

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 20 December 1983

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

EDUCATION: PRE-SCHOOL

Bridgewater: Petition.

MR TRETOWAN (East Melville) [2.17 p.m.]: I present a petition on behalf of 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 are a group of mothers who either are sending or will be sending in 1984-85 our children to Bridgewater Kindergarten and wish to express our deep concern over the permanent closure of the Centre.

There are no other kindergarten facilities in Applescross/Ardross/Mt. Pleasant available for children in the year they turn 4 and we feel sure that viable numbers can be reached if the Centre were to re-open.

The Bridgewater Kindergarten has fulfilled a real need in the past and that need has not changed, in fact more than likely increased with the influx of younger families to the Melville area. We request the Bridgewater facilities re-open for the 1984 year.

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

The petition bears 53 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 67.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT: CARNARVON SHIRE COUNCIL

Inquiry Report: Printing

MR HODGE (Melville—Minister for Health) [2.22 p.m.]: I have for the tabling the report of the inquiry into public health in the Shire of Carnarvon, and I move—

That the report be printed.

Question put and passed.

Inquiry Report: Ministerial Statements

MR HODGE (Melville—Minister for Health) [2.23 p.m.]: I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

MR HODGE: For the information of members I have just tabled the report of the inquiry into public health in the Shire of Carnarvon. The report is important from the point of view of the administration of health legislation in Western Australia, and from the point of view of the relationship between local government and the State. Its findings and conclusions will be of concern not only to Carnarvon, but also to local Government generally, and to the wider community.

In August 1982, the Shire of Carnarvon wrote to the Commissioner of Public Health (Dr James McNulty) seeking approval to dispense with the services of one of its health surveyors, thus reducing the establishment of its health department from two health surveyors to one. In its letter, the shire gave reasons for its belief that the workload for the remaining officer would not be excessive.

Under the Health Act, the commissioner's approval is required for staff changes of this kind, and in accordance with normal departmental practice, Dr McNulty had one of his officers look into the matter while he was in Carnarvon on other business. Subsequently a senior departmental health surveyor was sent to Carnarvon for the express purpose of carrying out a full investigation of the workload of the shire's health department and assessing its staffing requirements.

On the basis of these departmental reports, the commissioner advised in October 1982 that he could not approve of the shire's request to relinquish the services of one health surveyor. The shire council did not, however, accept this decision, and continued to press its case. In December, it sent a three-man deputation to Perth to see Dr McNulty and to present a submission setting out its position in detail. Two members of the deputation were the shire president and the shire clerk.

No agreement was reached between the deputation and the commissioner, and in order to break the deadlock, Dr McNulty proposed in writing that there should be an informal on-the-spot examination of the health surveying needs of the shire by a team consisting of the department's director of inspection services (Dr Richard Lugg),

the chief health surveyor (Mr Robert Zehnder), and an officer to be nominated from the Department of Local Government.

The council at first deferred this proposal, and when it was raised again, the shire clerk replied saying that council was of the view that it was administering the Health Act in a responsible and efficient manner, and could see no real value coming from such an examination.

By this time—February of this year—considerable public disquiet about the council's approach to the staffing of its health department was starting to become evident in Carnarvon. On 9 February, a special meeting of electors was held to discuss matters pertaining to the health department, and a number of acrimonious exchanges occurred between the shire president and shire clerk, on the one hand, and the health surveyors (Mr Alan Hobbs and Mr Greg Nicholas), on the other. The meeting passed a motion expressing the utmost faith in these two officers and urging that they be retained in their positions.

Meanwhile, the council had been exploring the possibility of employing a part-time meat inspector in lieu of a full-time health surveyor, and yet another senior departmental health surveyor had visited Carnarvon to assess the staffing implications of such a move.

On 15 March this year, the shire president visited the commissioner in his office and sought his approval to have Mr Nicholas removed from office for improper conduct. The incident is referred to on page 38 of the tabled report. I mention it now because it resulted in the department's Deputy Chief Health Surveyor (Mr Robert Sweetman), going to Carnarvon to try to resolve the issue. On his return to Perth, Mr Sweetman prepared a departmental report which indicated that he was disturbed by a number of things which he found concerning the functioning of the shire's health department. Among other things, he recommended that consideration should be given to a thorough investigation into the health surveying services of the Shire of Carnarvon.

While Mr Sweetman was still in Carnarvon, the local health surveyor (Mr Nicholas) submitted his resignation. As members may imagine, this added fuel to the flames of local indignation. At the annual meeting of ratepayers a week later, the council was severely criticised over its handling of health matters and a motion for an investigation under the Local Government Act was passed.

With the resignation of Mr Nicholas and the absence on sick leave of the other health surveyor

(Mr Hobbs), the Public Health Department assisted with the provision of relieving officers. On 11 April, a departmental health surveyor (Mr Leo Diletti) was assigned to assist council, as the commissioner considered that its health services needed rationalisation. Mr Diletti's findings reinforced those of Mr Sweetman, and he came to a similar conclusion concerning the need for a thorough investigation of the situation.

In May, Dr McNulty advised me that there were grounds for grave concern, and said that he was satisfied that health surveying services in the shire would not be put on a proper footing until a full investigation was held and recommendations for the proper functioning of the health department were made and implemented to the extent necessary. He had in mind a formal inquiry under the Health Act, and showed me the terms of reference he had prepared. He sought my assistance to obtain suitable membership for the team to conduct the inquiry, and this I readily agreed to give.

On 1 June, I announced the establishment of the inquiry, the report of which I am tabling today, saying that reports received from departmental officers who had visited Carnarvon in preceding months had disclosed a disturbing state of affairs. In my announcement, I recounted some of the developments which I have just explained to the House in fuller detail today. I concluded by expressing the hope that the inquiry would lead to recommendations which could be implemented to achieve proper functioning of the shire's health department.

A formal inquiry under the Health Act has extensive powers, and I pointed out at the time that this inquiry would be able to summon witnesses, to require the production of documents, and to enter premises. However, its proceedings are not privileged and the Act affords no protection from legal action to witnesses who give evidence to it. This is a weakness in the Act to which I will be giving further consideration. It led to the inquiry being conducted in private, with all submissions received and all evidence taken being treated as confidential except where express consent was given to the contrary.

The holding of this inquiry has been an important event in the history of health administration in this State, and it has probably been unique. Certainly there has been no comparable exercise in living memory.

The three-man inquiry was chaired by the department's Director of Inspection Services (Dr Richard Lugg). The other members were the Deputy Secretary of Local Government (Mr

Michael Harding) and a senior departmental health surveyor (Mr Brian Devine).

The terms of reference are given in full in the report. Briefly, the inquiry was charged with the responsibilities of examining the state of public health in the Shire of Carnarvon, examining the administration of the Health Act by the shire and its officers, reporting deficiencies, drawing conclusions, and making recommendations for improvements.

The inquiry made three visits to Carnarvon and took evidence on 10 sitting days, two of which were in Perth. Twenty formal submissions were received and 50 witnesses appeared before the inquiry. Full details of its procedure are set out in the report.

The inquiry identified 15 specific public health issues which caused it concern, and these are described in the report. One of them, the operation of Gascoyne Abattoirs, involved several matters of concern, and was sufficiently complex to be treated separately.

The inquiry also identified 16 specific aspects of the administration of the Health Act which caused it concern. It highlighted the interference which took place in the professional judgment of the shire's health surveyors, citing four instances where this occurred.

Lastly, the inquiry looked at problems between the shire executive and the health department administration, and found that significant deficiencies had occurred. The text of the report makes instructive reading and is worthy of perusal.

One matter not dealt with in the report is a complaint about the shire that is still under investigation by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations. Before the report was received, it was understood that it would address this matter, and on 23 November 1983, the Attorney General so advised the Legislative Council in answering question 730 on my behalf.

In tabling the report, therefore, it is necessary for me to point out to the House that it does not deal with the complaint under investigation by the parliamentary commissioner.

The conclusions of the inquiry are set out on page 61. The inquiry found that the shire council had failed to discharge its responsibilities under the Health Act in a satisfactory manner. It would seem there was fault on all sides in this respect. Singled out for criticism are the shire president, who has exerted undue influence in the administration of the Act; the shire clerk, who has been involved in health matters outside his experience and training; and the senior health surveyor,

who has been deficient in his management of the health department.

The inquiry concludes that the administration of the Health Act in the shire is unacceptable in its present form and that considerable restructuring is required, but it believes that this restructuring cannot proceed successfully while the parties involved remain in their present positions of power or influence. It recommends that the Commissioner of Public Health intervene and take over the administration of the Act in the shire for a two-year period, and outlines the restructuring that would be required were such action to be implemented. This is the strongest action available to the commissioner under the Health Act.

In view of the serious nature of the problem and the limitation of the commissioner to intervene, and because the effect of such intervention impinges on other aspects of council administration, I have referred the entire matter to the Minister for Local Government for his consideration.

I am tabling the report because I believe it is essential that there be adequate opportunity for the Parliament and the public to know the reason for action which will be taken as a result of it.

In conclusion, I express to the officers who conducted the inquiry my sincere thanks for the dedicated manner in which they undertook that task.

Mr O'CONNOR: I seek leave to make a statement in response at a later stage of this sitting.

Leave granted.

MR CARR (Geraldton—Minister for Local Government) [2.34 p.m.]: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

Mr CARR: I refer to the report of the inquiry into public health in the Shire of Carnarvon and observe that the committee of inquiry made the most serious recommendation available to it under the Health Act; namely, that the council be divested of its health function for a period of two years.

The report was referred to Cabinet and to the Minister for Local Government because of the broader implications for municipal administration in the shire.

As a consequence, at a meeting of the Executive Council held today, the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator authorised the issue of an order for the dismissal of the Council of the Shire of Carnarvon. The dismissal becomes effective today.

The report identifies specific public health issues, together with specific aspects relating to the administration of the Health Act, which caused concern. It also cites instances of interference with the professional judgment of the shire's health surveyors.

The report presents a scenario of such maladministration, incompetence, and interference that the committee of inquiry concludes that the shire council has failed to discharge its responsibilities under the Health Act in a satisfactory manner.

In these circumstances, where there exists a possible substantial threat to public health in Carnarvon, the Government is under a duty to act.

Examples of problems cited in the report are—

- (a) failure to proceed with the prosecution of the proprietor of the Carnarvon Tavern under the Noise Abatement Act by issuing, but failing to serve, a summons;
- (b) that the shire had no procedures to prevent or detect corruption or undue influence in the administration of the Health Act and examples of what it considered to be undue influence were included;
- (c) domestic users are subsidising commercial users of rubbish disposal facilities;
- (d) the Commissioner of Public Health had been misled by the shire president;
- (e) that the manager of the abattoirs exercised undue influence over the shire in the matter;
- (f) that the requirement of the council that the health surveyor made appointments for all routine health inspection matters was contrary to the interests of public health;
- (g) that the council's practice of referring building plans to the health department after consideration by council was unacceptable;
- (h) that in matters related to the septic tanks of the Shell Carnarvon trucking terminal, a complaint of sickness at Dampier salt works, and problems at the Carnarvon Bakery, the shire clerk interfered with the professional judgments of the health surveyors;
- (i) that the council acted without authority in pre-empting a possible change in the meat inspection and branding regulations to reduce meat inspection fees, and quite wrongly allowed Gascoyne

Abattoirs to pay the reduced fees prior to any such approval;

- (j) that inspections were not being carried out prior to licensing of eating houses, and that other public health matters were not being attended to.

There has been a clear failure on the part of the shire council to administer the Health Act properly, and because of the obvious importance of the health function to members of the Carnarvon community and its inextricable interaction with other functions of council, the Government considers that it would not be practical to separate health from other functions.

Mr Rushton: Are you releasing this information here because you could be up for libel by making these comments in the public arena?

Mr CARR: We are releasing this report and announcing the details of the action in the Parliament in exactly the way that has been established by precedent.

The shire's operations are interdependent and require an ongoing integrated system of management; for example, while rubbish disposal is a health matter, rubbish charges are a financial matter, and sanitary landfill, an engineering matter.

In addition to the maladministration disclosed in the health report, misgivings have been held for some time over certain other aspects of the shire's administration in recent times. These misgivings were precipitated by a number of complaints received from ratepayers. Some of those complaints have been investigated by the Ombudsman, whose report is understood to be imminent.

Complaints relating to other aspects of the council's administration and evidence from the health inquiry strongly support the conclusion that the council's malaise is not confined to the administration of its health function. However, I wish to emphasise that the decision the Government has taken is based solely on the maladministration established by the health inquiry.

I strongly suggest that members read the report in its entirety in order to assess the full extent of the maladministration.

Section 156 of the Local Government Act reads—

156. (i) Where, in the opinion of the Governor a council is not properly carrying out—

- (a) local government in the district of the municipality; or

- (b) the powers conferred and duties imposed upon it by an Act;

the Governor may by Order dismiss the council.

Mr O'Connor: Is impropriety found only on the part of the shire president and secretary or also on the part of other members of the council?

Mr CARR: The impropriety and maladministration were shown in the council's failure to exercise properly the administration of the Health Act in general terms. To continue—

By an Order made under subsection (1) of this section the Governor—

- (a) shall appoint the day on and after which all of the offices of member of the council are vacant;
- (b) shall appoint such day for holding an election to restore a council to the municipality as allows sufficient time for compliance with the provisions of this Act relating to nomination of candidates and to other pre-requisites for the election, and as ensures the holding of the election as soon after the dismissal of the council as is reasonably practicable; and
- (c) may appoint a commissioner as if the appointment were made under Division 9 of Part III., with authority for the Commissioner to exercise the powers and discharge the duties of a council for the municipality until a council is elected and holds its first properly constituted meeting after the making of the Order.

I direct members' attention in particular to subsection (1) (b) which refers to the council's not properly carrying out the powers conferred and duties imposed upon it by an Act.

In this case, the decision was taken in respect of the Health Act.

I emphasise that it is with great reluctance that the Government and I have been forced to take this action. It is our view that the dismissal of a council should occur only in the most serious circumstances.

However, because the Health Act is one of the most important Acts administered by local government, the Government would be remiss in its duty if it had failed to act by dismissing the council and appointing an administrator until another council can be elected at the earliest opportunity.

The order made by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator today also provides for an election to restore a council to be held on 5 May 1984, and for the appointment of Mr R. Dymock to act as commissioner pending the restoration of an elected council. Mr Dymock is due to arrive in Carnarvon and take over the administration of the Shire of Carnarvon today.

MR LAURANCE (Gascoyne) [2.42 p.m.]: An opportunity will be provided for the Opposition to respond to the Minister for Health at a later time today, but I believe that because of the seriousness of the ministerial statement which has just been delivered by the Minister for Local Government, I, as the local member for that area, should respond immediately.

It is obvious from what we have heard of the report—I have not had a chance to peruse the health inquiry's report yet—that serious matters were divulged to the inquiry and that that is the reason for Government action. However, it has not been established to my satisfaction that the Government is warranted in taking the action it has, and many reasons exist for my statement.

First of all, the Minister for Health has indicated that the inquiry was held in private and that the evidence was confidential. The implication is that every elected member of that council was involved in this matter, yet the evidence was given in private so they have not had an opportunity to look at the allegations made against them, to seek any legal advice if they so desire, and to address the claims which have been made against them.

Mr Blaikie: It is a bit like the David Combe affair all over again.

Mr LAURANCE: I believe the Government may have been looking for an opportunity to vent its spleen on the Shire of Carnarvon.

Mr Brian Burke: Absolute nonsense! Seriously, don't you think it would have been wiser to read the report first?

Mr Hodge: It is a great reflection on the Commissioner of Public Health.

Mr LAURANCE: I query the action taken by the Government against this council when the Government has said that it supports strongly the idea of local government and local government autonomy.

If matters in the report need to be addressed, I am sure there are ways by which that could be done, without the Government's sacking the council and installing a commissioner in this way.

One of the difficulties to which the Government needs to address itself and which has been brought to light by this inquiry is that the health

surveyors are appointed by local authorities, but their duties are spelt out by the Health Act which is administered by the State Government. There is a conflict there which needs to be rectified.

Mr Hodge: It is fortunate it is there with a shire such as this one.

Mr LAURANCE: The Minister for Health has indicated that this inquiry has implications for all local government because there is a conflict between the group of people who must hire and fire the health surveyors under the requirements of the Act, and those people who administer the Act.

Mr Rushton: The Minister should be held responsible for what took place in Carnarvon.

Mr LAURANCE: I am sure there are ways by which this matter could be worked out without the councillors being sacked. The report has not shown that anyone other than the shire president and the shire clerk was involved.

Mr Brian Burke: You have not read the report. How do you know the report does not show that?

Mr LAURANCE: The budget for this financial year decreased the size of the health surveying staff. The financial affairs of the council have just been audited and a commendable audit report has been signed by the Acting Auditor General who indicated that the financial affairs of the Shire of Carnarvon are satisfactory. That was the position as it was explained to the council at a full meeting a week ago.

I think it is unfair of the Government to sack the council, because, in the words of the Minister for Health, "there was fault on all sides". The action taken by the Government has involved the whole council.

I wish to make the point that the Government has had this facility made available to it today only because of the action of the Legislative Council. If it were not for the Legislative Council's agreeing to a deferment, until 20 December, of consideration of other legislation, the Government would not have been able to deal with this situation.

Mr Brian Burke: Surely you are not using this as an argument to support the Legislative Council!

Mr LAURANCE: Exactly!

It seems that the Government is casting a wide net when the Minister for Local Government said that the malaise of the shire was not restricted to health matters. However, the Acting Auditor General has just delivered to the Shire of Carnarvon a commendable audit report.

I wish to make a point because the shire president has come under a great deal of criticism in

this report. The Shire of Carnarvon elects its shire president by a direct vote of all the ratepayers of Carnarvon. That is a unique situation, because all other local authorities in Western Australia, except for the Perth City Council and the Kalgoorlie Town Council—

Mr Brian Burke: And the Fremantle City Council and Bunbury as well. It is not quite so unique.

Mr LAURANCE: No other shire council, to my knowledge, elects its president directly by way of a separate vote of the ratepayers. The shire president was not elected by the other councillors, but because of his actions they have now been sacked. I think that is a point which must not be missed. It must be something which concerns the council greatly.

Mr Brian Burke: Are you saying the president should have been sacked, and not the councillors?

Mr LAURANCE: I am not commenting on the desirability of the election of the shire president. All I am saying is that all the shire councillors have been sacked largely because of the actions of the shire president.

I also make the point that a considerable degree of criticism has been levelled at the Carnarvon Shire Council because of the operations of Gascoyne Abattoirs. I make it clear that Gascoyne Abattoirs is the only local abattoirs operating in Carnarvon, and it has been in severe difficulty for 12 months. In addition to the Shire of Carnarvon's assisting that local industry, the Gascoyne regional manager, on behalf of the Department of Industrial, Commercial and Regional Development, has been heavily involved in this matter, and so have I.

In fact, I took the management of Gascoyne Abattoirs to meet the commissioners of the R & I Bank earlier this year in order that the business might remain open. I do not agree that the abattoirs should not comply with the terms of the Health Act, but everybody who is in an official position in the local community has tried to help the business stay afloat. The situation arose at a time when the Lake MacLeod salt works was in difficulty. The Premier announced on the last sitting day of Parliament that satisfactory arrangements had been made for that industry to stay open, but for approximately seven months that industry was threatened with closure. For the last six months, the abattoirs has been threatened with closure for health and financial reasons, and if it were closed, 16 people would be put out of work. I am doing everything within my power, as is the Shire of Carnarvon doing everything within its power, to make sure the abattoirs remains open,

and the shire has had to balance the situation of putting 16 people out of work with the necessity for the abattoirs to comply with the Health Act and to remain solvent.

It worries me that the Government has decided to take this extreme action, because in some way it has been gunning for the Carnarvon Shire. It will suit the Government well to take this severe action against the Carnarvon Shire because of the previous association with it of the Federal member for O'Connor (Mr Tuckey).

Several major businesses in the Carnarvon area have been approached by members of the ALP in recent times, and certainly the Federal Minister for Finance (Mr Dawkins) has made personal approaches to the proprietors of some of the major businesses in Carnarvon in an endeavour to uncover information which will enable him to retaliate against Mr Tuckey for allegations he made in the Federal Parliament about the tax affairs of Mr Dawkins. Mr Tuckey has no connection with the Carnarvon council at this stage, but he has many business interests in Carnarvon and has an indirect association with the Shire of Carnarvon.

It worries me that the Government has taken severe action against the shire, hoping that it will be able to attack Mr Tuckey, and I believe that would be most unfortunate, if that is the motivation behind this attack on the Shire of Carnarvon. I am sure a less extreme measure could have been used to sort out the health problems in that shire.

I make the point that the Government has been on a determined course to change the electoral boundaries of the shire, and the Minister for Local Government (Mr Carr) was reported publicly in *The Weekend Australian* on 3 September 1983, indicating that he was making an approach to all local authorities, but in particular the Shire of Carnarvon, which was singled out in this article. The example used by the Minister for Local Government was that there was a gerrymander in the local government boundaries in that area. I wonder whether the Government's move is directed more at trying to change the electoral boundaries of the shire, than at trying to put right the difficulties that have occurred in the health area.

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: There are some discrepancies within the boundaries and they have been looked at on many occasions by the previous Government and, no doubt, by the present Government. As the town of Carnarvon has grown, there has been a move to have more town councillors and fewer pastoral ward councillors on

the council, but I believe that should be done by a gradual transition, which is the process that has been taking place.

I believe it is unworthy of the Government to speed up the process by using the tactic of dismissing the whole council in order that an election for new councillors might be held.

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: I am asking the Government, through the Minister for Local Government, whether this is the process it wants to take.

Mr Carr: If you were to read that report, you would know the basis on which the decision was made.

Mr O'Connor: You must agree we have not had time to peruse the report.

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: There has been disquiet in the town over the administration of the health activities of the shire council. That disquiet should have been attended to publicly and remedied without the Government's recourse to sacking the council. The report should have been made public in Carnarvon, and these matters should have been redressed publicly. The ratepayers have a right to remove the president if they wish, because he is elected by the people.

For the nine councillors and the shire president to be crucified without their being given a trial is unfair. They have been sacked because of confidential evidence, and they have not had an opportunity to answer the criticism which has been levelled against them. The Government goes too far in sacking all the councillors, and the problem could have been solved without the necessity for this extreme action.

I do not want to judge whether the shire president is guilty of those things of which he has been accused, but he has been very ill in recent times and, while most of the inquiry was being conducted, he was in Royal Perth Hospital undergoing bypass surgery for a heart complaint. He should have been given an opportunity to answer the allegations.

Mr Blaikie: I wonder what the Minister will say about that.

Mr LAURANCE: All the members of the shire council should have been given an opportunity to defend themselves.

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: The private inquiry is an inquisition. Do members think that justice has been done by these people having been sacked?

Mr Hodge: If you were unhappy about the situation, why didn't you change it during your nine years in office?

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: I conclude on this note: The Shire of Carnarvon has been under attack many times by the ALP and this Government. The shire council does not do everything I support and we have had our rows, as all good families do. It must be remembered that the Shire of Carnarvon administers a huge area and is one of the largest shires in this State. It is the most remote township in this State and it is the most remote from its nearest neighbour. Even places as far afield as Wyndham have closer neighbours than has Carnarvon and that fact places it in a unique position. Since I have been the local member for the last 10 years, and I am not attributing a great deal to that, the activities of the shire council have been responsible for that town's achieving a very rapid growth rate.

In previous years, unemployment has been very low. However, because of the difficulties with Dampier Salt and Gascoyne Abattoirs, and the general downturn for other economic reasons, the recession has touched Carnarvon and there has been an unemployment problem recently. However, previously the growth rate was five to six per cent each year which is much bigger than that for other townships. To achieve that sort of growth rate, something must be going right in the town. Previous councils have done a great deal to attract investment and create jobs. While some of their actions may not have been 100 per cent correct and may have upset a proportion of the ratepayers, overall the Shire of Carnarvon has achieved a great deal and many ratepayers have an enormous amount for which to be thankful.

I believe the issues brought to light by this health inquiry need investigation and correction. Remedial action must be taken, but the Government has gone too far in sacking the council. I am concerned about the reasons the Government has taken this action.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS DUTY AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion without notice by Mr Brian Burke (Treasurer), and read a first time.

Second Reading

MR BRIAN BURKE (Balga—Treasurer)
[3.02 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr Blaikie: Is this a new Bill?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: This was foreshadowed during the original debate.

Let me clarify one point. Without too much difficulty on his part, the member for Vasse must be simply attempting to be obtuse by interjecting that this is something of which he has not had previous notice.

Mr Old: Testy.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Not testy at all; it is Christmas time.

Mr Clarko: Is the plum pudding ready to be served?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: As the member for Vasse, and other members in the Opposition know, when this measure was initially debated, the Government indicated it would be moving an amendment to the legislation. When the Legislative Council decided to adjourn another matter until today, it was decided that it was more appropriate to move this amendment at the same time.

Mr Laurance: Thank heavens for the Legislative Council!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: With due respect to the member for Gascoyne, who comments on reports without having first read them, I point out that it seemed to be convenient for the Government to move the amendment today although it could have been moved earlier had the Government wanted to detain Parliament at the time the original measure was debated.

The Government indicated at that time that it would move an amendment and it could have done so then. However, it seemed appropriate and convenient to leave it until now.

This Bill introduces the amendments which, during debate on the Financial Institutions Duty Bill, I indicated the Government considered necessary to the Financial Institutions Duty Act to ensure that the Commonwealth Bank registers under the Act.

The Commonwealth Bank is established under Commonwealth legislation and it is not possible for our Parliament to legislate to impose financial institutions duty directly on the bank in the same way as it can on other financial institutions.

Consequently, the Bill has to impose a duty on the Commonwealth Bank's customers, in which case the bank can, under section 33, undertake to make payments to the commissioner on behalf of its customers on the same basis as would be required if it were registered.

If this undertaking is accepted, section 33 provides that the Commonwealth Bank would be deemed to be registered under the Act.

The bank has only recently advised the Government that it would give an undertaking to pay duty voluntarily only if the legislation imposed a duty on all its customers and not simply on larger depositors as in the current section 12.

Consequently, the amendments to section 12 impose a duty on all depositors with unregistered financial institutions which have dutiable receipts in excess of the amount required for registration.

If section 12 is amended as proposed, the Commonwealth Bank has indicated that it will give an undertaking to voluntarily register under section 33 and to pay the duty on behalf of its customers, providing a neutral treatment of the Commonwealth Bank and other banks.

I would point out to members that the Commonwealth Bank has voluntarily registered in both New South Wales and Victoria and is currently paying financial institutions duty in those States. The existing provisions in section 12 of the Act are similar to those applying in Victoria; nevertheless, the recent advice from the bank is that only if this amendment is made to impose the duty on all of its customers, can the bank give an undertaking to voluntarily register in this State.

In effect, the amendments to sections 12 and 29 ensure that the Commonwealth Bank pays the duty on behalf of its customers, and the Government considers the amendments to be necessary to remove any doubt which must otherwise attach to whether the bank would give an undertaking to voluntarily register under the Act.

The Bill should ensure that the Commonwealth Bank is treated in the same way as are both State banks and private banks.

I commend the Bill to the House.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Leader of the Opposition) [3.07 p.m.]: The Treasurer gave me a copy of the amendments a couple of days ago. In order to achieve unanimity in connection with the banking system in the State, we must go along with this amendment. If we did not, and the Commonwealth Bank had preference over other banks in the State, many accounts would flow from those other banks into the Commonwealth Bank because it would be a way to avoid this financial institutions duty. Members on this side of the House have clearly indicated their strong opposition to the FID Bill. It is the first new tax introduced in Western Australia for 12 years and the Opposition has clearly indicated its rejection of the imposition of the tax and its impact on a

number of people in the community. If we compare this State's tax with that in the Eastern States, we see that Western Australians will pay 66 per cent more than is paid by New South Wales and Victoria. Many people may be tempted to ask why we accept the amendment because if we did not do so it would allow those who wanted to register and place accounts with the Commonwealth Bank to go into that area and avoid the duty.

It has been clearly indicated that we should have more time to consider this Bill and other Bills which have been going through too quickly. This speed has caused inconvenience to the Government, to members of the Opposition, and to members of the public. When many Bills are presented in a short time, it is difficult for members to fully understand their implications and their effect on the community, and to do so in the time permitted.

Many people in the community have had little time to peruse this Bill, which was presented at a time when many other matters required consideration. I implore the Government to try to give Opposition members more time in future out of courtesy and in consideration of the aspects which affect the community in such an important way.

This will not be the last amendment which will be made to this legislation, because many others will be introduced, so we shall have the opportunity to debate the matter further in due course.

I turn now to the fact that charitable organisations, church institutions, sporting bodies, P & Cs, and the like will have to pay the FID. That is quite unfair and I hope the Government will look at that issue again and, in due course, will introduce an amendment for further consideration. In that way, it might be able to give those organisations which do a tremendous amount for the community and should not have this hardship imposed on them, an exemption from FID.

In my own case, and I am sure in the cases of many other parliamentarians and members of the public, future consideration will be given to drawing wages in cash rather than by cheques and to paying accounts by cash. In that way, not only will people avoid paying FID on their wages when they are paid into their accounts, but also they will quite legally avoid not having to pay State tax on the cheques being drawn, or Commonwealth tax on the amount involved. They will also avoid paying FID on the money, which they will otherwise have to pay if they pay their green-grocers, grocers, building societies, etc., by cheque. Therefore, members of the community who demand that their wages be paid in cash

rather than by cheque—this can be done—will, in most cases, avoid paying at least four different forms of tax such as FID, the charges levied on cheques, and FID again. They will do this by having their wages paid into their accounts in the form of cash, rather than by cheques, and drawing it out and paying it in cash into a building society or the like.

A large number of people will now take advantage of cash transactions, but, in doing so, they will put themselves at risk of either losing that money or having it stolen.

Mr Old: Someone said that you should put your money under the bed, and he would not be far wrong.

Mr O'CONNOR: It has been said that FID will cost an average person in this State only 14c a week, but that is not so. It is estimated this tax will net approx \$38 million annually. Therefore, it can be seen that the cost to the average person will be far in excess of 14c a week, especially when it is borne in mind that people will pay FID two, three, four, or five times. The imposition on members of the public will be substantial and will be felt particularly by people who are presently experiencing difficulty finding sufficient money to feed and clothe their families.

I am disappointed that the tax has been set at such a high level which is greater than similar taxes imposed in the Eastern States. I hope that when these taxes are increased in the Eastern States, the Government in Western Australia will not increase the tax here.

The Premier has indicated that, by introducing this Bill, he is taking steps similar to those taken in Victoria. That is correct and, despite the fact that we in the Opposition oppose the legislation generally, this bill, which seeks to bring the customers of the Commonwealth Bank into line with those of other banks in this State, is important and should be passed. However, I emphasise that the tax itself is a bad one. It is the first new tax which has been introduced in this State in the last 12 years and it will cause hardship to those who can least afford it; that is, to the poor, the pensioners, people in receipt of the dole, and the individuals who are trying to bring up families and who are having difficulty meeting the expenses involved in feeding and clothing them.

With those comments, I support the Bill.

MR MACKINNON (Murdoch) [3.14 p.m.]: I rise to make a few comments on the Bill. Firstly, I express concern at the manner in which the Government is handling the business of the House. I object strongly to having to come here today, to see a Bill presented to this Parliament

for the first time, and to be asked to vote on it. It is my custom, and I know members of the Opposition normally follow it, when legislation is presented to the Parliament which impacts on other sections of the community—in this case it will have an impact on the financial and business sections of the community—to consult the people involved so that they might examine the Bill and cast their eyes over it from a legal point of view to see whether they have any concerns in respect of it, prior to our determining our attitude to it. We are being denied that opportunity today.

Mr Clarko: You will remember that the Government, when in Opposition, shed crocodile tears every time we introduced a Bill of which we did not give it a week's notice.

Mr MacKINNON: I do remember. It concerns me that no section of the business community has had access to this Bill until today, and also that members of the Opposition have not seen the Bill until now. Later today, or tomorrow, we will be asked to debate major amendments to a Bill which, in the Premier's words, is "a very important part of our legislative programme". We, the members of this House, still do not know the details of the amendments to that Bill.

If we are to be asked to sit here and pass judgment thereon when neither we nor the community of Western Australia have had time to examine the provisions, we do not think that is the way to run this House and I am sure the people of Western Australia share that belief.

I turn now to the Bill itself and draw a contrast between it and the Bill we will be debating today or tomorrow, which Bill is the WA Development Corporation Bill. The Government has been more than willing to accept amendments to it.

However, the Government has rejected every amendment put forward to the Financial Institutions Duty Bill, regardless of how logical or sensible those amendments might have been. I shall deal with a few of them to indicate their nature. Before doing so, I highlight the fact that the only amendments to the Bill the Government has considered are the ones which will ensure it will collect more revenue.

We propose amendments which would make the Bill's administration easier and more sensible, and its impact less harsh on some sections of the community. However, the Government, in its great desire to raise more revenue—to extort as much funding as it can from the business and private communities of Western Australia—has not accepted any of those amendments and is pressing forward now with only one, and that amendment is designed to ensure the Government will ensnare

anybody at all in Western Australia within the traps of this financial institutions duty.

Let me remind members of five important amendments this Government rejected out of hand. We proposed that the rate of the FID be reduced to ensure that we compared with the rates imposed in Victoria and New South Wales. Since that time, the Federal Government has made what I consider to be the right decision to ensure that currency fluctuations are no longer controlled by the Government, but are allowed to determine their own levels in the international marketplace. At the time, the Treasurer had much to say about that. He indicated that we would move to take advantage of it and to ensure Western Australia established itself as a viable financial market in Australia.

We said at the time—and we repeat—that unless our amendment is accepted, Western Australia will have no hope whatsoever of achieving such stature in the financial world when our FID is 66 per cent higher than that of our most earnest competitors.

We moved that amendment and it was rejected out of hand by the Government.

The second amendment we moved asked the Government to give business more time to prepare, and what have we now? We have a Bill which obviously indicates that the Government itself did not have adequate time to prepare itself, let alone to allow time for business to prepare itself.

Thirdly, we moved that an exemption be granted to religious, sporting, and charitable institutions. You, Sir, are a reasonable man. Surely you would expect it would be reasonable to assume those institutions should not have any unnecessary burdens placed upon them, in the form of lodging returns, getting the tax back, or paying it in the first instance. But no, the Government rejected that proposal out of hand. Its zealotry and desire to get the cash overruled its giving consideration to what would have been a sensible amendment.

Fourthly, and most importantly, the Treasurer rejected completely out of hand our amendments proposing changes to the appointment of a public officer under this legislation. In the words of his Attorney General, when queried in another place, severe doubts were held about the appointment of such an officer. The Treasurer gave an indication in this House of how it will operate. I made further inquiries by way of a question to which I received the following answer—

Similar provisions exist in the FID Acts of at least two other States.

That was the answer the Treasurer gave. We moved amendments to ensure that that provision was in line with the legislation already in force in this State and they were rejected again out of hand. Finally, we moved amendments to try to avoid double-dipping by the taxman into the funds going into trust accounts. I explained at the time how that procedure would detrimentally affect the housing industry. The Government rejected every amendment out of hand. The only amendment which has been made to this Bill is the one now before us relating to the Commonwealth Bank. The Treasurer is so wont to tell us that he is establishing good relationships or a good reputation with the business community of this State. In conclusion, I assure the Treasurer that he has a reputation, but it is not one which he would like. He has a reputation for being a high-taxing Treasurer and a big Government Premier and this has been indicated by the financial institutions duty legislation and large increases in Government spending and taxation this year. He also has a reputation for lack of consultation which has again been indicated by, firstly, the FID Bill and, secondly, the WADC Bill which we will discuss later.

As the Leader of the Opposition also indicated, the impact of this Bill is starting to come home to all of those who are about to pay this tax and I am sure that the Government will soon feel the heat and the wrath of those people in relation to this Bill. The Opposition has indicated that it will not oppose the Bill, but I, for one, certainly am opposed totally to the manner in which the Premier is treating this House by bringing forward legislation with such a rush, and the way in which he is treating the people of this State with such contempt. I can assure him that if he continues with this attitude, the people will extend to him the same courtesies at the next election.

MR COURT (Nedlands) [3.23 p.m]: In its first year, this Government has established a record of being a high-taxing Government as a result of its imposing new taxes and increasing Government charges.

Mr Clarko: And broken promises.

Mr COURT: The Treasurer did his job. He got the FID Bill through this Parliament. It took a long time because it was a very complex piece of legislation and a considerable amount of public controversy was involved, not so much during the debate, because the public were not aware of the legislation, but now that the public have had time to understand the ramifications of the FID tax, they are beginning to see that they will have to put up with a bad tax. As I mentioned in the original debate on this matter, the FID tax is a hid-

eous tax; it will not affect financial institutions as greatly as it will affect the community. It will fill up the Government's coffers; it will give them more money, and this is typical of the negative attitude which this Government is displaying towards the business sector. Instead of supporting the growth of the finance industry in this State, the Government is doing the opposite and is milking this industry and all the people who are a part of it.

With FID, this Government has attacked an industry that could be one of its major growth industries. The Treasurer has introduced an amendment to this Bill and, as the previous speaker said, we also proposed some amendments during the long debate on this Bill, but those amendments were not accepted. I am quite sure that in the months and years to come, while this legislation is in force, many amendments will be made to it because it is very complex. Many of the anomalies which we pointed out, particularly the one in regard to double taxation, should have caused the Treasurer to move quickly to try to do something to stop what will occur from 1 January; that is, on the same transaction people will pay taxes in this State and in, New South Wales, Victoria, or South Australia.

With the rushed introduction of this Act—it comes into effect from 1 January and it has only just gone through Parliament—there is a lot of uncertainty in the business community as to what it is all about. There is a lot of confusion in the business community which confusion is similar to that which occurred in New South Wales and Victoria when those States introduced the duty. In fact, there was a longer lead-up time in those States than we will have here. The Treasurer has assumed that because the FID tax works well in other State financial institutions, it will work well here. It is all right for those companies which operate as branches of national companies because they will be able to modify their systems to collect the duty here, but even they are having problems with the different rates of duty which apply in the other States. The people who really will be affected in this State are the smaller financial institutions which have not had that experience with this tax in other States. A tremendous amount of uncertainty and confusion exist in the community as to what the institutions have to do after 1 January. These groups need to be advised on how to collect the duty and on how to pay it; accountants and lawyers over the last couple of weeks have informed me that they have not even been able to obtain copies of the Act because it has been in short supply. The people who have to

advise industry have not been fully informed about this new tax.

The same situation exists in regard to the forms which will have to be sent to the State Commissioner of Taxation for exempt accounts. These have only just been sent out to some businesses, but many others still do not know that the forms have been printed. The same story goes for the regulations, which, I am told, will not be gazetted until the middle of January. All in all, this legislation has been rushed in and the financial institutions will have to face the heavy component of collecting this tax for the Government. It is morally wrong for this Government to bring in this tax on 1 January without giving the people who will have to pay and collect it the time to understand the legislation and to get their systems organised so that they can be a part of the collection process.

As we said during the main debate on the parent legislation, there were many opportunities in this State for us to build up our money market operations, but this Government has again shown its incompetence. It has brought in the FID tax at a rate higher than those in the other States, so automatically we are non-competitive. With the deregulation of foreign exchange rates which deregulation has occurred since the parent legislation passed through this House, Western Australia has missed an ideal opportunity to establish its money market with a competitive advantage over the other States.

The introduction of FID will scare money away from this State and we will be burdened with a continuing ineffective money market. On that point, I reinforce what we said during the earlier debate; that is, that this Government should give the Western Australian people an advantage and not a disadvantage if we are to get what the Treasurer trumpeted about the other day when foreign exchange rates were made flexible. He said, "We can now build up Perth as a short-term money market centre". Should not he have aimed to try to make Perth the major money market centre by giving the people in the industry here an advantage? In the discussion on the definition of "bank" during the Committee stage of this Bill, we raised the point that the Commonwealth Trading Bank, the Commonwealth Development Bank, and the Primary Industry Bank of Australia do not come under that definition and we asked whether they would have to pay the duty. The Treasurer answered—

Up until a few days before the debate they were going to but then decided not to.

As the Premier outlined in his second reading speech, he has negotiated with the bank and has amendments to the two relevant clauses. Now we have a Bill before us in regard to which the Commonwealth Bank has agreed to voluntarily collect the duty. If it had not agreed to do so, it would have seriously inconvenienced its customers. I suppose it is a technical amendment to make sure the bank operates on a competitive basis with the other banks. The Commonwealth Bank does not have to pay stamp duty on its bank cheques and it did not have to pay duty on its negotiable certificates of deposit. If it did not have to pay FID as well, it would have a tremendous advantage over the other banks. For that reason, we must agree to this amendment, but that is not to say that we cannot take this opportunity to disagree with the FID Bill as a whole and to point out that the business community is in a state of confusion about it. The big boys are okay, but the smaller companies are having trouble getting advice from lawyers and accountants because those people are having trouble getting the required information.

This amendment is one of many which are needed. The Treasurer should have seriously looked at the problem of charities because the message from charities in the last couple of weeks is that it will cost them more to do the paper work to get the refund from the Government than it would if they had to pay the duty. There will be a considerable amount of paper work for charitable organisations and in many cases it will cost them more than the tax. An amendment should have been drafted so these people would not have to go through that inconvenience.

I conclude by saying that these particular amendments are required to keep the Commonwealth Bank in line with the other banks. I wanted to take the opportunity to say that the planned introduction of this tax on 1 January has led to problems for the business community because of the short time allowed and because they have been ill-informed by the relevant Government department.

MR MENSAROS (Floreat) [3.32 p.m.]: The introduction of this measure proves that the Government really was not properly prepared when it introduced what has now become the parent Act. It did not think through the measure and it had really little idea about the consequences. I think it is proven by answers to a series of questions in which I asked the Treasurer and various Ministers to give some indication to the House of the contribution to FID by semi-government instrumentalities. With the exception of the answer from one Minister—and that only han-

pened because the question was asked a day earlier and he did not have the *ukas*; that is, instruction from the Premier or whoever that the question was not to be answered—who replied on behalf of the Metropolitan Water Authority, and who appeared to know how much FID the authority will pay, the answers did not give any information.

One question was answered in so many words saying that it depended on various circumstances as to how much the duty would be. Everybody knows that if you pay a certain percentage duty on a transaction—in this case a deposit—of course the amount of duty depends on the amount of the deposit. Consequently, one has to draw the conclusion, and there is no other way around it unless one accuses the Government of being dishonest, that the Government has no idea of what this tax will yield. Yet the Treasurer in his introductory speech gave a figure for the remainder of the financial year and for a full year. How can he obtain such a figure when he does not know how much FID will be paid by semi-government institutions? I mention a few: the R&I Bank surely does not have a small turnover; the Public Trustee; the SGIO. These are all large institutions. I refer also to the tertiary institutions such as the University of Western Australia, Murdoch University, WAIT, which handles enormous sums of money and has a big turnover, and the new Western Australian College of Advanced Education which incorporates all the campuses which used to be individual colleges.

Then we come to the port authorities, the Western Australian Government Railways, which is an enormous undertaking from the point of view of loss let alone turnover, the Western Australian Coastal Shipping Commission, the State Housing Commission, and last, but not least, a body with probably the biggest turnover exceeding half a billion dollars; that is, the State Energy Commission.

The Treasurer did not know in relation to any of those bodies the anticipated or estimated amount of FID. How is this possible when at the same time he gets a figure, presumably from the Under Treasurer, who can tell him when he introduces the Bill that the measure will result in so much total tax? This is incomprehensible to me and it is a sad situation that the Opposition is treated with such contempt that Ministers, answering questions—with the exception of a few Ministers, usually those who have served before and do not consider this newly acquired power as *nouveau pouvoir* like *nouveau riche* consider newly acquired wealth—do not answer them on merit. Standing Orders allow Ministers not to

answer questions. Why do they not say, "I do not answer this question", instead of skirting around it and trying to be smart and adding a few comments which are detrimental to the members of Parliament who ask the questions?

I would like to query another aspect although I do not suppose I will get an answer. The Treasurer emphasised in introducing this amending Bill that an agreement has been made with the Commonwealth Bank and the Commonwealth Trading Bank that they voluntarily accept the payment of this duty. How far does this agreement go? Is it a written agreement? The reason I am asking is that I want to know what recourse a Government has if the Commonwealth Trading Bank reneges on its voluntary undertaking. Suppose it gets a new management and there is a new Government and the Bank changes its policy, is it a written agreement under which the Western Australian Government can go to court and sue the Commonwealth Bank under common law for not honouring its agreement which is contained in a certain document, or are they only sweet words between the Government and the people responsible for the Commonwealth Trading Bank? I suppose officers of the Treasury should have drawn the Treasurer's attention to such a question, and if they did, I wonder whether the Treasurer will be prepared to answer the question I have posed. If we have a law relating to a financial and monetary matter which cannot be applied to anyone to whom it should apply, this Parliament which appropriates money and taxes ought to know what is the situation. With those few comments, I indicate that I do not oppose the Bill.

MR BRIAN BURKE (Balga—Treasurer) [3.40 p.m.]: I thank members of the Opposition for their general support of the amending Bill. I do not presume that those who contributed expect that we will see in their contribution anything but a continuation of their political position. We accept that political position as being one in opposition to the tax; we thank them for their support of this amending Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Brian Burke (Treasurer), and transmitted to the Council.

HEALTH: ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Select Committee Report: Extension of Time

MR GORDON HILL (Helena) [3.42 p.m.]: I move—

That the time for submitting the report of the Select Committee be extended to 1 May 1984.

I have already advised the Parliament of the enormous task this committee has in front of it in terms of submissions to be taken and a report to be written. It is for this reason that I have moved to extend the time for submitting the report.

Question put and passed.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

BILLS (14): ASSENT

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

1. Mining Amendment Bill.
2. Public and Bank Holidays Amendment Bill.
3. Electoral Amendment Bill (No. 2).
4. Door to Door (Sales) Amendment Bill.
5. Dairy Industry Amendment Bill.
6. Western Australian Tourism Commission Bill.
7. Western Australian Tripartite Labour Consultative Council Bill.
8. Loan Bill.

9. Taxi-cars (Co-ordination and Control) Amendment Bill.
10. Stamp Amendment Bill (No. 2).
11. Housing Amendment Bill.
12. Appropriation (General Loan Fund) Bill.
13. Dog Amendment Bill.
14. Financial Institutions Duty Bill.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

MR BURKE (Balga—Premier) [4.11 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until
Wednesday, 21 December at 11.30 a.m.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.13 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

WATER RESOURCES

MWA: Nine-day Fortnight

2467. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

Since the shorter working time decision regarding the—

- (a) Metropolitan Water Authority;
- (b) Public Works Department country water undertakings,

what demands, such as for shorter hours in specific sections, qualifications for foremen, additional allowances, redundancy provisions, etc., have been made to the management by unions and how many of these demands were met or partly met either through the decision by the arbitration commission or otherwise?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (a) The commission decision related only to classifications contained in the Government Water Supply Award No. 2 of 1980. As a consequence the same conditions were negotiated for groups with other award coverage within the industry, to bring working hours into line with operational requirements.

Those groups are—

Foreman
Nurses
Engine Drivers
Federated Clerks.

No union demands have been made in this regard.

- (b) No demands have been made upon management of the Public Works Department because in May 1983 ministerial direction was given to implement shorter working hours subject to negotiation with the various unions.

WATER RESOURCES: MWA

Staff: Turnover

2469. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

What was the actual turnover—how many employees were hired and how many departed—with the Metropolitan Water Authority between 30 June 1982 and 30 June 1983 of—

(a) wages staff;

(b) salaried staff?

Mr TONKIN replied:

(a) 142 hired—136 departed;

(b) 64 hired—55 departed.

The figure mentioned in (a) includes 38 university students hired for the Christmas vacation period.

PUBLIC SERVICE: PUBLIC SERVANTS

Transfer: Furniture and Effects

2477. Mr WATT, to the Premier:

- (1) Now that teachers' furniture and personal effects may be transported from door-to-door when transfers occur, could he advise whether similar conditions apply to all other public servants required to work in country locations?
- (2) If so, will all reputable furniture removalists be eligible to participate?
- (3) If not, would he supply details of the removalist to be used and the basis upon which that selection was made?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) The policy relating to the use of door-to-door transport under the Government employees furniture removal scheme applies to all Government employees and is not isolated to teachers.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Not applicable.

MEAT: LAMB

Marketing Board: Referendum

2478. Mr OLD, to the Minister for Agriculture: Adverting to the Minister's reply to a question without notice on Wednesday, 23 November, concerning the lamb marketing referendum, on what evidence did he base his assertion that "The Government now has direct evidence that Eastern States meat industry sources supported the major campaign against the Lamb Marketing Board with up to \$28 000"?

Mr EVANS replied:

The evidence for support of the campaign against the Lamb Marketing Board by Eastern States meat industry sources is contained in a circular distributed to Western Australian meatworks

members of the Meat and Allied Trades Federation.

The circular was tabled (paper No. 492) at the time the original question without notice was answered, on Wednesday 23 November.

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Herdsmen Lake: Argentine Ants

2479. Mr OLD, to the Minister for Agriculture:
Adverting to question 2417 of 7 December, concerning the Argentine ant eradication programme at Herdsmen Lake—

- (a) is it fact the Agriculture Protection Board is prepared to take over the control of the eradication programme;
- (b) if so, will he appoint an Agriculture Protection Board representative to the technical working party referred to in his answer to question 2417?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (a) The resources and powers of the Agriculture Protection Board will be available to assist in the eradication of Argentine ants from Herdsmen Lake;
- (b) if the technical working party consider this assistance necessary, an APB representative will be appointed to the group.

AGRICULTURE

Ryegrass: Alternative

2480. Mr OLD, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Has Miss Dixon left the Katanning office of the Department of Agriculture?
- (2) If "Yes", is the research work on an alternative pasture to annual ryegrass being continued?
- (3) If so, what progress has been made?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Two hundred and fifty legumes and grasses were sown in trials in 1983. The data is being collated now but already a number of lines have shown potential to grow well on soils unsuited to subclover and medics such as cv. "Cyprus" and cv.

"Tornafeld." Legumes to show most potential belong to two species—*Medicago polymorpha* and *M. murex*. One cultivar, "Circle Valley", has shown sufficient potential for the Katanning office to provisionally recommend its use on a range of soils, including the heavy grey soils for which previously no legume could be recommended.

With continuing support from the Australian meat research committee other lines which could prove superior to cv. "Circle Valley" will be seed increased in 1984.

DAIRYING: MILK

Whey: Prohibition

2481. Mr WATT, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is he familiar with the conviction of a Mr David Adams early in November this year for contravening the dairy Act by selling two samples of powdered whey drink?
- (2) Is he aware that similar products, known as "filled milk" containing the non-fat solids of milk and vegetable oil are legally sold in the Eastern States?
- (3) Is it a fact that the sale of these products would assist the many Western Australians who are allergic to cow's milk and would fill a definite market need?
- (4) Why is it that powdered whey milk, or "filled milk", is not permitted to be sold in Western Australia but a large range of "filled milk" products are sold in Western Australia, including custards, cake mixes, sponge mix, scone mix, cheesecake mixes and ice creams?
- (5) What reasons exist for the continued prohibition of the sale of these products?
- (6) Will he take the appropriate action to allow the sale of these products to give an alternative to the many allergy sufferers who would find relief from these products?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) I am aware of the conviction of Mr David Adams for an offence against section 93A of the Dairy Industry Act which prohibits the sale of "filled milk".
- (2) The legislative position in relation to the sale of "filled milk" in the Eastern States

is not clear at present and the whole question is the subject of an inquiry by a working party set up by the Standing Committee on Agriculture of the Australian Agricultural Council.

- (3) I am advised that only a very small percentage of Western Australians are allergic to cows milk. Whether a product would be valuable would depend on the composition of the product and the nature of the allergy.
- (4) The products mentioned are not presented as milk substitutes.
- (5) The Australian Agricultural Council has continued its support for a ban on the sale of "filled milk" in the interests of the economic viability of dairy farmers and other sectors of the dairy industry. There could also be health and consumer protection aspects involved in relation to some "filled milk" products.
- (6) There are alternative products legally available.

PUBLIC SERVICE: PUBLIC SERVANTS

Salary Cuts: Number Affected and Exemptions

2482. Mr O'CONNOR, to the Premier:

- (1) In relation to the 10 per cent salary reductions recently imposed on certain members of the public service, will he advise how many—
 - (a) people were affected by the salary cuts;
 - (b) have applied for relief or exemption;
 - (c) have been granted relief;
 - (d) have been granted exemption?
- (2) How many days, on average, does it take from receipt of an exemption application to notification of the success or otherwise of an application?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) The member will be advised in writing in due course.

FUEL AND ENERGY: ELECTRICITY

Power Stations: Local Participation

2483. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) For any recently constructed coal-fired power station in Western Australia, would the percentage of total local con-

tent (labour and materials) be some 70-75 per cent?

- (2) If the answer to (1) is "No", what would be the normal percentage of labour and materials sourced from Western Australia?
- (3) For the proposed power station associated with an aluminium smelter in the Bunbury region, is it fact that the percentage of local content will be only 60-65 per cent?
- (4) If the answer to (3) is "No", what will be the planned percentage of total local content?
- (5) If the percentage of local content for the proposed power station is lower, for what reason will this situation exist?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) and (2) The percentage of labour and materials sourced from Western Australia has been determined to be 50 per cent to 60 per cent.
- (3) to (5) These are matters still the subject of negotiation. Local content will be maximised to the extent consistent with the interests of the State.

FUEL AND ENERGY: ELECTRICITY

South-west Power Station: Government Equity Participation

2484. Mr PETER JONES to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

- (1) Is it the intention of the Government to be an equity partner in the proposed aluminium smelter, as referred to in the platform of the Australian Labor Party?
- (2) If consideration is being given to equity participation, what percentage is being considered?
- (3) What capital costs and ongoing financial commitments would be instituted in any proposed equity participation?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) to (3) The Government has been invited to consider equity participation.

NATURAL GAS (NORTH WEST SHELF) AGREEMENT ACT

Amendment: Request

2485. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

- (1) Referring to the natural gas (North West Shelf) agreement Act, has the Government received a formal request from the participants to an amendment which reflects the proposed equity changes?
- (2) Have any discussions on the proposed changes been held between the Government and the main participants?
- (3) If so, when were discussions held?
- (4) Does the Government acknowledge that the proposed equity restructuring was agreed to in principle by the previous Government in September and October, 1982 at discussions in Perth and Tokyo?
- (5) Is the Government prepared to re-confirm that agreement in principle, pending a formal request for amendment to the agreement Act?
- (6) If no, why not?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) The currently proposed equity restructuring was first raised by the joint venturers during a meeting with the Premier on 9 November 1983.
- (4) No.
- (5) and (6) The Government would first prefer to see that all other avenues for retaining Australian equity at the present level are exhaustively canvassed.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Western Australian Development Corporation: Equity Purchase

2486. Mr PETER JONES, to the Premier:

- (1) With regard to the proposed WA Development Corporation has the Government received any submission to purchase equity in a company that otherwise might pass to South-East Asian investors?
- (2) If so, which company is involved?
- (3) If an approach has been made to the Government, why could not the equity

interest be purchased by other Australian or Western Australian interests?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (3) The member will be advised in writing in due course.

TRANSPORT: AIR

Avior Airlines

2487. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Government refusing to allow Avior Airlines to use bigger aircraft between Perth, Southern Cross, Kalgoorlie, Kambalda and Norseman?
- (2) If "Yes", what are the reasons for this refusal?
- (3) If the Transport Commission is refusing to allow the use of bigger aircraft by Avior, does the Government intend to intercede?
- (4) If "No" to (3), what are the reasons for this decision?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) The Commissioner of Transport did not approve Avior's application for a licence to operate a bigger aircraft between Perth and Kalgoorlie. A licence may be granted for the operation of a bigger aircraft on regular services on routes which link Perth with Southern Cross, Kambalda or Norseman, if requested.
- (2) The only rights which have been granted to Avior, for the regular carriage of passengers between Perth and Kalgoorlie, were for the utilisation of excess capacity on Avior aircraft carrying newspapers under contract into Kalgoorlie. This special concession was restricted to an aircraft of a maximum size of seven seats.
- (3) No.
- (4) Last February, the Commissioner of Transport invited interested operators to apply for the right to compete with Airlines of Western Australia on the Perth-Kalgoorlie route. After carefully considering all applications, the Government selected Skywest Airlines to provide this competition. Avior has been given assurances that its existing concession will be maintained after the introduction of the competitive Skywest services.

HOSPITALS

Outpatients: Free Treatment

2488. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What arrangements have been made for the provision of free outpatient care at metropolitan non-teaching and country hospitals?
- (2) What doctors will be expected to provide these services?
- (3) Where resident doctors are not provided, how will the private doctors be remunerated, i.e. on a fee for service or sessional basis?
- (4) In hospitals with no resident doctor what will happen to patients presenting for treatment during normal working hours?
- (5) Will patients be actively encouraged to attend public hospital outpatient departments instead of general practitioners' surgeries?
- (6) What provision has been made to deter patients from attending a hospital out of hours when they should be attending a surgery in hours, especially in the country situation?
- (7) Will the country general practitioner be expected to provide an out of hours service on demand at the local hospital?
- (8) Will any doctor refusing to provide such a service be denied access to beds in that hospital?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) Negotiations with the WA branch of the AMA are in progress. It is possible there will be similar arrangements to those which exist at present.
- (2) See (1).
- (3) Arrangements may be either by contract for services or contract of service.
- (4) Where there is no resident doctor, the patient can be referred to the surgery of the local doctor or a doctor of his/her choice. If the patient is unfit to travel, the doctor of choice will be asked to attend.
- (5) No.
- (6) No punitive measures of deterrence are effective. Patients do not generally abuse the services of their local doctors by frivolous or unnecessary calls for service.
- (7) and (8) See (1).

RAILWAYS

Unit Trains: Crews

2489. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Why is the Government denying Westrail the right to pursue its economic policy of introducing two-man crews on unit trains?
- (2) Is the estimated cost saving of introducing two-man crews on unit trains about \$5 million?
- (3) If the answer to (2) is "No", what is the estimated cost saving?
- (4) Does the Government support the introduction by Westrail of two-man crews on unit trains?
- (5) If the answer to (4) is "No", why is the Government equivocating?
- (6) If the Government has given Westrail a lead to what it wants to achieve, what are the details of this policy objective?
- (7) If the answer to (6) is "No"—
 - (a) why has not the Government made its objectives clear to Westrail;
 - (b) how does the Government expect Westrail to forward plan if it does not know what the Government policy is and what the Government expects to achieve?
- (8) What is the cost to Westrail of the rail strike commencing last Wednesday?
- (9) What is the cost to the Metropolitan Transport Trust of the rail strike commencing last Wednesday?
- (10) How many tonnes of grain were not transported due to the rail strike?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) to (10) Some of the information requested in the member's question will take time to collate. However, I will provide him with a considered reply in writing as soon as practicable.

PUBLIC SERVICE: PUBLIC SERVANTS

Salary Cuts: Number Affected and Exemptions

2490. Mr RUSHTON, to the Premier:

- (1) How many persons have experienced pay cuts under the Temporary

Reduction of Remuneration (Senior Public Officers) Act?

- (2) How many applications had been received for exemption?
- (3) How many applicants had received—
 - (a) full exemption;
 - (b) partial exemption?
- (4) What was the amount calculated over the life of the Act granted in applicant exemption—
 - (a) full exemption;
 - (b) partial exemption?
- (5) Has he included in his letter to the applicants a request or direction for the applicant to keep the granting of the exemption confidential?
- (6) Has he granted exemption (either full or partial) to any Labor member of Parliament?
- (7) Has he granted exemption (either full or partial) to any Labor Party official or trade union official?
- (8) If "Yes" to (7), will he list how many—
 - (a) Labor members of Parliament;
 - (b) Labor Party officials;
 - (c) trade union officials?
- (9) How does he discriminate between persons falling within the Act when making his exemption decisions as to the provision applicants have made and the sacrifices undertaken to live within their salary?
- (10) Does he intend to examine the financial affairs of all persons affected by the Act to ensure all employees are treated equally?
- (11) What is the number of persons who are making voluntary deductions from their salary?
- (12) What is the number of persons who come within the Act who have declined to make voluntary deductions from their salary?
- (13) Will he table a copy of the application form?
- (14) What supporting evidence has he required to be produced by the applicant to substantiate his or her claim?
- (15) Now that the legislation is in place and exemptions have been granted, will he please show how the Act—

(a) does not discriminate against the thrifty forward planners;

(b) does not reduce incentive to advance in the Public Service?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (15) The member will be advised in writing in due course.

JETTY

Point Peron

2491. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Transport:

Has the new public jetty at Point Peron facilities for small pleasure craft to moor or take on or alight people, and if so, what are the conditions of use for such facilities?

Mr GRILL replied:

No.

2492. *This question was postponed.*

WATER RESOURCES

Metropolitan Water Authority: Self-insurance Scheme

2493. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

Has there been a decision made already regarding self-insurance in the field of workers' compensation by the Metropolitan Water Authority?

Mr TONKIN replied:

No.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Metropolitan Water Authority: Premiums

2494. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) How much were the—
 - (a) total of premiums; and
 - (b) actual contribution,
 to compensation payments to workers' compensation by the Metropolitan Water Authority in—
 - (i) 1980-81;
 - (ii) 1981-82;
 - (iii) 1982-83?
- (2) How much actual aggregate compensation has been paid out on account of the Metropolitan Water Authority's

workers' compensation liability by its insurer, the State Government Insurance Office and anyone else, during those three subject years mentioned in (1) above?

Mr TONKIN replied:

(1) (a) Total of premiums

	\$
(i) 1980-81	829 094
(ii) 1981-82	988 307
(iii) 1982-83	1 159 584

(b) Actual contributions to compensation and recouped from SGIO

	\$
(i) 1980-81	356 334
(ii) 1981-82	574 295
(iii) 1982-83	760 319

(2) Actual compensation claims paid on behalf of MWA

	\$
(i) 1980-81	595 595
(ii) 1981-82	885 424
(iii) 1982-83	1 597 923

INSURANCE

Metropolitan Water Authority: Self-insurance

2495. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

(1) Which are the classes of general insurance where the Metropolitan Water Authority itself carries the risk?

(2) How much money has been appropriated (set aside) to cover self-insurance mentioned in (1) above in—

- (a) 1980-81;
- (b) 1981-82;
- (c) 1982-83?

(3) How much has actually been paid out—

- (a) As accepted damages;
- (b) as progress payments to third parties for self-insured risks in—

- (i) 1980-81;
- (ii) 1981-82; and
- (iii) 1982-83?

Mr TONKIN replied:

(1) Uninsured Risks—

property (other than Metropolitan Water Centre); consequential loss:

engineering facilities (other than computer and airconditioning plant); fidelity; professional negligence; and public liability claims of less than \$2 000.

(2) Self-insurance appropriation—

	\$
(a) 1980-81	Nil
(b) 1981-82	\$400 000
(c) 1982-83	\$500 000

(3) (a) Payments to third parties for accepted damages—

	\$
(i) 1980-81	(incomplete records kept) 29 418
(ii) 1981-82 (incomplete records kept)	18 445
(iii) 1982-83	106 301

(b) Payments to third parties as progress payments

(i) 1980-81	Nil
(ii) 1981-82	Nil
(iii) 1982-83	Nil

ROAD

Rochdale Road: Action

2496. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Planning:

To satisfy the constant inquiries I am receiving from constituents, could he please now say when some decisive action can be expected to solve the plight of the Rochdale Road/Mt. Claremont residents and what this action is going to be?

Mr PARKER replied:

The Government has established a western suburbs road review task force to review previous decisions made in relation to the western suburbs road system. The task force will report and make recommendations to the Government on the need for, and location of, a primary north-south road.

The task force is expected to report to the Government no later than 30 June 1984.

Action to be taken to resolve the traffic situation of the Rochdale Road/Mt. Claremont residents will be consistent with Government decisions made when the recommendations of the task force are presented to Cabinet.

As well, discussions between the Government and the Cottesloe Golf Club in recent weeks will ensure that there are no unnecessary or undue delays when these decisions are made next year.

WATER RESOURCES

Fabcast Foundry and Engineering (WA) Pty. Ltd.

2497. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Has there been a special deal contracted re Fabcast Foundry and Engineering (WA) Pty. Ltd. of Subiaco by the Metropolitan Water Authority to secure continuity of their supply?
- (2) If so, what is the nature of such deal and to what period of time did it extend?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) It is not normal Government practice to divulge details of commercial arrangements negotiated on a confidential basis with private concerns.

WATER RESOURCES: CATCHMENT AREA

Stinton Creek: Objections

2498. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Has he or the Metropolitan Water Authority received objections against the Stinton Creek Karragullen/Roleystone catchment proposal from the Karragullen Progress Association?
- (2) If so, has he and the Metropolitan Water Authority responded to such objections?
- (3) Would he please table the contents of his and the Metropolitan Water Authority's response?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) The Karragullen Progress Association sent letters of objection to both myself and the Metropolitan Water Authority.
- (2) The objections are being considered.
- (3) The closing date for receipt of submissions has been extended to 31 January 1984. Objections have also been received from other organizations and individuals. All

objections will be given careful consideration. A public announcement will be made as soon as possible on the final decision relating to the reservation of Stinton Creek catchment.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS: LIBRARY

Board: Book Fund

2499. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs:

What was the Library Board's book fund expressed as percentage of the Library Board's total expenditures in each of the last 10 years, including the estimate for the 1983-84 financial year?

Mr DAVIES replied:

The figures below are drawn from the board's annual "Statement of Income and Expenditure" for the period 1974-1983, and from the board's appropriation for 1983-84—

	Total Book Funds \$	Total Board Expenditure \$	Per cent Book fund of total
1974-75	855 223	2 169 580	39.4
1975-76	1 181 408	2 828 518	41.8
1976-77	1 629 938	3 590 816	45.4
1977-78	1 793 499	4 135 779	43.4
1978-79	2 050 863	4 897 889	42.0
1979-80	2 345 703	5 770 890	40.6
1980-81	2 205 413	6 146 480	35.9
1981-82	2 851 391	7 002 546	40.6
1982-83	3 415 299	9 236 507	46.9
1983-84 (Estimates)	3 269 178	9 522 000	34.4

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT: PEEL INLET

Canal Development: Upholding of Appeal

2500. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for the Environment:

Is he or the Environmental Protection Authority planning to take any more steps in connection with the recent decision of the Town Planning Appeal Tribunal as far as the construction of canal development on the Murray River is concerned?

Mr DAVIES replied:

No. The matter has been determined through the statutory planning processes. However, following construction, water circulation and quality within the canal system will be studied and the authority will report on its findings in due course.

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT: PEEL INLET

Canal Development: Objections

2501. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for the Environment:

Could he please disclose the main objections (from the point of view of protecting the environment) that the Environmental Protection Authority and/or his department had against the recently approved Murray River canal development?

Mr DAVIES replied:

The Environmental Protection Authority, in the departmental bulletin 122 dated October 1982, concluded that the proposed Sunland Pty. Ltd. canal development on the Murray River was environmentally unacceptable.

The EPA found that the quality of the Murray River source waters for the proposed canals was generally poor throughout the year. Lack of tidal rise and fall would limit any flushing of the system to wind-induced circulation, and this alone would be insufficient either to exchange the water in the canals with that in the river or prevent stratification.

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT: PEEL INLET CANAL DEVELOPMENT

Environmental Damage: Counter Measures

2502. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for the Environment:

Who is going to bear the cost (State Government, Peel Inlet Management Authority, local government or the residents of the canal blocks) of any counter measures which will be necessary to protect the fragile river and estuarine system in the lower reaches and the delta of the Murray River as a result of deterioration of the environment by—

- (a) fertiliser being used on lawns, of the 300 or so newly-created blocks, being washed into the river system around the recently approved canals;
- (b) the damage to river shores owing to the wash created by the additional several hundred motor boats on the

river as a result of the recently-approved canal system?

Mr DAVIES replied:

- (a) and (b) The costs will be borne by the State Government. The Peel Inlet Management Authority is the agency that would be required to take the necessary corrective measures.

However, it should be noted that the Town Planning Appeal Tribunal, in its conclusions, outlined as one of the conditions of the canal development that the developer shall promote the use of landscaping methods which will minimise the use of garden fertilisers. Furthermore, the developer shall minimise the inflow of surface run-off from the estate into the canals.

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Foundry Sand: Dumping

2503. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) Is it a fact that foundry sand is dropped as fill in the areas around Mill Street and Railway Parade, Queens Park?
- (2) If so, to what extent does the filling material cause discolouration in ground water in the area?

Mr DAVIES replied:

- (1) and (2) These matters come within the jurisdiction of the Minister for Water Resources and the Minister for Health.

I understand that certain investigations have been carried out by the Metropolitan Water Authority, and suggest that the question be referred to the above Ministers.

FUEL AND ENERGY: SEC

Daylight Saving: Loss

2504. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) How much is the anticipated loss of gross revenue by the State Energy Commission on account of the introduction of summertime in 1983-84?
- (2) Considering that it is very difficult to reduce in proportion the amount of electricity generated and considering that presumably there is no waste of staff,

how much is the corresponding anticipated net loss?

- (3) Have these figures been allowed for in the original 1983-84 budget and at the time of deciding about the tariffs for that financial year?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) and (2) The summer weather pattern will have a greater effect on actual consumption and revenue than the continuation of summertime.

It would be premature, at this stage, to predict changes in revenue or operating expenditure.

- (3) No.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS DUTY BILL

Floating of Dollar

2505. Mr COURT, to the Premier:

- (1) Does he see the need to amend the Financial Institutions Duty Bill now that the Federal Government has decided to float the dollar?
- (2) Will financial institutions duty in Western Australia act as a disincentive for money market transactions to be attracted to Western Australia?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) No. As indicated during debate on the Bill, the Act is considered to provide the Government with sufficient flexibility to respond in a responsible manner to the relatively rapid changes which were to be expected in financial markets.
- (2) The financial institutions duty is a relatively neutral duty in its effect and should not result in a significant disincentive to short term money market transactions. This is in contrast with the stamp duties which FID replaced which, with the introduction of FID in the eastern States, had led to an outflow of short-term money market transactions from Western Australia to the FID States of New South Wales and Victoria.

SHOPPING: TRADING HOURS

Extension: Christmas Period

2506. Mr COURT, to the Premier:

- (1) Did the Government consider extending trading hours before Christmas to pro-

vide more convenient shopping for working people and was the matter discussed with interested parties?

- (2) If "Yes", was there opposition from the retailers and the unions concerned?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Many expressions of opposition were received including some from retailers and traders and unionists.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Self-employment and Work Experience Schemes

2507. Mr COURT, to the Minister for Employment and Administrative Services:

When will the Government be establishing its self-employment and work experience schemes for youth?

Mr PARKER replied:

No doubt the member's attention has been drawn to the announcements which were made yesterday. In relation to the establishment of a self-employment business venture scheme, the Government is now in the process of creating a community employment initiatives unit within the Department of Employment and Administrative Services. An officer will be appointed to the unit for the purpose of administering the above scheme and further details will be provided at that time.

The Government is presently in the process of initiating a number of work experience schemes. It is the Government's intention to introduce all such schemes as early in the new year as practicable. As soon as administrative arrangements are finalised, details will be publicly provided.

I have, today, tabled reports on an analysis of youth employment and unemployment in Western Australia, and the co-operative, community and self-employment business ventures programmes—policy options for the State Government, for the information of members and the public.

WATER RESOURCES: RATES

Payment: Change to System

2508. Mr COURT, to the Minister for Water Resources:

Is the Metropolitan Water Authority changing its accounts system to cater for people paying their rates at post offices before the 31 July deadline but not receiving the discount?

Mr TONKIN replied:

The authority has an annual contract with Australia Post. Australia Post has given assurance that it will more closely administer the terms of the contract in future and thus eliminate the problem.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Western Australian Development Corporation: Capital and Borrowings

2509. Mr COURT, to the Premier:

- (1) Does the Western Australian development corporation have a capital of \$30 million?
- (2) If so, how much more would it borrow?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) The member will be advised in writing in due course.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Western Australian Development Corporation: State Taxation Burden

2510. Mr COURT, to the Premier:

In what ways will the establishment of the Western Australian development corporation assist in covering the taxation burden in this State?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

The member will be advised in writing in due course.

MINING: DIAMONDS

Equity Purchase: Public Participation

2511. Mr COURT, to the Premier:

How will the public purchase the Government's interest in the Ashton Joint Venture, as mentioned by him in *The West Australian* dated 12 December 1983?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

The member will be advised in writing in due course.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Western Australian Development Corporation: Public Participation

2512. Mr COURT, to the Premier:

How will the public invest in the new Western Australian development corporation?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

The member will be advised in writing in due course.

EDUCATION: SCHOOL BUSES

Loss of Sales: Compensation

2513. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is he aware that Wentworth Truckland, a major supplier of Hiro and Leyland buses, has not sold a school bus since he first announced changes to the school bus contract system in May and that the company estimates it has lost sales of over \$600 000 as a result?
- (2) Is he also aware that the three body-building firms in this State that do most of the school bus conversions have been seriously disadvantaged during this period?
- (3) Does the Government intend to compensate these firms in any way for the possible loss of business caused by the Government's policy?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) and (2) I am aware that contractors have not wished to replace buses until negotiations with the Western Australian Road Transport Authority had been concluded and that suppliers have been affected.
- (3) No; the negotiations have simply resulted in the deferment of some bus replacements and it is anticipated that there will be a requirement for a substantial number of new buses to be supplied during 1984.

EDUCATION: COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

Western Australian: Staff Contracts

2514. Dr DADOUR, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Concerning the Western Australian College of Advanced Education what notice was given to contract staff in respect of renewal of their contracts on 9 December 1983?
- (2) (a) What specific jobs were advertised for the Western Australian College of Advanced Education in September and October 1983;
- (b) what specific jobs were filled as a result of the advertisement;
- (c) what specific positions were created and not filled as a result of the advertisements;
- (d) what specific positions were filled but not advertised?
- (3) Does he intend to get more outside representation on selection committees for staff appointments?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) The only contract staff whose contracts have not been renewed for 1984 are those whose contracts expired on 31 December 1983. These contracts have been held for one, two or three years and in each case when the person accepted the contract, the completion date of 31 December 1983 was clearly specified. Notice was given to contract staff on 9 December 1983 if a particular contract was not to be renewed. The reason for this late date was that at its November meeting, the college council decided to take every step to try to preserve as many jobs as possible and limit the number of contract staff who would not have their contracts renewed.
- (2) (a) In September and October 1983 advertisements were placed with 52 job descriptions in the School of Arts and Applied Science, School of Community and Language Studies, School of Education and School of Business. For some positions there were multiple vacancies.
- (b) 93 offers of appointment were made as a result of these advertisements.

(c) The position of Senior Lecturer, Industrial Arts, was not filled and is not being re-advertised at this time. Lectureships in computer studies, auditing and language studies were not filled but these positions have been re-advertised and it is expected that these will be filled shortly.

(d) None. All positions were filled as a result of advertisements.

(3) No. Selection committees were widely representative of staff, particular departments, particular schools and of the administration. The procedure followed is that followed in other tertiary institutions.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

LOTTERIES: INSTANT

Distributions: Amount

626. Mr BRIAN BURKE (Treasurer): I wish to provide some additional information to question 2361 asked by the member for Subiaco on 1 December 1983—

The answer I gave to the question requires some further detail so that the question of distribution of lottery funds and the effect of the amendment to the Lotteries (Control) Act is quite clear.

The amendment to the Lotteries (Control) Act provides that after deducting \$6 million for distribution to sport and culture, payment of prize money, agents' commission and administrative expenses of the Lotteries Commission, the balance is paid to the credit of the hospital fund.

Charitable organisations will not receive proceeds from the Sports-Culture Instant Lottery but they will continue to share in the surplus from ordinary lotteries and Lotto as they have in the past.

LAND: ABORIGINES

Rights: Northern Territory Legislation

627. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister with special responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs:

(1) Has the State Government received a copy of the report of Mr Justice Toohey

into the Northern Territory land rights legislation?

(2) If so, will the Government make a copy available to the Opposition?

(3) If not, why not?

Mr WILSON replied:

(1) to (3) The State Government has not received a copy of the report handed down by Mr Justice Toohey. The Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has undertaken to supply the State Government with a copy of that report in the near future. It will be up to the Federal Minister to indicate to us whether it should be made available to the Opposition. I shall seek that advice from him when it is made available to us.

TOURISM: HOTEL AND OFFICE BLOCK

Bunbury: Details

628. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Premier:

(1) Is it true that the State Government announced that a 13-storied office tower and an eight-storied hotel are to be built in Bunbury?

(2) Did the Government state that the State Superannuation Board would purchase the building and if so, is this still the case?

(3) Does the State Government intend to underwrite the lease of the office tower?

(4) Does the plan of the office hotel complex contravene the Bunbury City Council's by-laws?

(5) Had agreements between the Austmark Company, the Superannuation Board and the State Government been signed at the time of the announcement?

(6) If not, have the agreements been signed now?

(7) Has the 13-storied office tower complex concept been now amended to 11 storeys?

(8) Will there be a shortfall of approx 700 off-street car parking bays to service the complex?

The SPEAKER: Order! Before the Premier answers those questions, part (4) is out of order because it seeks an opinion on the question of by-laws.

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1) to (3) and (5) to (8) I do not think the member is serious in asking a question

that requires that sort of detailed answer without any notice whatsoever. If he wants to write to me, I will provide all the answers to his questions. However, I point out that implicit in the question is this whingeing, knocking attitude the member displays about everything we do in Bunbury. I hope the people of the Bunbury region take full note of the attitude of this Opposition, an attitude which seeks continually—whether it is the attitude of the member for Narrogin picking about what he is missing out on, the member for Albany saying that Albany is missing out on something, or the member for Murray-Wellington whingeing as he does—

Mr Peter Jones: Oh, cut it out!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: —to undermine the Government's attitude to promote growth and economic development in Bunbury. The Opposition should learn that the bird has flown—it has lost the seats, and it does not look like it will get them back again in the foreseeable future.

Mr MacKinnon: Want to bet?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I will tell the member why that is so: For nine years the Liberal Government did nothing—

An Opposition member: Rubbish!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: —except presume upon the good faith of people.

Mr Rushton: You can't answer the question.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I will answer the question in the way I want to, and the day that the member for Dale wakes up—

Mr Rushton: You are all-powerful!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am certainly powerful enough to answer in the way I want to the questions members opposite ask, and the day the member for Dale wakes up to the fact that that is what I intend to do, is the day he will stop bowling up questions that simply leave him in a state of embarrassment. I want to answer the question, and I want to answer it in the way I intend to answer it.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am not embarrassed about anything.

Mr Bryce: We are proud of it; very proud indeed.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: For nine years the Government that is now in Opposition did absolutely nothing. It is causing considerable discomfort to the Opposition that this Government is doing things, and this Government is being applauded for its most far-sighted development strategies affecting the Bunbury region.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Let me simply ask members of the Opposition, and especially the member who asked the question, whether they are opposed to the transfer of railway marshalling yards.

Mr Clarko: You are opposed to answering the question.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The member wants to criticise, and I am giving him a chance to state his case. He is struck dumb all of a sudden.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Let me ask members opposite an easier question because they have trouble with hard questions. Here is an easier one.

Mr MacKinnon: Can't you answer the question we put to you?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I do not know why members opposite ask questions, because they just do not like answers.

Mr MacKinnon: You do not give us the answers.

Mr Peter Jones: That is the trouble.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: From my point of view, I would have thought the Opposition was getting a perfectly good answer.

Mr Rushton: You can't answer it.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I will simply ask the member for Murray-Wellington: Would he abandon the proposal to build this office tower and associated hotel complex?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Would he abandon it? I do not know what is wrong with this Opposition. It wants to oppose every-

thing, but when asked whether it would desist from the decision we have made, the Opposition falls into a state of dissemblment which renders it incapable, with the exception of the member for Dale who is never incapable of talking, of answering the question.

Mr Clarko: Why don't you come back to your fifth sidetrack?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: His excess capacity is unfortunately not linked in any way to much sense. If the member cares to write to me or put the question on the Notice Paper, he will receive a detailed answer. In the meantime, we are going full steam ahead with "Bunbury 2000".

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I hope the *Hansard* reporter is recording the laughter, because we will be sending copies of this down to Bunbury and we will be showing people there the mirth that the Opposition sees in "Bunbury 2000". In the meantime, we are going full steam ahead with the most exciting development strategy that this State has seen in respect of regional development since 1901.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Canning City Council: Financial Interests

629. Mr O'CONNOR, to the Minister for Local Government:

Following the conviction of the two City of Canning councillors on the issue of pecuniary interests I ask—

- (1) Has the Minister received complaints regarding other councillors on that council?
- (2) What action does he intend to take?

Mr CARR replied:

(1) and (2) My recollection is that a number of approaches have been made to the Local Government Department and myself from various councillors in the City of Canning. On each occasion I have referred the people concerned to the police for investigation. This was done, because when initially an allegation was made which appeared to be serious, it was referred to the police for investigation, and subsequently when other allegations were made relating to

the same council, it was considered appropriate to refer them to the police for inquiry. I do not recall having received a report from the police which refers to any person other than those who have appeared in court.

I should take the opportunity that the question lends in respect of pecuniary interests in general to indicate a considerable number of representations have been made in the last couple of weeks since the court case took place.

Mr Clarko: They all followed the matter that I raised a few months ago.

Mr CARR: I would suggest the member for Karrinyup is not the only one who has indicated an interest in the matter of pecuniary interests. A particular aspect of the legislation with regard to pecuniary interests is not known widely in local government and needs to be known more widely and will be communicated by myself; that is, provision exists in the Act already that where a trivial pecuniary interest exists the chairman of the meeting, be it the mayor or president, has the power to rule that a pecuniary interest is of a trivial nature. I would suggest to many people involved in local government who are concerned as to whether they have any pecuniary interest in an issue, that perhaps that provision in the Act could assist them in many situations. Notwithstanding that, I accept a need exists to examine closely the whole section and that is being done at the present time.

FISHERIES

Abalone: Metropolitan Beaches

630. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

- (1) Is it still illegal to take abalone from reefs along the metropolitan area beaches?
- (2) If so, does the Government intend to allow fishing to resume in the future?

The SPEAKER: Order! In the manner posed, the question is out of order. Perhaps the member could rephrase the question and I shall allow him to ask it again.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Award: Locomotive Drivers

631. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Government preparing regulations to amend the locomotive drivers' award of 1973?
- (2) Why is the Government refusing to give Westrail the right to act and pursue the introduction of two-man loco crews on unit trains?

Mr Brian Burke (for Mr GRILL) replied:

- (1) and (2) The member for Dale cannot expect that the Minister representing the Minister for Transport who actually sits in another place should be here to answer that question. As the member for Dale knows, the Minister for Transport is overseas and the Minister representing him is the Hon. Peter Dowding who is the member for North Province. However, assuming, probably with vain hope, that the member for Dale is serious about his question, if he drops me a line he will receive an answer.

FISHERIES

Abalone: Metropolitan Beaches

632. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

- (1) Is it a fact that it is still illegal to take abalone from reefs along the metropolitan beaches?
- (2) If so, does the Government intend to allow fishing to resume at some time in the future?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) and (2) I am happy to reply to the member for Rockingham as follows—

We had intended to reopen this fishery on a limited basis for the 1983-84 summer, but Department of Fisheries and Wildlife monitoring, along with observations from amateur and professional fishermen, has indicated that abalone stocks are not yet ready to withstand fishing pressure.

The same closure applies to other edible reef-top molluscs, and sea urchins.

The Government's policy is to allow the maximum use of the State's

fisheries while protecting their potential for future use. The closures for abalone fishing were the outcome of recommendations by the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife when particularly heavy fishing pressure had severely depleted big areas of the metropolitan beach reefs of abalone of all sizes.

Since the closures, the department has been monitoring the reefs carefully so that we can allow Western Australians to fish them again as soon as stocks have been restored.

So far there are good indications that the stocks are recovering, but this is not happening quickly enough to allow fishing to recommence. I am anticipating that we will be able to allow limited fishing of these reefs for the 1984-85 summer, on the basis of bag limits and minimum legal sizes.

In the meantime the reefs along the beaches from the North Mole at Fremantle to the Two Rocks marina, up to 200 metres from the high water mark, are closed to abalone and other mollusc fishing, and this also applies to the area around Penguin Island up to 200 metres from the high water mark.

MEAT: LAMB

Marketing Board: Referendum

633. Mr OLD, to the Minister for Agriculture:

My question refers to question 2478 answered today. I ask—

- (1) As the Minister in answer to a question without notice asked by the member for Mundaring indicated that the Government now has direct evidence that Eastern States' funds supported the major campaign against the WA Lamb Marketing Board with up to \$28 000, was the Minister aware that the circular letter from which the information was obtained was in two parts, one dealing with the agency agreement expenses and the other with the referendum, and that in fact the amount expended on the court action was \$16 932 and on the referendum campaign, \$11 068?

- (2) If so, did the Minister deliberately mislead the House?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) and (2) I do not think there can be any suggestion of my deliberately misleading the House, because at that time I took the opportunity to table that document as it was presented. I have no way of checking the total amounts which were expended in each case.

Mr Old: It was definitely in two parts and you knew it. You misled the House!

Mr EVANS: Most certainly there are two parts to that letter, but I had no way of telling the expenditure on that campaign. I can only point out that \$28 000 was referred to in the letter as recouping the costs of the Western Australian division of that organisation. There was unprecedented and unacceptable interference by Eastern States organisations in the operation of a referendum in this State.

Mr Old: Did you mislead the House?

Mr EVANS: If the member for Katanning-Roe condones that sort of action, let him tell lamb producers in this State just what his feelings are. If he does not, I will.

Mr Old: Tell the truth!

NATURAL GAS (NORTH WEST SHELF) AGREEMENT ACT

Amendment: Request

634. Mr PETER JONES, to the Deputy Premier:

My question refers to the Deputy Premier's answer to question 2485 today where he indicated that the Government does not acknowledge that the previous Government approved in principle the equity restructuring of the North-West Shelf project. I ask—

- (1) Am I to infer that at the meeting of 9 November the Government indicated quite clearly to the joint venturers that it had abrogated the previous approval given both in Perth and Japan, or is it now indicating it is prepared to reconsider the matter?
- (2) Exactly what is the Government indicating, when it will not ac-

knowledge and presumably not accept the approval given previously?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) and (2) The position is that a very valuable and constructive session involving the Premier, myself and perhaps one or two other Ministers and approximately 10 representatives of the joint venture was held several weeks ago to discuss the most practical set of possibilities for restructuring the joint venture arrangement to cope with the second phase of the development of the North-West Shelf gas project. An agreement was reached which was not the agreement I am advised was discussed by this Minister and his predecessors, and an announcement will be made in the not too distant future when it suits the joint venture. It will certainly not be at a time or place that will prejudice the security of those negotiations.

HOUSING: SHC

Chairmanship: Application

635. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Housing:

In view of the fact that the term of the Chairman of the State Housing Commission expires this month, will the Minister advise whether the terms of the contract between Smith Corporation Pty. Ltd. and Mr Ron Smith, the consultant thereto, precludes him from accepting appointment as chairman of the commission?

The SPEAKER: Order! As the question calls for an opinion by the Minister on a contract by the Government and a person in the community, I rule the question out of order.

HEALTH: TOBACCO

Advertising: Replies to Government Advertisements

636. Mr TRETOWAN, to the Premier:

- (1) Is it a fact that up to five separate replies have been sent by the State Government to people who sent in the coupons to the Department of Premier and Cabinet taken from one of the advertisements in the State Government's anti-tobacco advertising campaign?

- (2) Did at least one of those replies deal substantially not with the Government's tobacco legislation, but with its campaign on electoral reform.

- (3) Will the Government give an undertaking not to use the list of names from those coupons to propagandise other pieces of its legislation at taxpayers' expense?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (3) I do not know whether five different replies were sent to one person who completed a coupon attached to one of the antismoking advertisements. I do know that the legislation failed because the Liberal Opposition in the Legislative Council, acting politically, decided to use its numbers to defeat the legislation. There is nothing more relevant to the defeat of the legislation than the abuse of the Legislative Council's powers to which we have become quite accustomed. If the member for East Melville wants to ask in effect, "Will the Government start laying off the Legislative Council?" the answer is "No". We are not going to stop using every opportunity that is appropriate and reasonable to tell people who object to a certain course of action the Legislative Council takes, that the Legislative Council is elected unfairly, that it is undemocratic by definition and that it constantly abuses its powers in a way that does not comply with the express wishes of the public at the last general election. If that fails to suit the member for East Melville, I am sorry, but the member can cause the Government to cease its criticism of the Legislative Council by one simple expedient; namely, by prevailing on the Legislative Council to be moral and fair and to accept the fact that at the last State general election, the Government of the day was defeated and another Government was installed.

Mr Court interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The member for Nedlands is becoming known as "pepper and salt", and for very good reason, because it seems there is nothing about which he is not an expert. It seems to me that the business of the Parliament could proceed a little more smoothly

were the member for Nedlands to practise by himself.

What I am saying to the member for East Melville is that whenever it is appropriate to emphasise this situation to people who express their concern at the Legislative Council's actions, and the basis for those actions, we will take that opportunity. That is perfectly proper, and those people who supported the Government's antismoking legislation in its expression as a ban on the advertising and promotion of tobacco products, had their support dashed on the rocks of that undemocratic legislative body. If it is suggested we should not use the opportunity presented to explain to those people who express support for that policy that their support came to nought because the Legislative Council acted wilfully and politically, we disagree with the implication of the member for East Melville.

TOURISM: HOTELS

South-west: Discussions

637. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Premier:

I had intended to ask my question of the Minister with special responsibility for "Bunbury 2000". With the keen expectation of so many south-west people following the Government's grand tourist proposals, I ask—

- (1) What discussions has the Government had with local authorities over the proposed development of five-star hotels at Busselton, Dunsborough and Manjimup?
- (2) When does the Government expect any of these developments to start?
- (3) With the current moratorium on liquor licences applying, how does the Premier see this problem being overcome?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (3) As the member for Vasse says, the question should rightly be referred to the Minister with special responsibility for "Bunbury 2000", and I will refer the question to him on the basis that he should expect a letter from the member for Vasse.

Mr Clarko: Most of your objectives will take 17 years to resolve.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: We are likely to be in Government for that long, so there will be no problem.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Members opposite are always whingeing about wanting answers, and I am trying to give an answer to the question asked by the member for Vasse.

The Government has been very pleased with the success of its tourism policy to date. I do not think there can be any criticism from the Opposition about the way in which the tourism industry has started to expand to the benefit of the constituents represented by the member for Vasse and other members. With the attention being paid to tourism by this Government, I have no doubt that the member for Vasse will rally to the cause by attempting to expand the facilities in his particular area and not continuing, as his colleagues seem to want to do, to criticise and to knock all of the Government's initiatives.

Tourism is one industry that is coming along nicely.

Mr Blaikie: I am simply asking a question following—

Mr BRIAN BURKE: And I am simply saying that the question will be referred to the appropriate Minister. I am taking the advantage that is afforded by the question to seek the aid of the member for Vasse in the expansion of an industry that is critical to his electorate. If he does not care about the tourism industry, he can say so; but I cannot see how the member can continue to knock the Government's plans.

Mr Blaikie: What do you mean by "knocking the plans"?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The member is in the forefront of those who seek to criticise "Bunbury 2000" and he has consistently been among those who have said that the plan is not in the region's best interests.

Mr Blaikie: I am asking you—

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The member does not deny it. All I am trying to say is that, if he stops being negative and becomes positive about the prospects for this State, a lot more could be achieved a lot more quickly.

Mr Blaikie: You don't have an answer.

LAND: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Interim Report: Submissions

638. Mr PETER JONES, to the Premier:

- (1) When is it intended that submissions on the land resource study interim report will close?
- (2) How widely has the report been circulated with a view to attracting comment and submission?
- (3) What discussions, if any, has the Government held or is proposing to hold with people before it considers the proposals and the recommendations?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (3) A detailed answer will be forthcoming in due course, if the member

writes to me. In the meantime, I say that Cabinet considered this matter, I think two or three weeks ago and allowed a period of six weeks for public comment before the production of a further report; a period during which it will be possible for further discussions to take place, on an informal basis.

I understand that the report has been widely distributed, but I cannot tell the member to whom it has been sent. I do not believe he would really expect me to have all those names at my disposal.

As far as the Government is concerned the report is of such significance that we will canvass it widely, and I look forward to hearing from the member.

