a reform. In the process of this, of course, we have a tremendous amount of argument in this Chamber. As I said on previous occasions, the arguments were mostly confined to the walls of this Chamber because I am sure they will not receive any publicity. During this internal argument, which has been raised again by the Deputy Premier, he has unleashed a third reading debate which otherwise would not have happened.

Mr Bryce: I am proud about it. I think your contribution is absolutely wonderful.

Mr MENSAROS: The real purpose of this exercise has scarcely been mentioned, even on this side, let alone on the Government's side. The purpose of the exercise, and we should not make any mistake about this, is very simply to achieve or to try to achieve, or to hope to achieve, a party political electoral advantage and thereby consolidate, hopefully keeping for a long time, if not perennially, the Labor Party in Government.

The question, of course, is that by those means—whether that can be achieved and that is a further question—what is happening to the people? No-one has mentioned at all what any of these measures if implemented would mean to the people. It has been mentioned that the people will obtain one-vote-one-value which is something mystical—I think even the Opposition would admit this when seriously considering it—to a large number of the electorate. Almost every public opinion research has shown that few people know much about the electoral system, how it works, or what it means. They know about some of the slogans promoted by the Labor Party recently and will no doubt be aware of them to a greater degree as a result of the car stickers, television advertisements, and printed advertisements. They do not really know the system. A few selected, or interested, people know what the system is. Apart from the slogans, the Government has not tried to tell the people what advantages it will receive from the proposed system. It has not said, "You will have a better living, more employment, less unemployment, one or other profession will be in a better position for some reason or another, or that any special section of the community, perhaps farmers, city dwellers, miners, transport workers, or whatever, will be in a better position". That would be the only point which would be of general interest to people and which perhaps could achieve popular support.

I remind the Government that virtually nothing can be done, particularly not in a lasting manner, which does not have popular support. It is quite interesting to note that today it is not necessary to have an elected Government system or truly elected Government system to need this popular support. I refer to the political situation in countries which are undoubtedly non-democratic and which do not have properly elected Governments, but which claim to achieve 96 or 98 per cent of the vote at their so-called elections. They are, without doubt and without contradiction, dictatorial Governments. Today with the enormous means of communication, both electronic communication from other countries, and internal communication, public opinion must be considered even in such dictatorial countries and it is. News from these countries is reaching Australia, not through the local media, but through periodicals which are read by few people, but it is clear that even in countries where dictators reign, whether these dictators are from the left or the right does not matter, because the end result is the same, perhaps to a lesser extent, but at least to some extent, the Government must heed public opinion.

The only way the Labor Party can win this argument and change the system—and I still question whether it would be to its advantage—is by getting the public behind it, not behind the slogan, "One-vote-one-value". People do not understand what the Government is talking about, but the Government could point out that something better will happen to people if this system contained in the Bill which is before the House is implemented. That has not been mentioned, let alone proved. One would admit that the Labor Party achieved advantage; it definitely won the battle with the printed media. The editorials of the printed media are certainly on the Government's side. Even in the media where the arguments are more logical and expressed better than are the speeches in this House, it has not been suggested that people will do better, that any individual citizen will have better employment, more leisure, more cars, more pay, fewer restrictions, or anything else they may want. That has never been said. What is being argued about is slogans, theories, and mathematics. On the other hand, there is no doubt that within this debate it has been shown that the measures, if they were to be implemented, would cause a lot of harm to many people in the way of personal representation. That representation is not concerned only with electoral systems, with the individual, or with the individual ills, problems, and concerns of the people such as we have all brought to us; it is concerned also

with legislation because ultimately we have to express the views and the interests of people or of individual electors in order to legislate or to amend legislation which appears to be in their interests.

Contrary to what the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform said in his second reading speech, vast differences exist between groups of electors, and those differences are based mainly on geographical features. Nobody can deny that. Despite the fact that the Minister said, "This legislation will result in a broader representation by a cross-section", it will not. Who will represent the interests of these geographically different parts of Western Australia?

If this Bill is enacted, who in the Legislative Council will represent the interests of the farmers who are diametrically opposed to the introduction of daylight saving, despite the fact that we, in the metropolitan area, might be convinced the city population is in favour of it? I am not so sure about that, but this is a different matter.

I have pointed out already that, at the last daylight saving referendum, virtually everybody made a mistake. This can be seen if one looks at the results of the referendum, because they turned out to be different from the views expressed by the members representing those electors.

The fact remains that generally people are not interested in electoral matters. I believe the Government realises this and that is why it has spent such a large sum of money on its advertising campaign.

The proof of what I am saying as to the Labor Party's recognition of this fact can be found in its pre-election campaign in which the emphasis was not on electoral reform. Nobody can claim the Labor Party won the election because it promised to introduce a system of one-vote-one-value. I do not think any objective observer would claim that, nor has one done so. Even the Government has not made such a claim.

An academic survey of the results of the last election was published, I understand, only today. That survey was carried out by people at Murdoch University. Many such surveys have been done, but the one to which I refer deals not only with the figures, but also with the causes that led to the electoral success of the Labor Party. The survey does not mention that its success was due even partially to its policy of one-vote-one-value. The survey indicates that the Labor Party's electoral success was due to many factors including promises which were made, but which have not been kept, and which enticed the people who were out of work, who had no security of employ-

ment, or who had high mortgages to vote for it. Prior to the election, the Labor Party promised those people that things would change and they would be better off. However, now no attempt is being made to try to convince the people that their lot will be better as a result of this legislation.

As has been pointed out already, the result of the Government's proposed system would be an electoral system based on party rule; that is, party rule by both sides of the House as majority parties exist today.

I shall give members another example to illustrate what I am saying. It relates to a country with which I am very familiar, because I went to university there. I give this example to some extent in response to the interjection of the Minister for Employment and Administrative Services.

In one way, Austria is similar to Australia in that the capital city is disproportionately large with a population of approximately two million people out of the country's total population of six million or 6.5 million. Vienna, the capital of Austria, has had a socialistic Government without interruption since the end of World War I. That Government introduced rent control in 1919 and it has existed ever since irrespective of currency changes, inflation, or the like. Therefore, today one could not buy a box of matches with one's monthly rent for an apartment. One must pay a certain amount towards the maintenance of the apartment, but people live virtually rent-free.

As a result, the apartments have acquired enormous value. They are passed on from father to son and it is a tragedy if the heritage is interrupted, because albeit they do not belong to the people—the apartments are not their property; they are rented premises—they have an enormous value. A consequence of this situation is that since 1920, with two exceptions—I believe the premises were originally built to house overseas embassies—no private construction has taken place in Vienna. All buildings which accommodate people are constructed by the City of Vienna.

If one wishes to apply for accommodation in Vienna, one must complete an application form. The first requirement in connection with submitting the application is the production of one's party ticket. If one does not show that, one's application is automatically ignored. If one complains about this system through the Press or the like, one's application may be taken without a party ticket, but I have not seen, and nobody was able to tell me about, one situation in which a person in a city of two million people obtained ac-

commodation from the City of Vienna without being a member of the socialist party. However, I know many people who subscribed and obtained party membership just to get accommodation and subsequently conducted business from those premises. They were able to do so because they subscribed to the party and contributed to its coffers.

Human nature being what it is, that is an example of what can result when one enhances party rule. This legislation would do nothing other than enhance purely party rule. No avenue would exist through which people could express their wishes, interests, complaints, and grievances. All representation which enables the expression of such sentiments would disappear.

No member would be interested in the complaints of people who lived in remote areas if it was clear that his main interest should be in the party machine which endorses him and keeps him in the Legislative Council of the day.

The whole theme of my contribution to this debate is that the real aim of the legislation, albeit hidden, is to achieve party political electoral advantage. The Government could respond—indeed it has—by saying, “How can someone from the Opposition say that when the Legislative Council has always had a majority of non-Labor members? You are only defending the status quo”.

Such an argument is absolutely wrong. Many Opposition members, including the member for Gascoyne, have referred to this point. The member for Gascoyne pointed out very colourfully that most of the remote electorates have been held by both Liberal and Labor representatives. That in itself proves that the present system, which gives advantage to the electors by way of representation, is not a disadvantage to the Labor Party as it claims.

Instead of spending so much money on advertisements, slogans, and other material which propagates this Bill, the Labor Party would be better off improving its electoral preparations to win Legislative Council seats. The Labor Party could very easily get a majority in the upper House as presently constituted, taking into consideration the principle of representation.

I did not have time or occasion to go through the statistics, but even in my own experience, going back approximately 30-plus years, I can say a number of provinces have changed hands. The member for Gascoyne mentioned the Legislative Assembly seat of Gascoyne, but the Provinces of North and Lower North have changed hands also. I remember when the North Province was held by Labor members. For a long time after that, it was

held by Liberal members, and then it reverted to Labor.

The same situation has pertained in the Lower North Province where elections have resulted in seats previously held by Liberal going to Labor and vice versa. That happened only comparatively recently. That is not the only example of this situation. The member for Welshpool said that non-Labor Parties would not have a chance of gaining the seat of Kalgoorlie, and I agree with him. The same situation pertains in relation to some Liberal seats. This occurs in the upper House also and never in recent times have non-Labor members held certain seats.

However, even in the metropolitan area, in the comparatively short time I have been a member during which the North Province has changed hands, the South East Metropolitan Province, represented by the President of the Legislative Council, changed hands, but he kept his seat.

Mr Jamieson: You can't compare that situation with the North Province, because fluctuations in the boundaries have taken place.

Mr MENSAROS: I am talking about a situation in which no boundary change occurred and the Hon. Clive Griffiths kept his seat as a result of his personal representation, while a Labor man was elected as his colleague in that very province. The system proposed in the Bill would not allow that to occur, regardless of the personal following of the Labor or Liberal member.

Mr Jamieson: But you are not talking about individual representatives.

Mr MENSAROS: I am talking about individual representatives, because, I think rightly, Legislative Council members represent people. That does not mean at the same time that the Legislative Council cannot be a House of Review. We in this House deal with legislation and we also represent people. However, Legislative Councilors represent people and the member for Welshpool knows that better than I, because he has been here longer. Members on both sides of the House represent people.

When I first participated in a parliamentary trip to the north of the State in 1968, the Hon. Frank Wise took an interest in me. To some extent, he acted as my mentor and took me around his electoral province, introducing me to people. I still do not know why he took such an interest in me. However, there was virtually no-one in his electorate whom he did not know personally and he introduced me to many people.

Mr Laurance: He represented people in the Legislative Assembly for a long time and then in the Legislative Council.

Mr MENSAROS: It is not necessary for the Labor Party to attempt to achieve perennial power and electoral political advantage through this means which is not to the advantage, but rather to the disadvantage of people. People will be disadvantaged in regard to representation and the expression of their views. I ask members to consider caucusing and party discipline among political parties. An example is the difference of view between country areas and metropolitan areas on the question of daylight saving. Who would raise a voice in the interests of country people if he were part of a 10, 11, or 12-member group from one party which was caucused according to the views of the party machine of the day? Members of a party are told what the attitude on daylight saving shall be. Who would represent, say, dairy farmers?

The Labor Party would be able to achieve its aim without hurting anyone if it merely contested the sitting members in the existing provinces. As history shows, it could win those seats, because the party holding almost every seat changes from time to time. It would not be difficult for the Labor Party to obtain a majority. If we refer to the figures, we realise that with little effort, and depending on what the Government has done in each electorate, the Labor Party could obtain the seats it requires. I have no doubt about that.

The Government could achieve what it wanted by obtaining public support in favour of what it wanted. The point is that it is possible for the Government to show to the public what would be to its advantage. In fact, we know the advantage the Labor Party would obtain, but that would not be synonymous with the interest of the people. I do not claim that any party's desire should be completely synonymous with the will of the people, but if the Labor Party is interested in the interests of the people, it should prove to the people that they will get an advantage by the implementation of this legislation. The Government has not attempted to do that, because it is not able to. The opposite is the truth. All we have had are slogans and sentences, which can be misunderstood easily. They do not mean anything. Of course, the Government hopes to gain the support of public opinion through these slogans.

I am fairly happy the Deputy Premier gave us this opportunity to debate this matter. After all, that is the reason we are here. I am glad I have the opportunity to address this important question, which is whether the legislation will bring an iota of additional benefit to the people. I maintain it will not; I maintain it will do the opposite. It will mean many disadvantages to the people; it will only bring electoral and political

advantage to the Labor Party, which wants to perennialise the power it presently enjoys.

That is why everyone should reject this legislation.

MR BRADSHAW (Murray-Wellington) [5.05 p.m.]: As a country member, I register my protest against this Bill. I was always under the impression that when we adopted electoral changes, or changes of any description, they should be for the betterment of the community, and certainly not to the disadvantage of everyone, as this Bill will be.

The change to the upper House disregards the rights and the representational needs of country people. When a person is elected to this place, he is responsible, firstly, to his party, and, secondly, to his electorate. Under this system, an elected representative does his best to represent his area, and make sure in one form or another that he contributes to the upgrading and improvement of his province or electorate. Proportional representation takes away any concern by a member of the upper House to look after a particular area.

Approximately 80 per cent of the people of this State live in the city, which will definitely lead to upper House members representing only city people. Under the proposed system, when a member is first elected, he may start off keen. He may have great intentions to go out to the country to meet the people so that he can get to the grassroots of country communities. He will desire to find out what country people want. However, after a few country trips, he will find it is a wearying job to travel to the country, and he will find reasons not to go to the country. The representation of country people will, therefore, take a dramatic dive. As I have said, upper House representatives will not represent country people, which will mean that this responsibility will be left to lower House members.

We have heard from the Government that many country members live in Perth. This applies to members from either side of the House, I am sure. They are elected by a district, but a party usually endorses them. A member must make sure he looks after his electorate; he must do his utmost to represent that electorate. Even though a member may live in Perth, he will still go to his electorate regularly.

I know from my experience of living in the country that an upper House member lived in the city. However, the representation from that member was excellent. We have always had a good standard of representation from upper House and lower House members. But with no pressure applied from either his party or the electorate, a

member will not effectively represent country areas.

I refer now to the comments made about one-vote-one-value. When electorates were originally drawn up, they were not of equal size—nothing was equal. If we are to have one-vote-one-value, should we make all the electorates one size? It is a stupid insinuation to say that one-vote-one-value is equitable. We need weighted voting; it is the system which should always prevail.

It takes me about two hours to get from one end of my electorate to the other, whereas a city representative would spend no more than half an hour to get from one end of his electorate to the other. Weighted voting is a central part of our system, and while we have disproportionate sizes of electorates and distances to cover, we need weighted voting.

This legislation certainly will not cause a change for the better. I cannot understand why the Labor Party carries on to try to have country electors agree with it. This legislation is just another step in the attempt to make country citizens second rate, when in fact they are the backbone of our State and are entitled to proper representation.

I oppose the Bill.

MR RUSHTON (Dale) [5.12 p.m.]: My interest has been aroused by the Deputy Premier's claim that the Legislative Council has been Liberal dominated for 90 years. This claim is quite false. I went through the records of representation in the upper House and I found that the figures produced by the Deputy Premier in the form of general statements were totally wrong.

Now is the time for the Labor Party's argument to be unstuck. In 1964, the Labor Party pressed for adult franchise, and that change took place. From that time on, the Labor Party expected that it would gain considerably in that other Chamber. I understand it lost something like three seats in the election of 1965, a situation which confounded the Labor Party. From that time on, it has worked against the Legislative Council, and has made constant claims of gerrymander.

It is a sad day for this House that we must listen to the constant claim of inequality. Over the years changes have taken place which, in the main, have been supported by both sides of the House. It is not for me to go through them all.

Chronologically, there has been a gradual change going back to 1907, when preferential voting was introduced. Certainly that is not the 90-year claim by the Deputy Premier. In 1922, legislation for the appointment of electoral com-

missioners to draw up future distributions was enacted. Various changes to the membership of this House and the other House were made in the early days, and many of those changes were quite dramatic. Some changes have taken place gradually, and obviously responded to the changing pattern of life in this State.

In 1964, a dramatic change took place for the Labor Party. The change was seen by it as an advantage, and I refer, to the provision of adult franchise. The ALP again supported it and it was introduced by the conservative Government. The Legislative Council was subject to full adult franchise, compulsory enrolment, and compulsory voting. There were 15 provinces and the elections were held jointly with those of the Legislative Assembly. We all remember it very well indeed. Before that period, we had to make sure that people voted at election time. Since then it has become easier for candidates to face up to Legislative Council elections.

Things changed in 1964 and since then there have been many claims by the Labor Government that violent changes are needed because it is totally disadvantaged. They must acknowledge that in this State we have an equitable system that is fair to all. What is proposed by this Government is not fair to all. It will advantage the Government politically and people will recognise that fact.

I would like a system that has regard for the facts. A number of vital issues within the Government's proposals highlight the differences between the two major parties. The Minister in charge of the electoral Bills, one of which has been accepted and passed through both Houses, has suggested we should support the proposed legislation. The question of proportional representation is something that could be seen as not recognising all areas in this State. I fully support those members who have made a strong case in relation to representation in sparsely populated areas. No-one can deny the facts in this regard. The one-vote-one-value system is another issue and we acknowledge that the Government has not brought forward legislation relating to it. In fact, they are standing off and not pressing something which obviously could prove to be of disadvantage to the country people. One must recognise that country members of the Labor Party would object to this type of proposal because they would recognise that it would be to the disadvantage of their electors.

Mr Bryce: I thought you were a reasonably intelligent human being. Do you believe country representation is fair and democratic in the upper House?

Mr RUSHTON: I am trying to be fair and I want a system that would be fair. Over the years, the present system has evolved and all I am suggesting is that we need electoral reform from time to time. However, we are confronted with the present legislation which advantages the Government.

Mr Bryce: I am sure the member for Karrinyup would support me in my argument to you that one-vote-one-value would not necessarily advantage the Labor Party in Western Australia, if you look at the percentage of votes cast over the last 40 to 50 years.

Mr RUSHTON: I am suggesting there should be a weighting of votes in the State and, to have fair representation, one needs to get away from the one-vote-one-value system. We need a boundary around the urban areas and to achieve that there needs to be an understanding of what that means. It would take us away from the one-vote-one-value system. I was referring to proportional representation which would need special attention. To be fair to the people in this State, one must reject proportional representation and understand the difficulties which would arise if such a system were used.

In a sparsely populated State, we must have regard for the special difficulties occurring in some areas. I have given considerable attention to creating a boundary line in the metropolitan area that would be fair to all. If we applied ourselves to this matter, we could find a solution. The Labor Party objects to the present system and it has the responsibility to come forward with an acceptable proposal as to the best way changes can be achieved. The extreme changes it has proposed are a long way from the one-vote-one-value system, and that should be recognised.

For a long time, the Government has been fraudulently presenting a position to the people and it is making a powerful plea by way of advertising which it claims is at the Labor Party's expense. It is placing pressure on the people of this State. The public will not be hoodwinked by this pressure tactic that the Government is using and I am hopeful that the legislation will be opposed in order that the Premier can carry out his threat that, if the Legislative Council does not pass the Bill, he will call an election. That does not bring great fears to this side of the House. It is up to the Government to take that step if it wants to do so.

The bully-boy tactics are frowned on by people in this State and they will be seen just as a power grab. Many people on both sides of the political spectrum would realise that parts of this legis-

lation are not fair to some areas in this State. These need to be addressed before we pass this Bill. We have put our case forward very strongly and have not spoken at length. However, the point was well made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that the Government should be made aware of the fact that we were resisting the legislation. Our leader commented on the debacle that took place in this House not long ago regarding the loss of a vote. I will not comment further on that situation.

Suggestions have been made that the Commonwealth Government will try to force changes to the electoral system for State Houses. That will arouse every Western Australia, regardless of where lie his party allegiances, to resist such a step. It is recognised now that the Federal Government has extraordinary powers, and I refer to the Tasmanian dam issue. As far as I am concerned, the Hawke Government should not move to change electoral laws in this State. If this occurred, it would mean that the Labor Governments throughout Australia could be out of office for a long time. People do respect the Federal system. It has proved its worth, but the special power the Federal Government has should be removed. It has been wrongly interpreted and the Federal Government is misusing its power in relation to State matters.

When the Deputy Premier makes claims that the conservatives have dominated the Legislative Council for 90 years, has he any supporting evidence that this is so?

Mr Bryce: They have won a majority in 39 consecutive elections.

Mr RUSHTON: In 1957, I think the Minister for Local Government, the late Hon. Gilbert Fraser, was the Government leader.

Mr Bryce: Are you saying they were not endorsed Liberals?

Mr RUSHTON: No, they were a number of people of different political allegiances which proves that it was not totally a party House. The introduction of adult franchise tended to change the position.

Mr Bryce: How can you say it was a non-party House if the candidates were endorsed by political parties before going to the hustings?

Mr RUSHTON: The Labor or Liberal Party did not have absolute power in the other House.

Mr Bryce: How long ago?

Mr RUSHTON: It goes back for some time. Ninety years ago it was not the Liberal Party, but the National Party that held the majority in the upper House.

Mr Bryce: We did use the term "conservative parties"; we did not mean the Liberal Party.

Mr RUSHTON: For how long?

Mr Bryce: For the Legislative Council, I would go back as far as 1909 and that might certainly signal the start of the political structure in that House.

Mr RUSHTON: I do not think my list goes that far back. It is clear that the change took place with the introduction of adult franchise. It was a year or two after that that the Labor Party got into difficulties. It had difficulties in the North Province with changes in representation. When I came to Parliament in 1965 there was a Labor man in that seat.

Mr Bryce: You have been around too long. The situation in Tasmania, where they are allegedly independents, does not constitute a House of neutrality for the people.

Mr Tonkin: Why do you not trust your luck and seek leave to continue your remarks at a later stage?

Leave to Continue Speech

Mr RUSHTON: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to continue my remarks at a later stage of this day's sitting.

Leave granted.

Debate thus adjourned.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 p.m. to 7.15 p.m.

ACTS AMENDMENT (CONSTITUTION AND ELECTORAL) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR RUSHTON (Dale) [7.15 p.m.]: Prior to the suspension, I was refuting the remarks made by the Deputy Premier and I think I had proved my point and the House was fully aware that the Deputy Premier was on false ground.

I certainly oppose the legislation.

MR STEPHENS (Stirling) [7.16 p.m.]: The National Party opposes this Bill in its entirety.

Once again, having listened to the debate this afternoon, I find it is perfectly clear that the Opposition has been confused about the Legislative Council as a House of Review, because most Opposition speakers have referred to it along the

lines of elected members and their constituents, and the relationship between the two. I restate that this is not really the Legislative Council in its proper role as a House of Review; rather, it is an extension of the duties and role of the Legislative Assembly.

It was pleasing to note that not one Opposition speaker said the Bill was illegally or unconstitutionally before the House, something about which they made great play in the debate the other day. I do not know whether they have woken up to the fact that they were on the wrong track or whether the editorial in *The West Australian* cut the ground from beneath them. It is quite apparent that they took that attitude not so much because they believed in it, but because they thought it might create an impression in the minds of the public that the Bill was illegally before the House.

Mr Crane: Of course we know it is illegal; it was and it still is. But it is a numbers game and because members opposite have the numbers, it will go through.

Mr STEPHENS: The member for Moore has not been listening; I have been saying exactly the reverse of that. The Opposition tried to imply the Bill was illegally before the House, but that approach has apparently been discarded, possibly because Opposition members found it was ineffective or possibly because the editorial in *The West Australian*, a newspaper not known for being a mouthpiece of the Labor Party, indicated the Opposition was on the wrong horse.

Mr Clarko: Are you attacking the Opposition again and supporting the Government, as usual?

Mr STEPHENS: Once again the member for Karrinyup seems to be upset when a member speaks the truth.

Mr Clarko: You get up and you attack the Opposition. Have you forgotten things have changed?

Mr STEPHENS: I happen to be making statements of fact. If members looked at the legal opinions advanced by the Opposition, they would have seen that they were shallow indeed. Unfortunately, during the second reading debate I could not comment on those opinions because I did not have a copy of them.

Mr Clarko: Why not sit on the other side of the House? Every time you get up you don't get up to argue the issue, but to attack the Opposition.

Mr STEPHENS: The member for Karrinyup should take a leaf out of the book of the member for Dale who has now decided that, when the truth starts to hurt him, he will leave the

Chamber when I am speaking; that is what he is about to do, and the member for Karrinyup should follow suit. I would not like the tension to upset the member's health.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I gave the member the call so that he could address the Chair, not the member for Karrinyup.

Mr STEPHENS: I am at a disadvantage speaking from back here because the member interjecting is closer to *Hansard*. His continual and raucous interjections, meaningless as they are, tend to drown me out, and make it difficult for *Hansard* to hear what I am saying. When interjections continue in that vein, I have to waffle on for a little while because *Hansard* cannot listen to me—the reporter must listen to the interjector. Perhaps we can come to the understanding that the member for Karrinyup will keep quiet, and if my remarks upset him too much, he will leave the Chamber while I continue my speech.

In regard to the legal opinion this lawyer happened to give, which was that the rescission of a resolution under Standing Order No. 179 does not have the effect of deeming that the subject of that resolution has never been resolved in the affirmative or in the negative, I believe deeming has nothing to do with the matter at all. In regard to what rescission has to do with it, I refer members to the *Oxford Concise Dictionary*, which says that the word "rescission" means "to abrogate, anul, or cancel". Obviously as the rescission was any one of those things, it was a cancellation, and under Standing Order No. 178 the question would have been quoted correctly before the House.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to Erskine May in support of the points he made. Page 414 says, *inter alia*, that an attempt to influence the course of a debate by reading arguments or letters of persons of authority from outside is repugnant to the spirit of debate, although it has been permitted. We should take cognisance of that. Particularly those members who quoted Erskine May in support of their arguments should take cognisance of that point, and particularly those members who quoted Erskine May in support of their arguments should take cognisance of it. When we are dealing with the interpretation of Standing Orders, it is the opinion of members of this House which counts, not outside legal opinion.

Mr Thompson: You seem to rely fairly heavily at times on people from outside to support your arguments.

Mr STEPHENS: Perhaps I do, but on this occasion we are interpreting the Standing Orders of this House. It was stated earlier, although I forget by whom, that there is no perfect system of democracy. That is true. We must ensure we have a system that reasonably reflects the attitudes of the public and any changes in those attitudes. The system should always ensure that the will of the majority may prevail, but that the interests of the minority are not neglected.

Perhaps we should take notice of situations in other parts of the world, and even in other States, but we must devise a system which takes into account the geographical nature of our State. A system may be reasonable and acceptable to, say, South Australia, but that would be no argument to support that the same system would be effective in Western Australia which is far greater in size than is South Australia, and our population is spread over a greater area. We must take into account also that Western Australia has 80 per cent of its population in one city. These arguments are valid in support of the National Party contention that we must retain a degree of weighted voting for non-metropolitan electors.

The effect of the legislation before us would be to erode completely any vote weighting for country people; it would mean the city vote would dominate more than it does now any decisions made in this House. Already there is a domination by the city vote inasmuch as that, of the 57 members of this House, 30 are elected from the metropolitan area and four from the peripheral seats of Dale, Mundaring, Darling Range, and Kalamunda. Those electorates are called country seats, but are nominal metropolitan seats. Taking that factor into account, we have 34 seats from the metropolitan area, and 23 seats from the country.

It is obvious that metropolitan seats already dominate country seats, and country people feel that the Parliament tends to make decisions in the interests of Perth instead of in the interests of Western Australia as a whole.

Mr Rushton: Would you go so far as to say that Dwellingup or Balingup is in the city?

Mr STEPHENS: No matter where the city boundary is put, there will be small anomalies, but they would be greatly reduced by the adoption of the situation I have espoused rather than by leaving the boundary where it is.

Mr Rushton: Where would you put the boundary?

Mr STEPHENS: I do not want to be sidetracked by where we would put the boundary. I could suggest that it follow the boundary set by

the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority. My point now is that country people feel they are disadvantaged by the decisions of this House, which tend to be made in the interests of the city rather than in the interests of the State as a whole. That feeling is so strong in the country that we should reserve a degree of weighted voting. The National Party cannot support this Bill because it completely denies the correctness of that concept.

Hopefully the day will come when electoral reform legislation is fair and reasonable to all people. To paraphrase the remark of the Leader of the House when introducing the Bill in the first instance—

Mr Tonkin: You are voting in favour of a gerrymander. Why don't you admit that?

Mr STEPHENS: I will not vote in favour of a gerrymander. The National Party has clearly indicated its interest in electoral reform, but we want that reform to be balanced and reasonable.

From time to time in this debate the Leader of the House has stated that the Liberal Party never consulted the Labor Party prior to introducing electoral reforms into this House or amendments to the Electoral Districts Act.

Mr Tonkin: Neither did you when you were a Minister.

Mr STEPHENS: I was not involved in electoral reform.

This matter affects all people, and if we are to develop a system which is reasonable to all people, we need their input. That means naturally that the Labor Party, the Liberal Party, and the National Party may not get all they want. We have to accept a compromise. None of those parties will necessarily get what it wants; it may have to accept a compromise, but it would be in the interests of the people of the State as a whole.

If the Labor Government had adopted a different approach on this measure and if the Liberal Party had supported the motion to refer it to a Select Committee, more progress would have been made in the long term than will be made by our passing this Bill tonight. I have said enough to indicate we are opposed absolutely to the Bill.

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform) [7.32 p.m.]: As members know, the people of this State suffer under an electoral system imposed on them. They have never once been consulted although the previous conservative Government had the impudence and effrontery to require future Governments which wanted to change certain aspects of the Constitution to go to the people at a referendum. We are quite prepared to consult the

people on this matter; we are quite prepared for the people to be given a choice to vote against our proposal, if that is their wish.

The conservatives have never consulted the people, and they are afraid to do so now. They are afraid that, if this Bill passes both Houses of Parliament, people may vote in favour of it. That is why they tremble at the thought of a referendum and will oppose this Bill to prevent people being given a choice.

So far, all laws have been approved by a Legislative Council which is not representative of the people; a majority of its members are elected by 28 per cent of the people. That is like getting burglars to make laws on burglary. Of course, one cannot expect members of the Legislative Council to approve changes which will shake their domination of this State's electors by a small and powerful clique. They will not approve of that. There are not many politicians or people in power who would cheerfully cut their own throats.

We believe 90 years should be long enough for any one side to make the rules so it has permanent control of one House of the Parliament. It seems 90 years is not long enough for the conservatives who want to extend it to a century and beyond. How can one defend a system where, on the one hand, 75 000 people have eight representatives in the upper House, and, on the other hand, 75 000 people have only two representatives? How can such a system be called democratic?

The Legislative Council of this State is the most undemocratic House in Australia. It is a disgrace to the State. As a Western Australian born and bred I am tired of being ashamed of the Parliament of which I am a member. I would like to be proud to belong to a Parliament which says the people may choose and may decide the laws, and go to a referendum and vote "Yes" or "No" to decide what the system shall be. It is time to sweep away 90 years of cheating. People tell lies when they say this Bill is to the benefit of the ALP; that is untrue. This Bill is to the benefit of the majority of the people of this State, and that is what the Opposition is afraid of.

Mr MacKinnon: Rubbish!

Mr TONKIN: The Opposition is afraid of the majority and that is why it built into the system a provision to ensure that 28 per cent of the people will control the Legislative Council which has complete power over all laws in this State.

No Australian worthy of the name would want to win an event, sporting or otherwise, by cheating. I say Opposition members are not Australians worthy of the name because the only way

they know by which to win elections is by cheating.

Mr MacKinnon: Rubbish!

Mr TONKIN: That has been proven for 90 years. It is time to sweep away 90 years of cheating and to introduce democracy in Western Australia! It is time to consult the people and let them decide!

Government members: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: Before I put the question, I remind members that this Bill requires an absolute majority of the House. If I hear a dissentient voice when I put the question, it will be necessary for me to divide the House.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 30

Mr Barnett	Mr Hodge
Mr Bateman	Mr Jamieson
Mrs Beggs	Mr Tom Jones
Mr Bertram	Mr Melver
Mr Bridge	Mr Parker
Mr Bryce	Mr Pearce
Mrs Buchanan	Mr Read
Mr Brian Burke	Mr D. L. Smith
Mr Terry Burke	Mr P. J. Smith
Mr Burkett	Mr A. D. Taylor
Mr Carr	Mr I. F. Taylor
Mr Davies	Mr Tonkin
Mr Evans	Mrs Watkins
Mr Grill	Mr Wilson
Mrs Henderson	Mr Gordon Hill

(Teller)

Noes 19

Mr Blaikie	Mr MacKinnon
Mr Bradshaw	Mr McNee
Mr Clarke	Mr Mensaros
Mr Court	Mr Rushton
Mr Coyne	Mr Stephens
Mr Crane	Mr Thompson
Dr Dadour	Mr Trethowan
Mr Grayden	Mr Watt
Mr Hassell	Mr Williams
Mr Peter Jones	

(Teller)

The SPEAKER: I declare the Bill to be carried with an absolute majority of the whole members of the House.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: THIRTEENTH DAY

Amendment to Motion

Debate resumed from 21 September.

MR WATT (Albany) [7.41 p.m.]: I would like to support the amendment moved by the member for Nedlands and to make a few comments about the difficulties this State is experiencing because of the lack of Government support being given in

industrial relations matters, particularly to private enterprise. It seems to me the Government's attitude is that it will do something if it is a popular move and it will earn it a few votes, but its attitude to industrial relations seems to be not to rock the boat.

It is interesting to read the ALP's industrial relations policy as follows—

Labor believes that good industrial relations are required on grounds of justice to those in the workforce and of efficiency in the functioning of the economy. Labor's industrial relations policies, in conjunction with other relevant policies of a Labor Government, are designed to ensure the rights of Australian working men and women to—

And it lists among other things, "full and secure employment". The events of recent weeks in the Pilbara might cause one to question how that policy relates to full and secure employment for people working in the iron ore industry. Those people have been put in a position where they have suffered severe loss of income through strike action forced on them in many cases. It is true those strikes are initiated by union leaders, but we all know that in many cases the rank and file union membership would much prefer not to be involved.

If one had the opportunity to ask some of the wives and families of the unionists whether they would rather be working or on strike, one would know jolly well where they would rather be.

In my view, one of the essential features of industrial relations should be to promote industrial harmony while maintaining what is best for employers and employees. Clearly, that is not being done at present. In fairness to the ALP, I point out that it does have a problem. Its support base is in the trade union movement and it is fair to say that movement helped it to win office. Therefore, the ALP probably feels it owes the trade union movement something and it must not offend the unions. The Government does nothing when its action is likely to offend. It has no concern for the profits of the companies large or small, and does not seem to realise companies without profits go broke and their workers lose their jobs.

No matter what it says, the Government has displayed no willingness at all to use the powers available to it to do something about the industrial situations that arise. That this State should lose iron ore contracts worth many millions of dollars to India, as happened last week, is a national disgrace.

Mr Crane: What about the grain loading at Geraldton?

Mr WATT: Many examples can be given; I used that one to demonstrate my point. The Government did absolutely nothing.

I would like to give an example from Albany where there is an abattoir run by Thomas Borthwick & Sons. The union membership there works under a Federal award. For some years, that work force has contributed a great deal to the company which for some time has been in a certain amount of trouble bordering on the brink of financial difficulty, and the workers have done everything possible to make the company more efficient. They have been prepared at times to receive less than the award states they should have, and to which they are entitled. The union is not concerned about its workers at all. I was told by an executive officer of the company that on one occasion when a union representative called and they were discussing ways by which to try to cut back some of the entitlements the workers were receiving, and had agreed to forego, the union official insisted they be paid and receive the entitlements due to them. He even said, "I am not concerned about jobs; I am concerned only about making sure the people who have jobs get the most out of them". I use that example to demonstrate that when we relate the Premier's stated objective of trying to establish policies designed to provide full and secure employment to the activities of the union movement, which is so much a part of the ALP, it has a hollow ring about it.

I wish to use another example to prove my point. It so happens that a man by the name of Glenn Rees, who comes from Albany, was working at Hamersley Iron Pty. Ltd. As members may recall, Mr Rees was sacked by the company in August last year because he chose to withdraw from union membership. He had been a member of the union, but he became tired of its antics, and decided he could stand it no longer. Mr Rees was working as an electrical trades assistant, and at that time was a member of the Electrical Trades Union.

After he resigned from the union, he received a letter from the company informing him quite clearly he was being dismissed because he had failed to maintain his union membership—this, despite the fact that the Industrial Arbitration Act had been amended to make such a dismissal quite outside the law.

So, on 18 November 1982, the Department of Labour and Industry acting on instruction by the former Government took action in the Industrial Commission against Hamersley Iron. This

Government has been in office for over seven months, and so far, no action has been taken to resolve this matter. It shows this Government's contempt for the industrial law of this State that it is prepared to allow a matter as important as this to linger on for so long. The person concerned has lost his job, and has lost income as a result of an action that is quite outside the provisions of the Industrial Arbitration Act. Clearly, this Government has shown scant regard for the members of the work force. The Government does not care whether people are in or out of jobs. When industrial disputes of this type arise, the Government runs away from them because obviously it is concerned that to do otherwise would be to risk losing the support of the trade union movement, a support which is so important to the Government.

For those reasons, I support the amendment.

MR McNEE (Mt. Marshall) [7.48 p.m.]: It is with a great deal of concern that I support the amendment. In doing so, I express my genuine concern for the wives and families of the striking workers, who are suffering as a result of the misleadership of people at the head of unions, who should know better. If these union leaders were really trying to do something for their members, I would appreciate their efforts. However, I cannot see what they are trying to achieve in the present stringent financial environment confronting industry and business.

Australia's image as a trading nation of the world is very poor. We are recognised as unreliable suppliers; our trading partners do not understand our seemingly endless run of strikes. I cannot understand why people do not seem to be able to appreciate the gravity of the situation. Surely strikes must be related to the marketplace. For example, if a person patronises a particular store and continually finds that the door is shut for some reason or other, he will not continue to shop at that store. Even members opposite would be able to fathom that one out. However, we continue to be quite happy to be branded as unreliable suppliers and to continue with this industrial vandalism. We all should realise that we can no longer afford to pay that price.

In the debate tonight we have been talking at some length about people. While the Leader of the House has gone to some lengths to explain how concerned he is about people—

Mr Crane: He also seems to have gone home to bed.

Mr McNEE: He has gone; members opposite have a habit of doing that; they are not really interested in people. Nonetheless, I am disappointed the Leader of the House has left the

Chamber because I wished to point out to him that, although he talks about his concern for people, I do not believe he understands what the word "people" means.

Mr Bertram: For example, we should not kill them off.

Mr McNEE: That is the idea of the member for Balcatta.

Mr Bertram: You think we should kill them off; that is okay.

Mr McNEE: I am talking not about killing people, but about representing people, which members opposite do not seem terribly good at; nor do members opposite care about the people in their electorates.

Mr Burkett: He did not win on anybody else's preference. He is only a barrister, solicitor, and accountant. So, you keep talking, God! You should take notice of some of your elders.

Mr McNEE: If members opposite were really concerned about the people, we would not have spent the past couple of days in futile discussion relating to this Government's attempt to crush its political opponents.

Mr Wilson: You are here on our preferences.

Mr Burkett: We got you here.

Mr McNEE: It would take more than the member for Scarborough to get me out of here, if he carries on with that type of interjection. He should carry on because I love it.

Mr Wilson: It will be different the next time.

Mr McNEE: I do not think so; next time is next time. The Government has many problems to resolve in my electorate before the next election.

However, we are not talking about that at the moment, but about the current industrial situation in Western Australia. The other night, I heard the Minister for Employment and Administrative Services say that this Government had the best industrial record since I cannot remember when. On that day, there were three strikes.

Although I found the interjections quite enjoyable, the point I was making before I was interrupted was that we are supposed to be here representing people, yet we spent two days in futile discussion about a matter which does not concern the people. The people are not concerned about electoral reform. They are more concerned about the Premier's keeping his pre-election promise to create an additional 25 000 jobs, but which he now seems intent on destroying.

The present strike at Kwinana is causing us real concern.

Mr Crane: Now we are talking about the wheat ship—the one in Geraldton, which was supposed to be loaded for Malaysia.

Mr McNEE: That is right; I will be leading up to that in a moment. This is the strike which resulted in an additional cost of \$40 000 to load that vessel. That was another result of the administration of this Government of gimmicks. I thank the member for Moore for that reminder.

Mr Crane: Do you know they do not have any wheat in Malaysia?

Mr McNEE: I certainly would not expect members opposite to know that; they are members of a Government of gimmicks. This whole matter is becoming rather tiring and boring. For example, we had the facade of the salary cuts, as a result of which the primary producers of this State were faced with an extra cost of \$40 000. Then we had the facade of the cigarette tax. For the Government to impose a salary cut on a selected section of the Public Service is like a bully beating up children at school.

Mr Bertram: I take it you will be supporting the antismoking legislation.

Mr McNEE: I am not discussing that matter; I am much more interested in the strike at Kwinana. I have yet to read one constructive statement from the Premier or any of his Ministers outlining the importance of this strike and what the Government is going to do about it. It is a clear indication to my electorate that the Government does not really care; so, we will have to help jog the Government's memory.

Mr McIver: If you were in Government, what would you do about it?

Mr Crane: Load the ship in Geraldton.

Mr Bertram: Are you a director of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd.?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Bertram: Ask him whether he is a director of CBH, Mr Speaker.

Mr McNEE: I am pleased to be asked for advice. The strike at Kwinana is a serious one.

Mr Bertram: Is he a director of CBH?

Mr McNEE: Let us not talk about who is or is not a director of CBH; let us talk about the strike at Kwinana. I wonder whether it is generally known that Australian ports generate something in the order of 80 per cent of the total amount of insurance money paid out in the world, on account of strikes, despite the fact that we generate only about three per cent of the world's shipping tonnage. That is a fantastic record, a record of which members opposite can be proud. However,

I cannot believe that the people the Leader of the House purports to represent—the wives and families of the people who are paying the penalty of the vandalism of some union leaders in this State—really want that situation to continue.

Mr Williams: What was the percentage?

Mr McNEE: Australia generates only about three per cent of the world shipping tonnage.

Mr Williams: That is absolutely disgraceful.

Mr McNEE: Of course it is. I would not mind if we had secure markets for our wheat, but I can assure members they are not secure, in the same way as I can assure them that the coming harvest about which they are all getting so excited is nothing about which to be excited.

Mr Crane: Malaysia wants our wheat, but cannot get it.

Mr McNEE: I understand it costs us more to ship our wheat to Tasmania than to Malaysia. Nobody will get our wheat at the rate we are going.

I refer members to an article which appeared in *The Australian* of 22 September 1983, which stated that grain exports will be worth about \$5 000 million to Australia this year—an income we simply cannot afford to lose. The article pointed out that waterside workers, grain handling authorities, and others must realise the danger of the present industrial situation.

The West Australian of 22 September carried the headline, "Government Blames Dispute on CBH". What an appalling display of ignorance! Everybody knows that is not true. Unfortunately, the Leader of the House still is not in the Chamber.

Mr McIver: He is out settling the strike.

Mr MacKinnon: I would not bet on it.

Mr McNEE: Nor would I. I would not bet the next harvest on it.

Mr Jamieson: All you are doing is bashing the unions. Did you ever hear of unions bashing the farmers?

Mr McNEE: I am not bashing the unions; all I am saying is that the community wants some industrial sanity to prevail.

Mr Jamieson: Then get some sane people to deal with; get rid of Green for a start.

Mr McNEE: What I am saying is that profits mean jobs for the supporters of members opposite. If industry is not making a profit, there will be no jobs. That is not the objective of a union. The member for Welshpool might recall that, at the beginning of my remarks, I said that I was concerned for the wives and families of those em-

ploees who have been disadvantaged by this industrial vandalism.

Nonetheless, let us talk about the strike for which the Minister said CBH could be blamed. The farmers stand behind CBH, which means, in effect, that the farmers are to blame also. In a message to shareholders issued in approximately 1979 by the Chairman of Directors of CBH, reference was made to this matter. It began as a body-snatching exercise by the Waterside Workers Federation of Australia, which wanted to increase its strength. It follows that that sort of situation will lead to the position we are in today and the actions taken by the management of CBH are the actions any normal employer would take under the circumstances. We should not be misled in this argument. We have to define clearly what the argument is all about.

Let us look at some of the claims which are made. Unions make claims for paid stop-work meetings; five weeks' annual leave; 27.5 per cent annual leave loading—

Mr Crane: It cannot be that much.

Mr McNEE: —increased meal money—

Mr MacKinnon: Have we heard any statements from the Government about that?

Mr McNEE: We have heard no statements from the Government about it. Claims are made for increased overtime rates; a 19-day month; 36 hours a week; extensive redundancy provisions; increases to waterside workers' rates of pay as soon as possible; and a spare man to relieve them when they go to the toilet! I find that amusing. I do not know whether the spare man is required to replace the man who is on his way to the toilet, the man who is on his way back from the toilet, or the man who is thinking about going to the toilet! However, somebody has to be relieved.

Mr MacKinnon: What happens when he has to go to the toilet?

Mr McNEE: I do not know. That is an indication of the level of idiocy to which we have descended.

Mr MacKinnon: You're not wrong!

Mr McNEE: We have fallen to that level in a situation of world trading which, to say the least, is very difficult.

Mr Crane: We would be better to pay them a toilet bonus!

Mr McNEE: We probably would be. Of course, the actions taken by CBH have—

Mr Jamieson: Are you a shareholder?

Mr McNEE: —conformed to the usual practices and, as a result of industrial piracy—that is all I can see that it is—we are in this situation.

Mr Peter Jones: Body-snatching.

Mr McNEE: The argument went back to body-snatching, but now ships call at Australian ports and this lowers their freight rates. Those ships do not want to call here, because there are too many strikes.

Mr Williams: As soon as a ship comes into port, they call a strike.

Mr McNEE: If we keep going in this way, the national song will probably be, "Where have all the jobs gone?" because that is how serious the situation is getting. There is no way any industry can stand constant unrealistic demands being made upon it. The Government claimed it could sort out the problems which confront industry.

Mr Peter Jones: It promised it would.

Mr McNEE: The Government promised it would sort out the problems which confront us. Up to date, its performance has been worse than dismal and it is time the Government started to talk to these unions in a sensible way. If for no other reason than to meet its pre-election promise and on behalf of the people it claims to represent, the Government should make definite approaches to these people and ask them to get back to work not only in their own best interests, but also in the best interests of the nation.

I support the amendment.

MR RUSHTON (Dale) [8.05 p.m.]: This is the most important issue to which the Opposition, the Government, or anyone in Australia could address himself. If our record in industrial disputes does not improve, there is little hope for Australia in an economic sense. In a Labor Government, the Minister for Industrial Relations has a very difficult task, because much is expected of him. We should work towards removing those expectations which are based on party political allegiance, because they destroy any hope of industrial peace and commonsense in this area being achieved in the future.

The Government has been in office for eight months and one needs only to reflect on what has occurred in the Pilbara, at Kwinana, and in relation to the Perth City Council to realise that the expectations of industrial peace as a result of a Labor Government's influence cannot be met. Indeed, the industrial situation has been worse than it was previously and some strange situations have occurred.

I shall reflect briefly on the situation I encountered in the Transport Ministry in relation to Port

Walcott. Somebody manning the pilot boat held up the whole operation because he demanded a residential situation which could not be achieved within the time frame. Obviously that will happen again. It resulted in a 100 000-tonne iron ore ship sitting at anchor waiting to be loaded. Surely we can do better than that in the field of industrial relations.

I shall put forward a proposition which could advance us towards achieving industrial peace and commonsense. Recently we have seen a difference of opinion in the Federal Liberal Party and two points of view have been put forward as to what should occur in the future. One advocated central wage fixation and the other preferred collective bargaining.

I believe we must remove industrial relations from the political scene and move towards an employer-employee contract system.

Obviously that proposal needs to be defined, but it would remove industrial relations from the party political scene and opportunities to exploit it would be diminished. I suggest we have something akin to the American system, modified to suit our circumstances. However, we certainly would not retain the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. That was set up as a tool by the Government of the day and we see the commission being used in that way in respect of its latest award. It is really just fitting in with what the Prime Minister has worked out by means of summit meetings and consensus proposals. The commission has adhered to the Prime Minister's proposals and the unions now have the opportunity to abide by those decisions. If they do not abide by the decisions of the commission, obviously the proposal put forward by the Prime Minister will fall apart.

Because of the Prime Minister's previous associations with and advocacy for the ACTU, he has the greatest expectation that the decision of the commission will be accepted, because the whole structure of the Labor Party and the future of the Government is dependent upon it.

We must have a system in which blackmail and bully-boy tactics do not exist. Under the present structure, we have the commission system. When a conservative Government is in power, the unions, through their association with the Labor Party by means of the ACTU and the TLC, have a ready-made structure to force up wages which action destroys the decisions made by the conservative Government to deal with inflation and to manage the economy.

If a Labor Government is in power, the unions expect to receive extra payments and, if they are

granted and if they are not linked to productivity, they destroy the economic system of Australia.

In broad terms, we should accept that a change should take place. Industrial relations should be dealt with on a non-political basis and the sooner we achieve that, the sooner we will have a real hope of obtaining industrial peace in Australia.

In the last few days, we have all witnessed the unity of Australian people as a result of our winning the America's Cup. If that sort of unity and consensus can be achieved in the sporting arena, surely it can be achieved in the industrial relations area. We need such consensus badly and, regardless of political colour, everyone would recognise that, for many years, we have been destroying ourselves because we have not had a system which people can understand readily, with which they can work, and in which they can find some security.

If contracts were established between employers and employees, with inbuilt safeguards for both parties, which were readily enforceable within the law, we would be able to produce efficiently and economically. Wage earners could commit themselves to debts in the knowledge that they would have a fair chance of meeting their commitments whereas, under the present system, people on lower wages are worried constantly that at any time there may be a strike and they will be unable to meet their commitments.

I have suggested a way in which we can move towards achieving industrial peace which is something we need urgently. This amendment enables me to bring forward my opinion on the matter and, although the member for Stirling is not in his seat, I believe he alluded to a system similar to that which I have suggested when he spoke earlier in the debate.

A statement by the Minister for Planning is reported as follows—

The State Government yesterday accused Co-operative Bulk Handling of deliberately provoking the dispute at the Kwinana grain terminal.

That statement indicates that the Minister for Planning accused CBH of provoking the dispute.

When I was Minister for Transport, I became fully aware of the lack of production in that part of transport which resulted from a dispute which took place at Kwinana. The unit trains which transport grain achieve only approximately 6½ hours of productivity a day. All of us know that Westrail can operate on a shift basis for 24 hours a day to handle a crop that is above the average size. We make a smaller return on our unit trains than we should relative to the investment in those

trains as a result of the overwhelmingly high cost of the conditions that the WWF demands for its members to work beyond a certain time.

I think that all of us would know—and if some members do not know they should get themselves acquainted with this matter—that the present demands placed on CBH for conditions to be worked by WWF members at the Kwinana terminal will place a substantially increased cost on the handling and export of our grain product. We should not accept those conditions; we should stand fast. I would be right behind CBH in resisting the demands being made upon it.

I would like the House to be fully aware that by these demands, the WWF is causing a loss of production by Wishart. What is the real cost of this lack of production? I am unable to place a figure on it, but it must be extreme when we realise that these unit trains are now able to work only 6½ hours a day at the Kwinana terminal. We have a huge investment in the rolling stock and locomotives, and high costs in employees' wages, and the many other factors involved.

It is time we moved to industrial sense. Surely we can put this subject beyond party political arguments. Surely we can take the anarchy within industrial relations, and the disastrous losses of production out of the political arena and put them into a separate industrial relations arena so that people have some assurance of continuity of work and productivity which are included in their contractual arrangements.

How anyone can accept that we should have a wage structure without any relationship to productivity, I do not know. These points should be understood by every person in our community, and can be understood if they are simply put to them. I think the people of our community would embrace them with open arms. Employees would welcome the taking of their positions out of the arena of constant dispute.

Only a small number of people are involved in these disputes, but a huge number suffer. Everybody in Australia pays to some degree for industrial disputes. It is about time we did not see union members as provoking these disputes. There is a force behind the union membership which causes these disputes, and that is the union leadership. What motivation does that leadership have for provoking disputes? I am not aware of the reason, but it certainly is suspect when we consider the harm these disputes do to this wonderful country of ours.

We should influence our friends and others in the industrial relations scene to adopt the enforceable contract or the collective bargaining system,

which would remove industrial disputes from the political arena, so that we could have industrial peace to the benefit of all in this country.

MR SPRIGGS (Darling Range) [8.20 p.m.]: I support the amendment moved by the member for Nedlands. This gimmick Government is quickly getting itself into serious trouble. What is happening in the Pilbara is a disgrace, and this sham Government is a disaster. It has taken responsible Governments a long time to turn this State from the cinderella State into the greatest State of the Commonwealth. It has taken this Government roughly six months to half destroy this State, at a time when everybody should pull together.

Worldwide problems exist, but this Government blatantly supports a union in the Pilbara prepared to destroy the lives, jobs, and wages of the people in its own town, and to destroy our industry. The destruction of the iron ore industry and, therefore, the depletion of royalties from that industry, make our future bleak. This Premier will find it difficult to produce a gimmick, such as the fat cats pay cut, to overcome the enormous losses resulting from the downturn in our iron ore industry. This gimmick Government is fast running out of time.

It may be of interest to members on the other side of the House to listen to what I will now read. It is an article in *The Australian Financial Review* of 21 September. It was printed by a responsible newspaper to describe the situation in the Pilbara. The headline is, "India wins on WA strikes", and the article states—

India is reaping a big benefit from force majeure on iron ore exports declared by Australia's two biggest producers, Mount Newman and Hamersley.

Japanese steel mills have switched their iron ore purchases mainly to India and to Australia's Robe River because of the inability of Mount Newman and Hamersley to supply.

Mount Newman declared force majeure on September 12, effective from September 8, because of strikes at the mine, rail and port facilities since July 25. Hamersley is also not delivering iron ore to Japan because of parallel strikes since early August.

Hamersley has yet formally to declare force majeure but the situation is being treated as such.

Japanese mills have redirected one-third of the ships which would have collected iron ore from Hamersley and Mount Newman to Robe River and two-thirds to India.

That represents three-quarters of the iron ore produced by those two companies. To continue—

Japan this year has been importing at the rate of about 25 million tonnes of iron ore from Hamersley and Mount Newman, about 35 per cent of the total iron ore supply. Hamersley holds a long-term contract with the Japanese mills for a 1983 supply of 31 187 000 tonnes.

Mount Newman has a long-term contract for the supply of 22 900 000 tonnes. Robe River has a 1983 contract for 12 600 000 tonnes.

In 1982 Australia shipped 54 100 000 tonnes of iron ore to Japan.

If this strike continues, approximately three-quarters of this year's production will not be shipped, and this Government has done nothing about that situation. Industrial disputes can be controlled by a responsible Government, one that is prepared to govern and not to play with gimmicks or to waste the time of this House with electoral changes which are an attempt to blatantly preserve itself in power when it does not deserve to be in power.

We have a Government prepared to destroy Western Australia. It is prepared to reduce this State to the cinderella State which we were a number of years ago, before responsible Governments turned it into the best State in the Commonwealth.

If we turn our thoughts to the situation at Kwinana and at every other port in Australia, we realise that WA, which is set for a record wheat harvest this year, will be fortunate if it can even harvest the crop, because there may be nowhere to store it. What is this Government doing? It is not doing anything. All it does is make provocative statements, which keep the strike in the Pilbara alive and may extend it to the rest of Australia.

[Quorum formed.]

Mr SPRIGGS: This Government's action clearly shows it up as a sham Government, a Government that is a disgrace to us all. Its members should resign.

Amendment put and negatived.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

MR COYNE (Murchison-Eyre) [8.29 p.m.]: I take the opportunity in this debate to discuss matters of interest to my electorate. I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to your high office. I am sure that you are coping with the situation quite well, and that you will observe the usual customs

of the Speaker by adopting a deal of sagacity and fairness, which you have already displayed.

No doubt the Liberal Government took an awful bashing in the last election losing four very experienced Ministers. It must be realised that we are a very resilient party and that we will eventually become the Government again. A great deal of endeavour and commitment is needed by all members of the House, and by experienced shadow Ministers particularly.

I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate all new members of whom there are quite a few. I offer them my best wishes and I hope they find fulfilment in their new role.

I want to discuss something a previous speaker, a new lady member, said in her maiden speech. I refer to a rather cryptic comment made by the member for Pilbara. I do not believe that she intended to be malicious—

Mr Jamieson: You don't usually refer to maiden speeches, you know.

Mr COYNE: She was referring to her predecessor, and she said—

Although my predecessor had the foresight to retire before the election rather than staying on and being defeated, he is seen by members on my side of the House to be a victim of modern technology—most hurricane lamps being replaced by bright lights these days.

That was a fairly cryptic comment to make and I cannot really understand it. I worked beside Brian Sodeman for approximately nine years. We shared a secretary in those days when two members had to do so, and during those years I was able to observe his dedication to his job.

Mr Jamieson: You weren't able to share his religious beliefs.

Mr COYNE: I assure members of the House that it was not the risk of losing the election that prompted Brian Sodeman to step down, but rather the risk of being re-elected. It was only his commitment to the leadership of Sir Charles Court that prompted him to run again in 1980. I admire the sentiments that motivated Brian Sodeman to remove himself from the political scene. By doing so, he automatically disqualified himself from the accrued superannuation benefits that attach to members of this House after nine years of service. In fact, he forfeited around \$100 000 by leaving Parliament. No other members of past, present, or future Parliaments could be as committed to their futures as he was. He has achieved something more precious in the

name of peace of mind and a clear conscience. I wish him well.

Mrs Buchanan: Maybe he ran out of fuel, and that is why he was nicknamed the hurricane lamp.

Mr Blaikie: I think you are being very unfair and very unkind to a very good member of Parliament. He was a very dedicated member.

Mr COYNE: I now mention a matter which was debated last week; that is, the resurrection of the Perth-Fremantle railway line. In the debate, well led by the member for Gascoyne, it was clearly demonstrated that the decision taken to resurrect that antiquated railway line has already assumed catastrophic downside proportions. I am disappointed that the media did not pick up the real import of that debate. In the following days, no mention of it appeared in the media. This will come home to roost. Like many of the older members, I am a supporter of railways. Our Government took that decision and absorbed the verbal punishment, criticism, and ire of those people, the Friends of the Railways, and I find it difficult to understand, having done that, why the Government had something to fear. However, the Government will endure that decision in the future. Knowing some railway chieftains in charge at Westrail, I wonder what they thought when called upon to reverse a hard decision which they had taken on solid advice. To reverse the decision in such a way must have strained against every feeling in their bones. The committing of millions of dollars of taxpayers' funds of future generations to fund a relic of the past is sheer stupidity. We discussed the woolly thinking of the Friends of the Railways. I thought that was a bad decision.

Mr Jamieson: You didn't mind their taking the Meekatharra railway away; you didn't fight very hard for that.

Mr COYNE: I will get back to that. The member knows I have great sympathy for the railways. I certainly do not share some of the views currently abroad about continuing a railway line from Alice Springs to Darwin in the name of defence.

The Government has also decided to proceed with a casino. I think that is a wrong decision. The Government should be conscious of the considered decision made by the Victorian Government in rejecting the establishment of a casino in Melbourne. Our Government's decision was a false one; it will not be borne out in fact. Our lack of population detracts from the attraction of the establishment of a casino here. We are in a remote locality, and it costs a lot of money to get here. I had the opportunity recently when

travelling to Hong Kong to do a day trip to Macau, and that is where the real story is told. For a casino to be established, we need thousands and thousands of people in close proximity to each other. I wondered at the sheer size of the Macau Casino and the volume of gambling that was carried on there. I believe already the Alice Springs Casino and the Darwin Casino are experiencing difficulties.

Mr Blaikie: Wrest Point Casino is, too.

Mr Jamieson: No it isn't.

Mr COYNE: I imagine this is due to the population. When transportation of people over long distances to a casino is required, it usually does not work. The casino needs to be close to the population centres. The only thing that helps Wrest Point Casino to be successful is that it is reasonably close to the large population centres of Melbourne and Sydney.

Mr Jamieson: That is not so. There are always gamblers there. If you go there at two o'clock on a Sunday morning, you aren't able to park your car.

Mr COYNE: I have been to the Wrest Point Casino. I have had experience of gambling on the goldfields. My early experience of gamblers was with people from Yugoslavia and Italy who used to inhabit the goldfields. This is not the situation now. They do not enter the country in the same way as they used to, but thousands of them migrated from Yugoslavia into the Western Australian goldfields. These people are real gamblers. Having had that contact with them, I learnt very early in life to be fairly perceptive in one or two areas, and one of those was the compulsion of people for gambling, which brings much misery into families and causes family break-ups. That was my early impression, and that is why I have been very concerned about gambling.

The other thing which I think was possibly a good decision in one way was the re-establishment or the resurrection of the two-up school in Kalgoorlie. In one way it was discriminatory to re-establish it, but it has certainly proved that it fulfils a need.

Mr Davies: Why do you say it was discriminatory? Because it is only in Kalgoorlie?

Mr COYNE: I am saying that because when the decision was made by the Commissioner of Police to close down the Kalgoorlie gambling school—

Mr Davies: The commissioner made it?

Mr COYNE: —it had a very detrimental effect on gambling throughout the area. First of all, it closed down the Kalgoorlie dice game and also

the two-up school, and it also closed down several other traditional games which used to take place in country areas at race meetings, gun shoots, and occasions like that. As far back as I can remember, places like Leonora, Mt. Magnet, Meekatharra, Wiluna, and Laverton, used to have a game of two-up or dice the day before the race or on the day of the race.

In most cases, the proceeds used to go to the local police boys' club or some other local fund. It is part and parcel of a race meeting or a congregation of people—not so much at a gymkhana, where there are so many children involved, but mainly in racing in these goldfield areas. It is a social activity and attracts people from various towns into one centre. It is a community activity which should be encouraged. The people gather for a meeting and do a bit of betting on the races. One of the best things is to finish with a game of two-up.

Mr Davies: Do you think we should give them casual licences?

Mr COYNE: Exactly. That is the point I made. I felt that we could have something like a late licence. I do not think there is anything wrong with it.

Mr Davies: There is nothing wrong with it.

Mr COYNE: It can be very good.

Mr Davies: With 10 per cent for the Government.

Mr COYNE: It would be a licence for a two-up school on Friday and Saturday. It would end there because we would not hear of it again. When these mining towns were populated by a big proportion of foreign-born people, gambling became a way of life. It is still the tradition, but on a lower scale, and for that reason I believe it is necessary to try to rationalise the situation so that those people are not disadvantaged. Certainly at a place like Landor, which is fairly remote, they could not apply the present regulations in terms of the legalising of two-up. This gambling instinct is so deep that they would feel it an affront to their freedom if that game were stopped. They are so remote from a centre of population, with Carnarvon being the nearest place; and that is another town where two-up is played. It is not the same at a place like Leonora, because Leonora is only a hop, step, and a jump from Kalgoorlie where the police are active.

The law is discriminatory. If two-up is to be legalised in Kalgoorlie and not allowed or provided for in some of the other places—

Mr DAVIES: You would not discriminate against Ascot. They could have one after the races there as well.

Mr COYNE: That is a bit different. One of the aspects which has come out today is that by enforcing these penalties for gambling, we will find the Northbridge situation has completely fizzled out. I tried to find out whether there was any gambling at all or whether it was underground. There has been a change particularly in the club "Gingers" which used to attract people from Manila, Hong Kong, and Singapore. It was the biggest game in the southern hemisphere virtually, inasmuch as it was free of "take". It was possible to win \$100 000. A person paid nothing, provided he did not bet in the "centre" which attracted that type of stake, after three heads, five heads, seven heads. It attracted many people from overseas. One particular individual I know was \$400 000 in front; he had a winning streak. He was urged to take an overseas trip, and in one night he lost \$80 000 at that nightclub. So it was an immense game.

There is one other matter with which I want to deal. The member for Kalgoorlie made some comments about the last election, and made some accusations which seem to me to be unanswered. I thought it might be better if I said something about them. He said I had to be convinced I could run for that seat because I thought I would have no chance of winning. That is not the reason I had second thoughts about running in the last election. It was an internal dispute with a couple of my colleagues and I refused to stand for endorsement until a dispute over the Mining Bill was clarified.

The Bill passed and I am still here. However, he was not wrong in asserting that I did not have any prospect of winning, or I thought that I did not have any prospect of winning. Certainly, it was the toughest campaign that I have ever fought. It was tough because I had an opponent who was using Graham Campbell's electorate office as a base for all his activities. That enabled him to conduct a long campaign using the privileges that go with a Federal member's travelling facilities and his electorate office. That campaign definitely caused me some trauma because it lasted approximately 18 months. I was certainly getting some criticism from some of our own members because I was not effectively covering the electorate. I think it came out today just how widespread is the electorate of Murchison-Eyre. I certainly had a lot of trouble covering it.

The ALP used a strategy that was originally published in July 1981 in a Press release which indicated that the only prospect the ALP had of

winning the election was to involve the 1 400 Aborigines who lived in the electorate. I did not think that there were 1 400 Aborigines in the electorate, but that was the figure the ALP gave. Mr Donovan said that he had met representatives of Aboriginal communities who asked for party support and who wanted to become involved in politics. That would be the last thing the Aboriginal communities would ask for. Mr Donovan also said that there was no doubt about the electoral advantage of getting Aborigines on the roll. He pointed out that the party's experience with north-west seats in the election of the previous year had also shown that support from Aborigines in the lower House flowed through to Labor candidates for the Legislative Council.

A certain type of individual was needed to go into remote areas such as the central desert area to persuade Aborigines to enrol or to offer them some blandishments that would motivate them to become involved. It is reasonably hard to motivate Aborigines. They are a guileless people. They are very honest and it is very difficult to sell them a story as is possible with Europeans. They take a long time to absorb the facts and they weigh them up. Eventually, however, a substantial number of Aborigines became involved. Approximately 360 Aborigines in the central desert area, another 125 in Wiluna, and some more in Cundeelee became involved. A blatant political manoeuvre was used to involve these people in the electoral process. Firstly, they did not want to become involved. Secondly, the people who—

Mr I. F. Taylor: If they didn't want to become involved, why did they go out of their way to get involved? Why did your people go out of their way to try to stop them voting?

Mr COYNE: I am trying to answer some of the comments made by the member for Kalgoorlie. I will say that there is no way that the member for Kalgoorlie would canvass an Aboriginal for his vote. He got Brian Wyatt and Aubrey Lynch to go out and do that evil job for him.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Brian Wyatt understands Aboriginal people a lot better than you do.

Mr COYNE: Mr Speaker, the member for Kalgoorlie is trying to destroy the comments that I am making. I am trying to portray honestly the situation as it was.

Mr I. F. Taylor: As you see it.

Mr COYNE: I am not portraying it as I see it. I am making these comments because allegations have been made. It has been alleged that some fundamental Christians were sent out to remote areas to oppose the ALP by pointing out the Communist bogey. That was not a fact. Geoff

McDonald, who was formerly a Communist, did much to alert the Aboriginal people in these remote areas. They tried to get control of the Aboriginal people with a view to causing disruption in the Australian community. Eventually, he saw the writing on the wall and wrote a book called *Red over Black*. That book is a story that the Aborigines have received. They believe in it. The Aborigines are not fools. Many of them are very alert and can read, explain, and discuss issues. That was the problem, because as I said previously, Aborigines cannot be pressured to do things. They have to understand something completely before they make a decision. That was one of the influences that caused 280 of the 360 Aborigines enrolled not to vote. Therefore, it can be seen that the work that went into canvassing those Aborigines and pressuring them to become enrolled was all to no avail because only 80 of them went to Alice Springs to vote.

Mr Frank Donovan was absolutely devastated when he found out that of the 125 Aborigines who enrolled in Wiluna—with the active support of Murray Dawson-Smith who was encamped as the village manager of the Ngaanytjarra community and who was working with Aubrey Lynch and Brian Wyatt to coerce these people into voting—only 29 or 25 voted. This happened despite the fact that on that election polling day a lawyer was actually going into the booth and snatching Liberal Party cards out of the hands of Aborigines and screwing them up. We had a lawyer there ourselves to watch people because every booth in the Murchison-Eyre electorate had a Labor activist lawyer present. A special charter plane dropped them off at Yalgoo, Mt. Magnet, Cue, Meekatharra, Wiluna, and in the desert. The Labor Party wanted those lawyers in those areas for one reason; namely, to intimidate the Aborigines. Their plot failed.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Don't try to turn it around—

Mr COYNE: From the malice we now see demonstrated by the member for Kalgoorlie, we can see how bitter he is about this whole matter. His expression gives him away. Somebody relieved him of \$100. He will never forget that \$100 because he was so sure that the Labor Party would win that election. However, he lost and had to pay it out which made him very bitter. My friend, the member for Karrinyup, would be the second-best poker player in this Parliament.

Mr Bertram: Who's the best?

Mr COYNE: The member for Balcatta would have to ask the member for Karrinyup to answer that question. Anyone who engaged in a game of

poker with the member for Karrinyup would be skinned alive because he can read every gesture.

Mr I. F. Taylor: I don't gamble.

Mr COYNE: I know the member for Kalgoorlie does not gamble. He just lost \$100. One of the things that certainly helped our cause was a crusade. It actually started at Elcho Island. When I was on radar stations during the war, I realised the fervour that possesses people when they start singing hymns and practising Christian beliefs.

Mr Blaikie: It is a pity we cannot bring them down here.

Mr COYNE: The movement started at Elcho Island, and it did something to the Aborigines. They eventually came into Darwin, down to Alice Springs, and across to Warburton, Kalgoorlie, Leonora, and Wiluna. It made a great difference to them. This was great to see, because if anything will lead to the salvation of the Aborigines, it is their Christian beliefs.

I have great respect for people like Terry Robinson at Warburton. They are very sincere people. The Christian movement had its core within the old Mt. Margaret Mission. The first missionary there was a gentleman by the name of Schenk. Many people who went to the Mt. Margaret Mission while Mr Schenk was there have a strong belief in Christianity. It was the core place, so all the work done by the Labor Party, its advisers and counsellors, was to no avail. The member for Kalgoorlie should take some credit for that, because he messed the whole thing up. He is a hypocrite because he would not canvass the Aborigines himself. He mobilised the machine to go and do it, but he did not canvass anybody, in Meekatharra, Cue, or Mt. Magnet.

Mr I. F. Taylor: You are wrong.

Mr COYNE: He would not do it because the white people were watching him. He went out into the desert where he was unobserved and dealt with the people at Cundeelee. He is a hypocrite.

Mr I. F. Taylor: You refused to go out there.

Mr COYNE: Those are my comments about that election. As I said, it was because of divine providence that I won.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Divine providence must have taken pity on you.

Mr Clarko: He has done a pretty good job in holding that seat over the years.

Mr COYNE: Frank Donovan campaigned for 18 months before the election on Federal campaign funds. He travelled around representing the member for Kalgoorlie, using his travel privileges. He travelled on aircraft. How was I to do my job

in this place and my job representing the people as well as campaigning? How could I possibly ensure that the person we all know—

Mr I. F. Taylor: We know you were not here, so what are you talking about?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COYNE: In my seat, the first candidate was Geof Bailey, and I won by 61 votes. The second candidate was Julian Grill, and that was the filthiest campaign ever run. He siphoned off a score of voters from the Mt. Margaret road camp. They were from Ken McIver's Avon electorate, and they were at Mt. Margaret on a three months' work stint. They were Northam based, and the member for Esperance-Dundas coerced those electors to come over. Obviously they were Labor voters who supported Ken McIver in Avon. What would have happened if Ken McIver had lost by 12 votes?

Mr I. F. Taylor: He did not.

Mr COYNE: Ken McIver would have been upset, but he did not find out until later.

Those are the dirty tricks that were played. They were replayed at the last election. I am here only because of what was done by the member for Kalgoorlie and the dirty tricks he used.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Sticks and stones.

Mr COYNE: I want everybody to know what sort of campaign took place. It is all right for the member for Kalgoorlie to get up and say things like the following—

Those Aboriginal people took it upon themselves to become involved in the political process.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Absolutely right.

Mr COYNE: He continued—

They should be praised for becoming involved in that process, rather than be hindered for taking part. However, in Murchison-Eyre, they were hindered.

I have never enrolled an Aboriginal in my life. Why should I want to enrol an Aboriginal?

Mr Crane: I have never enrolled anybody.

Mr Tonkin: I have enrolled hundreds. It is part of our job, especially if the Electoral Department is not doing it.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Murchison-Eyre has the floor.

Mr COYNE: It was proved at the election that it is of no benefit to go to the level of enrolling those people.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Outrageous political tactics! How dirty can you get?

Mr COYNE: The thought of that lost \$100 will remain with the member for Kalgoorlie for the rest of his life. Every time he thinks of me, he will think of something malicious to say. I did not even get a drink out of the \$100.

Mr Crane: Providence was on your side. God was not an American!

Mr COYNE: I think I should leave that subject and deal with a visit by the present Premier, who made a tour of the area with his group of people. He had about six in his party, and they went around putting on kegs and parties here and there.

Mr Blaikie: Did they give you plenty of advance notice of their visit?

Mr COYNE: They put on a party at the Coach House Inn in Laverton and it cost \$1 500. I should have complained about that. It was a blatant act, which nobody attempted to hide.

Mr I. F. Taylor: The party was going when you arrived.

Mr Tonkin: You are too lousy to buy anyone a drink, are you not?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COYNE: The crunch is yet to come. Now that the ALP has lost those seats, it has dumped the Aborigines. When the present Premier was in the area, he had a champagne breakfast in Wiluna, and he made some commitments or promises that if the Labor Party became the Government, the people would receive \$250 000. They are still waiting.

Mr Tonkin: What for?

Mr COYNE: Then the member for Kalgoorlie—

Mr I. F. Taylor: That is a Federal issue.

Mr Clarke: How could he make the promise, then?

Mr I. F. Taylor: He did not make the promise.

Mr COYNE: When one speaks to guileless Aborigines and one says "When we are the Government, we will ensure you get \$250 000", they do not ask from where the money will come. They believe it. The Federal member for Kalgoorlie has washed his hands of the Wiluna Aborigines. He does not wish to know them. He does not wish to know Murray Dawson-Smith, because he is lost. The Labor Party does not want to know Frank Donovan. They sent Frank Donovan to do the job, but they do not want to know him any more. He is finished.

The Labor Party put up Frank Donovan as the candidate in an election it thought it could win. He was good only as long as he could be a winner.

and when he became a loser, the party wiped him clean.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Quite wrong.

Mrs Watkins: Have you got to know him yourself?

Mr COYNE: I can only say that Frank Donovan is a very bitter man.

Mr Blaikie: The member for Murchison-Eyre has represented the area for 12 years now. He has done it very well.

Mr COYNE: I hope I have answered, in some way, the charges made by the member for Kalgoorlie. I believe I have rebutted those remarks. Indeed, the events have proved themselves. If we take the 80 Aborigines who went to Alice Springs away from the total of 360 Aborigines, we are left with 280 of whom approximately 140 voted.

When the election was over and we received our first update of the electoral roll, five pages of deletions were included. I went through those five pages of deletions and they included very few Aborigines, probably only five.

Mr I. F. Taylor: How did you know whether they were Aborigines?

Mr COYNE: I happen to know just about everyone there. I rang the electoral officer and said, "Quite a number of Aborigines did not vote. They were under category 'J' which indicated they failed to vote. I feel that the Aborigines who did not vote should be treated in the same way as everyone else who did not vote". As a result, another five pages of deletions were produced and the people involved were practically all Aborigines.

A total of 500 voters have disappeared from the Murchison-Eyre electoral roll since the election, so members opposite can see that all the blandishments which were offered to these people were to no avail.

The electorate of Murchison-Eyre is in pretty good shape. I do not take any credit for that. However, mining development in most of the centres is going ahead apace. Optimism is high in all areas except the nickel operations at Windarra and Leinster. They have excellent long-term prospects and they can be reasonably satisfied that eventually the tide will turn.

All the optimism at the present time is coming from those who are exploring for gold and the gold producers. The most active town is Leonora which, for many years has been the bridesmaid, and at last it looks like being the bride, because of the activities of some of the major companies which operate there. I refer here to CRA, Carr

Boyd, and Esso. Leonora will eventually take its rightful place following on the closure of the mine.

I shall approach the Minister for Housing and ask him to come to Mt. Magnet. As a result of the resurgence of the Hill 50 gold mine, Mt. Magnet has become a town of opposites. We have approximately 90 brand new, comfortable, modern homes, which house the Hill 50 staff and workers. Alongside them we have State Housing Commission homes which were bought and carted out of Big Bell 30 years ago. As a result of this disparity, a considerable amount of discontent has occurred among the people in Mt. Magnet. It is necessary that the Minister for Housing come and look at the situation himself.

Members might ask why I did not do something about the matter. However, Hill 50 has grown very quickly. We have already provided a new school and the previous Government did much for Mt. Magnet and the Murchison.

I do not have time to deal with all the matters on which I intended to touch, but one of the main aspects which should be considered in my electorate is roads.

MR TRETHOWAN (East Melville) [9.15 p.m.]: I take the opportunity to mention some issues which are of concern to a number of my constituents and which are also of concern to the wider community.

Mr Tonkin: One of their concerns is that you don't live in their electorate.

Mr TRETHOWAN: I have lived in my electorate for a considerable period and I may well do so in the future.

Mr Clarko: When you were first elected to represent Morley, did you live in Morley?

Mr Tonkin: No, I did not.

Mr TRETHOWAN: Of course, other members of the State Parliament live in my electorate and not in their own.

Mr Tonkin: Yes, some of those so-called "country members".

Mr TRETHOWAN: No, not country members; metropolitan members.

Mr Tonkin: Not the member for Booragoon?

Mr TRETHOWAN: No, not the member for Booragoon either.

The matters I wish to raise relate, firstly, to an accident experienced last year by the young, teenage daughter of constituents of mine. One afternoon she was attending a roller skating rink when she was involved in an accident.

Mr Tonkin: Is roller skating the subject of your amendment?

Mr TRETHOWAN: Perhaps the Leader of the House should wait for me to make my speech before interjecting.

Mr Tonkin: All right, I shall do that.

Mr TRETHOWAN: This matter is of great concern to my constituents, even if it is not of concern to the Leader of the House. My constituents' young daughter had a moderately serious accident at a roller skating rink. She had cuts and bruises to her legs and incurred some blows to the face which dislodged some of her teeth.

The cuts and bruises on her legs disappeared rather quickly, but she has required rather prolonged orthodontic treatment to ensure her teeth are in appropriate condition.

Shortly after the accident the parents of the young girl went to see the owner of the roller skating rink in order to make a complaint about the behaviour of the youth at the rink who had instigated the accident as a result of his somewhat aggressive attitude. The owner of the rink said that he took no responsibility for the accident. He then pointed to a sign on the wall which said, "People engaged in roller skating do so at their own risk". He disclosed further that he had no public liability cover.

It did not directly concern my constituents that they could not easily be assured of an effective claim against an insurance policy in order to recoup the costs of the orthodontic treatment they had to provide for their daughter.

Mr Bertram: But the insurance company would not have paid out.

Mr TRETHOWAN: That would be a question for the court to decide. Certainly it is my understanding that claims are made for public liability in relation to negligence.

Mr Bertram: How do you prove the negligence?

Mr TRETHOWAN: I express my concern that this situation occurred because it seems to me there is a potential problem in a venue of public entertainment which is not covered adequately by public liability insurance.

Mr Tonkin: You are always knocking private enterprise!

Mr TRETHOWAN: If my constituents could have proceeded effectively, if they knew an insurance policy covered the cost of the orthodontic treatment, they would have done so but, realising their only means of recovery would be in suing the person operating the rink, they have not taken the matter any further.

However, the point they raised with me was that it seemed unfortunate that whereas the majority of venues offering public entertainment and the majority if not all public areas such as shopping centres are covered adequately with public liability insurance, there may well be cases where individuals operate in particular areas without such cover.

On further investigation I was given to understand that although a sign was on the wall of the skating rink indicating that no responsibility was taken, in fact this did not obviate the liability for tort action for negligence.

Mr Bertram: You still have to prove negligence.

Mr TRETHOWAN: The operator would still be liable for such action. However, it is also quite possible that even if such a judgment were given, recovery of simple compensation might not be possible, particularly if the person or the company operating the rink had no substance.

It seems to me this raises a potential problem. I am not suggesting there should be compulsory public liability insurance, but I am suggesting it may be important for the public to be made aware of those areas of public entertainment that are adequately covered with public liability insurance. I imagine the majority of them are covered, because if a person is an operator of a public place—it may be an entertainment centre or a shopping centre—and he owns the building, he has a substance which a judgment in tort could place under attack. A person's ownership of the property could be forfeited because of a judgment for public liability brought against him in a court. Therefore it makes sense under those circumstances to take out adequate public liability cover.

I am suggesting it would be appropriate if a means of notification, perhaps a certificate, could be displayed in that centre indicating an operator was adequately covered, thus giving members of the public the opportunity to know that when they go to such an area, should they have an accident through negligence, they would possibly be suitably covered by the insurance taken out by the owner or operator of that centre.

I have expressed this concern of my constituents to the Leader of the House particularly in his role as the Minister for Consumer Affairs in the hope that he may look at this matter and see whether he can determine how widespread this problem is. I think it is something that deserves some investigation.

Mr Tonkin: The question of public liability insurance cover in places of entertainment?

Mr TRETHOWAN: In public places generally. The concern of my constituents was that they had

no idea when their daughter attended the venue that there was no liability cover. At present there is no way of determining in most cases whether an owner or an operator of a particular centre has suitable public liability cover. I imagine the majority would have such cover.

Mr Tonkin: We do not have the staff to go around and conduct a survey, so we would have a problem in determining the percentage.

Mr TRETHOWAN: I realise the problem. I have merely raised the issue because my constituents were concerned that it is something that may be putting people, especially children, at risk without their parents' knowledge.

Mr Tonkin: I will discuss it with the commissioner.

Mr Cowan: There is a precedent. Local authorities require a liability cover to be taken out for swimming pools and places of public recreation. If that can be done with local authorities, it should be able to be done in other areas.

Mr TRETHOWAN: I move on now to a problem which confronted another constituent of mine, a problem which I believe is relevant to the wider community. Not long ago one of my constituents purchased a family van. As members are probably aware, these vans are becoming a popular form of family transport. They are based on a light commercial van fitted with internal seating of a similar standard to normal domestic cars.

The van my constituent purchased was licenced for nine seats. As members are probably aware, a wide range of these vehicles is available from almost all major motor vehicle manufacturers. Some have eight and some have nine seats; some even have 10.

My constituent became concerned when she realised that she held only an "A"-class driver's licence, and on the back of that licence it indicated that it was valid only for driving a vehicle with a maximum seating capacity of eight. Very quickly she realised the implication of this. Should she be driving that van and have an accident, she might well not have been adequately covered for third party insurance, because the van was fitted with nine seats. Her immediate reaction was to remove one of the seats. She then discovered that even by doing this she was not necessarily covered should she be involved in an accident.

It was at this stage she approached me and I wrote to the Minister for Police. He promptly replied that the matter was under consideration by a special committee which had been set up to consider this and other matters. Further, the Minister promptly sent out one of his officers to view the van. I understand that the officer has seen that

the ninth seat had been removed and that he has provided my constituent with a letter attesting to this fact. So, should the particular vehicle be involved in an accident or should my constituent be pulled up for a traffic infringement, the letter can be produced which will indicate that the van has been viewed and attested to be only an eight seater and so complies with the requirements of a current "A"-class licence.

That has solved the problem for my constituent, but I wonder how many other people in the community may well be driving vans which seat more than eight and who hold only "A"-class drivers' licences and who are not aware of the potential risk they run.

I understand from the Minister that shortly a report may be forthcoming, and I look forward to that because I hope action will be taken on this matter. I understand that most of these vans are very similar in construction; they are approximately the same size, have the same sized engine, and have similar safety features. It is just that different manufacturers have opted for different seating arrangements, and it is this which has given rise to the problem. I understand some other States allow for 10 seater vehicles to be covered by an "A"-class drivers' licence. I look forward in the very short term to some positive action being taken to remove the uncertainty for members of the community who may well not be aware of the risk they run if they drive a van with a seating capacity greater than eight.

Mr Carr: I am expecting to have a recommendation fairly shortly, and the indication is that it will likely recommend that changes be made to the class "A" licence to approve the driving of a vehicle with a greater number of seats.

Mr Read: That has been the case for some time now, especially with Toyota vans.

Mr TRETHOWAN: The point is that it has been exacerbated because these vehicles have become popular in recent times and probably most people operating them are not even aware of this problem. The vehicles are now in common use as domestic vehicles. I appreciate the Minister's interjection and I thank him for his interest in this matter.

I will move on now to another matter that shocked a constituent of mine, and I do not think that is putting it too strongly. This constituent is involved in the hospital industry, and a short time ago he was served with a log of claims from the Royal Australian Nursing Federation. What shocked him when he started to read it was the nature of the claims. I will quote some of the

claims so members know why my constituent was so concerned about this document.

For instance, under salaries and wages, the claim is that the minimum salary or wage per week to be paid to a nursing administrator would be \$2 800, a principal nurse educator \$2 400, and down to a student nurse at \$1 000. A further section deals with an employee under 21 years of age, who would be paid a rate of pay applying to an adult. My constituent saw further that the living away allowance would be a minimum of \$300 per week, that the ordinary hours of work a week would be 30, that ordinary work on public holidays would be paid at treble time, that the annual leave would be eight weeks, and that the annual leave loading would be 50 per cent.

Mr Bryce: Which document are you quoting from.

Mr TRETHOWAN: This is the log of claims.

Mr Bryce: Is it an ambit claim?

Mr TRETHOWAN: Yes, it is.

Mr Terry Burke: He was ignorant—

Mr TRETHOWAN: The member says he was ignorant.

Mr Terry Burke: —of what that sort of claim is.

Mr TRETHOWAN: Does the member know why this document would be a shock to someone in the hospital industry? A claim like this has never been served on the hospital industry in this State because the hospital industry here is covered by State awards, and these sorts of absurd claims occur only under Federal awards. My constituent, however, received this claim. Not to be outdone, someone else sent him a further log of claims about three weeks later.

Mr Bryce: That's not the one the Leader of the Opposition sent around to people, is it?

Mr TRETHOWAN: My constituent gave this to me.

Mr Bryce: Did he get it through the mail?

Mr TRETHOWAN: He did receive it through the mail, and from the Hospital Employees Federation. This ambit claim goes further than the claim by the Nursing Federation. It claims a minimum salary per week for a nursing administrator of \$3 000, and goes down to a weekly wage for a nurses aide of \$1 200. An employee under the age of 21 would receive the full rate of pay applying to an adult, and the hours of work per week are set at 20, which is a significant decrease on the 30 hours claimed by the Nursing Federation. The annual holidays in this claim are 11 weeks, as opposed to eight weeks claimed by the

Nursing Federation. This second claim doubled the concern of my constituent.

As I have said, until now the hospital industry has been covered by State awards, and the claims that appear in State awards are a function of the Federal award. I understand that the Royal Australian Nursing Federation and the Hospital Employees Federation seek Federal award coverage of the industry, and I understand further that technical problems still exist in the Federal sphere for either of these unions to achieve registration under the Federal award. However, should the court decide that those technical reasons are not fully applicable, and is prepared to grant a Federal award, only one of the two competing employee organisations will be granted the award.

Once one award is granted, it will be the only one to operate for the industry, which means that either the Nursing Federation or the Hospital Employees Federation is likely to have the award and, therefore, the right federally to represent this section of the industry.

It certainly seems to me that in relation to ambit claims the Royal Australian Nursing Federation is considerably more responsible. I understand the nature of an ambit claim arises from the fact that a Federal award is made to last a considerable period, possibly 10 to 15 years, and there is no suitable provision or surety that during that period the court can grant above the claim lodged in the initial log of claims. The result is that the most extortionate and extravagant claims are made when lodging a log of claims for a Federal award. This is called the ambit claim because the union runs the ambit of the potential for award coverage over an extended period.

This has raised a number of problems in the operation of Federal awards because the extravagance of those claims lodged in the long run leads to unreasonable expectations as to what can be achieved. Instead of purely providing the total cover that would be required to take account of any increase in wages to keep pace with the rest of the community over a period, the claims become objectives in themselves; they become the goals to which the union either voluntarily or under pressure from its members is pushed towards attempting to achieve.

We can observe from these claims how unstable such an objective would be, such as a weekly wage of \$2 800 and an annual leave loading of 50 per cent. This is the good reason for my expressing concern about the movement currently promoted by the Federal and State Governments towards a centralised wage fixing system where coverage

from Federal awards would virtually become a necessity.

It does not advantage our industrial relations system to have such logs of claims as these brought down. They lead to unreasonable expectations on behalf of the members of the unions concerned, and in the long term lead to stringent cost problems for the industry employer. Unreasonable expectations in the long term lead to a loss of jobs.

I certainly believe that this State and its people will continue to be much better served by the more pragmatic, more down-to-earth approach of our State Industrial Commission and our laws. I certainly view with great concern any loss of flexibility in our State awards. Should the pressure increase and should the requirement be to move totally to centralised wage fixing based on the Federal arbitration system, I do not believe that would advantage this State or the majority of people currently employed under State awards.

Mr Cowan: Wouldn't you agree with the social worker's case?

Mr TRETHOWAN: This is one of the factors involved. I suspect that some of the recent decisions of the Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Commission—

Mr Cowan: The one in the Federal High Court?

Mr TRETHOWAN: Yes, that particular decision is the reason that these ambit claims were brought forward by these unions in relation to this award. However, as I said earlier, there is still a lack of legal clarity in deciding whether or not these two unions can in fact be granted registration under that Federal decision. I do not believe that changes my argument. Even if it is possible for them to achieve Federal registration, I do not think it would be to the benefit of the industry within this State or the people employed in the industry which these two unions are seeking to represent.

I hope Government members have listened to the problems I have put forward and that, in the case of public liability insurance and the industrial relations problem, they take suitable action.

I am grateful to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services for pursuing the van problem. I hope it will be satisfactorily resolved and the doubt removed in the near future.

MR COWAN (Merredin) [9.43 p.m.]: In the past I have always used the Address-in-Reply to make some comparisons between stated Government policy and how that policy affects local issues which take place within the electorate of

Merredin, and I do not propose to make this year an exception. Instead of our being able to look at the usual or traditional Governor's Address to find out the Government's policy, this year we have to examine a statement made by the Premier on Tuesday, 26 July. I want to raise some issues which indeed affect my electorate, and which demonstrate that while the policy of the Government sounds all very well, it is very hollow indeed in substance.

The first issue I would like to address, while the Deputy Premier is present, is that of Phillips-Merredin. Only two four-wheel drive tractor manufacturers of any substance operate in Australia. One is a firm known as Baldwin Four Wheel Drive Tractors. This firm makes a specialised unit; it produces no more than 10 to 12 units a year after firm orders have been received. Until approximately April of this year Phillips-Merredin was really the only commercial producer of four-wheel drive tractors in Australia, and the tractors were produced in Merredin. This man started in 1972 as a fitter and turner and really began producing four-wheel drive tractors to meet a demand in the agricultural industry inasmuch as at that time farmers were expanding into the now well-known concept of broadacre farming. We were moving from tractors with a horsepower rating of 90 to 100 up to 250 to 300 horsepower. Those tractors were very difficult to procure from overseas countries.

Murray Phillips decided he would make that machine himself. He started off and did particularly well, but like other businesses in their formative years, there was not enough capital and he had great liquidity problems. The previous Government gave him some support; I would not say that it was sufficient, but nevertheless, everybody knows that the units he was producing cost about \$120 000 each and, having started from nothing and being in a position where he was producing an average of 20 of these units each year, he developed a very large capital-intensive business. When Phillips-Merredin got into trouble, the previous Government, in its lack of wisdom, decided to appoint a receiver-manager.

Mr MacKinnon: What would you have done?

Mr COWAN: I will tell the member what I would have done. The previous Government appointed the receiver-manager when it was faced with three choices. Firstly, it could have agreed to the proposal put forward by Murray Phillips, the proprietor of this company, and guaranteed 50 per cent of the equity in a loan, which would have been made available from the Australian Bank Ltd.—I understand the proposed loan was in the vicinity of about \$1 million, and would have pro-

vided this firm with the liquidity it needed. That would have been a guarantee, and did not necessarily mean that the money would have had to be paid out.

The second choice was to appoint a receiver-manager and to have given that receiver-manager a guarantee that all its costs in the operation of Phillips-Merredin would be met from the Government purse. The third choice, of course, was to wind up the company there and then.

The secured creditors to Phillips-Merredin, as far as the Government was concerned, were owed something like \$143 000. Westpac, we know, happens to be quite lenient—selectively lenient—in the case of loans that it makes; but in this case it was not. It was fully supportive of the idea of appointing a receiver-manager. The previous Government appointed a receiver-manager and gave him a guarantee that whatever money he spent in the operation of Phillips-Merredin would be covered by the Treasury. That was a decision of the previous Government.

Regrettably, the situation did not change when the Government changed hands. I say “regrettably” because now we have the position where Phillips-Merredin has been, or is in the process of being, wound up.

If we consider the decision made by the previous Government and honoured by the existing Government, it is easy to see that it was the wrong decision. During the time that the receiver-manager spent with the company he expended something like \$420 000 of taxpayers’ money. Add to that the \$143 000 already owing and we are already \$60 000 over the figure which the Government could have guaranteed. If the member for Murdoch wants to dispute that point I am quite happy to allow him to do so, but he will find my figures are right. I asked a question about the money expended by the receiver-manager and the answer was \$420 000.

Mr MacKinnon: Expended on what?

Mr COWAN: On the operation of the company. That money has gone; it may be recovered.

Mr MacKinnon: The \$420 000 spent was on the operating expenses of the company. If Murray Phillips had operated the company he would have had to spend about the same amount, would he?

Mr COWAN: He certainly would have had to spend that, but he would have been doing it with money obtained with a 50 per cent guarantee from the Government. I would have assumed in the time it took to pay back the loan he would not have had to call on the Government to exercise its guarantee. In this instance, the Government

has spent \$560 000 and there is not much hope it will get that money back.

Mr MacKinnon: It is difficult to debate the issue at length. What was the extent of the unsecured creditors at the time of the appointment of the receiver?

Mr COWAN: Exactly the same as they are now—in the vicinity of \$1 million. They have no chance under the existing system of getting their money—no chance at all. Had Murray Phillips been given an opportunity to receive the loan and trade his way out of trouble, those unsecured creditors may in the future have received their money back—if not all of it, a great part of it.

Everybody knew his market was not just Western Australia but Australia as a whole. I think everybody has seen the statistics provided by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics which indicate the loss of income caused by drought. We know there was no money to spend on reinvesting in machinery and things like that, and that investment is only just about to happen in the next 12 months.

The previous Government never gave this company an opportunity to trade out of trouble. Unfortunately, the present Government has maintained the previous Government’s policy. If that were not bad enough, there were three bodies interested in the company—a partner, a group of farmers, and the major suppliers of component parts. Those tractors really are on assembly of component parts—they all use them and they are pretty much the same. The suppliers of those component parts decided they would accept a partnership with the farmer group and would make an offer to the receiver-manager for the company.

Mr MacKinnon: Those three came to the fore after the appointment of the receiver-manager—not while we were in Government?

Mr COWAN: I do not for one moment claim the appointment of the receiver-manager was the commencement of the problem; it existed long before he was appointed. I think the previous Government could have avoided the appointment of the receiver-manager, but having appointed him—and this is where insult was added to injury—the receiver-manager then set about trying to wind up the company and looking for a buyer.

Three groups were interested—a partner in Phillips-Merredin by the name of Don Zanetic, a farmer group which was supporting Murray Phillips, the original owner, and the suppliers, Smith Markwell and people like Power Train and Twin Disc. The suppliers had discussions and decided to allow Smith Markwell to act as their op-

erator and they decided they were interested in maintaining a four-wheel drive tractor production in Merredin.

Believe it or not, the Government of the day would not wait or did not give some instruction—and I do not know whether it could have given a direct or specific instruction, but surely any comment it made would have been influential if it had spoken to the receiver-manager—and no recommendation was made to say to one of the three groups interested in the company, "Put up an offer so the company can go on". All that happened was that Don Zanetic made an offer and the suppliers and the farmer group were totally ignored. Had they been given an opportunity they would have been able to produce enough finance to ensure the secured creditors were fully paid out, and the company could have continued to trade until it was making a profit and the unsecured creditors were able to receive some sort of compensation.

I notice the present Government has claimed it will legislate for the establishment of a small business development corporation. I would have thought a firm like Phillips-Merredin was an ideal vehicle with which to put into effect a policy which would reflect the views of the Government. The small business development corporation has not yet been formulated but the present Government could have done something to ensure Phillips-Merredin continued in business. As it stands, it is very doubtful it will continue and a ludicrous situation exists whereby Phillips-Merredin has, to all intents and purposes, been purchased by one partner, Don Zanetic. He is hoping to continue to trade and the farmer-supplier group is now thinking of establishing yet another four-wheel drive tractor operation in Merredin.

Mr Davies: Won't they go in with Zanetic?

Mr COWAN: He will not go in with them.

Zanetic wants to sell the firm to the farmer-supplier group for \$150 000 more than he paid for it from the receiver-manager. It will cost the farmer-supplier group the same amount of money to establish a separate tractor building firm, and they would rather do that.

Mr Davies: What would the future be for either if there were two manufacturers there?

Mr COWAN: In relation to the farmer-supplier group there is a guarantee that the consumers—the farmers—are likely to support that particular product. Guarantee of survival for the original Phillips-Merredin is negligible.

The Government's stated policy is that it will help small business and establish a small business

development corporation. In this case a small business was in dire trouble and the previous Government did nothing for it at all.

Mr MacKinnon: That is not true by your own statement.

Mr COWAN: The present Government is continuing to do nothing. If that situation is not true, how can the member for Murdoch defend a decision made by his Government?

Mr MacKinnon: You said the previous Government did not do anything and you indicated previously in your speech we had done something.

Mr COWAN: I did not say the previous Government did not do anything; I said it was faced with three choices and the choice it made sent the company to the wall. Is sending a company into liquidation doing something for it? If that is the member's attitude I understand why he is sitting on the Opposition side of the House and not on the Government side.

The previous Government made a decision it would guarantee a receiver-manager all his operating costs. It was not prepared to guarantee \$500 000 to the company to continue operating as it was. The Government put in a receiver-manager and guaranteed his expenses which subsequently amounted to more than \$500 000. Now the company has been wound up.

Mr MacKinnon: Unfortunately I do not have an opportunity to respond because I have made my Address-in-Reply speech, but about three of the points you have made are totally wrong.

Mr COWAN: I am quite happy for the member to defend himself by way of interjection. He has been interjecting fairly well up to now, and you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr I. F. Taylor) have been quite lenient in allowing him to do so, and I am very pleased you have done that.

The member for Murdoch can continue to interject. The previous Government made the wrong decision, and the present Government has continued with that decision. It is not prepared to address itself to the problem because it is not prepared to tell the Department of Industrial Development the recommendations it made originally were wrong. In other words, we have government by the bureaucracy.

Mr Peter Jones: That is not right.

Mr COWAN: If it is not right I would like the member to tell me where it is wrong.

Mr Peter Jones: I was going through my last year's recommendation from the department and the recommendation was not accepted. If it was not accepted it would not have gone back. They received some additional assistance, against the

advice of the department, and that particular advice prevented Westpac from closure at that time, because as you said, they were hostile. We took action against the advice of the department to keep Westpac out of the business—apart from other things which went on.

Mr COWAN: Perhaps I am casting the blame upon the wrong Minister. The fact of the matter remains: It kept the company going. They eventually put in a receiver-manager. It may have postponed the decision by six months, but the fact remains that the company was wound up. Despite the comments from both sides of the House, we support small business development and we support small businesses. This particular company could not obtain, either from the past Government or from this Government, a guarantee for a loan which would have allowed the company to manufacture machines, stockpile them and then sell them when the demand was there.

That is the crux of the matter. Unfortunately neither of the major parties will agree to do that. Now the company has been wound up, or is in the process of being wound up. If that is the attitude of this Government or of the major party which was in Government towards small business, it is a very hollow policy indeed. That is the point I want to make. Members of the Labor Party and of the governing party can go into Merredin for the next six months and ask about Phillips-Merredin and they will be laughed out of town, because the answer is—

Mr MacKinnon: If we were to go through the facts, which we would not do—but we could—they would clearly support the action taken by the then Government at that time. I am not speaking for the Government now.

Mr COWAN: With all due respect for the member for Murdoch, in no circumstances would they support the action of the previous Government; neither do they support the action of the present Government. Nobody would support the action which has really deprived the town of a future for its largest business. If the member believes that, he is in his rightful place.

Mr MacKinnon: The reason the receiver-manager was appointed was that a decision had not been made as to the chance of the company's surviving. As my colleague, the member for Narrogin said, if we had not made that decision, somebody else would have. We therefore appointed a receiver-manager during that time.

Mr COWAN: I wonder if the member could explain the point—

Mr MacKinnon: Just let me finish.

Mr COWAN: —that the receiver-manager has been allowed to spend over \$500 000.

Mr MacKinnon: That is not right.

Mr COWAN: It is right. In answer to a question the Minister for Economic Development and Technology informed the House that the receiver-manager had spent \$420 000.

Mr MacKinnon: Did you ask him how much money he received during his time?

Mr COWAN: I did.

Mr MacKinnon: What was the answer?

Mr COWAN: The answer is that it is expected that the money will be recouped.

Mr MacKinnon: That is the only answer he would give you?

Mr COWAN: That is the only answer that was given. If one adds \$140 000 to \$420 000—I am not like John Howard, I did not fail maths when I matriculated—that comes to just over \$560 000. That is \$60 000 more than the former Government was prepared to guarantee. The Opposition was prepared to guarantee a loan—

Mr MacKinnon: You are telling the House only half the facts. How many tractors did the receiver-manager receive during the time he was there, and how much income did he receive from the sale of those tractors?

Mr COWAN: The member has a point there; that is quite right.

Mr MacKinnon: Of course I have.

Mr COWAN: I have not asked about the operational costs of Phillips-Merredin. My understanding is that the income received from the sale of those tractors only just covered the operating costs; it did not cover the expenditure of the receiver-manager in the purchase of extra components for the manufacture of other tractors. I am quite prepared to say here and now that the sale of those six tractors only covered the operating costs of the business; it did not recoup any of the \$420 000 expended.

Mr MacKinnon: What did the \$420 000 go into?

Mr COWAN: It went into component parts for the manufacture of further tractors which have not yet been sold.

As far as I am concerned, that particular venture administered by both the previous Government and this Government has cost taxpayers more than \$500 000. Had a guarantee been given it may not have cost the Government anything. It may have cost \$500 000.

Mr MacKinnon: It may have cost a lot more.

Mr COWAN: It would not have cost any more. We were already guaranteeing the company for \$143 000. If it had been taken up to \$500 000 an excellent loan could have been obtained.

Mr MacKinnon: I am sure it was only \$500 000.

Mr COWAN: There could have been a 50 per cent quota by Government guarantee or by involvement from people from an outside source.

Mr MacKinnon: It was not forthcoming.

Mr COWAN: I address myself now to the matter of freight. For some time, the people in the eastern wheatbelt have been very concerned about the freight rate for the transport of grain to port and about the cost of farm exports from farming areas. It amounts to something like 25 per cent of the total gross product of the farming community in those regions. For a long time now we have argued that the grain freight rate set by Westrail has been much too high.

That argument has been refuted by Westrail and by the Government which has supported Westrail in this argument. We have always used the comparison with other commodities such as alumina and, until recently, iron ore. We have found that the cost of freighting these commodities represents approximately two-thirds of the actual cost of freighting grain.

Westrail argues that because we are transporting grain from 160 different points, whereas bulk commodities are usually transported from point to point, that justifies the extra cost. Under no circumstances can we accept that. The grain is loaded by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., which is a farmer-owned co-operative. It is also unloaded by CBH. Westrail is involved only in the actual transport of the grain from one point to another. Three years ago a freight rate was agreed to by representatives of the grain industry, including the Primary Industry Association, CBH, Westrail and various other groups, including the Grain Pool of WA. These bodies came to an agreement over a formula which would determine grain freight rates. After one year of operation that formula was abandoned by mutual agreement between Westrail and the other negotiating bodies because it would place an unfair loading on or increase the cost of freighting grain.

I am surprised that this formula, although abandoned last year, has been used as the basis for the renegotiation of the new season's grain rates, allowing Westrail to claim a 13.9 per cent increase in grain freight rates. The time has come when primary producers will cry "Enough". In fact, I have attended several PIA meetings at which there has been a great deal of agitation for

farmers to get together and co-ordinate their operation at harvest time to avoid transporting grain by rail. I can see what will happen: If they succeed there will immediately be some retaliatory move made by the Government at the request of Westrail because grain freight represents about 60 per cent of the total revenue of Westrail.

Westrail is not likely to want to lose such a large part of its revenue in a hurry. The time has come for Westrail to be serious about striking a freight rate for grain. It can no longer off-load all of its costs onto its one profitable commodity. I accept that it makes a profit on the cartage of alumina. It no longer transports iron ore in any quantity. Therefore, Westrail has only Collie coal to cart to Perth and alumina from the various points of production in the south-west to Bunbury and Kwinana. Of course, it also has grain. Coal and alumina are both short haul commodities. Grain is the only long haul commodity Westrail has left, with the exception of the interstate traffic. It is about time Westrail made a serious effort at striking a rail freight rate which is acceptable to the farming community.

Westrail cannot keep bleeding the farmers for this service. There will come a time when there will be a reaction against it. I suggest that time will be with the next harvest. Reference must also be made to the disastrous policy that was implemented two or three years ago with the Total West company, or the joint venture.

Mr Rushton: You must be out of your head not to recognise the advantages. You were a critic before and you are a critic still. You will never be anything else.

Mr COWAN: I point out to the member for Dale that I am still here.

Mr Jamieson: What a hell of a mess you made of it. You spent a lot of Government money there doing nothing.

Mr COWAN: I am very pleased that this Government has recognised—

[Quorum formed.]

Mr COWAN: In view of the lack of members present, I had the fear that I would usurp the title that had been given to the member for Dale before the last election. If it happens again I will never again speak in this place. I will follow the lead given by the member for Darling Range and say nothing.

I was referring to Total West. I am pleased that the present Government has recognised that it has created problems in the transport of smalls, particularly for those towns which are not large enough to generate the volume of traffic which at-

tracts private enterprise to those areas. This has been the problem with total deregulation of this type of traffic.

Mr Rushton: You are demonstrating your ignorance. You just do not understand the way it works.

Mr COWAN: I can understand it when the townspeople of a region come to me and say that they do not have an adequate transport service. I am quite sure that the previous Minister for Transport, the member for Dale, cannot understand that. Therefore, I will give him an example. The township of Merredin has a population of approximately 5 000. It is the main centre in my electorate. It has five transport companies running a service to the town.

Mr Rushton: It wants one.

Mr COWAN: Twelve miles out of Merredin to the west and east of the town lie two small peripheral towns. They have no service at all. They get a service only if they request the local baker, butcher or anybody else who happens to be going past to go to the Total West transport depot and ask whether any part has been consigned to them and to pick it up for them. If that is an efficient transport service—

Mr Rushton: You don't understand how it works. Why don't you put in a request for a franchise system?

Mr COWAN: The member for Dale does not understand that that system never worked. It did not work for a small town.

Mr Rushton: Nothing works for you.

Mr COWAN: At least this Government has recognised a problem exists with the transport of smalls under the present deregulated system. I am very pleased to give some input into this problem of transport because it is a quite serious one. Transport facilities—

Mr Rushton: It is a political ploy. That is all the objections were.

Mr COWAN: The National Party has maintained this policy both before and after the election.

Mr Rushton: What is the policy?

Mr COWAN: The policy was to implement the recommendations of SWATS which the member for Dale, as Minister for Transport, refused to implement.

Mr Rushton: What, Westfreight?

Mr COWAN: I shall tell the member for Dale something—

Mr Rushton: Your freight on grain would be up through the roof by now.

Mr COWAN: It would not be anything like the joke the member for Dale is or the joke his policies were when he was Minister for Transport. I can assure the member his policies were a joke and, if he does not think so, he should cast back his mind to the meeting he attended in Merredin.

Mr Rushton: That you fixed!

Mr COWAN: I did not fix it.

Mr Rushton: Of course you did. You set it up. I went there at your request and you had the indecency to abuse the position. That just shows you up for what you are.

Mr COWAN: I did not request the member, when he was Minister for Transport, to go to the meeting.

Mr Rushton: You did. I had a letter from you requesting me to go.

Mr COWAN: The member is wrong. If he goes back over his files he will find that the request was made by the Mayor of the Merredin Shire Council, and by the Primary Industry Association of WA.

Mr Rushton: You made the request too.

Mr COWAN: Of course I did. I was asked to support the request. The request was made by the Merredin Shire Council and the PIA. They invited the member to the meeting and I supported their invitation.

Mr Rushton: It was at your request.

Mr COWAN: The member accepted the invitation. When he got to the meeting he found out precisely the attitude of country people to his policy. If that is not enough, the member should tell us about the meeting at Kojonup.

Mr Rushton: I will tell you about the meeting at Lake Grace.

Mr COWAN: Tell us about the meeting at Lake Grace then.

Mr Rushton: I will tell you about the meeting at Esperance.

Mr COWAN: They all said the same thing.

Mr Rushton: Don't be untruthful.

Mr COWAN: The policy of the previous Government was totally inadequate. We welcome the inquiry and I only hope—

Mr Rushton: You are moving in a little, narrow circle.

Mr Blaikie: That might have occurred in your area, but it certainly did not occur in my area.

Mr COWAN: In those areas which generate a volume of freight, the Total West venture and deregulation were perfectly adequate; but in areas where the communities had a large volume of

smalls—my area has the majority of those communities—nothing at all was received.

Mr Rushton: Total West was purely a means of easing the burden on the employer. That is all it had to be. It did not have to be that if it was not necessary, but private enterprise took over the burden and, under deregulation, that is where it is going.

Mr COWAN: Total West might have been all those things to the previous Minister and the previous Government, but I can assure you, Sir, Total West meant absolutely nothing in terms of improving freight services for the transport of smalls in country areas.

Mr Rushton: You have not asked for a franchise service.

Mr COWAN: We have done so.

Mr Rushton: Last time I inquired you had not done so. They had not received any requests.

Mr COWAN: For some time in those areas where no service exists, we have been advocating a franchise service. Again that is a demonstration of the ignorance of the member for Dale, because he does not acknowledge those requests were made. I feel sorry for him. I can understand why the member for Dale had some doubt about being re-elected. The people in his area did not even have a transport problem.

If the member for Dale represented an area which had a transport problem, he would not be here, because I have indicated what country people thought of his freight policy—absolutely nothing!

Mr Rushton: You are just a scurrilous mischief-maker; that is all you are.

Mr COWAN: I hope the inquiry into the transport of smalls develops a policy which corrects the anomalies which exist under the present situation—anomalies which have been caused by the total deregulation of the smalls traffic and which have demonstrated that the larger towns were all right, but the smaller towns received nothing; that situation must be corrected.

There is no reason that, because of their geographical position, people should be forced to suffer a service which is totally inadequate or, indeed, non-existent, but that is what happens under this system.

Fair and reasonable people—those not blinded by the doctrines of their own policies or beliefs—would not accept it was right to ask country people to bear that burden. Therefore, I hope something comes out of this inquiry and it does not take two or three years to produce a result.

I shall make one other point: Recently I had the good fortune or otherwise, like many other members of this House, to have the boundaries of my electorate altered. Now I take on board some areas which are involved in the production of fat lambs. I must express my disappointment that, as a result of an argument between some consumers, processors, and the board, the Government of the day has requested producers to become involved in the argument.

I cannot see why it is necessary to have a referendum of producers to preserve what is in fact the status quo. In 1972, lamb producers demonstrated their demand for orderly marketing. The Government of the day acceded to that demand and established the WA Lamb Marketing Board, and the person who did that was the present Minister for Agriculture.

Lamb producers demonstrated their support for that move by increasing production in the lamb industry by a significant amount. The moment an argument occurs between the processors, some consumers, and the Lamb Marketing Board, the Government decides once again to ask producers to demonstrate their support for the board.

I do not see that as being necessary. All that was necessary was for the Government to stand firmly behind the board to demonstrate the board had its full support and indicating that the processors had better back off a little. Everybody knows precisely why the processors are taking on the Lamb Marketing Board. At the moment we are exporting more than 50 per cent of our lamb products and the export prices are down. Processors want to be able to go into a market place and buy lamb at the export parity price and they want to sell it at the prices consumers are prepared to pay, which is substantially higher than the export parity price, and processors want to receive the difference. They do not want the Lamb Marketing Board to benefit from the difference in prices and then distribute that among the producers.

Mr Blaikie: The Government should have acted as a Government is expected to act and it did not.

Mr COWAN: I am inclined to agree with that comment. The Government should have demonstrated its support for the board and allowed the board to continue its operations. It should have told the processors to either process lambs or it would be done through Robb Jetty. Unfortunately the Government has chosen not to do that; but now it has decided to do something about conducting a referendum. I hope it prepares an extremely good "Yes" case for the board.

MR STEPHENS (Stirling) [10.28 p.m.]: The Address-in-Reply debate started so long ago that some people seem to forget we have a new Speaker. I endorse the congratulatory remarks of previous members on your appointment, Sir, and also congratulate you on your performance to date. If you continue in that vein, this House will be justly proud of your service to it.

I also welcome new members from both sides to the Chamber. I trust their stay here will be rewarding and that they do not find too frustrating the rigid party system which is applied to some of them. I hope they feel a sense of achievement.

The election brought a change of Government and it takes some time for such a change to sink in. In some of the debates which have occurred up to the present time the Liberal Opposition does not seem to have accepted the fact that it is now in Opposition. However, the system under which we work will function only if the Government changes from time to time. That gives the defeated Government the opportunity to look at itself, analyse where it may have gone wrong, and come back better able to serve the public, because it has established the reason for its failure.

Had the Liberal Party, when in Government, taken a little more notice of the National Party it might still be in Government and the National Party might well have the so-called balance of power. We might then have seen some interesting debates take place and decisions made, not so much on strictly party lines but more in the interests of the community as a whole. I will touch on some of the issues on which I feel the previous Government was out of touch with the people to the point where it was solidly rejected. I will mention only those areas where we in the National Party tried to give the lead, but were ignored.

Fuel levies was one subject. The Mining Act was another; the Government's policy and decisions antagonised many people, particularly in the rural areas. My colleague the member for Merredin raised the topic of transport services. The previous Government failed to understand the wishes of many country people. I acknowledge that major centres and towns and those towns on routes between Perth and major towns do have a reasonable service; in some instances it is a little dearer while in others it is a little cheaper. However, the real sufferers are the people in the small country communities. It is all very well for the previous Minister for Transport to get uptight about this, but he has only to move around the small country communities to rapidly realise they have been seriously disadvantaged. In many instances their service is now a lot poorer and a lot

dearer. A proper application of the recommendations of the SWATS study and its recommendations for "Westfreight" would have been beneficial. We tried to get the Government to take the right course with WISALTS.

Mr Davies: Is it making any progress?

Mr STEPHENS: The farming community definitely supports it. I believe a full report of its progress will be forthcoming this Friday afternoon when the annual general meeting of WISALTS will be held here in Perth.

Mr Davies: It deserves to.

Mr STEPHENS: We indicated an interest in small business, and in fact moved a motion for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into shopping complexes and the relevant leases involved; in fact, into the problems of small business generally. However, the previous Government said there was no need for such a select committee because it had a back bench committee inquiring into the matter. It indicated there was no real problem. Its back bench committee report was such that the Government was not even prepared to table the report. Actually it was tabled in another place by a member who found a copy which had dropped off the back of a truck. I mention this matter because earlier in the debate a member of the previous Government spoke about the problems of leaseholders in shopping complexes and wanted to know what the present Government was doing about it. This struck me as rather peculiar because it was only about 12 months ago that his Government said there was no problem. Now that there has been a change of Government, the now Opposition wants to know what the new Government is doing about the problem.

These are all areas where we differed with the previous Liberal Government. It ignored our suggestions and it paid the penalty. In debates so far this session members of the National Party have aroused the ire of some Liberal Party members; however, we are not here to pat people on the back but to improve the lot of Western Australians.

I do not believe it is in the best interests of the Liberal Party in Opposition that we should start saying things we do not believe to be true, because its members may not get the message that they must improve their performances if they hope to get back into Government. We have a vested interest in their improving their performances, because if they increase their membership, the National Party will have the opportunity to gain the so-called balance of power. I do not want them to misunderstand our intentions: We are out

to help them with our comments, not to denigrate them.

I have one final point to bring up to bear out what I have been saying. We in the National Party are very interested in the increasing problem of foreign ownership of farmland and real estate generally. We gave notice of a motion for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into this problem but were beaten to the punch by the then Labor Opposition, which actually moved for a Select Committee to be appointed to report upon and to make recommendations regarding the extent to which ownership by foreign interests of farmland and urban properties had increased in Western Australia in the past five years, and also to look at the nature and the extent of the effects and the possible effects of increased ownership of such land by foreign interests.

The Government rejected that call for a Select Committee and moved an amendment to the motion. In order to be fair to the previous Liberal Government, I will read its amendment—

- (1) The Government should continue and expand the monitoring of pastoral and farming land and urban properties which have been acquired or are being sought now and in the future by overseas interests.
- (2) For this purpose there should be—
 - (a) a continuation and expansion, where practicable, of the cooperation with the Commonwealth Government both direct and through the Foreign Investment Review Board in respect of the present and future activities in this field; and
 - (b) a study of any legislative amendments which may be necessary where difficulties are experienced in accurately ascertaining the degree of overseas involvement in transactions which fall in the above categories; and
 - (c) a study in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government of the best ways and means of preventing transactions which are not considered to be in the State and National interest, especially where absentee ownership is involved.
- (3) Further, this House is of the opinion that the Government policy of looking favourably on overseas people who legitimately desire to migrate and personally undertake the proper development and

management of properties as permanent residents of the State, is one to be encouraged.

The previous Government believed it was doing everything necessary and therefore, in its view, a Select Committee was not necessary.

Unfortunately that does not happen to be the case. The continued sale of farmland and real estate generally is a concern to a great many people in the community and certainly in my own electorate. On 3 August 1982 I asked a question of the Minister representing the Attorney General, because I wanted to find out how effective the Government's monitoring programme was.

I asked—

- (1) Has a register been kept of the purchase of Western Australian real estate by foreigners?

The answer was—

- (1) There is no statutory register of the purchase of Western Australian real estate by foreigners. However, in order to obtain relevant data an informal record was commenced from 1 January 1981 in respect of transactions lodged with the Titles Office after that date.

Titles Office records do not disclose the full picture because of leasing and other types of contractual arrangements and the inadequacy of detail on transfer documents.

I then asked—

- (2) If "Yes"—
 - (a) when was the register commenced;
 - (b) what area has been purchased and what is the total price paid for farm land; and
 - (c) how much has been invested in real estate in—
 - (i) the metropolitan area; and
 - (ii) the rest of the State?

The answer was—

- (2) (a) Answered by (1).
- (b) and (c) Because of the nature of the informal record, the limited incomplete information available is likely to be misleading and for this reason it is not proposed to release it.

The final question I asked was—

- (3) Has the Government a policy to inhibit the sale of farm land and real estate to foreigners without preventing investment

in projects which encourages productivity and employment?

The answer was—

- (3) Yes. Each application for Foreign Investments Review Board approval is carefully reviewed and in most cases the Government submits a negative report. However, worthwhile projects have been supported.

One can understand from those questions and answers that virtually nothing effective was done by the previous Government, notwithstanding that this matter was before the House in the form of a motion for the appointment of a Select Committee, and an amendment thereto. It is easy to understand why the people of this State at the recent election changed their minds about the then Government. The Liberal Party will have to look closely at its performance if it wants to get anywhere near the Treasury benches again. The National Party will comment to try to help it to find its way back.

Mr Bridge: People are still worried about foreign investment.

Mr STEPHENS: That is definitely so. I have just read the answers which indicate that the previous Minister led Parliament to believe everything was being handled. In fact, almost nothing was done. Certainly the little bit that was done was useless, and the Minister was not prepared to do anything about that.

The Address-in-Reply gives members the opportunity to bring matters concerning their electorates to the attention of the Government. I intend to touch on a few of those matters now.

The insufficient number of speech therapists available is a problem that concerns many people, not just those in the country. If there is any impediment whatsoever in a child's speech, he is immediately at a disadvantage in his learning and social behaviour. No one would argue against the point that it is absolutely essential that such difficulties be ascertained early in the child's life, and remedial action taken. Unfortunately not many therapists are available to cover the whole State. Only 59 are in the metropolitan area, and 20 in the country.

It is impossible for a speech therapist to cover adequately the number of problems and cases that arise. At the moment speech therapists are attached to the medical department. I do not suggest they should be taken from that department, but I do suggest additional therapists should be appointed under the auspices of the Education Department to get therapists into our

schools, especially our pre-schools, to ascertain problems at an early stage.

In the reply I received to a question to the Minister on 18 August it was indicated that the problem was one of a lack of finance. I appreciate that no Government has the money to do everything it wants to do and, therefore, it is a question of priorities as to whether certain things are carried out. This is where I believe the Government is on the wrong track.

I was encouraged greatly when the Government indicated it would reduce the number of Press secretaries employed by the Government. I remember that in 1974-75 the Cabinet had approximately three Press secretaries, but in about 1980 virtually every Minister had a Press secretary, and additional Press secretaries were attached to the Premier's Department. The operation became costly, and the reduction in the number of Press secretaries was a step in the right direction by this Government. However, once that was done it turned around and appointed a considerable number of ministerial advisers. No saving whatsoever was made; in fact, a net cost was added to the Budget.

These ministerial advisers are in effect creating a public service within the Public Service. I am not opposed to the concept that Ministers, or the Government as a whole, should get advice from outside the Public Service, but the Government is on the wrong track when it sets up advisers on a full-time basis, which creates a sort of service within a service.

On the odd occasion when extra advice is necessary, it should be obtained, but on an *ad hoc* basis from various people depending on the nature of the problem. I cannot give the Government any marks whatsoever for the appointment of these ministerial advisers and, therefore, this additional cost to the community. We could well do without those ministerial advisers, and the money saved could be used to appoint more speech therapists, to give the children of this State a good start in life, to which they are entitled. I hope the Government will rethink this issue. If not, I hope it will find ways and means to allow additional speech therapists to be appointed from funds in the Budget it is about to bring down.

I now turn to a subject which has virtually become an annual in my Address-in-Reply speeches. Hopefully one day the Government will see fit to take action to help people prepared to help themselves.

Of course, I refer to the Mt Barker Hostel. During my first term in this Parliament, which was when I was a member of the then Opposition,

I spoke in the Address-in-Reply debate to draw the Government's attention to the need for a five-year high school in Mt Barker. I am glad to say that following my speech the Hon. Tom Evans, the then Minister for Education, who has now left us, saw fit to investigate the matter. Subsequently Mt. Barker obtained a five-year high school. Unfortunately, successive Ministers of Liberal Governments have not been prepared to assist with finance to establish a hostel at Mt. Barker.

The local people have a great community spirit and have had tremendous assistance from the shire to go ahead with the establishment of the first five-day hostel in Western Australia, which gives children the advantage of spending three nights at home each week with their parents. In addition, such a hostel is economically better than others because it does not incur the cost of wages, etc., over a weekend, which would require the payment of penalty rates.

It has been a successful venture, and so much so that a waiting list exists which creates a need for additional units. Those responsible for the hostel want to develop additional units on the cottage principle and have made approaches to the present Minister in regard to that. Although I have not been advised, I understand he is still considering the matter, but the prospects are not good. It is essential that there be a five-day hostel complementary to the school. It assists in maintaining school numbers, and certainly is beneficial to the children.

The parents desire and support this because they have placed their children on a waiting list. I hope the Government will find ways and means of providing sufficient finance to give the local people the support they deserve and have truly earned by their own efforts. They presently run a hostel with 16 students without any Government assistance whatsoever. I trust the day is coming when that situation will change.

Over many years I have spent a lot of time discussing the need for adequate research into problems on the south coastal strip. I have talked about the pasture problems down there and also the need to investigate items such as clover scorch, wilt, parasite problems, nutritional problems, cash crops for the region, ways and means in which some farmers can diversify their interests, and also the problems of the economics of cattle production. Consistent with that, I have also urged the Government to maintain and increase the activities of the Denmark Research Station. We now know that regrettably the previous Liberal Government saw fit to close the Denmark Research Station and to establish another one in Vasse to virtually carry out the

same function as the Denmark Research Station. The Government's reasons for doing this have never been satisfactorily explained to me. I refer to the previous and the present Governments. I was hoping that we may have saved something for Denmark, that part of the research station could be retained; or possibly have reached an agreement with the advisory committee from the agricultural high school, which would have permitted the retention of the dairy herd and that, in itself, might have helped to maintain the cheese factory at Mt. Barker, so a flow-on effect would have arisen.

The Minister for Agriculture is fully aware of those proposals, but even in this area a problem seems to be developing and we may even lose that opportunity, unless the Minister takes notice of the advisory committee of the agricultural school and gives a direction to his officers to do something about it and accept the offer the advisory committee has made.

One matter into which the research farm was looking, and which may be lost, is carpet wool sheep. I urge the Government to maintain an interest in this subject which is of tremendous importance to the region, because on previous occasions it has been said that the long-term future of the cattle industry is not very bright, and many farmers down there are looking at alternatives. A tremendous number of sheep are presently in the Denmark region. I have been unable to obtain the statistics, but it may be in the vicinity of 50 000 or 60 000 merino sheep in a very high rainfall area. I think it is generally accepted that when we return to the pattern of normal winter rains, that is hardly the desirable type of sheep for the area.

Mr Crane: Have you got any carpet wool sheep down there?

Mr STEPHENS: That is the point I am making. An experimental flock of carpet wool sheep was at the Denmark Research Station, but this has been placed in jeopardy by the previous Government's decision to get rid of the Denmark Research Station. According to my information from the Albany woollen mills, they need yarn from 600 000 sheep, which would be basically 400 000 Romney and 200 000 carpet wool sheep; it is blended from the two and it would depend, like all other things, on the individual decision. The two favourite breeds appear to be Tukidale and Drysdale. I understand that the running of so many sheep would mean about a \$7 million industry for the region. That might not be a lot in absolute terms, but for these smaller areas with smaller economies, I assure the House that \$7 million is a considerable amount of money. I hope this Government does not take action that would

in any way jeopardise the possibility of that industry being established.

One thing I overlooked when talking about the need for research on the south coast, when more or less condemning the previous Government for its actions, and when expressing my disappointment that that decision was more or less endorsed by the present Government, was that recently I went to a seminar in the south Stirling area. The seminar was entitled "Sandplain Pastures, Are They Deteriorating?" I will read from a position paper given by one of the farmers in the area itself. It reads as follows—

and I still have a copy of the farm analysis for the year ending 31st March 1969. This shows that the average dry sheep equivalents per effective acre of pasture carried on our property was 3.6 producing 41 pounds of wool where as that of the whole group was 4.3 dry sheep equivalents with 40.3 pounds of wool per acre.

Referring to his problems he says—

The problem commenced in the spring of 1971 with the widespread appearance of clover wilt on our property for the first time and with it has come at least a 30 per cent reduction in carrying capacity when measured by sheep through the shearing shed but in real terms of nearer 50 per cent when the amount of hand feeding now required is taken into consideration.

Later he said—

With the wind erosion comes adverse publicity and accusations of over stocking and ridiculous statements to the effect that the land should never have been cleared and that it should revert back to bush etc. This of land which 15 years ago was carrying 4 sheep per acre and was considered to have almost limitless potential but is now written off as overstocked at 2 sheep per acre or less.

I read that to confirm that the local people have the practical experience which indicates a need for research. Problems were well and truly stated at that seminar and were understood by the agricultural officers present; however, no solutions were forthcoming. It is significant that the year the problems started was 1971 which was the year I entered Parliament. It may give the members some indication why I have consistently espoused the need for additional research facilities in the south coastal region, and why I was so vocal when the previous Government decided to dispense with the Denmark Research Station.

I now turn to the Albany Port Authority. Albany, of course, is the port for the region, and I

am aware that presently a committee is reviewing the problems at the port.

I am concerned that they are virtually under a direction to charge 90c wharfage for grain, when all other ports in Western Australia charge only 70c.

Mr Watt: It is down to 85c now.

Mr STEPHENS: I accept that but it is still in excess of the charges in the other ports.

The port is important to the economy of the entire region, and I believe the management of the authority has been quite efficient and the problems besetting it are outside its control. Basically, those problems are insufficient cash flow to fund working expenses and other financial commitments. This has been brought about by factors such as the high cost of port development and of loan funds, the high fixed costs, and last but not least, centralisation of cargo, in particular meat, wool, and tallow in Fremantle. That problem is outside the control of Government but nevertheless it is a real problem.

Mr Watt: When I talked about matters in your electorate you made rude remarks.

Mr STEPHENS: I did not. I would like to point out to the member for Albany he should not be interjecting from where he is sitting now, but I will accept that.

Mr Watt: I was not interjecting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr STEPHENS: The port of Albany is important to the people I represent.

Mr Watt: National parks are important to the people I represent.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Albany will come to order.

Mr STEPHENS: I believe the problem to which I have referred could be overcome simply by restructuring the debt of the port authority, and the simplest way to do that would be to write off part of the debt.

A precedent exists for that; in 1966 the State Government approved the writing-off of a debt of \$3.3 million for the port of Bunbury. If it has done it once, it can do it again, particularly when one considers the alternatives. The Government has agreed to the statistical transfer to other departments of some assets, but they have been transferred at their value. It leaves the port authority with the difference between the takeover value and the value that appears on the books.

That is only a partial solution. If the Government decided the port authority were to be dissolved, some other department would have to bear

the cost. Those other departments would only take over the assets at a written down value, so why not write them down now and save the problem?

If that excess burden were written off no doubt exists that the port authority could operate quite efficiently and balance its budget. I put another point to the Government: If the port authority were a private concern and ran into financial difficulties, it would no doubt go into liquidation and then be purchased by some other company or organisation which would take over the assets at a written down value. The authority would be able to operate quite effectively at that written down value.

I urge the Government to give serious consideration to writing off the debt now and allowing the port authority to operate efficiently and without any great problems. If the authority were given that opportunity I believe the matter would readily resolve itself. I do not believe the committee of review will be able to come up with anything to overcome the authority's cash flow problems, if it is left with the problem of servicing its very high debt.

I refer now to the Lamb Marketing Board. The member for Merredin commented on this in his speech and I endorse his remarks and say how disappointed I have been in the stand taken by the Government. I have followed closely the operations of the board, having been involved with its formation. Prior to becoming a member of Parliament I was a member of the meat executive of the Farmers Union and was able to involve myself in the debate on the measure when it was introduced in 1971. I believe the board's operations have been exceedingly successful. It has stabilised the price of lamb and encouraged greater production which has been exported overseas. For many years the export price subsidised local consumption. The role possibly has been reversed now with the downturn in the overseas market.

This has enabled the processors to virtually sabotage the operations of the board, particularly as a tremendous amount of lamb has been available in the Eastern States. They have used this situation to bypass the board. I believe the Government acted precipitately in seeking a referendum; it is quite unnecessary. I know the Pastoralists and Graziers Association has been very vocal in its opposition to the board both before and after its inception. It has rarely kept to the truth. I will not say outright lies have been told but at best it has told half truths. The people who are causing the problem at the moment are those who control the abattoirs and are bypassing the board. They have not acted legally in bypassing the board and

yet the Government appears to have taken some notice of their complaints.

In my electorate the majority of producers recognise the benefits of the board and will overwhelmingly support its continuation. I am concerned at the flood of money that could pour into Western Australia from the Eastern States to mount a strong propaganda campaign. For many years we have heard the cry that lamb producers in the Eastern States without a board are getting higher prices than producers in Western Australia. The low prices obtained by producers in the Eastern States have enabled processors in Western Australia to mount a campaign against the board. At the moment a strong move is under way among Eastern States producers, particularly in South Australia and Victoria to try to establish their own lamb marketing organisation. This is the reason I believe the processors in those States will try to kill the Lamb Marketing Board in Western Australia as this will help them undermine the endeavours of producers in the Eastern States to establish a marketing authority which will give producers in those States some stability.

I now draw the attention of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to a problem which is vexing the farm community in my region. I refer to the licensing of trailed firefighting units and the problems of people who have licensed farm trailers.

It is a peculiar situation, but a spraying outfit can be towed along the road, any road, without a licence; but a trailed firefighting unit which is basically the same as a spraying unit except that it does not have a boom, must be licensed. Even as a licensed vehicle its use is restricted inasmuch as one is not allowed to tow it along a main arterial road. The same applies to farm trailers. Many farmers have trailers for farm use and if they want to move them they may only do so if they use a secondary road. If the trailers are taken on an arterial road the farmers commit an offence and may be prosecuted. It is a ridiculous state of affairs where one can have other types of implements—for example, a harvester—which may take up more space on the road than a farm trailer and yet, they can be towed on an arterial road but a farm trailer cannot.

Recently one of my constituents, believing he had a farm trailer licence, was towing his trailer on an arterial road. He was stopped by a police officer and received a \$400 fine. I think that is a bit rough. This situation was particularly rough because my constituent was stopped at the top of a hill on a wide road with wide gravel verges. The policeman who stopped him parked his own car on the bitumen and any cars travelling in the same

direction had to move over and in so doing crossed the double white line. While booking the farmer the police officer also took the number of every vehicle which passed and went over the double white line. I have inquired of the local police whether they proceeded with infringement notices. I have not yet received an answer. In my opinion the only person who should have been prosecuted was the police officer who forced other vehicles to cross the double white line.

A member: He should have lost his licence.

Mr STEPHENS: Yes I think so, but I do not want to get involved in the scales of justice. I sometimes think we should look at the way in which the Police Force operates. If the police are operating correctly, they would not object to an independent inquiry; they should welcome any investigation. I am a little apprehensive when the police do not want an inquiry. It makes me and many members of the community suspicious that they may have something to hide.

Adjournment of Debate

MR OLD (Katanning-Roe) [11.14 p.m.]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before the member for Katanning-Roe commences his speech I would like to indicate that, during the last speech, a number of members interjected from seats throughout the Chamber which were not their seats. I realise that when stimulating speeches are made, members are prone to make interjections, but I would prefer it if, in future, interjections are made from members' own seats.

MR OLD (Katanning-Roe) [11.15 p.m.]: I wish to refer to several subjects during my contribution to the Address-in-Reply most of them relevant to the rural industry.

Firstly, I would like to raise the confusing situation which exists with regard to drought relief. So many conflicting statements have been made and conflicting answers given, that many people in areas which were declared drought-affected during the latter part of the drought period are somewhat confused as to whether they will receive certain benefits. I refer to such things as interest and fodder subsidies.

In the southern part of the State, in the Cranbrook Shire and parts of the Plantagenet Shire, the declarations were made about 27 June, backdated to 1 April. A statement was made, I

think it may have been by Senator Walsh, the Doodlakine devastator, saying that all drought relief measures would be ceased. This statement was, in fact, later refuted by Mr Kerin who was quoted in *The West Australian* of 12 July as saying, "because of criticism by rural groups, the Government would consider continuing the fodder subsidy". We assumed from that statement that some further relief would be granted to farmers who had only just been drought declared.

On 28 July I asked the Minister for Agriculture the following question—

- (1) Are subsidies for fodder purchases and agistment of livestock still available to farmers in drought declared areas?
- (2) If not, has he made any approach to the Commonwealth Government to have the decision to abolish these subsidies reversed?

The Minister replied—

- (1) Agistment subsidies are still available to farms in drought declared areas that have been assessed as prone to severe wind erosion. This subsidy will be available to those farmers until the drought declaration is revoked.

Purchasers of fodder are no longer subsidised. This scheme was fully funded by the Commonwealth; and it terminated the subsidy on 30 June 1983.

On 22 July *The Australian Financial Review* contained the following statement—

The Federal Government has reversed its earlier decision to terminate the interest rate subsidy scheme for drought-affected farmers from June 30 and has now extended the scheme to December 31.

It goes on to say—

The Government is not extending the fodder subsidy scheme which terminates at the end of September.

On the one hand we have the Minister telling us locally that the Commonwealth terminated the fodder subsidy on 30 June, and this was reported in *The Australian Financial Review*. A couple of days later it is stated that the Government has no intention of extending subsidies which terminate at the end of September.

I am sure, Mr Speaker, you will agree with me that the people in the areas which were declared at the deadline towards the end of June are justly confused about what they may expect, and if, in fact, they may expect anything. I had taken up the matter of the agistment subsidy with the Minister for Agriculture and I pointed out to him that

many farmers in that area, through necessity and also through respect for their land and not wishing to degrade it, had sent their stock away at an early stage of the drought period. They were not entitled to the drought relief agistment subsidy because of the way the regulations were gazetted.

The regulations were gazetted when I was the Minister, so I am not blaming the present Minister for Agriculture for the criteria that were laid down. They were laid down originally because the Department of Agriculture, quite rightly, wanted to remove stock from fragile land in the south-eastern part of the State. This was the incentive for the farmers to remove the stock from that country which was prone to blowing. The criteria that the land had to be sandy soil and prone to wind erosion was laid down, and I accept responsibility for that.

I point out to the Minister that in the case of the Cranbrook area, and especially that part west of Cranbrook where the soil is not as fragile as is some land to the east of Cranbrook, the people have been judicious in sending their stock away, and therefore they should be considered for a fodder subsidy.

The battle has been lost, because the drought declarations have been revoked, and quite rightly so. The Minister has still retained a few pockets as drought declared, but one would be hard pressed, in most areas of the southern part of the State, to convince anybody that drought conditions prevail. It is only in recent weeks that one could say that, rather than being drought affected, parts of the area have become waterlogged because of the winter rains. In those areas, not enough detail has been given to the farming community as to what the Commonwealth Government is prepared to fund, and what the State Government is prepared to do with those funds.

I understand some people who have applied for loans have been told that money is not available for them. That is understandable, because on 30 June, unless a drought declaration is carried over from one year to the next—which did not occur on this occasion—the system collapses and no assistance is given to the State Government under the “natural disaster” classification. From memory, in the case of the Western Australian Government, it has to meet the first \$3 million, which is not an inconsiderable sum. When it can be proved that loans should be made available, it is incumbent upon the Government to make the money available under the “natural disasters” arrangements, and it should start to build up the next \$3 million. I hope that the Government does not have to reach the trigger point, because that

signifies real trouble, either due to cyclones in the north or to fires or drought. I hope that we will not face that.

That brings me to the question of drought loans for small businesses. This is a rather vexed subject. Three years ago, the previous Government made drought loans available to small businesses at a rate of about 10 per cent from memory. A limit of \$10 000 was placed on each loan. Although it provided some assistance to some small businesses, it was totally inadequate.

The following year, the State Government made loans available at a concessional rate of interest, as it did with primary producers. The year after that, when the drought hit the Eastern States and the Commonwealth Government of the day realised that drought was a serious malaise in the agricultural industries, one of the core measures for which it assumed responsibility was the funding of drought loans for small businesses in drought-affected country areas. Obviously, the money would not be made available to small businesses having a difficult time just through mismanagement. It is a matter of considering the businesses such as machinery agents, storekeepers, and general agents in areas which have been declared drought affected, and reviewing their finances which have been affected adversely by the drought declaration.

One area under consideration was the Gnowangerup-Borden-Ongerup area. Much unrest and criticism still exists among the small business community in that area. Despite the fact that the Commonwealth undertook to provide the funds at no interest to the State Government on condition that the money was to be re-lent at three per cent, the State Government steadfastly refused to make any money available to the people in the area. I assure members of the Government that will not be forgotten by the small business people.

I wrote to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology, because when we were in Government the Department of Industrial, Commercial and Regional Development handled drought relief loans for small businesses. I gave examples to the Minister of people in businesses in those areas, and I gave details of their financial situations. In the case of one dealer, I attached to my letter a copy of a bulletin from the Ford Motor Company's general manager which stated that, as the result of discussions and negotiations with Mr Howard, the then Treasurer, the dealer had been advised that the people in drought-declared areas may and should, if the necessity arose, apply for small business drought loans.

That applied also to Ravensthorpe. However, I did not receive a reply to my letter, but I took the precaution of asking the applicants to keep me informed. The gentleman who had given me the bulletin from the Ford Motor Company advised me when I was next in Gnowangerup that he had received a letter from the Minister stating that the Government had no intention of making loans available.

I had the temerity to write to the Minister and ask if he would give me a decision, as I had not received a reply to my letter. In reply, I received a copy of the letter the Minister had sent to the applicant, with a compliments slip on it. That answered my question, but I do not believe that is the way to answer correspondence.

I am not complaining about the way the correspondence was conducted; I am complaining about the fact that the people were denied the extra money which, at that time, was freely available from the Commonwealth Government. Now it is not available, so it is far too late.

I will touch briefly on debt reconstruction. I have a very high regard for the Rural Adjustment Authority. It has an exceptionally hard job, inasmuch as the amount of money allocated by the Commonwealth is low. However, I was pleased to see that in the Minister's last sojourn with the begging bowl, he was able to obtain from the Commonwealth an increased allocation for rural adjustment. The increased allocation, unfortunately, is totally inadequate, as I am sure the Minister would agree. When the number of applications for rural adjustments, both for debt reconstruction and farm buildup, is known, very few loans can be granted because of the amount of money available to the State.

Obviously the board has to look very closely at the applicant; it has to look closely at the possibility of the applicant returning to viability and at his ability to repay the loan, although the latter aspect does not have the higher priority of the two.

By the time the loans have been examined a few people are satisfied and some are disgruntled because they have been waiting for some time to obtain relief from either the Rural Adjustment Authority or the Commonwealth Development Bank and, as time goes on, their operations are impeded.

I was very pleased to see Sir James McCusker, as Chairman of Directors of the Town & Country WA Building Society, convince his board it would be a good idea if the society ventured into rural finance. Sir James is held in very high regard as a financier in this State. For many years he worked

with the Commonwealth Banking Corporation and then, as a result of circumstances, he decided to branch out on his own. Among other things, he was the original founder of the Town & Country WA Building Society. He is a farmer in a very big way nowadays and he understands rural finance.

The last time I spoke with Sir James McCusker, Town & Country WA Building Society had committed \$30 million to rural adjustment. That project was launched in Katanning about 10 months ago when \$10 million was committed to rural finance in the Katanning region. When one considers that, at that time, the amount allocated for rural adjustment each year by the Commonwealth Government to this State was approximately \$2.5 million, an injection into one area of \$10 million looked like a fairy story. The project was later launched in Geraldton and Bunbury. I believe it is operating out of Albany now also, but I am not sure. At this stage the society has committed \$30 to \$40 million to the project and I noticed an article in last week's *Western Farmer* to the effect that the society is committing another \$50 million in what is called a "farm pack loan".

The society is able to do this because it has access to money through some overseas trading banks. It could obtain a great deal more money from the same source of supply if it could persuade the Commonwealth to extend mortgage insurance into the rural lending field. Mortgage insurance is run by a corporation set up by the Commonwealth and I understand it is operating at a very healthy profit. It seems a logical step to go into rural finance, because at present the criterion is that lending will be made up to about 50 or 60 per cent of the value of the property. These people are quite happy to go higher than that and are quite confident that, on the basis of this lending, the debt would be repaid, but they cannot get the prime lender to lend the money without some form of mortgage insurance.

I know that Sir James has written to the Premier and I only hope the Premier will be able to assist this very worthy organisation in having the mortgage insurance scheme extended to cover that facet of its business.

Another anomaly which occurred was not very great at the time, but perhaps the Minister for Agriculture will look into it in case he is ever unfortunate enough to experience another drought. Frankly I do not think he will, because I think the next two years will be excellent and he will not have to worry about the matter after that.

Mr Evans: He hopes you are right!

Mr OLD: I am quite sure I am right. I shall be back there on the Government benches waiting for the next emergency. The Minister is well aware that the interest subsidy was available to farmers on eligible debts. Loans or borrowings in respect of which interest subsidy payments may be made include "(a) loans on borrowings relating to an eligible farm enterprise which were in existence at 31 August 1982". Some of these Town & Country WA Building Society loans were in existence at that time, so they would be eligible. The provision under (b) is, "borrowings from a bank or pastoral house after 31 August 1982 which are certified by the vendor as being for the purpose of carry on necessitated by the drought". That precludes a client of a lending house such as Town & Country from obtaining any assistance with regard to the interest subsidy.

I know the Minister for Agriculture is aware of that problem and I only hope he will continue to press for an alteration of those conditions, even though we share the confidence that he will not need to utilise them in drought conditions in the near future. It would be desirable to have that assistance available when necessary. I do not say "if" it is necessary, because there is no doubt that droughts are cyclical and we shall return to lean years when assistance will again have to be provided. At all times we should be looking at criteria to provide assistance in drought situations for the future.

One of the matters which has disturbed me and a number of people in industry is the attitude of the Minister for Agriculture and, I guess we must say, the Government to some members of rural boards who have been very dedicated.

Previously I have mentioned this in a Press release, but I want to refer to it in the House in order that it is on the record. Many people within the chicken meat industry were very concerned when a grower representative on the board, Mr Len Brajkovich, was not reappointed. I do not deny it is the Minister's prerogative to appoint whom he and the Cabinet see fit as the grower representative. However, the Minister would be well aware of the delicate negotiations which proceed within that organisation in respect of the agreed price for chickens, etc.

Mr Brajkovich is the largest grower in Western Australia and one of the largest growers in the Commonwealth. He is the president of the Federal chicken meat organisation and, therefore, one could not say he is not well qualified to be a spokesman for the industry.

Mr Thompson: Oh yes, but he is a Liberal.

Mr OLD: I did not realise that. The member for Kalamunda should have told me that previously. I have just found out that Mr Brajkovich is a Liberal.

Mr Tonkin: Is he a member of your party?

Mr OLD: I guess that answers my question and I am sorry I wasted the time of the House on that matter.

Mr Davies: He was the bloke who wanted to hang everybody, wasn't he?

Mr OLD: Not everybody—just a few people. Actually it would not be a bad idea to hang a few people the way things are going.

Mr Davies: Hear, hear! We should have a list.

Mr OLD: I have already voiced my concern at the appointment of Mr Alex Payne to the WA Meat Commission. I have nothing personal against Mr Payne; I consider him to be a very good union organiser who does a good job for his union. But what the Government has done is to put the cat among the pigeons. This is worker participation at its worst, because here we have a man who is dedicated to the welfare of his union members, whose first responsibility is to his union, not to the WA Meat Commission or to the industry. I would bet my life there is a direct line out of the boardroom to the unionists, and this is not giving the commission much of a go.

I am starting to look around corners now, because I wonder who will be appointed next and to what. I will tell members what will be next: It will be the Dairy Industry Authority.

Mr Davies: After they gave away all those free empty cartons recently, they deserve to be strung up.

Mr OLD: That was a very disappointing promotion. I opened my carton expecting some fresh milk, but I found none. I thought perhaps someone had swiped it.

Mr Davies: It was a disaster from an environmental viewpoint.

Mr OLD: The Minister has already made it plain that he will take up some of the recommendations of the recent Honorary Royal Commission which inquired into the dairy industry, and I look forward to debate on that. What I see as sinister is that the Minister has said he will restructure the DIA. As I recall, the Honorary Royal Commission's recommendation was that there should be a board of three people. The Minister intends to reduce the number from nine to seven members. He intends to reduce producer representatives from four to two; he intends to reduce industry representatives from two to one; he intends to retain one vendor representative, the

status quo; he intends to retain one member of the Department of Agriculture, the status quo; and he intends to retain an independent chairman, again the status quo. That gives us six. The Minister also intends to add a representative with special qualifications! What special qualifications does one need in the dairy industry? It will not be a "tit puller", because they use machines now. It might be a nutritionist. Of course, it might be someone involved in the transport industry, someone like Mr O'Connor.

Mr Bryce: Have you seen where some of the people you nominated finished up?

Mr OLD: I hope I have not put an idea into the Minister's head. I hope I have driven that idea out of his head because there is no doubt that the subject of transport took up a lot of space in the Honorary Royal Commission's report. When considering a person with special qualifications, we are looking at either an accountant or a union organiser, and I would give small odds on the latter.

Mr Peter Jones: He will be told what to do anyway.

Mr Blaikie: The Minister sat on the inquiry and he will be judged by his fairness and impartiality when he introduces the Bill.

Mr OLD: I would like to direct a few comments now to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and I do not intend them to be seen as criticism. I have spoken with the Minister on a couple of occasions about the priority for replacing the Cranbrook police station and quarters. The Minister is well aware of the problem, but I am anxiously waiting to see the Budget to see whether the station and quarters are mentioned.

I was in Cranbrook about 10 days ago seeing members of the shire, when I received a message that the local superintendent had asked that I call in at the police station. I found that the local constable's wife and child had been away for a week and had just returned. His wife was in the midst of trying to clean up the house. It is almost indescribable, but the walls of the bathroom, of the child's bedroom, and of the main bedroom, if we can refer to it as that, were completely covered with mildew, and this after just one week away from the place. The ceiling of the bathroom was black with mould, and the mattress from the child's bed was sopping wet. At the time it was hanging out the window in an effort to dry it.

The problem is the water table under the house. To my mind the house should be condemned. Any officer of the Police Force would be entitled to say that he refused to live in such conditions. Should the Minister be in the vicinity at any time I ask that he call in and inspect the building, because it

really is a disgrace. The Minister has assured me the situation is well known to the force and to himself.

It is interesting that the only section of the bedroom not affected by mould is that part of the wall which abuts the police station proper. Between the police station office and the bedroom is an asbestos wall. The relieving officer told me that even in Cranbrook they get the odd stroppy fellow who is brought in in the middle of the night and who has a few choice words to say about his situation. Unfortunately this can happen when the officer's wife is perhaps just a couple of metres away on the other side of the wall in her bedroom. It really is a disgraceful situation and I have mentioned it in the hope that the Minister will do something urgently to rectify the problem.

Mr Davies: They must have complained about it before.

Mr OLD: The member for Stirling in fact interjected earlier to say that the problem has been known for some time. A tremendous amount of correspondence has been involved and it is now my duty to follow it up.

My colleague the member for Mt. Marshall mentioned during his dissertation in this debate the disappointment of the people who were to be covered by the Agaton water scheme. We have been through a lot of exercises on this proposed scheme, and the farmers of the area have been active in promoting and trying to establish it. A proposal that was put to them by the previous Government involved farmers raising some finance. Unfortunately it has involved some difficulties; nonetheless there is a lot of merit in the idea of providing water to these people and in going ahead with a water scheme.

In the first instance, a water scheme would service one million hectares of farmland, which is not an inconsiderable area.

Secondly, it would relieve the Mundaring scheme of the necessity to supply some 334 000 hectares. With the water storage we have now, that point is probably not as important as it was last year, but we must endeavour to ensure that these supply problems do not occur again. The end result would be that 664 000 hectares and a number of small towns would be brought onto a reticulated water supply. The number of small towns to be supplied could be treated as a social decision.

When the current Minister for Administrative Services campaigned during the last election he attended a meeting at Mukinbudin. The *Central Districts Herald Tribune* of 10 February made this report—

... the Oppositions spokesman for Water Resources, Mr Parker, gave firm commitments on the party's attitude towards the implementation of the much discussed Agaton water scheme.

He announced at Mukinbudin that the ALP would move immediately to have the scheme listed as a No 1 priority for application for Federal funds and that on gaining government the first stage would be put into operation.

"For far too long the needs of country people have been neglected, and a State Labor Government would rectify this injustice.

"People living in areas not now reticulated are equally entitled to Government regard to provide those services at a fair and equitable cost, the same as those areas already serviced," Mr Parker concluded.

That is a wonderful message for the people in the area to be served by the Agaton scheme—but no action has been taken, and it is time we had some action.

The WA Lamb Marketing Board seems to be a fairly popular subject this evening. The other evening when the Premier was cavorting in the House and telling us how good he was, he said in as many words that the farmers in this State think he is the greatest thing since sliced bread. He said that the Liberal and Country Parties had done nothing about the Lamb Marketing Board and did not believe in such things. For a start, I will put the record straight by quoting from the latest edition of our State platform. After the preamble it says—

We advocate stabilisation of industry through orderly marketing schemes managed by bodies on which producers are adequately represented.

Mr Terry Burke: That's in ours.

Mr OLD: It is not.

Mr Terry Burke: It is close.

Mr OLD: To continue—

We advocate increased accountability by marketing boards to growers...

Quite frankly, it is time we had some accountability by those boards, and especially by the WA Lamb Marketing Board.

Late last year the rumbling started in the rural Press about the possibility of an excessive loss by the board, a rumbling which proved to be correct. I asked Mr Malone, the chairman of the board, and Mr McSporran, the chief executive officer, to

discuss the projected loss. We discussed the prognosis for the current season, and I asked them what they thought might be the result and the throughput. I did not agree with the figures put to me to represent the throughput for lambs, because of the seasonal conditions we had experienced. Naturally, when a budget is drawn up for a board such as this, it is based on the number of, say, lambs that will go through. We discussed the whole situation of the board and I suggested there would have to be some sort of investigation into its workings if it continued to incur the types of losses it had incurred to that date.

I suggested further that it would be in the interests of the board for a firm of consultants to look into the board's operations—to look over their shoulders to see what they were doing. I suggested that when a report was received, it should be made public so that the producers and the public generally could see what was going on in the board. I said "If you do that, you will come out smelling as sweet as a rose". The people with me agreed it was a good idea, and went away to discuss it with the board. However, it was decided by the board, due to possible costs, to conduct an internal investigation. Such an investigation into a statutory marketing authority is absolutely useless.

The current Minister said he would have an investigation carried out by the Department of Agriculture, and it was carried out by Mr O'Loughlin. He is a fine rural economist, but he was the man instrumental in the setting up of the Lamb Marketing Board. It does not matter how objective he is, he will be seen as biased by people slightly antagonistic towards, or even people merely concerned about the board.

Mr Blaikie: I do not think that officer should have been put into that situation.

Mr OLD: Yes, it was unfair to do that to him. Mr Stoute of the Department of Agriculture was interviewed by the Press, and said he saw disturbing trends; later, there was a dispute between the slaughtering industry and the board.

I maintained communication with the board, the producers, and the meat industry. There was enough goodwill within the three parts of the industry to settle the dispute by meetings. I do not believe the Minister for Agriculture undertook his responsibilities as he should have. To put it crudely, perhaps he should have banged some heads together; he told the people involved to get on with their jobs. The end result was that an extra 100 000 lambs were imported, lambs which should have been sold by producers in this State.

Amendment to Motion

I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to the motion—

but we regret to advise Your Excellency that the Government has been remiss in allowing the problems besetting the lamb industry in Western Australia to escalate to their present level without taking suitable action to bring all parties together to relieve the situation.

Mr Burkett: Seven months against nine years—Snow White and the seven dwarfs!

Mr Bryce: Good. You had nine years to solve it.

MR CRANE (Moore) [12.01 a.m.]: I second the motion and in doing so I wish to make comments which I hope will assist the Government in its deliberations.

Mr Tonkin: We could do without your complicity.

MR CRANE: Mr Speaker, you ask members not to interject if they are not sitting in their proper seats or if they are walking around this Chamber. I hope I will be afforded the courtesy that we and you, Mr Speaker, always try to afford other members.

I have been associated with the meat industry for many years, but I am not an expert on it.

Mr Old: Hear, hear!

Mr Davies: Hear, hear!

MR CRANE: It is a terribly complicated industry and business, but, over that period, I have learnt a lot about the industry particularly in respect of farming. I have been involved in the industry as both a producer and grower—I am not growing lambs for sale now as such; I produce them but they are only for the production of our wool crop. We do not now sell lambs to the Lamb Marketing Board or for slaughter or household purposes. I still remember all there is to know about the production of lambs and the manner in which they have been sold over the last few years. I was particularly concerned and very much involved with the lamb and mutton industry prior to the establishment of the Lamb Marketing Board. I must agree with the member for Katanning-Roe when he expresses concern at the lack of action taken by the present Government to bring all parties together to resolve or relieve the present situation. He just told us that he felt there was sufficient goodwill within the three facets of the industry—the processors, the producers and the Lamb Marketing Board—for them to get around the conference table and iron out many of their differences. The member would not have

made this comment without relying on a great deal of his own personal experience in dealing with these matters over the last six or seven years.

We have arrived at a situation in this State which has escalated to a point where the lamb industry in Western Australia is in a state of chaos. We know that since its inception there has been antagonism towards the Lamb Marketing Board, a great deal of which has not been due to ignorance on the part of its antagonists, but to their vested interest in ensuring that the Lamb Marketing Board did not proceed, because it was instigated to meet a very real need to protect the producers.

In 1971 we had higher sheep numbers in this State and a pretty high production level of lambs. From that time also we had a great problem in getting our stock slaughtered. We had the threat of no abattoir space and an over-abundance of sheep and lambs with the result that it was virtually impossible, without waiting a considerable time, to have stock slaughtered. Much was said at that time about introducing new abattoirs to the State, extending the Midland Abattoir and putting four mutton chains in to increase the killing capacity.

I think we had the capacity to kill 12 000 a day. Mr Speaker, who is plucking this duck?

Several members interjected.

MR CRANE: If members have finished talking about Pinocchio, perhaps we could continue.

Mr Burkett: We weren't talking about Pinocchio; we were talking about you.

MR CRANE: At least they had a good subject before them.

The SPEAKER: I can hear the member for Moore quite clearly and I am listening to him.

MR CRANE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. At that time it was decided to increase the killing capacity of the Midland Abattoir to cope with this glut in the market. This solved the problem to a certain extent, but only part of it. At that time much pressure was put on the Government of the day to introduce a Lamb Marketing Board because the producers felt they were not getting a fair price, and there was plenty of evidence within the market place to suggest that things were not all right. In one instance a buyer, who shall remain unnamed, had a particularly good and very effective habit while on the rails buying sheep. He would distract the attention of some other buyers by creating an argument, and while they were all busy arguing, the sheep would be knocked down to him at a much reduced price. That was a normal practice in auctioneering sheep. Mr Speaker,

you yourself were part of the Select Committee into the meat industry which became an Honorary Royal Commission.

Mr Blaikie: It was a very, very good inquiry.

Mr CRANE: It was a good inquiry. The member for Vasse was also part of that inquiry.

Mr Blaikie: I was not going to mention that.

Mr CRANE: I will mention it.

Mr Old: I am surprised.

Mr CRANE: The member for Vasse played a very useful part in that inquiry. The Minister himself, of course, was also part of that inquiry. We were able to question all facets of the industry from the grower to the producer to the manufacturer to ascertain as best we could the problems besetting the industry.

Mr Blaikie: I think it also would be fair to say, and to have recorded in *Hansard*, that we were probably the first inquiry of any kind in Australia to visit the premises of Protean Meats, which became rather infamous in later years.

Mr CRANE: The member for Vasse is quite right. Mr Speaker, do you remember Protean Meats presented us with a set of cufflinks which we decided were best not to be worn after we found the company processed kangaroo meat? That was just an aside.

Mr Stephens: You failed to pick it up.

Mr CRANE: We did not pick the kangaroo meat at that time. In 1971 prices were rock bottom, down to about \$3 to \$4 a head. Skin values were worthless and the producers were very agitated. The EEC market was being lost to us; in fact, we were in a very serious situation; so, out of sheer necessity and the beliefs of the producers and many other people, the Lamb Marketing Board was formed. It had a rather chequered career, one might say, considering the compliments it received from one section of the community and the abuse it received from the other; nevertheless, many claimed it brought stability into the market. It brought together the highs and the lows of the market and broke them down to a more even plane. Valuations were more consistent and the producer obtained a more realistic price. He would receive a more even price for his home consumption meat and his export meat and so felt he was in a better position.

Once the market price is manipulated many other forces come into play which of course can cause the Lamb Marketing Board problems. A great deal of stability was brought to the market by the establishment of the board. Over the years it has been shown that a great deal of dissatisfaction existed, particularly in respect of some

abattoir proprietors who claimed that in many instances they were having to buy their own lambs back from the board and they had to pay the cost of slaughter; all these other arguments were put forward which caused many problems. We called to our inquiry the Manager of the Lamb Marketing Board (Mr McSparran) and questioned him very deeply over a long period on many subjects.

We were satisfied with the operations of the board and said so in our report. I believe we were correct in our deliberations.

The Lamb Marketing Board began operations in 1972 but it should be remembered that prior to that in the spring of 1972 lamb prices had increased a little. It cannot be claimed in all fairness the increase in lamb prices was necessarily due to the introduction of the board. It could have been coincidental, but prices did improve a little at the time.

A rather disgraceful situation exists now and that is why I am supporting this amendment. The Government has failed to act when plenty of evidence exists that the processors and the Lamb Marketing Board are on a collision course. One area that concerns me is the claim that 300 000 lambs have bypassed the board. I cannot understand how this can happen because I have produced lambs and know how to identify them. I thought perhaps I ought to give members a brief lesson on how to identify a lamb.

It is a rather simple method, and members will have heard of the terms two-tooth, four-tooth, six-tooth, and full-mouth. Lambs are born with milk teeth which they keep for approximately 12 months after which two prominent incisors grow in the centre and the animals are known as "two-tooth". At that stage they are known as hoggets. After approximately another 12 months two more teeth come on either side and the animals are known as "four-tooth" and so on. So it is a relatively simple matter to identify a lamb; all that is necessary is to ensure its head is left on the carcass before the inspector inspects it. The fact that this has not been done—and one can only presume it has not been done—indicates that some of the inspectors in the country abattoirs who are probably shire health inspectors, apparently have not done their job effectively.

It is a simple as that. They have not identified those lambs, so the blame can be laid fairly and squarely on the inspectors. You would be aware of that, Mr Deputy Speaker, because you saw those lambs' teeth when we were looking at them in our investigations. It is one area in which the Government could have acted.

Mr Evans: Which Government?

Mr CRANE: In this instance, any Government, including my own if such things were happening. It could have and should have been done because laws and regulations ought to be adhered to. It has led to continuing and growing malpractice in the industry. It would seem it has been almost a sport to bypass the Lamb Marketing Board if it has been happening on the scale that is claimed. It should have been stopped and I am sure it would have been prevented had a meeting of the parties concerned taken place, such as was suggested by the member for Katanning-Roe. The Minister no doubt could have made them an offer they could not refuse, and with the powers he has it would not have been difficult.

We have arrived at a situation where a show-down must occur, but I am concerned to hear that a referendum is to be held in the next fortnight or so about whether the board should remain as it is. At the same time, an inquiry is to be held. Such an inquiry is well and truly overdue because we cannot afford to lose \$2 million a year without looking to see where it is going. The board has been losing that amount of money and it must be a matter of concern to us all. I believe an in-depth study is necessary and it ought to be carried out by competent people further removed from the industry than has been suggested.

Aspersions will be cast on the people involved in the inquiry particularly as the person who will conduct it was the architect of the Lamb Marketing Board. It is almost tantamount to Caesar passing judgment on Caesar, or it could be misconstrued as such. I put a question to the Minister for Agriculture, and I do so as one who has worked not only as chairman of that commission but also on the inquiry into the dairy industry. The Minister and I have worked closely together in these matters for a long time and have valued and respected each other's opinions. I am giving an opinion now in the same vein. It is important an inquiry be held into the operations of the board by an independent and responsible authority.

This should happen before the referendum is held. It is pointless to hold a referendum relating to the board, and an inquiry afterwards; that is putting the cart before the horse. Nowhere in my wildest dreams would I have expected a Minister of the calibre of this Minister for Agriculture to do such a thing. I pay him that compliment and I am sure he would not do it if he gave it some thought. I ask him to consider the important points I have raised. There is no question but that the inquiry should be held; we are not going to say every operation is perfect. This Parliament has a Public Accounts Committee which looks at the expenditure of public money. That is fair enough;

there is nothing wrong with someone looking over one's shoulder.

An inquiry should be held but the referendum should be delayed for some time. If after the findings of the inquiry are known it is decided to hold a referendum to test the attitudes of producers in the industry as to whether they believe the board should continue to function when all the benefits are known, that is another matter. It does not add up to hold a referendum and have an inquiry afterwards. I suppose somebody is responsible for making that suggestion, but whoever it was must have woken up from a bad dream.

There is no logic or commonsense about it. It is commonsense to hold an inquiry to find out what are the problems and how so much lamb can be imported from the Eastern States and sold on the local market. It should also find out how many lambs supposedly are bypassing the board, and are slaughtered and in which abattoirs. It should find out why meat inspectors who can recognise lamb do not at the same time put a lamb brand on it. I have seen hogget in butcher shop windows which was hogget a long time before it got there. I have never in my life seen ribs as long as some of those on the "hogget" in some windows.

Too much manipulation has been taking place for far too long in the meat industry.

Mr Tonkin: Why didn't you do something in nine years? You ought to talk!

Mr CRANE: These matters should be put right. I have very much pleasure in supporting this amendment and I hope sincerely the Minister will take on board the comments I made and the spirit in which I made them. They do not come from someone who does not understand the industry. They are concerned comments from someone who has been associated with this industry as a grower and has investigated it over a number of years. I am sure the Minister would appreciate the points I am making.

Mr Tonkin: You did nothing for nine years; it is all hot air.

MR EVANS (Warren—Minister for Agriculture) [12.20 a.m.]: I am rather startled at the effrontery of members of the Opposition. I should not be amazed at their hypocrisy and charlatanism in bringing forward an amendment of this kind in connection with the meat industry when I consider the state of the meat industry and who is responsible for it. The present state of the meat industry goes back to the previous Government. The cost to the present Government is in excess of \$4 million and this sum is traceable to the previous Government's involvement in the Midland Junction Abattoir. The original tragedy

was the failure to follow the Townes Austin report, the increase in the size of Midland, and the disastrous consequences of that.

Mr Blaikie: You are going back to 1950.

Mr EVANS: That is where it goes back to, and that was followed by the Government going ahead with the development of Midland, which turned out to be disastrous. As a consequence we saw the gradual decline in its operation which followed in progressive steps with the inevitability of a Greek drama. This situation has resulted in a debt of \$15 million. The State pays \$1.1 million in interest on this accumulated debt.

That was the start of what has transpired. From there we have seen a decline at Robb Jetty until a most unsatisfactory situation exists with regard to Government involvement in the meat industry in Western Australia.

I would like to follow through several of the points raised by the two speakers on the Opposition side. The member for Katanning-Roe indicated that last year as Minister he called in the board and gave it certain instructions which apparently were not followed. This goes back before the last season and, bearing in mind that the lamb season in Western Australia lasts about four months in the flush and 60 per cent of lamb is exported, a unique situation prevails in Western Australia which gives rise to all sorts of problems.

If the former Minister was disturbed at that time why did he not proceed to take some action?

The member for Moore indicated that the board was bypassed last season of something like 300 000 lambs. I believe that to be so and the passing of those 300 000 lambs involves a differential of about 15c a kilo on what the board is charging now and what it should be charging. This kind of stealing is going on in the industry and it involves many people. Vested interests are involved, producers who go behind the board and who are increasing their profitability and making the best of the situation. They are doing it at the expense of the lamb growers themselves.

Mr Blaikie: You have made an accusation of people going behind the board. Will you name them?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr EVANS: It involves farmers, abattoir processors, shire councils and health inspectors whose names have been drawn to my attention as being involved in this passing of the board.

Mr Blaikie: Who are they?

Mr EVANS: I think the member for Vasse may have a clue as to who I refer to.

Several members interjected.

Mr EVANS: I point out to the member for Moore that most of the lambs would have gone past the board in the last season when his Government was in office. The flush has not started at this stage; why was something not done then? I repeat: Why was it not done and why did the previous Government leave the mess which the present Government has inherited? On assuming office one of the first actions taken by this Government, consistent with its intention to call upon efficient audits to ensure that every authority and board performed as near to its maximum as possible, a position paper was called for from the rural economic section of the Department of Agriculture which set out the position and, for the first time, gave an overview of the operation of the board. That was not a bad start. However, it was not very well received in quarters which had a vested interest, which claimed it was a whitewash.

Mr Crane: When was this paper?

Mr EVANS: Four or five months ago, soon after this Government came into office and decided to look at the situation. It was in early August. A situation developed following circumstances which arose emanating from the plight of the Eastern States where, following the disastrous droughts of last year the late lambs were carried over and the new season lambs were dropped; then the pastures improved dramatically and as a consequence there was a glut of lamb in the Eastern States which is now being used by certain processors in this State to break the board if they possibly can.

Early in August I called a conference of members of sections of the industry, including primary producers, unions, the Meat and Allied Trades Federation, and processors. When I called those groups together it was expected that two representatives from each of the various sections of the trade would be adequate. However, the Meat and Allied Trades Federation asked firstly if it could bring three representatives and subsequently requested four representatives, including one from the retail side. The situation was starting to become rather unwieldy and for that reason I suggested that three representatives were ample, although the federation could bring whoever it liked. Because of this limit the Meat and Allied Trades Federation boycotted the meeting which made it somewhat worthless. It has continued to import lamb as at present. I understand from the Lamb Marketing Board, with whom I have been regularly in touch, that the processors have changed their ground consistently, making dealings with the board almost impossible. They

sought to use the glut of lamb in the Eastern States to weaken the board, undermine and even wreck it. That is the situation which exists today.

Several further developments have since transpired; one is the intention of this Government to call for a full inquiry, and that was announced more than a month ago. The purpose of this inquiry is to examine, and have examined by an independent authority, the Government's involvement in the meat industry in Western Australia. That includes the Lamb Marketing Board, the WA Meat Commission, and also involves the live sheep trade, Midland, other abattoirs, and the full role of the Government. A preamble to the inquiry has been set out and I would like to quote some of it, as follows—

Governments in Western Australia have traditionally supported the need for a Government owned slaughtering facility. This support was based on the need to provide a service, works and to make available a facility capable of handling the increased throughput which occurred seasonally and in times of emergency, e.g. drought. More recently, the Government facility has complemented orderly marketing systems, such as the Lamb Board and has permitted the Government an insight into the economics of the meat processing industry.

The preamble goes on to specify the following—

Whilst the present Government is committed to the establishment of strong marketing structures for products and endorses the process of orderly marketing, it is appropriate at this time to review the Government's involvement in the meat industry and to examine its relevance to today's needs and for the future.

In particular, it must be reviewed in light of:

- reduced livestock numbers, particularly cattle
- excess abattoir capacity

It is about double the required capacity at the moment. I point out the previous Government issued an additional licence to an abattoir at Mundijong, against the advice of the WA Meat Commission, the Primary Industry Association, and the Department of Agriculture. The preamble continues—

cost to the Government of maintaining Robb Jetty

I have suggested that the Government is looking at a loss of \$4 million-plus. Considering the economics of the situation it would be more profitable

to pay each of the employees a year's salary and send him home, if that could be arranged. That represents one year's loss; but it is an ongoing loss for the last nine years. We have been stuck with that by members opposite.

Mr Old: What do you want to do? Close it down?

Mr EVANS: The preamble continues—

the live sheep trade with respect to:

- (i) the quality of residual mutton available for export;
- (ii) the increasing number of young sheep being exported;

the developing trade in live cattle, pigs and goats

changing consumer preferences, e.g. decreased consumption of red meats

the existence of two Government Meat Marketing organisations

Changing conditions of world trade, resulting in the current depressed export prices for meat

the general swing by farmers from livestock to cropping enterprises.

Those are the factors affecting the meat industry in Western Australia. The impact and import of each of those factors must be analysed.

The draft terms of reference include the following—

The purpose of the enquiry is to examine and report on State Government commitment to meat marketing and processing, as outlined.

The Government has no intention of moving away from that, where it is deemed to be desirable. The terms of reference continue—

The enquiry will consider the cost to Government of such involvement and recommend, where appropriate, methods of increasing efficiency. Recommendations must include changes required immediately and those required in the next ten years. The enquiry is to include:

Meat Marketing

Is the current form of involvement of two Government authorities in meat marketing (the W.A. Lamb Marketing Board and the W.A. Meat Commission) desirable?

In answering this question, issues to be addressed should include:

- (1) Is the power of acquisition necessary for the orderly marketing of lambs?
- (2) What are the effects of pricing and trading on:
 - (i) producers
 - (ii) processors
 - (iii) employees
 - (iv) consumers?
- (3) What is the impact of the existing organisations' marketing and pricing policies on production and consumption in both domestic and exports products?

Should a change in the Government's involvement in industry be recommended—

- (i) what should the new structure be?
- (ii) how should it operate? (in terms of acquisition powers, pricing policies, and management)
- (iii) what relationship should it have with a government abattoir?

What financial structure is necessary for a government meat marketing organisation or organisations (existing or proposed)? What would be the cost to the government of such a structure?

What impact does the live trade in sheep, cattle and pigs have on the Government's involvement in the meat industry?

Abattoirs

What type of government abattoir is required to best meet the future needs of the industry?

What structural alterations are required to Robb Jetty abattoirs, and at what cost, in order that these needs be met?

One must bear in mind that the European Economic Community has just presented further requirements to the export abattoirs in Australia, including Robb Jetty, for the export of meat into the EEC markets. The terms of reference continue—

Is the continuation of the Robb Jetty abattoir feasible in view of increasing environmental pressures?

How else can the Government meet the requirement to provide a slaughtering facility and at what cost?

Is there a need for a statutory licensing system for abattoirs based on abattoir capacity?

What are the likely effects of the developing export trade in live lambs and young sheep on the meat processing industry and the Lamb Marketing Board?

The terms of reference then deal with the requirements of the Government relating to the Midland saleyards and the question of employment. The nature of the inquiry is outlined, and it is suggested that it ought to be an independent committee of inquiry, with the inquiry to be made in two separate phases.

I regret that time is closing in on me. The Lamb Marketing Board has been conducting negotiations with the processors, and this afternoon the arrangements between the board and the processors were finalised. The contractual arrangement they have been seeking for some weeks has finally been reached. The processors will kill board lambs as from Monday.

Mr Blaikie: The processors will be back killing lambs for the board?

Mr EVANS: That is what I was informed by the President of the Lamb Marketing Board today.

Mr Blaikie: That is important.

Mr EVANS: It is quite important.

I return to the amendment before the House. It is the twelfth amendment moved in this Address-in-Reply debate.

Mr I. F. Taylor: The dirty dozen!

Mr EVANS: I am obliged to the member for Kalgoorlie for that interjection. We should bear in mind that the average number of amendments moved on Address-in-Reply debates is just over three, but we are on the twelfth. One could not expect any member of this House to believe that the amendment is moved with sincerity and purity of intention to help the lamb industry and the lamb producers. Members opposite should not make us laugh. This is a purely political charade. It is about time members opposite—

Mr Burkett: We will get positive interjections when the truth comes out.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr EVANS: The condition of sections of the meat industry in Western Australia that we have inherited is a disgrace, and the responsibility for that rests with the people over yonder.

Mr Tonkin: Especially the mover of the amendment.

Mr EVANS: With the assistance of the primary producers of this State, we had a change of Government. Had that not happened, the producers could not have kept going much longer.

Mr McNee: The primary producers did not do that.

Mr EVANS: Not only do I ask that the amendment be defeated, but also I ask that it be defeated with contempt.

Government members: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: Order!

MR McNEE (Mt. Marshall) [12.39 a.m.]: I support the amendment.

It is easy to see that the Minister for Agriculture is not an experienced farmer, because he left the shed door wide open. He mentioned sincerity—

Government members interjected.

Mr McNEE: I am quite sincere in what I am saying.

Government members interjected.

Mr McNEE: I happen to be—

Mr Bryce: Let the record show he has a smile all over his face. He thinks it is a giggle.

Mr McNEE: One can wind up members opposite, can one not?

Mr Blaikie: The Minister should take the smile off his face.

Mr McNEE: Members opposite are like a bunch of stag rams; they are not much good, but there is a hell of a lot of fight in them!

Several members interjected.

Mr McNEE: Of course, I did not get to my feet to talk about stag rams; I intended to talk about being sincere in what we on this side of the House are doing.

Mr Tonkin: You were in office for nine years and you did nothing!

Several members interjected.

Mr McNEE: I know the Leader of the House would like to walk over my electorate—

Mr Tonkin: You were in office for nine years and you did nothing.

Mr I. F. Taylor: You have only been here five minutes—

The SPEAKER: Order! The tradition in the House has been that the Speaker gives a member the call and he is the only person who can address the Chair. Under the Standing Orders all interjections are disorderly. The member for Mt. Marshall has the call.

Mr McNEE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am sincere about this, and the basis of my sincerity is that this matter affects the profits of the electors I represent. As I have tried to explain to the House previously, profits mean jobs, but I do not think members opposite can understand that.

Mr Evans: Members on your side of the House have sold out the primary producers for years.

Mr McNEE: The Minister for Agriculture seems to be getting irritated. It is probably getting a little late, but if he was an experienced agriculturist—

Mr Burkett: Show him your experience! You have been here only seven months!

Mr McNEE: If the member for Scarborough likes to interject like that—

Mr Burkett: As you do!

The SPEAKER: Order! I have put up with the interjections from the member for Scarborough for approximately the last hour and a half. My advice to him is he ought to stop interjecting.

Mr Burkett: I apologise, Mr Speaker, but it is hard when the member for Mt. Marshall abuses—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Burkett: I apologise, but—

The SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Scarborough makes another interjection he will be doing so from elsewhere. The member for Mt. Marshall.

Mr McNEE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Lamb production in Western Australia is very complex.

Mr Evans: Do you favour the board?

Mr McNEE: I am not saying whether I favour anything.

Government members interjected.

Mr McNEE: I will take on a paddock full of Government members before breakfast!

Mr I. F. Taylor: Run rabbit, run!

Mr Evans: You talk about sincerity!

Mr McNEE: If the Minister stays here he will learn something, but if he does not want to do so, it is up to him.

Lamb production is a very complex industry.

A Government member: Tell us whether you favour the board.

Mr McNEE: The Minister gave us the historical details of the industry and indicated what happened in the 1950s and what has occurred since then.

Mr Tonkin: Do you favour the board?

Mr McNEE: The lamb industry is a complex one.

Mr Clarko: Give him a go instead of defying the Speaker! After all, you are the Leader of the House.

Mr McNEE: The problem as I see it in my electorate relates to the producers of prime lambs. They are the people who seem to have some reason for complaint at present. They complain that they support the balance of the industry. As the producer of a merino ewe I have three choices: I can put it through the WA Lamb Marketing Board; I can run it on as a wether lamb and support it as a hogget; or I can put it into the grazier trade. However, the hour is far too late to go into the complexities of the industry.

I emphasise lamb production is a complex industry and that is why the inquiry will need the complete attention of the Minister. The Minister has just walked out of the House; he is walking away from the problem.

Mr Tonkin: You are walking away. Do you favour the WA Lamb Marketing Board?

Mr McNEE: I do not walk away from that problem, the problem of the Leader of the House, or any other problem which faces my electorate.

Mr Tonkin: You are too afraid to say whether you favour the board.

Mr Clarko: Why don't you dry up?

Mr McNEE: I will not let the Leader of the House hassle me into telling him what I favour. I am making this speech and, when I am good and ready, I shall indicate the points I wish to make. In the meantime, the Leader of the House should try to learn something.

The simple fact is, the people in the industry are not satisfied with what the Government is doing. The Government tries to criticise the previous Government for what it did, but the WA Lamb Marketing Board came into operation approximately 10 years ago. At that time the price of wool was approximately 25c a pound. Members will recall prior to 1972 when the referendum was held, a disastrous drought occurred in 1969 which created massive over supplies, particularly of meat. The traditional market for Western Australian prime lamb in the United Kingdom closed down, but the Minister forgot to mention that.

Mr Crane: I reminded him about it.

Mr McNEE: I realise that, but, as the member for Moore knows, we have to keep repeating things because members opposite tend to walk away from issues. At that time we had a massive glut of lambs. Since then farming has changed.

Indeed, it has had to change, because if it did not we would not have an industry today.

Farming today is much more specialised than it used to be. One farmer may specialise in the production of wheat, and perhaps the second string to his bow will be pigs. Another farmer across the road may specialise in fat lambs. It is rare to find a farmer today who does not specialise in that way. It is far too expensive not to do so and the industry has become so complex that, if one does not specialise, one finds it impossible to succeed.

The Minister intends to hold a referendum, but the Government seems to have the situation upside down.

Mr McIver: The Government is having the referendum, not the Minister.

Mr McNEE: It appears that, after the referendum has been held, an inquiry is to be conducted. The Minister went to some lengths to talk about what would be included in the inquiry. I suppose the producers do not matter very much as far as the Government is concerned, but they would prefer it if the inquiry were held before the referendum. They would prefer the inquiry to be conducted by independent people, and I see no harm in that. After the inquiry we should proceed with the referendum.

It appears this whole matter has been orchestrated by the Government and people to whom I have spoken have expressed the fear that the referendum will contain only one question when it would be preferable if it contained a number of questions. The people to whom I have spoken would like a question dealing with the power of acquisition of the board, because, in the main, the producers support the retention of the WA Lamb Marketing Board. However, they may want to support the board with qualifications and the Minister wants to push this limited referendum onto them. The Minister should listen to what I am saying, because I might be closer than he is to the people who are concerned about this matter.

Mr Blaikie: Now is the time to pause to get a response from the Minister.

Mr McNEE: The Minister is not here. He has walked away from the House in the same way as he is trying to walk away from primary producers.

Mr Bryce: That is a load of bunkum!

Mr McNEE: The Deputy Premier may say that, but we shall deal with one of his portfolios soon.

Mr Bryce: You try your best.

Mr McIver: If it wasn't for a Labor Government, you would be back to boiled wheat and rabbits.

Mr McNEE: The Labor Government has been responsible for \$18 million in meat charges. And do not forget the Federal Labor Government's fuel levy. It is so ridiculous for the Minister to make that sort of statement. I hate to think what the Government's freight rates for wheat will be. We were not talking about what the Labor Government has cost us. I am sorry the Minister interjected and took me away from the track I was on, because I want to talk about the Lamb Marketing Board's referendum and the fact that my electors think it is a set-up, something about which they are greatly concerned.

One point about the referendum that concerns us is the way we will qualify for a vote. I quote the following from a Press release issued recently by the Minister, indicating the terms controlling entitlement to vote—

Those who delivered 100 or more lambs to the Board in either 1981/82 or 1982/83. Such producers would be readily identified from existing Lamb Board records.

Those who sold 100 or more lambs during the same period directly to an abattoir operator or wholesale butcher, through an agent. In this case producers would be required to present the Minister with documentary evidence from the agent of such sales, by October 5.

I understand it is now 12 October. To continue—

Those who sold 100 or more lambs for slaughter through the auction system. In this case producers would be required to supply documentary evidence from the agent concerned that such lambs were purchased by an abattoir operator or wholesale butcher for slaughter in Western Australia.

I think the Minister has now agreed that we do not need to sign a statutory declaration; he has decided we are not all crooks.

So, if I had chosen to sell my 100 lambs to an abattoir and not to use an agent to conduct the sale—which was perfectly legal—it appears I would be precluded from having a vote. I have seen members opposite parading about the place with badges saying that all votes should be equal. No doubt this is a fair indication of what they mean.

I have people in my electorate who produce several thousand lambs and who may or may not get a vote, but I could get a vote with 100 culled merino lambs if I had sold them through an agent. Is that what the Government means by all votes being equal? It must do in the Government's eyes. If that is so, God save us from these people.

Mr Bryce: You are complaining about your own principles.

Mr McNEE: I have seen the Deputy Premier's colleagues with the slogan which I cannot really work out. I think it means all votes are equal, other than those of the people who live in the country! Obviously the Government does not give a damn for us.

I have a genuine and sincere interest in what happens to my industry. I ask the Minister to take a proper and thorough approach to this matter. I doubt that the consultation in his early days was broad enough. It is my aim to ensure that whatever system we use will maximise the returns to the farmer; that is the important issue.

Mr D. L. Smith: Why didn't you tell the previous Minister?

Mr McNEE: The people I represent want me to talk about the present. Last Christmas has gone and we will not see another for a while yet. This Government seems to take the approach that it can help the fellow at the bottom by pulling down the fellow at the top. That approach does not work.

I ask the Minister to pay particular attention to these points in his deliberations on this very complex problem, and to exercise extreme care. The producers in my area are concerned that he should pay attention to the current situation involving livestock in farming areas, because the position has changed and it is not the same as it was 10 years ago; those conditions no longer prevail.

Mr D. L. Smith: That is why we are having an inquiry.

Mr McNEE: If the Government has an inquiry, it should not have a referendum first. If I were to hold a referendum first, it might be to give the people who are to conduct the inquiry some preconceived ideas, which is exactly the way the Government is doing it. I would ask exactly the same question the Government is most likely to ask and, probably, I would get the answers the industry does not want, just as the Government is likely to do. Perhaps the Government is taking a risk it has not calculated.

Mr D. L. Smith: The board has had 10 years' experience.

Mr McNEE: I do not know how much experience of the board the member has. I am not being critical of the board, but of what the Government is doing to the board. The Government should be looking more carefully at where it is going. It seems to be a Government that rushes in and then later tries to fix what it has demolished. We are

asking that it should advance with care in this important area. I support the amendment.

MR BRADSHAW (Murray-Wellington) [12.57 a.m.]: I support the amendment. The problem that arose several months ago should have been dealt with much sooner by the Minister. It is a problem that has created a loss of jobs, a lowering of prices to lamb producers, and an uncertainty for some abattoirs throughout the State.

Basically there are two problems, not one. The first involves the killing charges to the abattoir operators. For some reason, the Lamb Marketing Board in its wisdom decided to introduce a differential cost for the killing of lambs, and the cost depended on the size of the abattoir. Previously, all the abattoir operators were paid \$4.60 a lamb for killing. The board decided to introduce a range of charges from \$2.60 up to \$4.60, and the charge would depend on the size of the abattoir.

This was not good enough for many abattoir operators, and all the non-export abattoirs decided to stop killing lambs. I do not understand why the board decided to change the system, because it had worked adequately in the past when there was one price for killing lambs. I think the board felt that the bigger abattoirs had bigger costs and should therefore receive more for killing. That does not hold water, because surely if they have a bigger throughput, they would have lower costs. Anyway, this is the main reason the non-export abattoirs have not been killing lambs. I understand they will restart tomorrow on a temporary basis until the matter is resolved.

The other problem was brought to my attention earlier this year when a constituent of mine in Pinjarra, who produces fat lambs, told me he had recently purchased a retail outlet and indicated that after sending his own lambs to the abattoir it was costing him an average of \$18 to get them back.

The abattoir charge is \$5.35. That includes a killing charge, a meat inspection charge, a levy to the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation, and a 20c charge for grading. The rest of that money, approximately \$13, went to the board, which did not touch or even see the lambs. All it did was receive a cheque for the difference. This situation did not seem right to me, so I tried to find out why the board obtained this money. It tended to say only what it wanted people to hear. I was perturbed by the situation, so about six weeks ago I wrote to the Minister and asked him to stop the compulsory acquisition of lambs by the board until its operations were investigated.

The Lamb Marketing Board has provided a needed service over the years, but the costs of

running it have increased so much that it should be investigated, and some way found to reduce its costs. In 1971 it charged 2.6c a kilogram, and in 1983 it charged 10.86c a kilogram, which has been quite a dramatic increase.

Mr D. L. Smith: Who was in office when that happened?

Mr BRADSHAW: The responsibility would rest with both sides.

Mr D. L. Smith: Do you think the Government should conduct an inquiry?

Mr BRADSHAW: I fully support the conduct of an inquiry. The total acquisition could be set aside, which would lead to the removal of the compulsory acquisition. This would not lead to the downfall of the board.

Mr Stephens: You would have to be joking.

Mr BRADSHAW: I am deadly serious.

Mr Stephens: That indicates how much you don't know about it.

Mr D. L. Smith: Ask members on your side whether they agree.

Mr Stephens: We have had beef marketing schemes which have been absolutely useless.

Mr BRADSHAW: The removal of compulsory acquisition would not lead to a downfall of the board. It would be an incentive to prime lamb producers, particularly out of season. This would spread production for the lamb market and would lead to greater co-operation and involvement by the private sector in the local market. It would lead to the finding of export markets and to the minimisation of heavy flush periods of lambs. It would lead also to the removal of costs associated with the acquisition placed upon processors, and increase market opportunities for producers.

The Lamb Marketing Board has supposedly been out searching for markets, yet two years ago when one of the processors was in Kuwait, I think it was, and had dealings with the Intercontinental Meat Corporation, which was buying Western Australian lambs, he was told by the company that it had never heard of the Western Australian Lamb Marketing Board. The board is supposed to be overseas selling our lambs and searching out markets, but this huge corporation had never heard of it. Obviously it sells through middle men, which would mean added costs to the producers of this State. If producers do not bear the cost, it is forced upon consumers, who must pay excessive prices through the retail outlets of Western Australia.

I support this amendment and the establishment of an inquiry into the board and a

referendum to be held after all the attributes of the board are explained.

MR STEPHENS (Stirling) [1.05 a.m.]: I will indicate the view of the National Party on this matter. During the Address-in-Reply the member for Merredin and I made reference to the lamb situation in this State. We expressed our disappointment that the Government had seen fit to conduct a referendum in respect of the Lamb Marketing Board.

For the sake of continuity, I will restate that the National Party does not support amendments to the Address-in-Reply. We have not in the past, and we do not intend to do so now. That does not mean we are not concerned about matters of this nature. We believe that amendments to the Address-in-Reply are an exercise in futility—they achieve nothing; we all know that.

Mr D. L. Smith: Sometimes they are an exercise in hypocrisy.

Mr STEPHENS: That is the member's attitude, but certainly they do not achieve anything. If this amendment were carried, it would not affect the lamb producers of this State one iota; nor would any of the other amendments so far moved affect any of the areas to which they referred.

Mr Crane: This enables us to raise matters.

Mr STEPHENS: If we were to get the Address-in-Reply out of the way, we would still have the opportunity to move substantive motions, which might achieve something. That is the reason behind our objection to these amendments.

Mr Crane: You would agree, wouldn't you, that the referendum before the inquiry will be an absolute waste of time? I am sure of that.

Mr STEPHENS: The referendum is a waste of time—period.

Mr Crane: After the inquiry, there may not be a need for a referendum.

Mr STEPHENS: The member probably is right, but the Government has indicated it will hold a referendum. I support the intent of the amendment, but it will be defeated. Remarks were made about what occurred in 1971. At that time I was a lamb producer, and produced approximately 2 000 lambs a year. I had the galling experience of witnessing the price of prime lambs drop from approximately \$12 a head in one year to \$2.50 a head in the following year. That was all we could get for lambs.

Someone who spoke earlier did not understand the situation. He said that the EEC situation meant that we lost our market in the United Kingdom, but at that time there was a guaranteed price for our lambs f.o.b. the ship, a price which

was made up by the board. The processors in Western Australia could have paid the producers more than \$2.50 a head, but they tied up the abattoir facilities so that basically the only way a producer could sell his lambs was to sell them to these people who had the market cornered. We were robbed in no uncertain terms.

As a result of that experience, a referendum was carried out among producers. The processors had taken the producers to the cleaners. The processors are the very people who have never stopped niggling at and sabotaging the Lamb Marketing Board; they are the people of whom this Government has apparently taken some notice and has, therefore, decided to hold this referendum; they are the people who cheated the farming community; and they are the people who are not worth considering. Most people are looking after their vested interests; they are not looking at the situation to ensure a reasonable and fair return to the producers or a reasonable price to the consumer.

Mr Bryce: Are you advocating interference with the free market forces?

Mr STEPHENS: Interference with the free market forces?

Mr Bryce: Is that what you are advocating?

Mr STEPHENS: I do not have to advocate that.

Mr Bryce: I am just listening to you. I am a bit concerned about this.

Mr STEPHENS: If every member of this House sat down and thought for a moment, he would know that at any stage when there is interference between production and marketing a free enterprise system no longer exists. There might be a private enterprise system, but it is not a free enterprise system.

Mr Bryce: Some of your dry friends over there don't agree with that.

Mr STEPHENS: Take the motor car industry. In just about every facet of that industry there is an involvement somewhere between production and the retail level, so, while we might have a private enterprise system, we certainly do not have a free enterprise system. That situation is commonly misunderstood.

Mr Rushton interjected.

Mr STEPHENS: One could say that. The member can get up and make his speech later.

Mr Carr: Don't provoke him.

Mr Bryce: I promise I will shut up.

Mr Clarko: Forever?

Mr MacKinnon: You have got them worried.

Mr STEPHENS: People who have sabotaged the board since its inception had the opportunity of being fair to the producers and yet they took them to the cleaners. Presently many of the same people are bypassing the board and because they have done so they have bypassed the equalisation payment scheme. Have they passed that on to the producer? No, they have not. They have pocketed the difference because they have still been selling their meat at roughly the principal price to the consumer, but they have been getting their lamb a lot cheaper. The Government is interested in catching those people by this referendum. As a matter of fact, to be fair, I was most impressed with part of the reply given by the Minister for Agriculture. I am not clear whether he is really putting forward an excellent case against a referendum or the need for one. If the Minister looks back over his remarks, he should accept my comments. He went on to say that four months ago up to 300 000 lambs bypassed the board.

Mr Evans: The result of the referendum will be of great use to the inquiry. That is the essential thing.

Mr STEPHENS: Of great use to the inquiry? I am glad the Minister said that. If I quoted him correctly, he said we had the Lamb Marketing Board situation locked and the report was very favourable to the board. The Minister called together the people in the industry and the only organisation which did not turn up at that meeting was the Meat and Allied Trades Union which is causing the problem. Basically, it ripped off the producers. Its having been indicated that the Lamb Marketing Board is supported and is operating efficiently, I cannot, for the life of me, understand why we are to have a referendum.

The previous speaker said, "There is no need for equalisation payments". Around 1976, there was a glut of baby beef and producers were expecting to get round about \$200 for it, but they were lucky to get \$25. I opposed the proposition from the very outset—and I was a member of that Government—because it was an exercise in futility that embodied a system of imposing a misleading price on baby beef which was going onto the local market at a price different from the export price. This was on a voluntary basis and it was absolutely and utterly useless. In addition, a quota system, which was also a complete and utter failure, was introduced. I am not theorising. That is something we tried to invoke on a non-compulsory basis, but it was a complete failure.

The other point that should be made is that reference was made to a producer in Pinjarra who now has a retail outlet. He slaughtered his own lambs and had to pay \$18-odd, only \$5.35 of

which went towards the cost. People have many misconceptions about this \$13. This is not the cost to the Lamb Marketing Board at all; it is the basis of the equalisation scheme which is part of the whole Lamb Marketing Board operation which is more or less obligatory.

Earlier this evening, I said that for years the export price has been higher than the local consumption price and so it basically subsidised local consumption. However, a downturn on the overseas market has occurred. I do not know the exact figure, but I understand that with equalisation, home consumption now tends to stabilise the export price. It is completely and utterly false to talk about this \$13-odd being a Lamb Marketing Board cost because it is not. The board cost is put up by the board from time to time. As a matter of fact, I have the newsletter of the board of 20 July 1983 wherein it gives the total of the distribution of possible income and carcass acquisition of 50.3 per cent, processing costs 22.1 per cent, factory operating costs 6.2 per cent, freezing and storage costs 5.3 per cent, bank interest 2.8 per cent, slaughter fees 2.5 per cent, selling expenses 1.3 per cent, and board operating costs 6.2 per cent; and in this operation it had an operating surplus of 3.3 per cent. That clearly indicates the fact that those people who have been trying to undermine the board have not always been honest in their propaganda.

I have read many letters and comments accusing the board of dishonesty in regard to the cost of operation but these people are deliberately misleading the situation and deliberately ignoring the fact that the biggest component of that cost is the equalisation factor. That was one of the reasons for the board's introduction. Having been a producer, I can go back to the day early in the season when we got tremendous prices for lamb, but the day there was one lamb more than the number required for the local market the producers received export prices for every lamb marketed. They did not get the local price for them. This was one of the reasons behind the establishment of the board and the equalisation factor. It was desired to ensure that the board was not flooded out. That is the reason for that figure which has been particularly misleading as an operating cost.

A Government member: I am not always critical, but it is good to hear a reasonable and constructive speech from that side of the House.

Mr Thompson: What do you mean "from that side of the House"?

Mr STEPHENS: I try to be factual in my comments. Having been a producer and having suf-

ferred because of no marketing arrangements whatsoever, and also representing an area containing many lamb producers who, in the main, definitely support the board, I acknowledge that some are opposed to it and have been since its inception and, no doubt, they will always be opposed to it.

I find it also remarkable that some of those people who are opposed to boards would not hear of the Wheat Board's being disbanded. They would not hear of the reserve price scheme for wool marketing being altered. After all, as far as I am concerned, the lamb marketing operation is as near as one can get in principle to the reserve price scheme for wool, bearing in mind that meat is a perishable commodity and wool is not.

We do not intend to vote for this amendment—

Mr Evans: Ha, ha!

Mr STEPHENS: The Minister for Agriculture need not laugh—

Mr Carr: Sit on the fence for a change.

Mr STEPHENS: It is no joke; it is a serious matter. The livelihood of producers is involved. The situation is serious and it needs to be attended to closely.

The meat marketing referendum held by the previous Government required a 60 per cent majority before any change took place. I hope the Government will follow that principle, and on the off-chance that I am mistaken in thinking that strong support exists for the board, I indicate that a 60 per cent vote against the board will be needed before any change occurs. That is consistent with what the previous Government wanted in putting three questions to the producers of Western Australia; it required a majority vote of 60 per cent.

A question was thrown in designed to divide the farming community. It is history now that it successfully divided the vote. Some farmers had the impression that a revamped Meat Commission would solve the problem. I do not know that the Meat Commission was revamped much; a little extra money was put in, but it did not have the power of acquisition, and it was absolutely useless. If we are to have a successful marketing organisation, it is essential it has an acquisitive power.

Under the Lamb Marketing Board's method of operation, those farmers who do not want to use the board have the right to sell at auction outside the board. The power of acquisition applies only at the point of slaughter and the producers meet the board's costs. The lamb marketing newsletter to which I referred estimated that something like

150 000 lambs have bypassed the board this season at a cost of \$900 000. I venture to suggest that the producers who have made that money have not passed it on to the consumer by way of lower prices.

I believe the board must be retained in the interests of lamb producers in Western Australia.

MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [1.24 a.m.]: Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr Bryce: Are you going to support this piece of rural socialism or advocate its disbandment?

Mr BLAIKIE: I have not had time to collect my thoughts and the Deputy Premier is asking me where I stand.

Mr Bryce: It is just a humble inquiry.

Mr BLAIKIE: To put him out of his misery, I indicate I am very concerned for the Lamb Marketing Board as it presently operates because it is disadvantaging lamb producers, particularly those I represent.

Mr Bryce: Would you call it a little rural socialism?

Mr Evans: Were you satisfied with the terms of reference of the inquiry?

Mr BLAIKIE: Although the hour is late, it is important to state once again the terms of the amendment moved by the member for Katanning-Roe. It states that the Government has been remiss in allowing the problems besetting the lamb industry in Western Australia to escalate to their present level without taking suitable action to bring all parties together to relieve the situation.

I support the amendment because I believe the Government has been remiss, and a very serious situation faces the lamb industry and lamb producers in this State. I believe I can substantiate that statement and show that the Government has been at fault.

In recent days, the Government has said it will conduct a referendum.

Mr Evans: Not recent days; going back weeks.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Government of recent days—

Mr Evans: It is some weeks; at least a month.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Government of recent days has indicated it will conduct a referendum into the Lamb Marketing Board. I pause to ask the Minister whether he was indicating that the Government announced some months ago it would conduct a referendum.

Mr Evans: The inquiry was announced some weeks ago; the referendum some days ago.

Mr BLAIKIE: I am speaking about the referendum.

Mr Evans: It was some days ago. You are quite right.

Mr BLAIKIE: It was announced by the Government in *The West Australian* on 20 September. That is only of recent days.

Mr Evans: I agree.

Mr BLAIKIE: It does not do the Minister any justice for him to turn around and try to twist that argument. I believe he was on the wrong track.

Mr Evans: You are quite right, but the announcement of the inquiry goes back weeks.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Government has indicated it will conduct a referendum. It also has said it will conduct an inquiry into the meat industry.

Mr Crane: I think it was a brilliant move.

Mr BLAIKIE: In a moment, I will relate to the House some of the terms of reference of the inquiry.

The Government should have acted sooner to get the lamb industry out of its particular problems. The Government should have waited until the results of the inquiry were known before conducting a referendum. Producers in the industry would have had some knowledge of the outcome and findings of the inquiry. The Government has acted; it shot from the hip and took aim afterwards. The inquiry should get under way before the referendum takes place.

The terms of the inquiry are very wide, but a number of lamb producers want to know the answers before they vote in a referendum. My assessment is that the referendum will result in an overwhelming vote by producers to retain the Lamb Marketing Board. Notwithstanding that assessment, I believe the referendum still will not resolve the problems besetting the board. It will not deal with the problems faced by producers in the marketing of lambs, and the problems of the board in its dealing with the industry in total.

The referendum will be an exercise in futility. It will prove a point, but it will do nothing else; it will not solve the problems. The Minister and the Government have been quite remiss in their conduct of the meat industry and the way in which they have handled the situation in relation to lamb producers in Western Australia.

Mr Evans: You are incredible.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Minister indicated his concern for Robb Jetty and the amount of money that Government instrumentality was losing each

year. I share his concern; it is a matter that would concern any Government.

Mr Evans: It did not seem to concern your Government very much.

Mr BLAIKIE: It is a matter that concerns me and it should concern any Government.

I remind the Minister that he and I were members of an inquiry which recommended that, in due course, the Government should get out of operating serviced abattoirs. The Minister was signatory to a report of the investigation into the sale or leasing of the abattoirs.

Mr Evans: To investigate the sale or leasing?

Mr BLAIKIE: And is the Minister doing that?

Mr Evans: You have seen the terms of reference under which we are acting.

Mr BLAIKIE: That was carried out some years ago and I believe it is one of the areas that should be thoroughly investigated. The answer was there in 1976-77 when the report came out. I believe it has been so important that all sectors of the industry should have been brought together. I do not accept the Minister's explanation that he tried and failed; trying and failing to bring the parties together is not good enough. While the Minister was trying and the parties were not coming together, insurmountable damage was done to the Lamb Marketing Board of Western Australia because of the importation of lambs into the State. The Government must wear this mantle because it was at the end of June, when country abattoirs—I think some 28 were involved; the member for Mitchell is certainly representing some important country abattoirs in this State—took out an injunction against the Lamb Marketing Board in regard to what the board was attempting to do against the interests of country abattoirs.

Mr D. L. Smith: If the member for Vasse had read the local newspaper last week, he would be aware that abattoir owners in my electorate support the terms of reference of the inquiry.

Mr BLAIKIE: Apart from the terms of reference of the inquiry, I advise the member for Mitchell that in June of this year a crisis had been reached because of the actions of the Lamb Marketing Board necessitating some 28 country abattoirs taking out an injunction relating to a serious matter. The Lamb Marketing Board had offered the producers a contract at a price on which they could not operate. While that was happening, what was the Government doing? The Government—

Mr D. L. Smith: Perhaps the member for Vasse can tell us what he would be doing in that situation.

Mr BLAICKIE: It was a serious set of circumstances and a matter which caused the industry grave concern.

On 24 August, I asked the Minister a series of questions relating to the Lamb Marketing Board. As far as I am concerned, the questions were basically of a statistical nature and I asked them on behalf of lamb producers in my area. I had attended a meeting of 55 producers who wanted a series of questions asked of the board and requested that I ask the Minister those questions on their behalf. I related the information to the Minister and to the House that the questions I posed were not dreamt up by me, but were asked on behalf of producers. I think the circumstances that followed were quite scandalous. The questions were asked on 24 August and it took three weeks for the replies to be given. Quite frankly, that just was not good enough.

Mr Evans: It took a senior officer 4½ days to prepare the information and to have a reply within three weeks is not bad.

Mr BLAICKIE: If the Minister says it took 4½ days to prepare the answers, it obviously took him two weeks to release the information after those 4½ days. The producers sought the information and the Government did not provide it as quickly as it should have. I regard that not only as a slur on the producers, but also as a slur on the Parliament. Part of the question I asked the Minister related to the amount and estimated value of lamb imported into Western Australia by the Lamb Marketing Board and other sources since 1976.

The answer given by the Minister by way of a letter to me read as follows—

The information below has been provided by the Lamb Marketing Board, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Department of Agriculture. It answers, in part, the questions you asked. Information in respect to the unanswered portion of your questions is not readily available.

I will not go into the full details of the answer, but suffice to say that the information was not that difficult to obtain and I am quite surprised at the offhanded way in which the Minister or his department, whoever provided the answers, attempted to handle the situation.

A further question was asked of the Minister for Consumer Affairs, I think by the member for Darling Range, as to whether he would look into the Lamb Marketing Board from the point of view of the Department of Consumer Affairs to see whether the board's operations were causing the cost of lamb in this State to be higher than

that in other States. To date I am not aware of what action, if any, has been taken by the department. That situation gives rise to concern that the Government has not acted in the interests of the Lamb Marketing Board or the producers of the State.

It was interesting to note that the answer to part of the question I asked relating to the importation of lamb indicated that in 1981-82, 21 709 carcasses were imported into Western Australia. In 1982-83, 43 913 carcasses were imported into Western Australia. Bearing in mind that the question I asked was finally answered early in September, I point out that the Minister did not give an answer relating to the number of lambs imported into the State since 30 June of this year. These matters are of considerable importance to the lamb producers, the industry, and all those who have an interest in the lamb industry of Western Australia.

Although the Minister did not supply the information, I am pleased to advise the House that the number of lamb imports from 1 July to 25 September of this year was—

Mr D. L. Smith: What is the source of the information?

Mr BLAICKIE: The source happens to be my information because, if I cannot get the information I request from the Minister, I have to do my own sums. I can assure the member for Mitchell that the source is authentic.

From 1 July to 25 September, 129 404 lambs were imported into Western Australia. For last year, the total figure was almost 44 000 lambs. Surely that quantity of lambs should be of great concern to every member of this House because it has displaced the Western Australian product. That quantity has not been slaughtered in Western Australian abattoirs and this has affected employment levels within the abattoirs. The loss of that quantity of lambs will have a profound effect on the income of producers at the end of the year. It is a matter for which I have great concern.

The Minister was not able to provide me with the information I required, but I have obtained it. During the week of 2 to 8 August, 6 048 lambs came into Western Australia; during the week of 9 to 15 August, 15 273 lambs came into the State; and from 16 to 22 August, 16 211 lambs were imported. All those lambs were imported from South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland. For the week of 20 to 25 September, which is the period just past, 13 667 lambs were imported into the State. That is the information I sought on behalf of the producers, but the

Government did not supply it. It is freely and readily available within Government sources.

I now turn to the referendum to be conducted by the Government in relation to the Lamb Marketing Board. We have heard the Government's arguments in relation to one-vote-one-value. I am pleased, on a rare occasion, to see the Leader of the House back in the Chamber.

Mr Tonkin: What do you mean, "a rare occasion"?

Mr I. F. Taylor: He has been here nearly all night.

Mr Bryce: All night every night.

Mr BLAICKIE: I will qualify that comment. Most of the time, I am not pleased to see the Leader of the House; but this is one of the rare occasions on which I am pleased to see him because he and the ALP have been demanding one-vote-one-value. What are they doing with the Lamb Marketing Board? They have decided that a producer in Sawyers Valley with 100 lambs is entitled to one vote, and that a producer at Williams producing 5 000 lambs in a family farming company is entitled to one vote also.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Give the sheep a vote.

Mr BLAICKIE: The Government has made comments about ensuring equal voting rights for all people, irrespective of what they do; but it does not believe in that as far as the Lamb Marketing Board is concerned.

Mr Bryce: Are you talking about one-man-one-vote-one-value or one-sheep-one-vote-one-value? The sheep don't vote, you know.

Mr BLAICKIE: I am concerned about the return to the producers. I am concerned about the importation of lamb into the State. I am concerned that, traditionally, the lamb producers do not obtain the return that they deserve, in comparison with the return the wool producers receive. I am concerned that there is no representation for high rainfall out-of-season areas on the Lamb Marketing Board. I am concerned at the cost of the board's operation which, in turn, increases the price to the consumer.

I do not believe the Government has acted properly because it has not ensured that all parties meet together to save the critical situation in which all lamb producers find themselves in Western Australia. I condemn the Government for its lack of action.

MR PETER JONES (Narrogin) [1.43 a.m.]: Now that the Minister has returned to his seat, I will direct my discussion to two main points. My first point relates to the timing of the referendum that the Government has chosen to call. Quite

frankly, I am not against the referendum. My second point relates to what the Government has done in the last few months, or what it has failed to do during the period of the great influx of lambs into this State from the Eastern States. The figures that have been given indicate that nearly 130 000 lambs have come into the State in the last three months.

In relation to my first point, I support the inquiry proposed by the Government. Most members who have spoken tonight support it. When the Minister read the terms of reference, he mentioned the factors which create difficulties in the industry.

Mr Blaikie: I support the inquiry, too. I want to make that understood very clearly.

Mr PETER JONES: The factors include matters mentioned by the Minister in interjections; but he did not refer to them in his speech. One factor he mentioned a moment ago related to the number of carcasses being brought in from the Eastern States. He asked whether the member for Vasse knew there was a big glut in the Eastern States. Of course there is, and a range of other factors brought that situation about. That cannot be controlled by the existence of a Lamb Marketing Board.

The kind of thing I am referring to is the change in the profile of the meat industry, and particularly in the sheep meat industry. Since the Lamb Marketing Board was established, its operations have been the centre of attention. The Minister indicated how things have changed—things such as a succession of droughts, not only in this State, but also in the Eastern States; the big decline in livestock numbers; and the fact that the abattoirs in the Eastern States, as I understand the situation, are in as much financial difficulty as are the abattoirs in this State, if not in greater financial difficulty.

The Minister served on the Select Committee into the meat industry, so he would be well aware of these things. However, he sells himself short. Of course he is more aware of the factors than his response indicated; and the credit is due to him so far as the drawing up of the terms of reference is concerned. On the assumption that he drew them up, that fact should be acknowledged, because the terms cover all the points affecting the way in which meats should be handled.

I have no reason to believe the inquiry will not be independent, because it consists of several people who are completely independent of the industry. I commend the Government for that. Indeed, as the former Minister for Agriculture said, he asked the Lamb Marketing Board to have an

inquiry and it did an in-house one, which was hardly to the advantage and credit of the board or of the industry. As the Minister said, the four members of this committee will be completely independent. They have no vested interests, and they will have no preconceived ideas, conditions, or commitments to one form of marketing or one form of handling as against another.

The Government should have available to it a basis upon which it can make decisions regarding the future. I suggest that those decisions have been made; but the decision to drop the Lamb Marketing Board and the basis upon which it was established have not survived. It will not survive forever, because we cannot go on blindly supporting a body that lost some \$2 million last year and which may lose another \$2 million this year.

Mr Evans: No, a profit—a substantial profit.

Mr PETER JONES: Could I clarify that? Did it lose \$2 million last year?

Mr Evans: In 1981-82, it did.

Mr PETER JONES: The Minister is now saying it will make a substantial profit this year?

Mr Evans: I believe so.

Mr PETER JONES: That is not the information I had. That is a factor which perhaps will work to the board's favour in the inquiry to be undertaken.

The point I make relates to the timing of the referendum. Why is the Government choosing to have a referendum before all the information to come from such a comprehensive inquiry is available, not only to the Government, but also to everybody in the industry? The people who obtain their livelihood from the industry will have some questions to be answered.

I will not have a vote in this referendum. I am not worried about that; but if I did have a vote, I would not vote for the continuation of the Lamb Marketing Board. One cannot vote for something based on blind faith. One must vote in respect of something that is not doing the job given to it by Statute.

Mr Bryce: At least you are consistent. You are against socialism.

Mr PETER JONES: The Minister would be well aware of my position, because some years ago, when he was Minister previously, as his representative on a statutory marketing authority I took issue with the work of that authority and made it clear it was not acting in the best interests of the growers or the industry to which it was related. The Minister might well remember the trouble that caused, because I took issue with the way the board and its agents were doing the job

and made it quite clear that the growers might be better off without the statutory marketing board.

I do not know whether I speak for the other members on this side of the House, but I do not support any form of agrarian socialism based on blind faith. However, if the inquiry the Government intends to institute comes up with a system which offers various options and a recipe for a future method for handling livestock, and carcase meat can be made available for consumption on the home market as well as on the export market, on the basis that it will meet the exigencies of the present situation which are not the same as those which applied in 1971-72, it should be considered.

I turn now to the other part of the comment I want to make which relates to the role of Government in relation to imports from the Eastern States.

Mr Stephens: Before you get on to that, would you tell us the National Country Party's policy in regard to lamb marketing?

Mr PETER JONES: It was read to members tonight.

I turn to the importation of carcase meat from the Eastern States. Between 1 July and 25 September last, approximately 150 000 lambs came into Western Australia from the Eastern States and the Government does not appear to have come to grips with that situation.

I fail to see how a Lamb Marketing Board would have dealt with that situation. The Minister made the point that the villain in the exercise was not so much the importation of lambs from the Eastern States, but the lambs which, under the present arrangement, do not go through the board. It might well be a serious difficulty if we have a marketing discipline—whether it is good or bad—which is not supported or is not set up in a way which forces support, if it cannot be policed. Perhaps that is an issue with which the planned review should come to grips.

Undoubtedly, under the terms of reference, that is one of the issues which will be addressed. The Minister said that in the past year approximately 300 000 lambs which were produced within the board's jurisdiction bypassed its operations. However, the Minister cannot avoid the fact that, in the last three months, nearly half that number of lambs have come into Western Australia from the Eastern States, and they have bypassed the board's operations.

Mr D. L. Smith: Perhaps you would tell us what has been done to prevent that.

Mr PETER JONES: What I am saying is that the Minister should acknowledge that is one of the

areas which needs to be addressed, but he failed to acknowledge that fact. In acknowledging that an estimated 300 000 lambs produced in Western Australia had avoided the board's operations, he should also take into account the fact that in the last three months nearly half that number of lambs have come into this State from the Eastern States and it makes no difference that they were not handled by the board, because they were consumed locally. That matter needs to be addressed and no blind faith in support of any presently established and currently operating board will affect that situation if the same set of circumstances prevails again in the future or continues to prevail now.

Mr Bryce: Do you have any blind faith in the Australian Wheat Board?

Mr PETER JONES: No, I do not have blind faith in it.

Mr Bryce: Do you have any faith in the Wheat Board?

Mr PETER JONES: It meets a purpose. The way in which it operates and the nature of the commodity it handles—whether or not it is perishable—makes it different from the Lamb Marketing Board. However, it meets a need, and I have not heard any questions raised about what it does.

Mr Bryce: So that bit of socialism is all right.

Mr PETER JONES: As far as I am concerned, I do not intend to support what is offered in blind faith and I am giving another example of the same situation.

Mr Tonkin: So you support the Wheat Board?

Mr PETER JONES: Perhaps the Minister might also arrange for those who are conducting the inquiry to consider the situation which has arisen in New Zealand, where a marketing discipline prevails and, as I understand it, the national loss incurred by the lamb marketing authority is enormous. As a result, the authority has indicated it will abandon its advertising arrangements which have been operating overseas for some 10 years. It has been discovered now that the system is unworkable. I believe the accumulated losses of the lamb marketing operation in New Zealand are in the vicinity of \$200 million.

Mr Evans: Last year the Lamb Marketing Board showed a substantial profit.

Mr PETER JONES: Is that in New Zealand?

Mr Evans: No, in Western Australia.

Mr PETER JONES: I am not talking about Western Australia.

Mr Evans: But your comparison is not so valid, is it?

Mr PETER JONES: I am just saying I believe those conducting the Government's inquiry should have a look not only at the position here, but also at the experience of other similar operations.

If the Minister cares to look at, I think, last Thursday's *The Australian Financial Review*, he will see an article on the lamb marketing situation in New Zealand. Bearing in mind the horrendous future of the industry predicted there because of the financial losses and the failure of the marketing and acquisition arrangements, perhaps the lessons that country is learning could be used to benefit the Government's inquiry. The losses in New Zealand were indicated as being approximately \$200 million.

Either now or subsequently, I hope the Minister will comment on the point I raised initially in relation to the timing of the referendum. Does the Government see any advantage in proceeding with the referendum forthwith without waiting for the information made available by its inquiry? If the inquiry were conducted before the referendum, greater consideration could be given to the drawing up of the questions and the growers involved in it would have the advantage of the information provided by the review when making their decisions.

Would the Government be prepared to consider waiting until the results of the review become available before conducting the referendum?

Mr Evans: It is preferred that the inquiry be conducted after the result of the referendum is known, because that will give an indication of the position to the inquiry.

Mr PETER JONES: The Minister has indicated what he would prefer, so the door has not been shut altogether in this respect.

In conclusion, I repeat that I fail to see how a referendum containing a simple question requiring a "Yes" or "No" answer can be of any assistance to a wide and broadly based review of the matter, as proposed by the Minister, when the information on which such a decision would be based is not available to those who are being asked to cast their votes. On that basis, the Minister might care to give some consideration to altering the timing of the referendum.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 17

Mr Blaikie
Mr Bradshaw
Mr Clarko
Mr Court
Mr Crane
Mr Grayden
Mr Hassell
Mr Peter Jones
Mr MacKinnon

Mr McNee
Mr Mensaros
Mr Old
Mr Rushton
Mr Spriggs
Mr Thompson
Mr Watt
Mr Williams

(Teller)

Noes 24

Mr Barnett
Mr Bateman
Mrs Beggs
Mr Bertram
Mr Bryce
Mrs Buchanan
Mr Terry Burke
Mr Carr
Mr Davies
Mr Evans
Mr Grill
Mrs Henderson

Mr Hodge
Mr Jamieson
Mr McIver
Mr Read
Mr D. L. Smith
Mr P. J. Smith
Mr A. D. Taylor
Mr I. F. Taylor
Mr Tonkin
Mrs Watkins
Mr Wilson
Mr Burkett

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes

Mr O'Connor
Mr Laurance
Mr Tubby
Mr Coyne
Dr Dadour
Mr Trethowan

Noes

Mr Tom Jones
Mr Parker
Mr Brian Burke
Mr Pearce
Mr Gordon Hill
Mr Bridge

Amendment thus negated.

Adjournment of Debate on Motion

MR RUSHTON (Dale) [2.03 a.m.]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negated.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

MR RUSHTON (Dale) [2.04 a.m.]: Mr Speaker, I would like first to congratulate you on your being appointed to your present position. We on this side of the House have confidence in your fairness, and we wish you well.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr RUSHTON: To members on both sides of the House who are here for the first time, I offer my best wishes. No doubt they realise by now that this is a most difficult club to get into and the easiest to get out of. I must also thank the staff of the Parliament for the courtesies and attention they pay to our needs.

We have all heard about trifectas of recent times, and certainly in my case they have not been successful. Claremont lost the grand final, although it should have won. I would like to reflect now on the principle of fairness as it relates to the grand final played in my own electorate last Sunday between Kenwick and Kelmscott. One of the umpires was the brother of the cap-

tain-coach of one of the teams as well as of another member of the team. That did not seem quite satisfactory to me in a grand final.

The third point is that we have all gloried in the efforts of *Australia II* in winning the America's Cup. I join in the congratulations of others to Alan Bond and the complete team in their great success. I am one of those who stayed up a number of nights watching the races right through, including the dramatic last night. I must say that I was providing every puff I could to help them get there in the end.

One of the main points I would like to make during this Address-in-Reply debate relates to some of the misleading statements made by Labor members. Those statements involve my own district, but have a broader application to the whole State. I refer firstly to remarks made by the member for Armadale about the Armadale subregional centre. Before the election, he said that, if the Labor Party won, the centre would receive a boost. The opposite has been the case. He made the claim that during the Tonkin Government's occupancy of the Treasury benches it initiated the concept of the subregional centres. That statement is untrue. He said progress was being made, but I can indicate that during my term of office the studies were completed. In fact, we involved the shires in the research into the concept of the subregional centres.

The present Government also made the claim before the election that it would establish a bus-train transfer station in Armadale. It has now said that this will take another 15 years. Members should know that a commitment was made by the O'Connor Government that as soon as the planning for the subregional centre was finished, the transfer station would be built.

The previous Opposition also made a promise about the electrification of the suburban railway systems, including the Armadale system. Of course, we know that the electrification of the Bunbury line is related to freight and that there is nothing to be done about the electrification of the suburban system. This was another misleading statement made to the people of the Armadale area.

When the Government went to the people, it claimed it would provide full-time doctors for the Armadale-Kelmscott Memorial Hospital. Of course, this is very close to what is happening now and the Government's actions are a threat to the local GPs who presently provide a magnificent service at the hospital by having a roster involving something like 20 doctors. In this way, they have

saved the taxpayers of this State a magnificent sum.

They have provided a qualified and professional service. The position in which we find ourselves now is that the doctors are not allowed to provide a service for the casualty ward. They have been told that resident doctors will be employed, and negotiations are taking place.

It is of great concern to me and other people in the district that pressure has been applied to the doctors. If they do not agree to sessional service they will not be able to attend their patients at the Armadale-Kelmscott Memorial Hospital. This has created grave concern among the people of that area.

In regard to the envisaged building programme, we have been pushing for the establishment of an extra ward to service geriatric people who need that type of service.

A Government member: That's right, look after yourself.

Mr RUSHTON: The Government is considering the construction of a psychogeriatric wing at the hospital, which will give relief to the local people who require such a service.

Another promise of the Government which has not come about is the promise to extend Ranford Road to South Street to join Kwinana Freeway. Already the Minister for Transport has knocked back that construction. A commitment was given in February that the road would be extended, but now it will not be started for 2½ years. When we were in Government the commitment was made to complete this road in 2½ years.

The matters to which I have referred show clearly that the development of our area has been put back as a result of the change of Government.

Another area of concern is the division of the district over the establishment of a high school in the Byford-Mundijong area. Recently the Minister attended a public meeting in regard to that high school, and effectively divided the community when he suggested he would listen to the points of view as to whether a high school should be established at Mundijong or at Byford. Of course, that was total hypocrisy, because the Minister had already made statements at election time, as reported in the Press, that he was committed to the construction of a high school at Byford.

Before the public meeting, the Minister's own people at Byford distributed leaflets to people asking them to attend the meeting, so that they could outvote the people of Mundijong. Fortunately good sense prevailed and a vote was not

taken. For the Minister to make an offer to both areas was divisive; it was not in the best interests of the children of the areas.

The Minister for Education in the previous Government had committed our Government to the right path, and that was that Mundijong would have a district high school, and that Byford would have a high school as soon as the numbers were available. Vice versa, if a high school were constructed at Byford there would not be a high school at Mundijong during our time.

The way the Minister has gone about this matter has been totally unacceptable. The public will gradually wake up to what he is about. He has changed a decision about a high school in his own area, the Cecil Andrews High School. Students are being drawn off the Armadale High School to attend the Cecil Andrews High School, which will grow to a five-year high school, thereby depriving Byford of the opportunity to have its high school at the earliest possible opportunity. The price will be paid by the Government.

I have highlighted these factors to indicate the disadvantages caused to my area as a result of the change of Government.

The Minister made a promise in respect of the regional music centre, but that promise has changed. In the previous Government's last Budget, a reasonably large amount of money was set aside to improve the music facilities at the Armadale Senior High School. The provision of those funds was overdue, but I now hear that the Minister does not intend to pursue that commitment to the regional music centre for the south-east corridor. He has put forward a concoction of ideas which would use the Armadale Band and the primary school choir.

Mr Tonkin: It is a very good choir.

Mr RUSHTON: It is the best there is.

Mr Tonkin: It is high class.

Mr RUSHTON: I am delighted that this Minister can say that, but the actions of the Minister for Education fall far short of the commitments he made at election time.

I have raised already with the Minister for Planning a suggestion in relation to the Byford trotting complex. An extensive number of horses are trained at Byford for trotting, and many of those go to country events. In fact, more than 50 per cent of the horses go to country areas. It is time we had trials conducted at Byford, and I intend to follow up with the Minister the provision of facilities for such trials. I know that the people at the Byford trotting complex will follow this matter through.

I refer now to the extension of tourist facilities at Canning Dam where recently the Leader of the House unveiled a plaque.

Mr Tonkin: It was started by a Labor Government, and completed by a Labor Government.

Mr RUSHTON: The Minister made a political speech.

Mr Bertram: He also helped to build it.

Mr RUSHTON: The Minister may agree that in difficult times a dam like that creates a burden because of the funds it requires, and without sufficient funds the appropriate picnic facilities, etc., are not supplied.

Mr Tonkin: We are looking into that; it was a great suggestion by you. We took note of it.

Mr RUSHTON: It would be a great advance to provide proper picnic facilities.

Mr Tonkin: I agree.

Mr RUSHTON: Those facilities would attract a tremendous amount of tourism to the area. I hope the Minister has taken the matter further, and that a few dollars will be spent to provide those facilities. The Minister was talking to his neighbour when I mentioned it to him.

I now refer to the allocation of grants from the Commonwealth to local authorities. The Minister for Local Government was kind enough to supply me with a number of schedules, which increased the fears I already had. The change in the formula has done just that which we expected it to do; it has reduced the country allocation to something like eight per cent, and lifted the average metropolitan allocation to between 12 and 15 per cent. The Shire of Serpentine received an allocation of approximately seven to eight per cent, Armadale received 11 to 12 per cent, and Gosnells received approximately 15 per cent.

I refer the House to the time when the system was introduced. I had responsibility for the portfolio, and I endeavoured to create a formula to distribute the total funds if regard could be had for all the factors involved. It was not possible to do that, but we negotiated with local authorities to determine what they would support to the greatest degree. They supported the formula system we came down with, and at that time it was 80:20.

When the present Minister attended meetings on this subject, he indicated to local authorities that he had a different point of view. I am sure he will agree that local authorities strongly supported the formula we had.

Mr Carr: The Grants Commission has circumvented the previous 70:30 arrangement you had, because what they have been doing over the last

couple of years is working out the total grant for each council, and then subtracting from that what the formula produced.

Mr RUSHTON: The Government has changed the system to 30 per cent as of right and 70 per cent as of need, which has brought about the present allocation which will result in a gradual increase in the cost of administration as it has in New South Wales and other States. It involves telling the people what they should have.

My interest in this question was raised the other day when I heard or read of the member for Kalgoorlie complaining that the right people were not on the committee because his councils had received the wrong or not enough allocation. I inform him that he can blame his Government for the allocations those councils received, because his Government changed the formula and is responsible for country areas receiving reduced allocations. Country areas have a far less capacity to raise money than have city areas and fair allocations need to be made to country areas. I very much regret this change which has not been made with the concurrence of local government.

Mr Carr: That is not true. For a start, both local government organisations were consulted before the change took place and neither raised any objection.

Mr RUSHTON: I am told that country shires have not agreed to this change of formula, and I deplore that.

Mr Carr: You can deplore it as much as you like; it is not true.

Mr RUSHTON: The Government did not consult with local government or take into account its point of view. The Government claims it had regard for the local government point of view.

Mr Bertram: There is no question about that.

Mr RUSHTON: I deplore the fact that the Government is to entice local government to be involved in adult franchises and a few other socialistic intentions.

Mr Carr: Since when has that been socialistic?

Mr Bryce: Adult franchise is not socialistic.

Mr RUSHTON: It adversely affects local government.

Mr Bryce: That is not socialistic.

Mr Davies: There are no politics in local government as long as you live with it.

Mr RUSHTON: I suggest the Minister does not continue on that tack.

Mr Bryce: Who put this place out of gear today?

Mr RUSHTON: It cost us about six hours in talking time because the Deputy Premier provoked everybody to become involved.

Mr MacKinnon: You should have had the numbers in this House today.

Mr Bryce: I was pretty upset when he said to the House that he aroused me.

Mr Davies: He didn't arouse you, did he?

Mr RUSHTON: The Deputy Premier provoked me; he did not arouse me.

Mr Bryce: You check *Hansard*. I have been rubbished ever since.

Mr RUSHTON: I repeat that the application for grant money certainly needs very close attention. The original concept was linked closely with local government. That is how the Government of the day regarded it and it was implemented on that basis. Now we have a total change and it should be reconsidered.

I mention the frequent inquiries and reviews presently taking place. It is really government by default. I raise the point of the Premier's failure to provide information to questions, and I take this opportunity tonight to indicate that I first asked in July for information relating to the number of inquiries and reviews that have been conducted by the Government. Three months ago I asked the Premier for that information. He indicated he would supply me with it. The other day he had the gall to provide a member of his own party with that information which he purported related to the matter, but he provided no information on his present commitments to inquiries and reviews; it still has not arrived. To me that is most contemptuous of this House's rights and privileges. It indicates the Government's way of doing business in regard to making information available in this House.

One inquiry—and we heard input from the member for Merredin tonight on this—relates to the deregulation of freight. As far as I am concerned, the steps that were taken at that time to deregulate smalls were some of the biggest steps forward in the transport history of this State. They were proved to be of great advantage to the customer, Westrail, and to the transport industry; this has been acknowledged. In fact, the general comment made in the road transport industry was that it was the best thing since sliced bread. Everybody seems to have got into the act of using the sliced bread analogy. When the next review is completed we will see the advantage of our continuing with the present system, which will show up the weaknesses in the member for Merredin's argument. He made play of small communities not receiving a service.

In the policy which was brought forward on 1 July 1982, a clear undertaking was given for a franchised service for communities which were not provided for by competition through the main towns and bigger communities. In fact, in the last week we were in office, the people from around Corrigin and the area the member for Merredin represents visited me and wanted to know what could be done. I put the situation before them. At that time they had not made a request for a franchised service and they went away with the intention of trying to ensure that the needs of those small towns would be covered. They had to realise that if they wanted a franchised service, they would have only one supplier because there was not enough freight to warrant a competitive service. That was not unreasonable. If there is not enough freight to generate a competitive service, that was the situation. On top of that, if an area did not have a franchised service, it could make application for a subsidised service through the Transport Commission and the matter could be investigated.

I made the point to the member for Merredin that at the time of the change of Government a request for a franchised service had not been made, which indicated that either some of those small communities did not realise what the opportunities were, or there had been general agreement that they had sufficient services. In fact, members have come to me tonight since the outburst of the member for Merredin to indicate that in their remote communities the service is running very well indeed. What is galling to me is the fact that since the election in February we have not seen one complaint in the newspaper relating to the Total West service. At the time, we were receiving complaints about no food stocks on the shelves in Norseman and places like that, but the Kalgoorlie newspaper denied that situation; it was not the metropolitan newspaper which had printed the misstatements of the member for Avon. That just shows how difficult it can be to implement change when political points of view are presented and printed in the Press.

I want to re-emphasise the facts relating to Total West and the claims and charges involving the new policy. Total West is not the most important factor in the total system. Total West was put forward as a recommendation by the transport advisers as a means of protecting the jobs of 800-odd Westrail employees who would be affected by the change. As it turned out, as time went on, only 55 were retained by Total West. Some went to Westrail and 200 or 300 favoured retirement. Total West was a means of ensuring a continuous service to people in country districts.

Very despicable actions occurred at the time with people vandalising some services. The matters were investigated, and the situation settled down. Within six months of the introduction of the service, things were starting to run fairly smoothly.

At the time, Australia Post decided to rationalise its services and it was easy for political opponents to put the blame on Total West. To give Australia Post credit, it acknowledged its part in the rationalisation of its services and did not wish the Government of the day to take the blame for it.

I want to refer to the rash of inquiries announced by the Premier. He is now suggesting he will inquire into all affairs of the Government. I suggest it is a hoax—it is a matter of words. An internal survey system has existed in the Public Service for a long time. I used it as a Minister and was able to effect efficiencies. The Premier talked about efficiency audits, but that does not mean a jot if one does not look to the end result. My direct experience relates to the two portfolios for which I was responsible. We gave attention to the efficiency of the Public Service within those areas. A great deal was achieved in the transport area which was a big portfolio and the reductions in numbers and costs, and improvements in conditions achieved as a result of senior officers and officers at all levels co-operating, making changes, and advancing the efficiencies, were immense.

I object to the constant implication that no attention was given to the efficiency of running the various agencies. Something like \$50 million a year in costs was saved in the Transport portfolio when I was the Minister. It was done with the initiative and co-operation of the different heads of department. I believe we do not have sufficient regard for the people who are very dedicated to the service. In some ways, there is a parallel with the efforts achieved by our great yacht the other night. Once these people are inspired and gain trust in what one wants to achieve, decisions are reached together and no difficulty arises in their giving loyalty, application, and dedication to achieving a result.

Mr Williams: You are talking about *Australia II*?

Mr RUSHTON: Yes. That was a tremendous effort by an inspired group of people who had loyalty and comradeship. We saw it demonstrated on the television. However, the efforts made by people in different departments go unsung. That also requires leadership and example, and a mateship develops. I am confident the loyalty I and my Government received from those people is

available to this Government. All that is required is for the Government to give them the regard they deserve, and acknowledge their position. The inquiries that have been initiated and the salary cuts which were discriminatory will work against the loyalty we were able to achieve by example.

Another point about which I am apprehensive is the Premier's delay in introducing the Budget. In the last few days we have already seen in answers to questions by the Minister for Education that certain matters are hanging on until the Budget is presented. I can imagine what this is doing to the private sector. It is delaying work that should be continuing, and uncertainty exists as to what the Budget will contain. It is very regrettable such a delay should occur. The Budget should be presented at the earliest possible time so that work can continue, the community understands the Government's strategy, and industry gains confidence and can do its job of providing employment.

Mr Court: The year will be over before the Budget comes out. It will be after the Mundaring by-election.

Mr Burkett: Is it generally brought in months earlier than this?

Mr Carr: It was sometimes introduced in October in the Court Government's time.

Mr RUSHTON: It may be a delay of only two or three weeks, but it has an effect. The Budget is being produced later so as not to affect the by-election, because if a tax increase is to be imposed on grape growers, the Government will not want to disclose that fact before the by-election.

Mr Bryce: What State tax on grape growers?

Mr RUSHTON: The Government is capable of anything.

Mr Bryce: You are capable of allowing your imagination to run riot.

Mr RUSHTON: I refer now to the Midland Workshops. The Dorothy Dix questions asked recently about it have been galling because the answers have produced a misleading position. This House, members, and the public know that at the end of the previous Commissioner for Railway's time he brought forward a recommendation that something ought to be done to improve the efficiency of the Midland Workshops.

Mr Bryce: Weren't you going to sell it off?

Mr RUSHTON: That has been said by the Labor Party at every election. The Minister is not here very often so I point out for his information that when the Dorothy Dix question was asked yesterday, I interjected on the basis that the Government had claimed the credit for

efficiencies introduced. I investigated the Midland Workshops' future, and it is easy for anyone to see that the workshops have an important part in our structure because Western Australia is so isolated, and we need the workshops' capacity to maintain services.

Mr Evans: Why did you let them run down? You killed morale.

Mr RUSHTON: Nothing ran down in the Midland Workshops in my time. The Minister has not been there. If he went there, he would find the place has been upgraded extensively in the last five years. An investment of \$5 million is being made on upgrading in the workshops which have been streamlined for efficiency and an amenities facility has been introduced. The painting made a lot of improvement in morale and efficiency.

The point I find vexing is that at each election the Labor Party put it around that the Government was doing the workshops up with a view to selling them. Every time I visited the workshops the union leader would raise this point. He was the only one there who believed it, but it was pushed out in the Labor Party's publicity. In the present publicity for the Mundaring by-election, the claim is made that the Government is spending \$5 million on the workshops by way of improvements.

People who work there know it has been going on for three years and is reaching its final stage. One should not have to accept that sort of standard from the Government. I hope more regard will be given to the truth and the facts. We should not have a talking machine that pours out illusions. The general opinion is that this Government has been more effective in creating an image than was the previous Government. One would expect some result when one considers the amount of money spent and the number of advisers who have been intruded into the system. It is a situation similar to that perpetrated by Mr Wran in

New South Wales. Although that State was bankrupt, he was able to hang on by creating an impression that was not accurate, but which convinced the public. He did it by constantly painting a picture which was different from the real situation.

This is now occurring in this State. We have a tremendous number of words which, in the main, portray generalities, but they are words painting a picture which does not have much regard for truth. This is of real concern. It will increase because one can see the dangers that will be created by a Government which has a system of brain-washing and which finds itself so powerful in making images, that it believes it should stay in office forever, and so it starts to cook the books.

Mr Bryce: I don't think I should have called you a fair person earlier today. You are saying some very hurtful things.

Mr RUSHTON: The hour is late and I have an amendment to move, but I thought on this occasion I would not do so. I will reserve that for a later stage. I have eight minutes of my time to spare, but as a contribution to the good health of the members of this House, I will finish my few words.

I hope that some note has been taken of the points I have raised. I am concerned at what is happening in my district as a result of the change of Government. I am concerned about the constant reviews and inquiries taking place. I do not believe in government by referendum; Governments need to make decisions and to be judged upon their decisions. I am pleased to have had this opportunity, even though it may be the last speech in the Address-in-Reply.

Question put and passed; the Address-in-Reply thus adopted.

House adjourned at 2.42 a.m. (Thursday)

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

1148. *This question was further postponed.*

ALUMINIUM SMELTERS

Portland: Equity Composition

1187. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

- (1) Is he aware of discussions relating to the equity composition of the proposed Portland aluminium smelter, which involve potential partners in the Bunbury smelter-power station project?
- (2) Is he aware of approaches to the Federal Government to financially support the Portland smelter, and to prevent a Western Australian smelter proceeding ahead of Portland?
- (3) Is he aware of the approaches made to promote Korean interest in the Portland smelter?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) to (3) I am aware that there have been discussions regarding the Portland smelter with potential equity investors in the Bunbury smelter-power station project and approaches to the Commonwealth Government.

It could be that the member is aware of specific information which may be of assistance in Western Australian initiatives and I would be glad if he would communicate with me if this is the case.

LIQUOR: DISTILLERY

Swan Valley: Subsidy

1260. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

- (1) Referring to the Government's announced intention to financially support a proposed distillery in the Swan Valley, what is the annual estimated operating loss on the proposed distillery?
- (2) What was the annual operating loss projected in the feasibility study prepared for the previous State Government?
- (3) Will he table the feasibility study commissioned by the previous State Government together with the current assessment which the member for Helena advised the Legislative Assembly was undertaken?
- (4) Who were the "top economists" referred to by the member for Helena in the

Legislative Assembly on 21 September 1983, who undertook the assessment of the grape growers' submission, and determined it to be viable?

- (5) Will he table the assessment?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) to (5) The member will be aware that the matters raised in his question are the subject of confidential negotiations. He will be fully informed of the details when available.

1262. *This question was further postponed.*

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Filtration Equipment

1269. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

- (1) Is he aware that a British company making filtration equipment was interested in setting up a manufacturing plant in Australia earlier this year?
- (2) Has his department made any attempt to assist the plant being established in Western Australia?
- (3) If so, what is the result?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) The Department of Industrial, Commercial and Regional Development has had contact with at least one party representing British interests who might fit the description given by the member, but the inquiry was of a very preliminary nature and no firm proposal has been received.

As the member would be aware, the department handles a large number of investment inquiries and, because of the restrictive nature of the industry assistance programme inherited from our predecessors, very few of these are deemed eligible for Government assistance. This is a problem this Government intends to overcome and action is presently in train to put in place a workable programme of assistance to industry.

Under the scheme we inherited, an application for assistance from a manufacturer of filtration equipment would probably fail because there is already some small-scale manufacture of filtration equipment in Western Australia.

I would be grateful if the member would provide me with details of the inquiry al-

luded to in his question and I can assure him that every endeavour will be made to ensure that the company concerned establishes a facility in Western Australia.

(2) and (3) Answered by (1).

MEAT: LAMB

Marketing Board: Referendum

1273. Mr OLD, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Has he or any of his departmental staff consulted any industry groups either formally or informally on the matter of what questions or what format the WA Lamb Marketing Board referendum will take?
- (2) If "Yes", which groups have been consulted?
- (3) If "No" to (1), does he intend to liaise with industry to satisfy himself that the questions asked will produce a true reflection of the industry's wishes?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Discussions have been held with the Primary Industry Association.
The views of the Pastoralists and Graziers Association have been well represented in recent correspondence.
- (3) Not applicable.

TRAFFIC

Reynolds Road: Petition

1279. Mr WILLIAMS, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) On 2 August 1983 a petition was lodged in the Legislative Assembly on behalf of 117 residents of Reynolds Road, Mt. Pleasant, protesting at the volume, speed, and noise of through-traffic in the street and calling on the Main Roads Department and the City of Melville to take steps to overcome the problem. What action has been taken by the Main Roads Department in response to the petition?
- (2) What proposals have been considered for overcoming this problem?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) and (2) I am aware of the concern shown by people residing in Reynolds Road relating to traffic matters. The

road is under the control of the Melville City Council, which has sought comment from the Main Roads Department on a number of aspects of traffic management. The department replied to council on 8 September and I understand council had the matter on its agenda at the last meeting. It should be noted that there has been a significant reduction in vehicles using this road following the opening of the Kwinana Freeway southern extension. Volume has been cut to one-third.

In addition, I am aware that the Police Department has paid particular attention to Reynolds Road traffic control in the light of the complaints received from residents and will continue to visit the area during the normal course of their patrols.

MINISTER FOR THE CROWN: MINISTER FOR SPORT AND RECREATION

Adviser

1280. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

- (1) Does he have an adviser in the area of—
 - (a) sport;
 - (b) recreation?
- (2) Is Mr David Hatt employed on his staff, and if so, when was he employed and in what capacity?
- (3) What qualifications and experience does he have for the position?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) No.
- (2) Yes. July 1983 as a ministerial officer.
- (3) Those appropriate for the position.

1281. *This question was postponed.*

LAND: AGRICULTURAL

Clearing Bans: Compensation

1282. Mr OLD, to the Premier:

On what evidence did he base his statement that there were 1100 potential claims for compensation in the gazetted catchment areas, entailing possible compensation payments of \$180 million?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

Information available to the previous Government, and tendered to the present Government, indicates that the po-

tential scale of claims is large and unpredictable. Indeed, the former Government was aware of budgeting difficulties associated with compensation cases, because of escalating land prices and uncertainties about when compensation claims would be made. These factors contribute to the uncertainty of the size of annual demands for funds to satisfy compensation cover claims. I have given an undertaking, and I repeat it, that farmers will receive fair and just compensation.

HEALTH

Arthritis: Treatment

1283. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is the rheumatology ward at Royal Perth (Rehabilitation) Hospital and the rheumatology unit at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital adequate for the treatment of arthritis in its various forms or are additional or expanded facilities required?
- (2) If the latter is the case, what is planned in respect of additional facilities?
- (3) Does a waiting list exist for patients requiring treatment at either of the facilities provided at Royal Perth Hospital and Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital?
- (4) If so—
 - (a) approximately how many names are on the list;
 - (b) what is the approximate waiting period?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) Additional facilities at Royal Perth (Rehabilitation) Hospital would be desirable when funds permit.
- (2) Planning for this area is part of the overall site development plan currently being prepared for the Royal Perth Hospital (Rehabilitation) Hospital.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) (a) Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital—47
Royal Perth Hospital—15;
- (b) waiting times for new inpatients vary between one and three months according to the specialist concerned; emergency cases are seen immediately.

I am informed that there is also a waiting period for patients who consult specialists in their private rooms.

HOSPITAL

Swan District: Emergency Roster

1284. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has the problem of having a doctor available on site 24 hours a day to roster for emergencies at Swan District Hospital been resolved?
- (2) If so, on what basis has it been resolved?
- (3) How many additional full-time and part-time appointments will the roster require?
- (4) Have salaries for the additional appointments been approved?
- (5) If so, how much are the salaries involved?
- (6) Is it intended that family medicine programme residents will provide the roster service for emergencies?
- (7) If so, will the residents be third and fourth year graduates?
- (8) Have general practitioners in the area indicated their support for—
 - (a) the proposal that each resident will spend a day a week in a practice in the area and that general practitioners will fund this by paying a fee at \$100 a day to the family medicine programme;
 - (b) the proposal that each resident will have access to the patients at Swan District Hospital providing the patients agree?
- (9) Is this type of 24-hour-a-day roster for emergencies considered adequate?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) The implementation of the Government's election promise to provide a casualty service at Swan District Hospital has not caused a problem.

The doctors in the Swan District Hospital area are co-operating to develop a proposal to have a 24-hour doctor on site. This has not yet been finalised.

- (2) to (5) See (1) above.
- (6) The family medicine programme State director has been involved in discussions

with the local doctors. It is possible, but not yet definite, that FMP doctors will be involved in the service in co-operation with, and under the supervision of, the local practitioners.

- (7) Most, but not all, FMP residents are third or fourth-year graduates.
- (8) (a) and (b) The general practitioners have not informed me of the proposals outlined in (a) and (b).
- (9) See (1) above.

HOSPITAL

Swan District: Surgical Admissions

1285. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

Is it a fact that—

- (a) because of the shortage of beds Royal Perth Hospital has cancelled a large percentage of booked surgical admissions;
- (b) to ease the load at Royal Perth Hospital all patients who are suitable for treatment at Swan District Hospital are admitted;
- (c) this occurs to the exclusion of patients booked for surgical admission at Swan District Hospital;
- (d) the cancellation of booked operations and earlier discharge of patients are two methods resorted to by Swan District Hospital in its effort to cope with the pressure which it is experiencing;
- (e) the problem of Swan District Hospital is likely to become much worse when Medicare is introduced?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (a) It is common for hospital managements to adopt a policy that from time to time results in a postponement of admission of elective cases in favour of emergencies presenting without warning; it is usually only a small proportion of overall cases;
- (b) all patients who have conditions suitable for treatment at Swan District Hospital are and should be admitted there;
- (c) no;

- (d) all hospitals may have to do such things if emergency patients present for treatment;
- (e) the member does not appear to appreciate that Medicare will not alter the incidence of disease.

HOSPITAL

Royal Perth: Kidney Stones

1286. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Approximately how many patients have been treated on the Royal Perth Hospital machine which uses ultrasound to fragment kidney stones?
- (2) What percentage of patients admitted to Western Australian hospitals with kidney stones are treated by this method.
- (3) Is there a waiting period for treatment on this machine?
- (4) If so—
 - (a) what is the normal waiting period involved;
 - (b) what is the reason for the waiting period?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) Seven.
- (2) A small percentage. The machine has only been installed for two months and is not yet in full operation.
- (3) Only when the consultant is not available. This is a newly introduced procedure.
- (4) (a) and (b) Not applicable.

HEALTH

Arthritis: Funding

1287. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Approximately how many Western Australians suffer from arthritis in its various forms?
- (2) What State Government support does the WA Arthritis and Rheumatism Foundation receive?
- (3) Has the WA Arthritis and Rheumatism Foundation requested additional support?
- (4) If so, with what result?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) Figures are not available.
- (2) I direct the member to his own question 584.

- (3) Yes.
- (4) This is a matter to be determined by the Government in its budgetary deliberations.

HEALTH: TOBACCO

Education Programme

1288. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Was the one-week smoking prevention training programme which was conducted last week for 700 teachers regarded as being satisfactory?
- (2) Is it considered that the teachers involved will be able to effectively conduct the 10-week smoking prevention programme which is planned for all Government primary schools?
- (3) Are additional teacher training programmes planned?
- (4) If so, when?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) to (3) Yes.
- (4) As part of a comprehensive programme for primary and high schools during 1984.

HEALTH: TOBACCO

Education Programme

1289. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Are private schools included in the smoking prevention teacher training programme?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) Are similar courses planned for private school teachers?
- (4) If so, when?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) to (4) Not applicable.

HOSPITAL

Princess Margaret: Staffing Problem

1290. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

Apropos the statement by the Eastern States management consultant, Mr Peter Cabban, that the staffing problem

at Princess Margaret Hospital has been resolved for the present—

- (a) what action was taken to overcome the problem;
- (b) what were the reasons for the recent difficulties experienced at the hospital?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (a) The temporary problems encountered were overcome by appropriate managerial action by the hospital administration;
- (b) the reasons are complex; these include the effects of proportions of registered nurses and student nurses, the rostering and deployment of available registered and student nurses within the hospital, the education programme requirements of student nurses, sickness and other absence, surges of increased activity within the hospital, inability to recruit temporary staff, and the difficulties resulting from general economic restraint.

HOSPITALS

Medicare: Increased Demand

1291. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) In view of the universal expectation that Medicare will place substantial additional strain on Government hospitals, is it intended to augment staff at such hospitals prior to the introduction of Medicare?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (5) If so, when?
- (4) Has the augmentation of staff at Government hospitals prior to the introduction of Medicare been discussed with the Commonwealth?
- (5) If not, why not?
- (6) If so, what is the Commonwealth Government's attitude to this?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) The only universal expectation of Medicare I am aware of is that the "substantial strain" and worry of medical bills will be alleviated for those families previously unable to afford health insurance.
- (2) There is no point in putting additional staff on establishments until they are needed.

- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) Yes.
- (5) Not applicable.
- (6) The Commonwealth has agreed to review its compensation grant on evidence of documented increased activity. Payment by the Commonwealth will be four weeks in arrears to the State.

HOSPITALS

Statistics

1292. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What are the latest statistics available in respect of—

- (a) cost per patient treated;
 - (b) length of stay in days;
 - (c) number of inpatients;
 - (d) number of outpatients;
- for—

- (i) Swan District Hospital;
- (ii) Wanneroo Hospital;
- (iii) Osborne Park Hospital;
- (iv) Armadale Hospital?

- (2) What are the statistics under these headings for the two previous years?

Mr HODGE replied:

(1) and (2)

DETAILS	ARMADALE			OSBORNE PARK			SWAN DISTRICT			WANNEROO		
	1982/83	1981/82	1980/81	1982/83	1981/82	1980/81	1982/83	1981/82	1980/81	1982/83	1981/82	1980/81
(a) Cost per patient treated (b)	597.77	554.97	465.09	980.15	883.76	784.77	718.43	659.07	581.20	768.94	793.35	—
(b) Length of stay in days	4.2	4.2	4.1	6.3	6.4	6.3	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.4	—
(c) Number of inpatient admissions	5 629	5 452	5 433	7 896	7 665	8 455	7 311	6 821	7 773	4 067	3 642	—
(d) Number of outpatients occasions of service	26 281	23 328	23 708	11 176	6 597	6 147	7 549	5 347	5 895	3 537	3 138	—

Note | Cost per patient treated includes the cost of treatment for outpatients which cannot be accurately and uniformly separated.

LIQUOR: SPIRITS

Alcoholic Content

1293. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has consideration been given to reducing the alcoholic content of spirits in Western Australia?
- (2) If so, has a decision been made in respect of the matter?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) and (2) The Public Health Department is reviewing the Food and Drug Regulations with a view to bringing Western Australia's regulations into line with all other States, as recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

TRAFFIC

Accidents: Coode Street-Thelma Street Intersection

1294. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) How many police-attended traffic accidents have occurred at the Coode Street-Thelma Street intersection, South Perth, during the last three years?
- (2) How many of these accidents resulted in injury?
- (3) When it is intended traffic islands will be constructed at the site?
- (4) Has the installation of traffic lights been considered?
- (5) If so, what is the current position in respect of these?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) 21 accidents have been reported to the Main Roads Department.
- (2) 12.
- (3) The site is listed for channelisation treatment in the 1983-84 financial year.

The form and timing of the treatment is dependent on the outcome of the South Perth City Council's road rationalisation scheme which is currently under review.

- (4) Not at this stage since this, too, would be dependent on the Council's road rationalisation scheme.
- (5) Answered by (3) and (4).

HOSPITALS

Sterilisation Procedure

1295. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has recent research indicating that at least two distinct kinds of bacteria have been collected from water emitted from vents in the Pacific at temperatures of about 360°C, and that these bacteria grow and reproduce most rapidly at 250°C, any implications for present sterilisation procedures for hospital instruments, equipment, etc.?
- (2) Are current methods of sterilisation practised in hospitals considered adequate?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) No. There is no indication that the organisms are pathogenic to man and I am advised the organisms may not even survive at lower temperatures.
- (2) Yes.

HEALTH

Pharmaceutical Benefits List

1296. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Are alternative nutritional products to the two products pregestimil and glucose nutramigen, recently removed from the pharmaceutical benefits list, available?
- (2) If so—
- (a) what are these products; and
- (b) how does their price compare with pregestimil and glucose nutramigen?
- (3) Are these alternative products on the pharmaceutical benefits list?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) Not to my knowledge.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Not applicable.

HEALTH

Heart Attacks: Number

1297. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many deaths in Western Australia are caused by cardiovascular diseases?
- (2) What percentage of these deaths are attributable to high blood pressure?
- (3) Can the rise in blood pressure caused by alcohol, as found by Royal Perth Hospital study, cause any of these diseases, or make a person more vulnerable to contracting a cardiovascular disease?
- (4) Will Western Australian hospitals be involved in research into the renin-producing gene found responsible for raising blood pressure?
- (5) If so, to what extent?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) In 1982, the number of deaths attributed to cardio-vascular diseases was 3 784.
- (2) It can be estimated that 35 per cent of these deaths are attributable to high blood pressure.
- (3) The study to which the member refers has produced evidence of an association between high blood pressure and excessive alcohol consumption, but it has not shown whether this is a causal association with alcohol *per se*, or reflects the effects of other factors (e.g. diet, personality type) which may be correlated with level of alcohol intake. Regardless of cause, high blood pressure may increase the risk of developing cardio-vascular disease.
- (4) The programme of research conducted by university clinical departments in Western Australian teaching hospitals is directed towards lifestyle risk factors for high blood pressure. There are no plans at present to duplicate the research being conducted elsewhere on the renin-producing gene.
- (5) Not applicable.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS: DISPUTE

Pilbara: Japanese View

1298. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

- (1) Has he noticed in the *Japanese Trade Exploitation* daily reports how the Mt.

Newman strike actions have been described and referred to the securing of jobs for apprentices strike, viz—

..... the middle of last month, meanwhile, the Electrical Trade Union announced a plan to shift into a new campaign to demand shorter work hours to 35 hours a week, in case the said strike was called off?

- (2) If so, is this in line with his repeated statements in this House that the Japanese did not consider Australia as a source of unstable supply and hence there is no need for Government intervention against industrial unions?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) and (2) I am having checks on the text of the article referred to by the member and I will then provide in writing the information the member is seeking.

LAND: AGRICULTURAL

Clearing Bans: Compensation

1299. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

The Premier having given his assurance that all property claims in connection with clearing bans will be justly and equitably dealt with, could he say how many payments have been made and to what aggregate amount during the term of the present Government, including September so far—

- (a) as compensation;
(b) as purchase of properties?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (a) 32 payments have been made since 21 February 1983. Net of interest the aggregate compensation amount paid is \$3 358 298. The number and amount include one advance payment.
(b) Two properties have been purchased since 21 February 1983. The aggregate amount is \$1 035 725 and includes a 90 per cent advance payment.

WATER RESOURCES: CATCHMENT AREAS

Property Purchases

1300. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

Have the guidelines for eligibility for purchasing of properties under the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act been amended and, if so, would he please table the new guidelines?

Mr TONKIN replied:

There are no such guidelines under the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act. There are compensation guidelines in respect of the land clearing provisions of the Country Areas Water Supply Act.

These have not been amended since I became Minister for Water Resources.

PUBLIC WORKS: DEPARTMENT

Jetties, Ports, and Boating Facilities

1301. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Works:

Could he please tell the House the already decided and presently prevailing priorities of all works connected with ports, jetties, and any other boating facilities to be undertaken by the harbours and rivers branch of the Public Works Department?

Mr McIVER replied:

The establishment of priorities for the works to which the member has referred comes within the responsibility of the Minister for Transport.

Details on capital works projects to be undertaken by the harbours and rivers branch of the Public Works Department will be announced when the 1983-84 Budget is delivered to the House by the Premier and Treasurer.

WATER RESOURCES: METROPOLITAN WATER AUTHORITY AND COUNTRY AREAS WATER SUPPLIES

Amalgamation; Subsidy

1302. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

Considering his assurance to my question regarding further subsidy of the operation of the country water undertakings after amalgamation with the

Metropolitan Water Authority, could he state that this "appropriate" subsidy to be considered and continued will be proportionate to the turnover thus continuing to be at least the same percentage subsidy as it is today and the yearly total subsidy will not be frozen as a dollar amount?

Mr TONKIN replied:

No decision as to the extent of the subsidy has yet been made.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Carpets

1303. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Works:

Could he please detail, according to the description of jobs and the value of each job, the Western Australian manufactured and imported carpets in all contracts allocated by the Public Works Department for supplying and laying carpets during the term of the present Government up to the most recent date to which this information is conveniently available?

Mr McIVER replied:

Compilation of the information requested will take some days to prepare and the information will be provided direct to the Member when this has been completed.

STATE ENGINEERING WORKS

Carousel Foundry Equipment

1304. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Could he please describe the increased jobs and orders on hand with the State engineering works on account of the new carousel foundry equipment which he recently commissioned?
- (2) To what approximate percentage of its capacity is the State engineering works presently working?

Mr McIVER replied:

- (1) There has been no increase, or decrease, in the level of jobs and orders in hand of the type suitable for performance on the new carousel foundry equipment since it has been commissioned.

- (2) Factory plant is operating at about 66 per cent of capacity. Factory employees are operating at or near full capacity.

STATE ENGINEERING WORKS

Staff

1305. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Works:

How many—

- (a) salaried employees;
- (b) wages employees;
- (c) apprentices;

were on the payroll of the State engineering works on 30 December 1982 and 30 June 1983 respectively (or two similar comparative dates more convenient from the point of view of getting the information)?

Mr McIVER replied:

	31 Dec. 1982	30 June 1983
(a) Salaried employees	41	43
(b) Wages employees	158	169
(c) Apprentices	41	32
Total	240	244

FUEL AND ENERGY: COAL

Exploration

1306. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) What funds are being provided by the State Energy Commission to assist exploration activity being undertaken by the partners in the Coal (Western Collieries and Dampier) Agreement Act?
- (2) For what purpose are the funds being provided?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) and (2) I refer to the answer given to Question 1190.

EDUCATION

Teachers: Salary Cuts

1307. Mr PETER JONES, to the Premier:

- (1) Relating to the temporary reduction in salary of certain public servants as approved by Statute, is he aware that in some instances at least, the small allowance available to some school principals

for co-ordinating school bus services has been included as salary?

- (2) Is he aware that this action has resulted in some school teachers being brought under the provisions of the Act, or included in a higher salary reduction than their basic salary would otherwise warrant?
- (3) Was this situation intended by the Government?
- (4) Will he move to correct this anomalous situation?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) Yes. This is a requirement of the Act.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Yes.

It was intended under the interpretation of 'remuneration' in the Act that numerous allowances payable in recognition of additional responsibilities should be included as part of remuneration.

- (4) In preparing the Bill for presentation to Parliament, I was mindful of the need to have some mechanism in the Bill to give scope for removing or resolving anomalies which may arise in the operation of the legislation. Accordingly, clause 17(C) was included in the Bill. Unfortunately, clause 17(C) was deleted from the Bill during debate in the Legislative Council.

However, I am aware that the Minister for Education is having prepared for me a report on the particular teachers affected under the Act by the school bus allowance. Consideration will then be given to the problems which have arisen.

HEALTH: TOBACCO

"Smoking Accessory": Definition

1308. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) With regard to the Tobacco (Promotion and Sale) Bill 1983, what is the definition of "smoking accessory" as referred to in clause 8?
- (2) Are safety matches and pipecleaners examples of "smoking accessories"?
- (3) By what method is it intended to enforce paragraph (b) of clause 8?

- (4) How is it intended to ensure that no person under 16 years of age uses a cigarette vending machine?
- (5) How does the Government intend to police paragraph (b) of clause 9 of the Bill?
- (6) Will he define "other officer" as referred to in clause 11?
- (7) Is a secretary-stenographer involved in management and administration classified as an "officer" under clause 11?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) As defined in Clause 3.
- (2) Safety matches are made for other primary purposes and would not be considered within the definition of "smoking accessory". Pipe cleaners, on the other hand, are included in the examples of smoking accessories in the definition and this would be obvious from even a cursory examination of the Bill.
- (3) This is merely a re-drafting of existing provisions and will be enforced initially by officers of the Public Health Department.
- (4) The member will appreciate there is no way to ensure that persons under the age of 16 will not use cigarette vending machines any more than it is possible to ensure against persons exceeding the speed limit in motor vehicles. What the legislation does is to make it quite clear that it is an offence.
- (5) As outlined under (3).
- (6) "Other officer" is not the expression used in the Bill. The expression used is "other officer concerned in the management of the body corporate" and one doubts the courts will have any great difficulty in identifying such persons.
- (7) No.

1309. *This question was postponed.*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Signs: Advertising

1310. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) With regard to the licensing of advertising signs by local government authorities, can local government authorities refuse to approve advertising signs for reasons of being considered by

the council to be injurious to the natural beauty or environmental acceptability of the area?

- (2) Has the power of local government authorities to control advertising signs for these reasons been legally tested?
- (3) If so, with what result?

Mr CARR replied:

- (1) By-law No. 26 of the Local Government Model By-laws (Signs, Hoardings and Bill Posting), No. 13, provides that a council may refuse a licence for a sign which, in its opinion, would be injurious to the amenity or natural beauty of the area.
- (2) and (3) I am not in a position to provide a complete statement of the law as decided by the Courts.

However, I am aware that a Full Court decision (Appeal No. 14 of 1983) in the case of *Claude Neon Ltd. v the City of Subiaco*, held that such a by-law was valid.

An earlier decision of the Supreme Court (Appeal No. 29 of 1982) in the case of *City of South Perth v John Clive Churchill*, held that a by-law of this nature was invalid.

PORTS

Authorities: Directives

1311. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Transport:

As he has indicated publicly that the Government will act to ensure that the port authorities heed the policy directives of the Government, will he outline which policy directives the port authorities have not been heeding?

Mr GRILL replied:

While I am most reluctant to open up old wounds, I would indicate that there have been some problems in one or more ports in respect to compliance with the previous Government's directives on employment policy.

However, contrary to the previous Government's approach, the approach of this Government is to solve problems before they might arise, not after.

1312. *This question was postponed.*

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

Inquiry: Shannon River National Park

319. Mr O'CONNOR, to the Minister for Forests:

In answer to question 123 on 4 August in the Legislative Council concerning the management of the Shannon River Basin, the Attorney General representing the Minister for the Environment said: "The Premier has announced that the Shannon River basin will remain under the Forest Department's management and control pending the outcome of a review by the task force on land resources management". In answer to question 152 on 16 August in the same place, the same Minister repeated that information and said that the review was expected to last a year. However, in answer to question without notice 305 last week, when I asked whether the Shannon River basin came under the responsibility of the Forests Department, the Premier replied, "No it does not." I ask—

Will he please inform the House which House of Parliament has been correctly informed and which has been misled, and why?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

I am not aware of either House being misled in relation to the Shannon River basin decision. At the time when the Government made the decision to exclude the Shannon River basin from the cutting area of the timber industry, an announcement was also made about the future management of the Shannon River basin area. That future management was assigned to the Forests Department in co-operation with a number of people representative of other areas of interest from within the Government and, from memory, representatives of the south-west development authority and perhaps of local authorities. I do not have in front of me the questions asked by the Leader of the Opposition. All I can say is that the situation is that the Forests Department, which has considerable expertise in the management of the Shannon River basin and which will continue to play a pivotal role in the

management of the area will be joined by others.

Mr O'Connor: Yes, but the answers contradicted each other, and I am just trying to find out which answer was correct.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: They are contrary only if the Leader of the Opposition concludes that the role of the Forests Department is exclusive in terms of the role of other departments. The Forests Department has a major role in the management of the Shannon River basin as it is now excluded from the cutting area. That does not mean no-one else has a role to play in it. The situation is as outlined to the Leader of the Opposition.

RECREATION: YACHTING

America's Cup: Celebrations

320. Mrs BUCHANAN, to the Premier:

What action has been taken so far to welcome the crew of *Australia II*?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

I have invited the Commodore of the New York Yacht Club, Mr Robert G. Stone, Jr. and the Captain of the American Yacht *Liberty*, Mr Dennis Conner, to be guests of the State Government at the reception being planned to welcome home Alan Bond, crew members and everyone associated with *Australia II*'s America's Cup victory.

The welcome home will probably be held late in October—probably on a Friday to enable as many country people as possible to travel to Perth and to take part in the celebrations.

Arrangements will be finalised when the local organising committee has received confirmation of travel arrangements, arrival times etc. of all the Australian contingent from Newport.

Recommendations put forward by the America's Cup celebrations committee and which are likely to be implemented, include a victory parade through Perth and a people's welcome involving the cities of Fremantle and Perth, as well as the suburbs of Cottesloe, Claremont, Subiaco and West Perth, followed by a major fireworks display in the evening.

It is probable that a half-day holiday will be declared for school children to enable them to take part in the people's welcome which will be held at the Perth Esplanade.

A request will be made to employers for two hours off-duty to allow workers to attend the Esplanade reception.

Invitations will be extended to prominent West Australian and interstate sportsmen and women to take part in the victory celebrations.

The organising committee is well ahead with its plans for a display of victory banners and flags in both Perth and Fremantle and these will be erected at the weekend.

The City of Perth technical committees have been called into action to plan the reception on the Perth Esplanade, and the City of Fremantle is also well advanced with its planning.

The day of the people's reception and holiday for children will be known as "*Australia II* Day".

Various other aspects aimed at enhancing the celebrations are being examined and will be incorporated in the programme should they reach fruition.

These include the supply of souvenir flags to people watching the reception, invitations to all business houses and Government departments throughout Western Australia to fly either the West Australian or the Advance Australia Challenge flag, and the supply of *Australia II* decorations to municipal bodies and business houses. Included in the future programme of events will be a sail past of yachts and motor cruisers as a Swan River spectacular to salute *Australia II*, with family barbecues along the Swan River foreshore.

The committee has also explored the possibility of getting *Australia II* back to Perth by jumbo jet in time for the celebrations but this has not proved to be practicable.

Other proposals being considered as part of the official recognition of *Australia II*'s achievement include—

the minting of special *Australia II* medallions in gold, silver and bronze, as a collector's item;

exhibiting the America's cup for an agreed period for public viewing at the Art Gallery of Western Australia or at some other venue offering similar security;

establishment of a nautical scholarship; and

an illuminated salute on the riverside wall of the old brewery on the Swan River and lighting patterns on public buildings similar to those brought into use as part of Western Australia's 150th anniversary celebrations in 1979.

All of our efforts are directed at a truly Western Australian reception for those sportsmen who achieved such outstanding success on behalf of Australia and of Western Australia in particular.

LAND

Urban Lands Council: Financial Arrangements

321. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Planning:

- (1) Is land held by the Urban Lands Council exempt from rates?
- (2) Is this land exempt from land tax?
- (3) Does the Urban Lands Council pay to the State Government any sum of money equivalent to land tax?
- (4) Does the Urban Lands Council pay to the State Government any sum of money towards meeting the interest Bill on the liability to the Commonwealth?
- (5) When the Urban Lands Council is turned into a statutory corporation, as proposed by the Minister, will the Urban Lands Council be put on the same footing as private land developers and be subjected to all taxes and charges, so that the statutory body to be created does not compete unfairly with private land developers?

Mr PARKER replied:

I preface my answer by saying that no changes have been made to the operation of the Urban Lands Council by the present Government.

Mr Hassell: That is understood.

Mr PARKER: Any of the answers I give, in fact, reflect not only the practice which is followed now, but also the practice which has been followed over the past

seven or so years since it was established by the member for Dale when he was the Minister responsible for that portfolio. I also should add I am not 100 per cent certain of the correctness of the answers, but as I understand, the situation, the answer is as follows—

- (1) to (3) The Urban Lands Council does not pay local government rates, land tax, or income tax. It certainly pays water and other types of rates and, of course, pays headwork charges to the Metropolitan Water Authority and other charges appropriate to developers when developing its land. I will provide details of that in a formal response to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, because I am not 100 per cent certain of these matters.
- (4) As far as the interest bill on liability to the Commonwealth is concerned, the arrangements that were made between the Commonwealth and State of Western Australia in about 1974, or early 1975, were that the interest which would accrue on the amounts loaned to Western Australia in order to have the land purchased would not be required to be repaid to the Commonwealth for a period, from recollection, of 10 years. In fact, no payments have been made to the Commonwealth. However, there is a debit of moneys charged against the ULC that are required to be paid to the Commonwealth in terms of interest accumulated under the arrangement made at that time and, of course, a final capital sum which is owing to the Commonwealth. The capital sum was to be repaid over a much lengthier period of time. That certainly is debited against the Urban Lands Council and, at the time of payment—if it is to be paid—it will be paid by the Urban Lands Council and not the Government. No State Government funds have been used on behalf of the Urban Lands Council, other than those granted by the Commonwealth some seven or eight years ago.

Negotiations with the Commonwealth are under way at the mo-

ment in order to establish whether the interest bill for the Urban Lands Council can be written off, because the former Commonwealth Government, just before the elections last year in the States of Victoria and South Australia, wrote off the interest bills owed to it by similar authorities established in those States. The former Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning (Mrs Craig) was in the course of negotiating to write off those amounts and had reached agreement with the then responsible Minister, Senator Carrick. However, Senator Carrick's proposition was rejected by the Federal Cabinet on the instigation of the then Minister for Finance, Senator Dame Margaret Guilfoyle. Those negotiations are under way at the moment and, if there is any finality, the House will be advised.

- (5) The final question in relation to the basis of operation of the Urban Lands Council is one which has yet to be considered by Cabinet. No final decision has been made in relation to the form of legislation that will be produced. A great deal of work had been done on this legislation by the former Government and representations were constantly made by my predecessor to the former Government to have such legislation introduced, apparently unsuccessfully. Those matters are under consideration. Of course, when the Bill is introduced to the House, if it is, the House will be advised of the outcome.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL

Warwick

322. Mrs WATKINS, to the Minister for Education:

Will the Minister outline the steps to be taken to relieve the accommodation problem at Warwick High School for 1984?

Mr PEARCE replied:

This matter has been raised with me privately on a number of occasions by the member for Joondalup. The situation at

the Warwick High School is that it is being taken from year 10 to year 11 status next year and, with the population growth in the area, considerable problems exist in terms of housing the students next year. I understand this will be the subject of a public meeting to be held at the school this evening.

I need to outline the situation carefully to the House, because a member in another place is attempting to blame my Government for a lack of permanent accommodation facilities from the beginning of the school year. The only way permanent accommodation could have been built for the Warwick High School for the start of the 1984 school year would have been if the previous Government had placed in the Budget an allocation of funds to start that building programme. The previous Government did not make that decision. As a result the planning—

Mr Clarko: It is theoretically possible to build it in that time. I am not suggesting it would follow the standard pattern.

Several members interjected.

Mr PEARCE: Of course early starts on building have been made, and an amount of \$17 million has been allocated for building during the current year, which is the amount decided by the previous Government and which does not include the Warwick High School. That \$17 million, which is the vast proportion of the 1983-84 Budget for building, represents the priorities of the previous Government, and does not include the Warwick Senior High School.

Nevertheless, planning for the school has been proceeding with an allocation made under architects' fees generally and not specifically designated for the school. Planning is now complete, and a considerable sum of money is included in the Government's 1983-84 works programme. As soon as the Budget is before the Parliament tenders will be called and the whole business will proceed in the normal way. The building will start in November and will be finished in October next year. I understand the member to whom I previously referred, Mr Wells, is claiming if the Government advanced the building commencement

from November to now, a period of six or seven weeks, the building completion could be advanced from next October to next February.

This indicates that perhaps Mr Wells should spend some time at the Warwick High School maths classes so that he can understand the position. I am sending departmental officers to a meeting this evening which I would have attended myself were not it for the fact that we need a constitutional majority in this place tonight. If I can I will go to the meeting, otherwise the departmental officers will put a number of options to parents. We hope to have a satisfactory level of accommodation at the school next year while the building programme is completed.

MINING: URANIUM

Roxby Downs and Yeelirrie

323. Mr MacKINNON, to the Premier:

- (1) Has the Premier seen or been referred to the article in today's *The West Australian* which reports the Prime Minister as supporting the mining and export of uranium in the economic interests of Australia?
- (2) If so, does he support the mining and export of uranium?
- (3) As the Prime Minister supports the Roxby Downs development in South Australia, and is reported as saying so, did he make representations to the Prime Minister during his visit to Perth in support of Yeelirrie?
- (4) If not, why not?
- (5) If he has not, will he now make representations to the Prime Minister in support of the development of the Yeelirrie uranium project as the Prime Minister at this stage appears to be favouring the Roxby Downs proposal as opposed to the West Australian development?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (5) In answer to the member's question I have consistently raised with the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister the question of Yeelirrie.

I have consistently sought from each of those people the national Government's policy in respect of the mining and export of uranium from Yeelirrie. I have not as yet raised this matter with the Prime Minister on his current visit to Perth. My understanding of the previous situation as it now stands is that the Commonwealth Government is to inform Western Australia how Yeelirrie fits into or contradicts the national Government's policy. I would point out to the member also that he appears not to understand the important aspects of the Yeelirrie and Roxby Downs situations. Roxby Downs involves the mining and export of uranium ore that is occurring with other minerals. In that situation it is clearly accommodated by the national Government policy. That is on record as long ago as the last national conference of the Labor Party which was held in the middle of 1982.

Mr MacKinnon: It is exactly the same product exported, irrespective of what is dug up.

Mr Court: The Prime Minister never mentions Yeelirrie. He always mentions Roxby Downs.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I would guess that the Prime Minister mentions Roxby Downs because under the national Government's policy the mining and exporting of uranium from Roxby Downs is accommodated because the uranium ore occurs in concert with another mineral.

Mr Hassell: This doesn't help jobs in Western Australia. There are thousands of jobs tied up in Yeelirrie.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I would have thought that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition had, by force of his apologies, learned better than to interject during question time.

Mr Hassell: I am still remembering a question you have not answered. There are thousands of Western Australian jobs for which you are not fighting.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Constant negotiations between the Western Mining Corporation and the Commonwealth Government, facilitated by the State Government, have yet to arrive at a situation from which I understand Western Mining Corporation is able to say, firstly, that there is a joint venture in

existence, or secondly, that there are any contracts in existence.

Mr Hassell: There will not be any contracts while your policies are hanging around.

Mr Peter Jones: That is the answer you gave me to a question.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: It would seem to me that there is an obligation on the project to assume a different aspect from the one it now assumes, if realistically encountered as one which will get off the ground. Given all those things it is essential to say that Roxby Downs, under the national Government's policy, is different from Yeelirrie, and the Prime Minister has—

Mr Hassell: It is in South Australia, that is the difference.

Mr Peter Jones: Before the election you said it was the same.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Who said it was the same?

Mr Peter Jones: You did. The national policy of the Labor Party is that the projects that had been committed—

Mr Hassell: So did your Minister.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The difference I am attempting to point out is not a difference of commitment. It is a difference related to the occurrence of the uranium ore in concert with another mineral.

Mr Hassell: It still doesn't help the unemployed.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Of course it doesn't help the unemployed, and it does not help the Thursday Islanders either. Does the member understand that?

Mr Hassell: These projects will not get off the ground because you will not fight for them.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The previous Government had nine years to get projects off the ground and all it did was to bring the State's economy to its knees. The architects of the unemployment explosion should not sit smugly and accuse this Government, which has succeeded in bringing down unemployment and lifting employment—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: It is nothing less than a substantial achievement. I am going to persist in answering the question because the implication that the member

makes in the question goes to the heart of what is a very contentious issue within the Labor Party at the present time.

Mr Hassell: Quite right.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am not attempting to avoid that issue. If the member asked me a question directly I would answer it. As he has not, I will answer the implication. It is well known that within the national Government the Prime Minister adopts a certain attitude in respect of the mining and export of uranium which is not shared universally by his colleagues in Parliament or by members of the lay party that he now leads. That is the truth.

Mr Hassell: It is your attitude that is of interest to this House.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: As far as the Prime Minister is concerned, his comments in respect of uranium mining are within the context of the policy of the Australian Labor Party. That is the truth of the situation.

Mr Hassell: What is your policy as the Premier of the State?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am happy to give my personal view.

Mr Hassell: No, your policy.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: My policy as a Government is the policy which I voted to support at the last national conference of the Labor Party. If the member wants me to produce a copy of that 18-page policy I will happily forward it to him.

Mr Hassell: Tell us now, are you in support of uranium development and export, or not?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: In all the circumstances, without any qualification, the answer is "No". I will not support the mining and export of uranium for sale to France so that it can test its nuclear weapons on our doorstep. I will not support the mining and export of uranium, as the Opposition does, in order that it be exported to Libya, because that is what the Opposition supports. I will not support the mining and export of uranium to the Soviet Union, because that is what the Opposition wants to do.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Members opposite cannot have it every way. To whom does the Opposition want to sell it? Does the Opposition want to sell it to the Soviet Union? Does the Opposition want to sell it to Argentina? Does the Opposition want to sell it to Libya?

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: That is not the truth either because France has not signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Mr Peter Jones: Would you sell it to Switzerland?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am not attempting to duck the question by any means, but let the Opposition cover the ground it pretends to stand on, and if it wants to talk about the export of uranium, let it tell the public that its policy supports the export of uranium to Libya, to the Soviet Union, and to Argentina.

Mr Hassell: We have never said that.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Opposition has never denied that it would export uranium to those countries, but when the heat goes on, the Opposition ducks the uranium question—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Under the policies of the Opposition, uranium would be exported to every totalitarian regime that wanted to build an atom bomb.

ELECTORAL

Reform: Referendum

324. Mrs HENDERSON, to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform:

If Western Australians are capable of winning the America's Cup, can they also achieve a democratic electoral system?

Points of Order

Mr CRANE: I would say this is seeking an opinion of the Minister.

Mr Tonkin: No it is not, it is asking a fact.

Mr CRANE: I believe it is. I would like your ruling on it, Sir, after your consideration.

Mr CLARKO: My point of order is that it does not come within the province of this Minister's duties.

Mr Tonkin: You are wrong.

The SPEAKER: Under the Standing Orders, it is quite possible for the Minister to be asked a question relating to the portfolio for which, for the time being, he is responsible. His portfolio is electoral reform, and he has the opportunity to answer it.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr TONKIN replied:

For me it was an exhilarating feeling to be a Western Australian and be a part of the triumph of the *Australia II* syndicate. Western Australians showed that 132 years of history could be overturned when our representatives set their heart on winning yachting's most prestigious trophy. This Parliament congratulated the crew and syndicate of *Australia II* on the same day we debated the Legislative Council reform Bill. History-making is in the air. Our Legislative Council is 151 years old, so at first sight it may appear to be even more difficult to shift than the America's Cup. But if we remember that the elected Council began its role as an upper House in 1893, the present holders of that parliamentary trophy have held it for 90 years. If 132 years of yachting history can be changed by Western Australians, I am confident that 90 years of undemocratic elections can also be changed by Western Australians voting at a referendum.

BUILDING INDUSTRY

Builders' Registration Board: Complaints

325. Mr THOMPSON, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

I hope that the Minister who has just resumed his seat will be as helpful in answering my question as he was with the one he has just answered. Further to my question on notice 887 of 25 August, in response to which the Minister said he would discuss with the Registrar of the Builders' Registration Board whether they would give a positive response to my question, and further to my private discussion with the Minister

when I pointed out to him that I would like details of complaints lodged with the Builders' Registration Board with respect to buildings built by owner-builders—I wanted that information before the Bill was debated in this House—I ask—

(1) Will the Minister now state whether it is his intention to provide the information?

(2) If not, can it be taken that the information being withheld does not support the case for those parts of the Bill which relate to owner builders?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) and (2) It is certainly not true that the information we have does not support the Bill. I would not bring the Bill to this House if it was not shown that nine years of neglect by the previous Government have left the Builders' Registration Board in a parlous situation. In fact, it is the Housing Industry Association and the Master Builders' Association that want changes to the Builders' Registration Board and want the area extended.

Certainly it is not true that the information we have does not support the

Bill. As I said before, I would not bring the Bill to the House if the problem did not exist.

However, the statistical information required by the member would require the very small staff that the board has to be devoted to a great deal of research which I am not prepared to direct them to do.

Had it been left to the previous Government, the Builders' Registration Board would now have closed its doors. As soon as I became the Minister, one of the reasons I was given for the board's closing its doors was that for several years it had not been permitted to borrow money or raise its fees. The board was brought to the situation of becoming bankrupt and closing its doors.

However, this Government is different from its predecessor, and I am prepared to provide the information that is readily available to the member—perhaps privately, if not in the House—to the degree that I can. However, we do not have the research staff to go through all the thousands of files to get the information in statistical form.