

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 5 April 1984

The SPEAKER (Mr Harman) took the Chair at 10.45 a.m., and read prayers.

LIQUOR: BEER

Low-alcohol: Petition

MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [10.47 a.m.]: I have a petition which bears 56 signatures, and which reads as follows—

TO:

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 are opposed to unlicensed premises selling low alcohol beer particularly as it could be available to children without the knowledge of parents and request the Legislative Assembly to ensure that low alcohol beer is not available to persons below the age of majority.

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

I certify that this petition 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. 78.)

PORNOGRAPHY AND VIOLENCE

Video Films: Petition

MR TRETHOWAN (East Melville) [10.48 a.m.]: I have a petition which bears 227 signatures, and which reads as follows—

To the Honourable the Speaker, and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia assembled.

We, the undersigned, plead that the Parliament will not legalise the sale, hire, or supply of all "video tapes, video discs, slides, and any other recordings from which a visual image can be produced", which are listed in category 1 and 2 of the A.C.T. Classification of publications Ordinance 1983 and we strongly oppose such legislation of these categories for the following reasons:

Because academic research elsewhere has proven that where such material is available to adults, 40 percent of children do in fact view it, most without parental knowledge (British Parliamentary Inquiry "Video, Violence and Children" 23 November, 1983).

Because video film is assiduously portraying cruelty and violence to child viewers as the norm in today's society, and may well be the catalyst in establishing such behaviour as the norm in tomorrow's society.

Because adults have had the freedom to view R films in a restricted way in places of entertainment for a long time, we feel that the new categories for video are a vicious intrusion into the family home, and are abetting legal commercialisation of brutality, sadistic violence, cruelty, mutilation and sexual perversion, with legalisation condoning, and conferring on this material the stamp of government approval.

Because research has shown that such child viewing causes children to develop a physical stress response, an enkephalin/adrenalin state resembling addiction is produced, forming a generation of "violence addicts".

Because it is in the best interests of society that first priority be given to the protection of *children*, and that their rights be placed above all other considerations.

Because video material shows perverted adults how to commit further cruelties they themselves could not invent.

Because pornography is degrading to women, and must be challenged for portraying women as an exploitable sexual commodity.

Because pornography is downgrading to men, both in changed attitudes to and declining respect of their partners.

Because video film is an overwhelming teaching medium whereby scriptwriters and film producers are dictating what will be said, and what will be done in the future, the results of which are irretrievable, irreversible and probably already with us.

Because it constitutes a variable in the new social phenomena of transience in human relationships.

Because it will give rise to a substantial increase in serious crime, (27.4 per cent in a four year period in the U.K.) (page 1 Video Violence and Children) in crimes against the person, sexual offences, rape and incest.

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

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

(See petition No. 79.)

COMMUNITY WELFARE

Review: Ministerial Statement

MR WILSON (Nollamara—Minister for Youth and Community Services) [10.52 a.m.]: I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The SPEAKER: The statement will not take longer than 20 minutes and provision will be made for the Leader of the Opposition or a member of the Opposition nominated by him to respond.

Mr WILSON: I sought leave to make the statement to acquaint the House with progress on the conduct of the welfare and community services review.

The review was established in September 1983 in line with the Government's election policy to instigate an independent inquiry into the delivery of welfare services in WA. Ms Jan Carter, a welfare practitioner with wide experience in Australia and the United Kingdom, was appointed to direct the review with the assistance of an advisory board, chaired by Bishop Michael Challen. The review is due to report to the Government in May 1984.

Public submissions officially closed in December with 400 being registered, but more are arriving every day. The review board has sat for over seven weeks of hearings in about 26 different locations in the State, from Wyndham to Albany. Nine specialist committees, including one composed of welfare clients and consumers, have now reported. These specialist committees have tackled a range of issues from intergovernmental relations to welfare law. Special strategy groups have considered the future of welfare for particu-

lar users—the disabled, the elderly, children, and Aboriginal people. A research programme has examined, amongst other things, the satisfaction of consumers with services provided by the Department for Community Welfare and the morale of those working in the department.

Outside consultants have been invited where appropriate to make special recommendations to the review. For example, the views of children in care have been sought, and a group of persons making complaints to the review had their case investigated by a barrister and social work team.

A detailed appraisal has been made of the resources and management structure of the Department for Community Welfare, with particular reference to developing a new service in which the community and those working in the department can take pride and show confidence. It has been agreed by all concerned that extensive changes need to be made in the department's style and structure.

A particular problem has been disclosed with reference to the Department for Community Welfare's resources. In 1973, the department's share of State expenditure was 2.27 per cent—\$10 852 464. In 1983, the department's expenditure as a proportion of State expenditure was 1.69 per cent—\$39 575 889. It is clear that the Court Government did its best to starve the most vulnerable and poor groups of the community of the resources the department could offer at a time of rising unemployment and unparalleled family disruption. There is much ground to be made up.

One of the pleasing features of the review for me has been the high level of community enthusiasm and voluntary participation of individuals. Of about 150 people approached to be on review committees, a minute number declined. The review has tapped into a broad range of community opinion and new ideas. I have confidence that it has tried to reflect the views of the many groups making up the welfare sector as well as the public in general.

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Leader of the Opposition) [10.56 a.m.]: The Minister provided me with a copy of his ministerial statement as the House rose at 11.00 p.m. last night—

Mr Davies: That is longer than I used to get.

Mr HASSELL: —and I express to him my appreciation for that notice.

The Opposition has publicly expressed its reservations about aspects of the welfare and community services review and I place on record today that we maintain those reservations. I do not wish to make any attack on the people concerned or to raise any question about Jan Carter,

with whom I had dealings when I was the Minister for Community Welfare. However, I do say that the Opposition maintains its reservations about aspects of this review which will be dealt with more thoroughly, with full research and detailed response at the appropriate time. Certainly I have not had the opportunity to put that together between 11.00 p.m. last night and this morning.

One aspect I take up very strongly relates to one of the comments included in the ministerial statement. Yesterday the Premier made a number of wild assertions and accusations about calculations which I had used when dealing with his Budget.

Mr Brian Burke: The problem is you did not make them yourself.

Mr HASSELL: The Premier can come in with that kind of comment now—

Mr Brian Burke: You corrected that to say it yourself.

Mr HASSELL: —and it sounds all right, but yesterday he ascribed dishonesty to me; and if he believes what he said, how could he possibly have ascribed dishonesty to me?

The SPEAKER: If this debate is to continue, it should not include comments about what happened in this House yesterday.

Mr HASSELL: Perhaps you, Mr Speaker, could restrain the Premier.

Mr Tonkin: You raised the matter.

Mr Davies: He is unbelievable.

Mr HASSELL: If the Premier wants to approach things in that way, he had better apply his own standards to the Minister who has just made the statement.

I refer to the second paragraph on page two of the ministerial statement in which the Minister attacked the Court Government in a very political and unfortunate way for what he sees as a reduction between 1973 and 1983 in the Department for Community Welfare's proportion of the State Budget.

He drew from that reduction the conclusion that the Court Government did its best to "starve the most vulnerable and poor groups in the community of the resources of the department". Let us examine the facts and see what a wild conclusion it is.

The first point is that the size of the State Budget has grown in real terms since those years, and, therefore, the Department for Community Welfare's budget, although it may have been reduced in terms of proportion, may well have

increased in real terms. I have not been able to calculate those figures in the time available to me. The Minister's conclusion is totally simplistic and wrong, firstly because of the growth in real terms in the Budget to which I referred, but also for two other reasons and perhaps more. In the period referred to, the Commonwealth has taken over a very significant increased role in the provision of welfare services and in the support of the family. Part of that has deliberately and by specific decision involved a reduction in the role of the State welfare services. I will give the Minister one example that occurred in my time—the supporting parent benefit.

Mr Wilson: That has been taken into account.

Mr HASSELL: Well and good.

Mr Wilson: I do not need a lecture about that.

Mr HASSELL: That is not the only thing that has been taken over.

Mr Wilson: That has discounted that one.

Mr HASSELL: In addition, the Fraser Government introduced family allowances, which made an enormous contribution to the base of welfare for all children and families in Australia. When it was introduced in 1976 or 1977—I am not sure which year—the family allowance provided a massive cushion for all families at enormous cost, and to that extent relieved all State welfare departments of obligations they were previously picking up. Other extensions of Commonwealth welfare benefits have occurred in various areas which have reduced State responsibilities.

I wanted to put that on record in reply to the very cheap and snide political comment directed at the former Government in relation to welfare. As the Minister responsible for that department for some years, I was very much aware of the needs and ensured that we received proper budgetary treatment. Other Ministers did so before me.

We will see over the course of this Government's time in office how much it is prepared to increase the allocation to that area relative to other areas. If the Premier does what he says he will do and reduces the increase in the tax take, and carries into practice his assertion that the State is bearing as big a tax burden as it can, he will have to make choices in his priorities between welfare and other areas. In time we will see how he performs.

Mr Brian Burke: The difference is in the choices made.

Mr HASSELL: That is what budgeting is about, and that is why members opposite are in Government—to choose their priorities. We have

seen them and undoubtedly we will see more of them.

Mr Wilson: We saw your priorities in your time as Minister for Community Welfare and they were pretty poor.

Mr HASSELL: There is no need for concern about them. There is always more to be done and there were more things I wanted to do in that area and others. If the Government does not have that budgetary problem I will be amazed.

Mr Wilson: It is certainly a question of priorities.

Mr HASSELL: A lot of things can be done in many areas.

Mr Brian Burke: You left us with a big budgetary problem.

Mr HASSELL: I was working on projects which would have achieved some of those aims.

The Minister's cheap political comment is simply not based on an accurate assessment of the situation. It is a very poor comment; he did not need to make it in relation to the welfare review. He simply wanted to have a shot and he is wrong. The record shows he is wrong.

Mr Wilson: No it does not.

Mr HASSELL: In due course the Minister's performance will be measured on the basis of the standard that has been set. It will be interesting to see which areas of Government are abandoned in favour of providing services when the Premier has said the Government will not have any more money to do it.

Mr Brian Burke: You said this morning we were going to do away with the water police.

Mr HASSELL: I did not say anything of the sort. The Premier is consistently inaccurate; that is his one consistency. He is always inaccurate and half-right at the best of times.

Mr Brian Burke: I thought there was some indication we were going to do away with all those things and we will not need priorities because you are setting them for us.

Mr HASSELL: The Opposition has previously expressed its reservations on this matter and we maintain them. The important point about the Minister's statement is to record how wrong he was when he slipped away from reporting to the House on what the Government is doing and moved into the political games arena to score a point. He was wrong.

Mr Wilson: You have not shown I am wrong in any sense.

BILLS: SESSIONAL ORDERS

Motion

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Leader of the House) [11.08 a.m.]: I move—

For the balance of the present session the following order shall apply:

- (1) On the reading of a message from the Governor recommending an appropriation in connection with any Bill, on the calling of a motion for leave to introduce a Bill or a notice of presentation, on the consideration of any motion preliminary to the introduction of a Bill, at any stage of a Bill, or on the consideration of Council amendments or requests for amendments to a Bill, a Minister may declare that the Bill is an urgent Bill, and on such declaration, the question "That the Bill be considered an urgent Bill" shall be put forthwith—no debate or amendment being allowed—and on such question being agreed to, a Minister may forthwith, or at any time during any sitting of the House or committee, but not so as to interrupt a Member who is addressing the House or committee, move a motion or motions specifying the time which shall be allotted to all or any of the following:

- (a) The initial stages of the Bill (including any motion preliminary to the introduction of the Bill) up to, but not inclusive of, the second reading of the Bill;
- (b) The second reading of the Bill;
- (c) The committee stage of the Bill;
- (d) The remaining stages of the Bill;
- (e) The consideration of Council amendments or requests for amendments to the Bill:

and the order with regard to the time allotted to the committee stage of the Bill may, out of the time allotted, apportion a certain time or times to a particular clause or clauses, or to any particular part or parts of the Bill.

- (2) Upon such motion or motions with regard to the allotment of time being moved, no debate thereon shall be allowed for more than 20 minutes, and in speaking thereon no member may exceed five minutes. If the debate be not sooner concluded, then forthwith upon the expiration of that time the Speaker or the Chairman shall put any questions

on any amendment or motion already proposed from the Chair.

- (3) For the purpose of bringing to a conclusion any proceedings which are to be brought to a conclusion on the expiration of the time allotted under any motion passed under any of the preceding paragraphs of this sessional order, the Speaker or the Chairman shall, at the time appointed under the motion for the conclusion of those proceedings, put forthwith any question already proposed from the Chair and any other question requisite to dispose of the business before the House or committee, including, when considering any Bill in committee or any Council amendments or Council requests for amendments to a Bill, any amendments, new clauses and schedules, and modifications, copies of which have been circulated by the Government among members two hours at least before the expiration of the allotted time. No other amendments, new clauses or schedules, or modifications may be proposed.
- (4) Where any time has been specified for the commencement of any proceedings in connection with any business under this sessional order, when the time so specified has been reached the business, whatsoever its nature be, then before the House or committee shall be postponed forthwith, and the first mentioned business shall be proceeded with, and all steps necessary to enable this to be done shall be taken accordingly.
- (5) Standing Order 158 shall not apply to any proceedings in respect of which time has been allotted in pursuance of this sessional order.

For a number of years, the Western Australian Parliament has faced significant problems in organising its affairs to ensure it is able to pass the required legislation in the time allocated for Parliament to sit. As a result, members of Parliament have experienced the phenomenon of all-night sittings and the general process of legislation by exhaustion when controversial matters are the subject of debate. One reason was the need to pass more legislation than was the case in the past. The explosion of legislation in the last decade or 1½ decades has been quite remarkable.

Another reason is that legislation is more technical and complex than it was in the past, and members have access to better research facilities

and are able to inform themselves better and speak at greater length than was possible in the past.

Mr Hassell: What access to research facilities do we have?

Mr TONKIN: The Leader of the Opposition certainly has more research facilities than had the Leader of the Opposition 10 years ago.

Mr Blaikie: What about his backbench colleagues?

Mr TONKIN: When it was suggested that we employ electorate secretaries, the member for Vasse suggested that his secretary would sit on the end of the Busselton jetty fishing because there would be nothing for him or her to do.

Mr Blaikie: That remark does you no credit.

Mr TONKIN: I know, and the member should not have made it. The fact of the matter is that there was a great deal of reluctance on the part of some members. However, certain members could not serve their electorates very well and they could see the need for secretaries. As a result of members having secretaries, instead of their having themselves to sit in the House, putting stamps on letters and fighting to have work done by a typist, they are able to provide a better service.

The Library has been improved and although members might think the research provided is not adequate and not as much as is provided in many Parliaments, nevertheless research facilities have improved.

Mr Blaikie: You are drawing a long bow and are extremely wide of the mark, as usual.

Mr TONKIN: A further cause is the lack of time available to deal with contentious legislation. Whatever the reason, the traditional way of putting through legislation is not acceptable to the present Government. It has a firm commitment to rational organisation of the Parliament. Members will realise that we are sitting earlier now than at other times and it is hoped that this will help in that organisation. The Government is committed to adjourning by 11.00 p.m. where necessary. It will be noted that on Tuesday night the House adjourned at 11.10 p.m. Last night the House adjourned at 11.02 p.m. as a result of co-operation from the Opposition, for which I thank it. This indicates that the House can be managed and can keep reasonable hours, provided there is goodwill on both sides.

Mr Hassell: The Government did not stick to the 11.00 p.m. adjournment in the last session, even in the early stages. On one occasion, while discussing the Supply Bill, the Premier insisted on

keeping the House half the night to finish the Bill even though the Government had set the 11.00 p.m. standard.

Mr TONKIN: I tried to finish by 11.00 p.m. when I was in charge of the House.

Mr Hassell: Quite often you were not—I know only too well.

Mr TONKIN: It is not always possible to finish by 11.00 p.m. Without time management motions, it will not be possible, or the Government will not get its legislation through. There are several methods by which to get legislation through and I will refer to two of them.

Mr Hassell: Do you remember how often you said that the House should sit for more than six months of the year if necessary so that business could be dealt with? You often said that we could extend the session, and there was no need to sit all night.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr TONKIN: If we were to sit a month or two longer, which the Leader of the Opposition seems to be suggesting, there is no guarantee that we would get through more legislation. I will try to explain the traditional system so far followed in this place. When we reach 11.00 p.m., and no time management motion is in place, a conference between the Government and the Opposition may indicate that there are two more speakers. If we want to adjourn at 11.00 p.m. we finish the debate for the night and agree to continue the following day. However, when the following day arrives, suddenly six speakers pop up in the place of the previous two speakers.

Mr Blaikie: It does not always apply.

Mr TONKIN: It is a very common situation. Therefore, a Government—whether of this colour or of the Opposition's colour—will often decide to continue the debate to get rid of those two speakers and to get the second reading out of the way at that sitting even if it goes until 1.00 a.m. There is a great deal of pressure on a Premier to adopt that course. If, on the other hand, the Government knows there are only two more speakers, the House can be adjourned at 11.00 p.m. and the debate continued the next day. Nothing has been lost and there is no intention to cut down the amount of time available to the Opposition for debate.

Mr Clarko: That is nonsense. The whole thing is designed to prevent the Opposition from thoroughly debating legislation.

Mr TONKIN: That is the member's opinion, but it is not the Government's intention.

Mr Clarko: You have been a jack boot Leader of the House from the day you took the position. The Speaker called you to order on your first day in office.

Mr TONKIN: I make it quite clear that it is not the Government's intention, by and large—

Mr Clarko: By and large, Bismarck was a pacifist compared with you.

Several members interjected.

Mr Hassell: You said "by and large" it is not your intention to use that. Is it not correct that at this very early stage of the session, in the third substantive sitting day, you have already proposed to use this procedure in relation to a number of Bills?

Mr TONKIN: I have discussed with the Leader of the Opposition the proposition that this procedure could be applied to certain Bills by way of experimentation.

Mr Hassell: We assumed that it would apply as we approached the end of the session or when the Government had a genuinely urgent Bill. You say you do not want to restrict debate, but you have now proposed to use the procedure on three or four Bills.

Mr TONKIN: And to accept the amount of time for debate suggested by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Thompson: You should not be proposing to resort to that.

Mr TONKIN: That is the member's opinion and perhaps he wants the Parliament to continue in the same inefficient manner as it has in the past, when it was necessary to sit all night to pass legislation. It is far better to have a time for debate agreed between the parties so that we know where we stand. It appears that the Liberal Party will object to this.

Mr Thompson: If you were on this side far more objections would be raised.

Mr TONKIN: This is a much better system than the one we had last year. The Government came into office indicating that it wanted to adjourn at 11.00 p.m., but without time management motions, it was not possible. On some occasions we sat all night. There has to be a better way.

Mr Clarko: What about the FID Bill? Look at the courtesy you extended to the Opposition on that Bill.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr TONKIN: In reply to the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition, I accept that I have

suggested that certain Bills should be tried out in this way. I asked the Deputy Leader of the Opposition how much time he thought would be reasonable and he has suggested certain times, which I have accepted. It is not a question of our using this procedure only at the end of the session; it is a question of orderly management of the business of the House so that all parties will know that on a certain Bill they have X number of hours to speak and can plan accordingly. Of course, the Opposition will provide the greater number of speakers. The parties will know that the House will not sit beyond 11.00 p.m. because at a certain time the question will be put. Therefore, the House can adjourn at 11.00 p.m. knowing that the debate will not be unduly protracted, because we will adhere to the time agreed between the Government and the Opposition.

Mr Hassell: Will that apply to the industrial relations Bill?

Mr TONKIN: That decision has not been made.

Several members interjected.

Mr TONKIN: In relation to that Bill, for example, we are aware that this is a matter of great principle to the Opposition; the Opposition would be very concerned about it; and we would expect that a long period of debate would be provided.

Mr Rushton: You will determine that time.

Mr O'Connor: This is a steamrolling tactic and a blot on the Parliament.

Mr TONKIN: If that is the member's opinion, that is all very well. I do not expect people of the member's calibre to have changed from the nineteenth century.

Several members interjected.

Mr Laurance: You would not have gone along with this when you were in Opposition.

Mr TONKIN: The member for Katanning-Roe spoke about the terrible practice of giving everyone a vote in local government. That indicates the century to which the Opposition belongs.

Mr Clarko: You want some people to pay \$1 000 and others nothing. You think that is justice.

Several members interjected.

Mr TONKIN: The motion is not part of the Standing Orders because it is an experiment. It is intended to last only for the rest of this session. It would work basically as follows.

Firstly, the Minister in charge of the Bill would declare the Bill urgent. The question that the Bill

be considered an urgent Bill would be put forth-with, with no debate or amendment.

Mr Blaikie: Is that after discussion with the Opposition, or not?

Mr TONKIN: Of course.

Mr Blaikie: If the Opposition spokesman indicated to you that the Opposition was not prepared to have that Bill declared urgent, what would you then do?

Mr TONKIN: We would then do what any other Government has done in this place, and indicate that we are in charge of the House.

Mr Blaikie: You would then ride roughshod over everyone.

Several members interjected.

Mr TONKIN: If that is the member's opinion of riding roughshod, he should remember that Governments have always insisted that the business of the House should be under their control.

Several members interjected.

Mr TONKIN: The Minister may declare the Bill urgent at any time except when a member is speaking. When the question is agreed to, the Minister puts a motion specifying the times to be allotted to all or any of the various stages of the Bill, including consideration of Council amendments. The debate on the time allocation motion may not exceed 20 minutes. No member may speak for more than five minutes. That is just on the question of whether the time is sufficient.

Several members interjected.

Mr TONKIN: This provision is a composite of existing motions in operation in the House of Representatives and the Victorian Legislative Assembly. New South Wales has a different form of motion designed to achieve the same effect.

Mr Laurance: Who holds the record for the longest speech in this Parliament? Do you recall?

Mr TONKIN: You will note that the lead speaker on either side will not be subject to this. I will discuss this in a moment.

Mr Laurance: You hold the record for the longest speech.

Several members interjected.

Mr TONKIN: Standing Order No. 158, the gag, will not apply when this sessional order is in operation in respect of the Bill.

Several members interjected.

Mr Rushton: You are saying we would not need to meet in Parliament very often.

Mr TONKIN: At the present time there is no intention to deprive this House of its proper capacity for debate.

Several members interjected.

Mr TONKIN: I indicated our attitude to the Leader of the Opposition, and he then asked the Deputy Leader of the Opposition (Mr Barry MacKinnon) to have discussions with me. We have had those discussions. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has shown a much greater willingness to co-operate and to see the advantages to all members and the State in this.

Several members interjected.

An Opposition member: Has there been reciprocal action on your part?

Mr TONKIN: I think there has. I have acceded to every request he has put forward, with the exception of those which were put forward yesterday.

I will go through three letters I have received from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, in which he asked for various assurances, and I will indicate our attitude to those assurances. He welcomed the suggestion of a weekly conference between himself and myself. I was very happy that he accepted that idea, and that should continue.

He asked if there would be an increased allocation for questions without notice to 45 minutes. I agreed to that.

Mr Blaikie: The way you are handling questions at the moment, no wonder you did.

Mr Rushton: Is the form of questions without notice to change? Will they continue to be launching pads for the Government, or will they become genuine questions without notice?

Mr TONKIN: The member would be aware that he stood in this place once giving an answer for 20 minutes.

Several members interjected.

Mr TONKIN: The control of questions without notice is in the hands of the Speaker. If the member is dissatisfied with the actions of the Speaker, he has the remedy in Standing Orders.

Several members interjected.

Mr TONKIN: In that case the member is saying we should not do it.

Mr Clarko: The Premier gives four major speeches during question time, and that is question time.

Several members interjected.

Mr TONKIN: The fact is that the Premier is so far ahead of anyone on that side of the House that it hurts. I can understand the member's

chagrin. I do not know how a rule can be introduced to prevent the supremacy of the Premier from shining forth.

Several members interjected.

Mr TONKIN: To indicate how insincere and unfair the Opposition is, I think it was the member for Karrinyup who asked if I had acceded to any of the requests. I acceded to the request from the deputy leader for 45 minutes. Instead of the member's acknowledging that as a fair, decent, and upright man would do, he immediately started to say that question time was no good anyway. I was asked if I had acceded to any request; the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked for 45 minutes for question time and I agreed.

Several members interjected.

Mr TONKIN: That is what the deputy leader asked for. If he is dissatisfied, he should move a spill in the party room. That is what the deputy leader did. I understood he had the confidence of his party when he came to me with that request.

Several members interjected.

Mr Clarko: I do not like the way the Premier has dominated question time and the Opposition has no say. This is after his answers have been put in the paper twice already.

Several members interjected.

Mr TONKIN: I can understand the feelings of members on the other side of the House with a man of the stature of the Premier. If I were on the other side of the House and a man of the stature of the Premier was on this side, I would be upset too.

Mr Clarko: The only other noise in the House is the snoring of the Press in the gallery because they have been given the information half an hour before.

Mr TONKIN: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition requested 45 minutes for question time. The member for Karrinyup, who apparently believes he should be Deputy Leader of the Opposition, is upset by that.

Mr Clarko: What does that have to do with it?

Mr TONKIN: The place to resolve that difference is upstairs in the party room.

Mr Mensaros: Would it be correct to say that the request by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was only made on the basis that you were likely to proceed with asking Dorothy Dix questions? He indicated that if you desisted from asking Dorothy Dix questions at question time, it would be all right to have 30 minutes for questions without notice. Is that understanding of the position correct?

Mr TONKIN: Is the member for Floreat saying that Dorothy Dix questions should be prevented?

Mr Mensaros: No; I am saying that if you discontinue asking Dorothy Dix questions, we will be quite happy with 30 minutes for questions without notice. You omitted to say that that was part of the proposition put by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr TONKIN: All members of Parliament have a right to have access to the operations of this Parliament and the Government's backbench members have as much right to ask questions of the Government as do Opposition members.

Mr Laurance: You are not fooling anybody!

Mr TONKIN: If the member opposite is saying some kind of Standing Order should exist to the effect that backbench members on this side of the House do not have the same rights as backbench members opposite, he is talking nonsense.

Mr Mensaros: All we want is a decent gentlemen's agreement which will be kept. That is all we are asking. That is what we had for nine years, and the Brand Government had it also.

Mr TONKIN: That was one request from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to which I agreed.

A second request was for more reliable provision to be made for urgency motions. That request was rather vague and we explored it further. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked that, although this is in the hands of the Speaker, the Government indicate its attitude to enabling one urgency motion a week with a maximum of one hour's debate by both sides of the House to be dealt with. I agreed to that.

Mr Evans: Is that on top of grievances?

Mr TONKIN: Yes, it was as well as grievances. It is very important that Opposition members or, for that matter, any member should be able to bring matters that they consider to be of great public importance to this Parliament. It is one of the important functions of Parliament that this should happen.

When we went into Opposition in 1974, the idea of having urgency motions debated was almost unheard of. The Speaker at the time took his role under Standing Orders very seriously. That role was that he should decide whether urgency motions should be debated. In my view, he would decide in that regard on political grounds. At that time it was felt that the Speaker should decide what was urgent. However, that is not on. The Speaker does not have the right to use

his political judgment in these matters; he should use his judgment as the Chairman of this Parliament.

During the nine years we were in Opposition we turned the position around in respect of this Parliament and made the debating of urgency motions much more common. That was done with the help of the previous Speaker.

Mr Clarko: So your previous argument is nonsense.

Mr TONKIN: I have not studied the matter and the member for Kalamunda is sitting on the edge of his chair.

Mr Thompson: No, I am not. I am very relaxed about the whole thing.

Mr TONKIN: Certainly the member for Kalamunda had a very different attitude from that of his immediate predecessor, but I have not researched the matter to try to apportion the credit. Indeed, apart from times when the member for Kalamunda was put under undue pressure by Sir Charles Court, as occurred from time to time, we found him to be a competent and fair Speaker. I acknowledge that this development of urgency motions resulted partly from the drive of the Opposition and partly because the member for Kalamunda, when Speaker, did not see his job as being that of some kind of political censor, but rather as the present Speaker sees his job which is that of custodian of the Standing Orders of the Parliament. That is the Speaker's proper role.

That position has developed and we are content that the Opposition—it hopes it will be to the embarrassment of the Government every time—should have the capacity to bring urgency motions to this House.

Another request from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was that sufficient time be allowed between the introduction and second reading of Bills by Ministers and the subsequent resumption of debate. The period suggested was seven days, and I agreed to that request.

Therefore, I agreed entirely to the first series of requests. More talks were held and, as a result, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition sent me a follow-up letter in which he asked that we postpone the introduction of this process. Originally, I intended to give notice of it on Thursday, 22 March, but I agreed to the deputy leader's request and we postponed giving notice of it until yesterday, because the deputy leader wanted to discuss the position further in the party room and with the Government. We were happy to do that.

Secondly, the deputy leader referred to his proposal that, when a matter is declared to be urgent,

the declaration should occur following the resumption of the second reading debate, after the first or lead speaker for the Opposition. When we met subsequent to my receiving that letter, I pointed out that we had not agreed to such a situation, and in fact what we had agreed to was that the declaration should be made after the Minister—the Government speaker—had explained the Bill. Therefore, if one of the more verbose Ministers had taken a long time to explain the Bill, that time would not have to be subtracted from the time allowed for the total debate on the Bill.

I pointed out to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that his proposal had not been the basis of our agreement and we had not decided that both the Government and the Opposition speakers should be excluded, but only that the Government speaker should be. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition agreed that had been our verbal agreement, but indicated he thought now that the lead speaker for the Opposition should be excluded as well as the Minister. I thought that was an entirely reasonable request. After all, if the Minister speaks for a long time and that period is not included in the time allocated for debate on the Bill, one would expect the Opposition speaker to be concerned, in the case of a major Bill which contained many important points, to have a similar period to that used by the Minister in which to debate it. If such a period were subtracted from the time allowed for debate on the Bill, an uneven balance of time would occur. Therefore, if the time taken by the Minister to debate the Bill at the second reading stage were to be excluded from the allotted time, so also should the time taken by the lead speaker for the Opposition. I was happy to accede to that request.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked also that Bills to be debated along these lines should be discussed and agreed to at our weekly meetings. I am happy to discuss Bills, but I do not know that we will always be able to agree. Of course, every Government has always insisted that it be in charge of the business of the House, but I hope that, by and large, agreement will be reached.

Naturally the Opposition always has the very powerful weapon of going to the public, whether by way of questions, urgency motions, or using some other procedure of the House, or just by appearing on television or speaking on radio and saying, "This Government has not provided us with adequate time for debate. It is acting unfairly. It is using this procedure to stifle debate." I am sure that the public and the news media would react very unfavourably against a Government which prevented reasonable debate in this

House. The Opposition would be aware that a Government which embarked on the course of being unreasonable and which did not provide enough time for debate would be dealt with by public opinion.

Mr Rushton: We have referred to the position that pertains in respect of question time, and the media does nothing about it.

Mr TONKIN: That is probably because the member still holds the record for giving the longest and most boring answer during question time.

Mr Rushton: We indicated the Premier was denigrating the Parliament by taking over question time.

Mr TONKIN: I hope the member for Karrinyup and other members who asked whether I acceded to any requests and referred a moment ago to "jack boots" are listening to this. Another request by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was that at least two hours' minimum be provided for debate on any Bill. I agreed with that.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition went further—he had quite a shopping list of requests—and asked that the Address-in-Reply, Budget, and Supply Bill debates not be part of this procedure. I had not even considered that, but I agreed to his request.

Mr Hodge: You are too easy.

Mr TONKIN: And am I not the one with the jack boots? I understand that, in the meantime, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was conferring with his party. He came back to me with a third letter and said that instead of having a sessional order or a change of Standing Orders, it should be done by agreement. I am afraid it just will not work by agreement only. If we do not have a Standing Order and we merely say, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and I, that two hours is fair enough for a particular Bill, what happens if a member gets up and says we can jump in the lake and he will do what he likes? Quite obviously that will not work.

Mr Thompson: How does it work in the Federal House? Is it by the application of sessional orders or Standing Orders?

Mr TONKIN: The Standing Orders in the Federal House are used, and they are very similar to the provisions in this motion.

Mr Thompson: Is it the application of those Standing Orders that results in their having some time arrangement?

Mr TONKIN: Yes, in the ultimate; but what happens is that there is discussion between both sides, and then it is applied.

Mr Thompson: It is a private arrangement made behind the Chair; no application of that Standing Order is made in the Federal House.

Mr TONKIN: I think it will be found that it is used.

Mr Thompson: In the normal running of the Parliament, it is not, and that applies in every Parliament I have had the opportunity to study. It is an arrangement made behind the Chair. If you tried to apply that sessional order you would come unstuck because it would only cause friction. It is only by mutual co-operation that you can get the work of the Parliament running harmoniously.

Mr TONKIN: That may be so, but the member would not deny that we have around 400 Standing Orders. What sort of shambles would this place be in if we did not have them and relied only on goodwill? Goodwill is more likely to be forthcoming if we have this sessional order.

Mr Rushton: You have a threat there.

Mr TONKIN: The member's party was in Government for nine years and it rammed Bills through this House. The member is talking in a foolish way. As a former Minister, all the member is objecting to is the fact that his party lost the elections.

Mr Rushton: We won't take jack boots.

Mr TONKIN: So that request from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is one I did not agree to. I do not believe it would be possible to do as he asks unless we have some formal substance to the arrangement.

Mr Peter Jones: Even though it works elsewhere.

Mr TONKIN: It does not work elsewhere. The Federal Parliament has a Standing Order like this, and it is used. One has only to listen to broadcasts of the Federal Parliament to hear the question put at a certain time. So it does happen elsewhere, although I agree that most of the work is done by co-operation. Of course, the national Parliament is very constrained by time—extremely so.

Mr Thompson: By arrangement between the two sides.

Mr TONKIN: Because there is this fall back position.

Mr Thompson: Not at all.

Mr TONKIN: Okay, that is the member's opinion.

Mr O'Connor: How much time will the lead speakers have?

Mr TONKIN: Unlimited time.

Mr Mensaros: Is that in your motion?

Mr TONKIN: It is in the Standing Orders. This motion does not override Standing Orders except to the extent that Standing Order No. 158, which is the gag motion, will not be used. I have given an undertaking that this motion will not be used to curtail the lead speakers from either side.

Mr Clarko: Why are you not doing that by motion?

Mr TONKIN: The member for Karrinyup is really amusing. One minute he says we should do it by sessional order and then he says it should be by agreement.

Mr Clarko: But you are trying to reverse it. You said it could not be done by agreement and that it must be in the Standing Orders. Now you are saying it should be by agreement and not by Standing Orders. You are the one twisting it, not us.

Mr TONKIN: The member can do it the way he wants to when he is returned to Government.

Mr Clarko: You are inconsistent.

Mr TONKIN: Any Parliament is run by agreement between the two sides, and also by Standing Orders and sessional orders. I am not being an extremist in saying it has to be either all by agreement—which I do not believe would work—or all by rules and regulations. I believe that the amalgam of the two will occur. I can understand why the member for Karrinyup does not feel so kindly disposed as does the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—no doubt the member has disappointed ambitions.

Mr Clarko: What tripe. What has this to do with the matter?

Mr TONKIN: It has everything to do with it, because several times the member has indicated his lack of faith in and respect for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Clarko: Absolute nonsense.

Mr TONKIN: Read *Hansard*.

Mr Clarko: I said on Tuesday this week that what he had done was very good. It seems that you have gone back on it.

Mr TONKIN: What does the member mean?

Mr Clarko: You indicated earlier, I believe in discussion with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, that we would make some progress which emphasised agreement and understanding, but that is not here before us today.

Mr TONKIN: It is like the member for Karrinyup to say things that are untrue.

Mr Clarko: What is untrue?

Mr TONKIN: It is untrue because I have not gone back on anything on which I have agreed. I

am sure the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will make it clear to the House that everything on which we have agreed in our discussions has been adhered to by me. It is just not worthy of the member for Karrinyup to say untrue things because he would like to believe them to be true. Believing things to be true does not make them true. I have not gone back on any undertaking I have given to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr O'Connor: Where in this motion does it say there will be unlimited time for the lead speakers?

Mr TONKIN: It is not in the motion; it will be by agreement. I have given that undertaking. I have given my word privately to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and I have said it in the House. If I go back on my word I am sure members opposite will have a wonderful time. I am sure the credibility of the Government and me will be debased.

Mr Thompson: If we go along with you on that point, why can't there be trust on the whole question?

Mr TONKIN: It seems that members of the Opposition are particularly dense. What the former Speaker seems to be arguing is that we should not have any Standing Orders and that we should trust one another. I will say it again, because it is no wonder we need motions such as this when there is so much tedious repetition being forced on me. There has to be a mixture of formal Standing Orders and sessional orders, and also co-operation and trust between the two sides. The member, as the previous Speaker, would know that he used the Standing Orders. If he had not, the place would have been in a shambles. The member used them with wisdom and with a concern to see that the fair desires of both sides were looked after. In other words, when the member was the Speaker, and when his Government was in power, we had a mixture of sessional orders and Standing Orders and these were administered perhaps most of the time with tact and with agreement behind the Chair. I do not relish repeating myself too often, because it is just a waste of time, but what I am saying is that this will happen now. We will have Standing Orders and sessional orders, and in addition we will have discussions. This sessional order is deliberately a sessional order so that it expires with the session, and the session is expected to expire some time in May. We have six sitting weeks during which it can be tried. That is the chief reason that I wanted to apply the sessional order to some Bills before the House. If we do not try it out, how will we know whether it is worthwhile persevering with it next session?

Mr Thompson: You have been quoting the Commonwealth as an example. You say it has been operating under this system for a long time. You reckon it has worked for them for a long time—

Mr TONKIN: That is true, and for that reason we think it will work here. If we did not think it would work we would not bring it in here. It has not been used here; we want to try it to see if it does work. It may be that we will need to modify the Commonwealth system. Perhaps the Commonwealth system is not the best for this Parliament, and a trial basis for six weeks will allow us to look at it. If we do not apply it to any Bill, we will not have tried it out; it will just sit there and we will not know how it will work.

The Leader of the Opposition said that I had already referred to some Bills to which it will apply, and he thought it would only be used at the end of this session and so on. We want to get away from this end-of-the-session mentality where Governments bring in Bills which are rushed through, but I do not know if we will be able to do so.

Mr Hassell: I did not say just "the end of the session"; I said where you had a genuinely urgent Bill. We understand that on occasions there are genuinely urgent Bills. You never had any trouble from us in getting those through.

Mr TONKIN: Yes, I acknowledge that. We received a lot of co-operation from the Opposition last year. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned the word "urgent", and I refer to that word because in discussions with the Deputy Leader I did say that the word "urgent" was not entirely to my liking because it seemed to suggest that only Bills which were urgent could come within the ambit of the motion. We could say, "Look, we want this Bill through", but, "urgent" would be the wrong word to use. I have not had the wit to find another word that would best take its place. It is not solely designed for urgent Bills. When I wanted to try it out I suggested to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that we try it out on certain Bills. He came back to me with suggestions as to the kind of time limit that would be reasonable, and I was happy to agree to those suggestions.

Mr Clarko: Yes, but we in turn are expecting the reduction in what we might otherwise have had in the past. In regard to the Colleges Bill I was asked how long it would take and I said it could perhaps be dealt with in two or three days; but that is putting a constraint on an Opposition shadow Minister. This has not, as far as I know, ever been done in this House before. I was pre-

pared to agree to it because I was requested to do so as part of this agreement we have been talking about.

Mr TONKIN: That is right; it is a form of constraint. It is a better form of constraint than sitting all night, because if we want a certain Bill to be passed knowing the traditional way of getting things through, if it is 11.00 p.m. we will just sit until it is through.

If we could agree that there is not a great deal of debate on a question, we should agree in this way. Of course it is a form of constraint.

Mr Clarko: Over time you have asked me certain things in regard to debates in this House and I have always acceded to your requests. I can give no example where I have ever asked you and you did not do the same, so I am not trying to raise one above the other. This is what this House has got to be about.

Mr TONKIN: I agree.

Mr Clarko: You, in my opinion, fall down at times by taking this other attitude which cuts across all this, and that is the problem. You need to make some concessions as well as us.

Mr TONKIN: Having acceded to about eight or nine requests of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I would imagine that I have made some concessions.

Mr Clarko: But it is not a trial.

Mr TONKIN: It is a trial.

Mr Clarko: But the prime one was, why not put this to trial without going to the extent of a sessional order.

Mr TONKIN: That would not be a trial. If we did not have a sessional order, we would be in the same situation we have been in for the last 100 years. That is not trying it out; it is refusing to try it out. This is a trial of six weeks. We can only try out a sessional order by having a sessional order. Trying it out by some agreement is what has always happened; and that is not trying it out at all. There will come a time when temperatures are raised when Oppositions and Governments cannot agree.

The traditional method Governments adopted for getting legislation through was to make the Opposition sit all night. I remember on one occasion we sat all night, and we were still sitting at 11.00 a.m. the following day.

Mr MacKinnon: Whose fault was that?

Mr Clarko: But you did the same thing on the Budget on 1 December last year. The Premier asked me in regard to the education legislation if I would speak even though the Minister was not

here. I said, "I am disappointed because I have some questions to ask", but he asked me whether I was happy to go on although it was 2.00 in the morning. I spoke for an hour when I could have spoken for much longer. I agreed to all that. I still have not had a reply to the undertaking the Premier gave me in regard to those questions I raised. It is now April and the matters were raised on 1 December last year.

Mr TONKIN: I am sure the member can take it up with the Minister for Education.

Mr Clarko: I asked a question a couple of days ago and have not received an answer to them.

Mr TONKIN: I acknowledge that. That has happened many times. We want to move away from that situation and towards reasonable sitting hours; we do not want to be sitting here after midnight. This is a sensible way of attempting to see to it that we have legislation facilitated without sitting all night.

It is worth a six-week trial. We therefore will need some Bills to put within its ambit, otherwise it will not have been tried at all. If it is not tried, the Government will say, "We have not even seen how it works. We have not got a clue, so we will introduce it as a sessional order or a Standing Order for July because we have not tried it out". We have this far more sensible opportunity to try it out now to see what happens so we can make modifications.

I stress that if there are any problems with this, if it is not working properly, the Opposition and the Government should sit down and work together on it. Because of the meetings that I have already had with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I believe it will be possible, in fact highly likely, that co-operation for the smooth running of the House will continue, because these meetings have been very cordial and we have been able to see different people's point of view.

It is very important for a Government to realise that an Opposition has a different perspective from a Government; it does not require a lot of empathy for one to realise that. There will be times of disagreement, but with goodwill, as has already been demonstrated by the discussions I have had with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and by the fact that the Government has agreed to all but one request of the Opposition as expressed by the Deputy Leader, it should work. It is obvious that there is already a degree of goodwill in the House, and I wish this to continue.

For those reasons, the Government wishes this motion to be passed. We are of the opinion that the kind of problem we had last year, and traditionally in this Parliament for many years, of

sitting all night, not only put a great strain upon members of the House, but also upon *Hansard* and other staff members; and it is desirable for us to get away from that situation. I do not know whether this will enable us to get away from that situation because I cannot foretell the future. All I can say is that this is an attempt by the Government to get away from an archaic system of legislation by exhaustion.

Early in the stages of a Bill, members will know a certain period of time will be allowed for that Bill, and we will be able to arrange our speaking time accordingly. It may cut out the situation we have often had where 14 or 15 members will say the same thing time and time again. No wonder the public think we are a lot of old windbags if we keep repeating what other members have said. Perhaps we need to have more discipline and to realise that better ways of doing things are available, and making the same point tediously over and over again is not necessarily the best way of using the time of Parliament.

I believe that this is in line with the Government's undertaking to try to run the House on more orderly and rational lines. For those reasons I urge all members to support the motion.

MR MacKINNON (Murdoch—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [12.01 p.m.]: Firstly, I wish to say that I do agree with one comment made by the Leader of the House, and that was his commitment to a more rational organisation of the Parliament. I can assure him the Opposition has a commitment also, a commitment to the rational organisation of the Parliament. We have entered into discussions with the Government with that primarily in mind.

I should like also to thank the Leader of the House for the areas in which we have reached agreement and the manner in which he has approached the discussions. I thank him for agreeing to postpone the introduction of this motion until after we had had some discussions.

However I would like to take issue with some of the points made by the Leader of the House. One point on which he did not touch in his remarks is what is standing behind this sessional order; that is, the very next Order of the Day that we will discuss. I refer to the reduction by one-third of the time allowed to each member on general debate. In other words, the time will be reduced from 45 minutes to 30 minutes. Of course we in the Opposition parties are faced with a difficult decision. The Government has the numbers; the Government has a commitment to reducing that time, and we have to try to arrive at the best possible solution, bearing in mind that the Govern-

ment will proceed with that commitment anyway. I will deal with that commitment shortly.

Whether it be a sessional order or a new Standing Order, it seems to me—as I indicated at the beginning of this discussion—whether this is to work or fail depends on one word, “trust”. Whether any sessional order or Standing Order will work will be determined by whether or not the Opposition and the Government can build up trust between themselves. If there is no trust or goodwill from either side of the House, it will not work.

I say that, not having had just parliamentary experience, but also business experience. As an accountant it was evident to me that partnerships are hazardous business enterprises; they rarely last. No matter what is written into the partnership agreement, one cannot legislate for trust or goodwill. My partnership lasted for 10 years without any partnership agreement, because my partner and I had built up trust. That is really what is at the base of this discussion; a clear commitment to a better and rational organisation of the Parliament, a commitment of trust in one another.

It seems to members in the Opposition parties that everything the Government wants to change will be changed by the sessional order and the amended Standing Order. However, everything the Opposition would like has to be done by agreement. Whatever we want, and whatever the Leader of the House and I have agreed on, will not be written into the Standing Orders. We must take the word of the Government.

Despite the fact that we may well trust one another at this early stage, it is difficult for the Opposition to feel comfortable when the Government at the end of the day, no matter what the argument, has the numbers, we do not. I think it was Fred Daly who said “You take the logic, I will take the numbers”. Of course we feel threatened.

Mr Hodge: We are well aware of that.

Mr MacKINNON: It does not make us feel very comfortable in this whole exercise if at the base of it is the need to build up trust.

Mr Hodge: You had better build up a bit of trust with the member for Karrinyup and other members on your own back bench.

Mr MacKINNON: The member for Karrinyup was rightly raising some points which I am about to raise. If the Minister had been listening he would have realised that the member for Karrinyup was reiterating the points I have just made; that is, everything we want and which the Leader of the House has agreed to is not to be

written into the sessional order, yet everything the Government wants is written in.

As a consequence we will be moving some amendments. The Leader of the House and National Party members will receive a copy of these amendments shortly so that they can see how I would like to see the base of our agreement now incorporated in the sessional order.

Mr Evans: Why did not you do that when they were initiated with the Leader of the House?

Mr MacKINNON: I assumed, in my discussions with the Leader of the House, that once we had agreed to the changes to the sessional order, they would be encapsulated in the agreement. I was surprised when the Leader of the House introduced into the Parliament the same sessional orders he had initially proposed at the beginning of the day.

We have reached an agreement, I clearly understand that; but if that agreement is to be built upon I would like to think the Leader of the House will agree in line with the statements of the Premier when we first raised this matter in December and he indicated this motion would be proposed on the basis that we arrived at consensus.

I refer to the statement made in Bunbury, when the Labor Party went there on its jaunt to establish "Bunbury 2000", about which the people of the Minister's electorate are not happy. The Premier said—

The Premier, Mr Burke, said yesterday that the plan involved regular consultation with the Opposition about the likelihood of time limits on certain legislation.

The Government would seek consensus on the need to avoid legislating by exhaustion and on the need to schedule efficient sitting hours.

That is exactly what we are trying to achieve—consensus. The Minister and I have had some fruitful discussions. I would like to think he will extend to us the same courtesies and trust we have extended to him.

We hope the same courtesies and trust will be shown to us by encapsulating in this sessional order those views we would want.

We would have been quite happy, as the member for Karrinyup and I have indicated to the Minister, to proceed with this whole matter—both the sessional order and the Standing Order—on the basis of an agreement, and a written understanding between us.

I clearly understand the point of view of the Minister that he wants underneath this verbal

agreement a written agreement that he can fall back on, but we are prepared to give it a go on the basis of trust.

I was prepared to attempt to gain the support of our members in agreeing with those changes in the interests of achieving a better and more rational Parliament. I am confident I would have achieved that without resorting to what we have now, a sessional order and an amendment to a Standing Order. That is one area we did not agree on. I am disappointed we could not agree on this one area.

I believe if given the opportunity to arrive at a process without having to resort to the amended Standing Order or a sessional order, at the end of the day the situation we would have arrived at would be far better than it will be using this procedure.

The Leader of the House said, "There is no intention by and large to reduce the time available to the Opposition". The Leader of the House knows well that this sessional order and the amendment to the Standing Orders which follows will reduce the time available to the Opposition. That is clear, we have never departed from the belief that that will be the case.

Mr Tonkin: Not most times.

Mr MacKINNON: I think it will be a significant time, especially when we consider the amount of time backbenchers use. They usually use the 45 minutes available to them.

We are prepared to give it a try. I have indicated that to the Leader of the House. We are prepared to make a drastic change to reduce the time from 45 minutes to 30 minutes, as long as it is not encapsulated in the Standing Order.

Once the Standing Order has been amended, it is London to a brick that it will not be changed back by this Government or perhaps not by the next Government, although I would hope that as we will be the Government it would be changed if it did not work. It may work, and that was the point the member for Karrinyup was trying to raise. We in the Opposition parties are quite prepared to abide by the discipline of speaking for 30 minutes at each time provided it is not encapsulated in a Standing Order amendment.

That puts it in rock hard terms where we have little room to build up trust between one another. If the Government wanted to show that it was sincere in its commitment, it would have agreed to that approach. As the Leader of the House has said, the Government controls the business of the House, and I would have thought that we could adopt the suggestion that if this proposition did not work within the first or second week, the

Government could use the sessional order to stop the Opposition if it abused the basis of the agreement. However, the Minister has not agreed with me or with the Opposition and unfortunately has resorted to bringing forward a sessional order and an amendment to the Standing Orders. It concerns me and it also concerns other members of the Opposition.

I mention a couple of points on which we reached agreement. Firstly, I will refer to my letter—if members want to follow this correspondence I will table a copy of the correspondence I have to enable them to do so.

(The documents were tabled for the information of members.)

Mr MacKINNON: In my letter of 28 March, I said—

Firstly, what your move to give notice of motion in relation to shortened speaking times and the procedures relating to time management of debates will be postponed.

I have already said that I appreciate the fact that the Leader of the House has given us more time to proceed with discussion on these issues. In his initial letter to me on 13 March, he indicated that no such time would be given. However, he has given us the time and for that we are grateful.

I referred in my letter to the Leader of the House to the subject of time management proposals or urgency proposals. I said—

Firstly we would like agreement to our proposals that should a matter be declared urgent this declaration be made following the resumption of the second reading debate after the first speaker (being the lead speaker) for the Opposition.

The Leader of the House has indicated that he agreed with that proposal which I subsequently followed up in a letter to him after a further meeting; and I give notice that in due course I will move that we amend the motion of the Leader of the House regarding sessional orders to ensure that the agreement at which we have arrived is encapsulated in the sessional order. I propose to move an amendment by adding after the word "Bill" in item (1)(b) the following words—

other than for that part of the debate involving the second reading speech of the member introducing the Bill and the first member responding thereto.

As the member for Karrinyup and I have already indicated, the Opposition would be happy to proceed in this whole area by agreement. It is not the choice of the Government and if it is resorting to

a sessional order, we would like to think it will accept the amendment.

I refer again to the letter I sent to the Leader of the House, which continued—

It is hoped that the Bills to be debated along these lines can be agreed to at our weekly meetings. In addition we would suggest that in no case should a minimum time of less than two hours be placed on these time management motions.

It was the Opposition's desire to have a minimum time placed thereon. Obviously we need some guidance, and if that were encapsulated in a sessional order we would have a better idea of where we are. We have agreed to the sessional order on that basis. My letter continues—

Naturally each would have to be examined on its own merits and a proper time determined with two hours being the minimum time limit. This flexibility will be required to ensure that complex committee type Bills are given proper consideration.

To that extent, I will be moving, at a later stage, to add after the final paragraph of item (1) the following words—

The total time so allotted to a Bill declared urgent will not be less than a total of two hours.

In addition, the next item we agreed on is encapsulated in the following comments which will be included in the amendment as follows—

Debate to proceed on the Address-in-Reply, the Budget and the Supply Bill will not be subject to these procedures.

While those items will probably not be debated in this session, it is obvious they will be used as a guide in the future and I would like to think that we will get it right now.

In relation to the other requests made, for the purpose of ensuring they are on the record, I would like to repeat those which were agreed to in discussions between the Minister and me. One concerns questions without notice. I will quote the point I put to the Minister on 28 March, relating to this matter, as follows—

Questions Without Notice. If the question time is to be continued as at present we would ask for an extra 15 minutes to be allocated to question time so that the Opposition have sufficient opportunity to put questions to the Government.

I repeat that this proposal was subject to question time being continued as at present; and the member for Floreat has already indicated the Opposition's concern about question time. He repeated

what I said to the Minister that if question time was handled correctly, as it was when we were in Government, we would be happy to retain 30 minutes, but if it is to be continually abused by the Government as it is now, we would ask for 45 minutes. We hope that this time would not be occupied by "Dorothy Dix" questions by the Government.

I ask the Leader of the House: If the sessional order does come into effect, when will the 45-minute period for question time commence?

Mr Tonkin: I have written to the Speaker to have the time increased. Questions without notice are at his discretion. The Government is happy to have the 45-minute period commenced as quickly as possible.

Mr MacKINNON: I will approach the Speaker to see that it happens as quickly as possible.

The second request I raised with the Leader of the House relates to urgency motions and the Leader of the House has explained the basis on which we would like them to proceed. The only clarification I would like is that if an urgency motion debate is restricted to one hour, the time would come not only from the Opposition's time, but also from the Government's time.

Mr Tonkin: If you do it during private members' time it would come from private members' time. Every time we sit at the beginning, and the usual time is not Opposition time, we certainly would not be subtracting.

Mr MacKINNON: If we move an urgency motion on Tuesday, would the Government be happy with that?

Mr Tonkin: We would not be happy, but we would accept it.

Mr MacKINNON: With regard to the time for debate, we asked that the Standing Orders provide that, except in the case of agreement, a minimum of seven days be allowed between the second reading introduction and the resumption of the debate. It has been a long-honoured tradition and I thank the Minister and the Leader of the House for agreeing to continue on that basis.

In conclusion, it would appear that the thrust of what the Government is trying to do is one-sided to the degree that everything the Government wishes on its part is encapsulated within Standing Orders or a sessional order.

On everything the Opposition requests—whether it be an urgency motion, questions without notice, or that the lead speakers from the Opposition have unlimited time—it is asked to accept agreement on the basis of trust.

As I have indicated, the Opposition wants a trial period—I do not want members on either side of the House to gain the wrong impression that the six-month trial period be carried out on an agreement of trust. I believe it would work. I believe that at the end of the day, whatever errors we find as a consequence could be discussed and we could make some adjustment. I remind the Leader of the House that these sessional orders are being debated ahead of the next motion which I see as probably far more important. It will limit members' time from 45 minutes to 30 minutes. That is a real sacrifice being made by the Opposition, and we are not getting a lot in return. We are getting the word of the Government on which we must rely so the agreement will be abided by. That is something we are not particularly happy about and I am sure the Leader of the House would be unhappy about it. I remind him of the remarks he made in this House in September 1974, when he said—

I believe in parliamentary democracy. Members of this House are the people assembled. We do not accurately reflect the wishes of the people in some of the Statutes but, nevertheless, as far as is possible in Western Australia we are the people assembled and we come here to discharge our duties. Yet we find that a Government, anxious to push through a measure, will not allow us the opportunity for full and proper debate.

I hope the Leader of the House and members on the Government side read those comments again because that may help them decide what matters will be discussed on a time management basis.

Mr Brian Burke: Can I raise a serious point? It is my experience that what can be said in 45 minutes can in most cases be said in 30 minutes. I hope that if the limit becomes 30 minutes there may be a different attitude towards extensions of time.

Mr MacKINNON: I have never denied that and I probably agree with the Premier. The point at issue, which he may not have caught up with, is that if we agree that is the case we would prefer to see the trial undertaken without encapsulating it in Standing Orders.

Mr Brian Burke: An informal arrangement behind the Chair?

Mr MacKINNON: Yes. If it broke down the Government would have the right to bring in the amendment to the Standing Order at any time—the next day or the next week. On the basis of understanding and trust I am confident we could give it a trial and see that what the Premier

says is true. If it were not, bearing in mind that Government members will be back in Opposition one day, they have a vested interest in ensuring it works for both sides.

Mr Brian Burke: Governments come and go.

Mr MacKINNON: I hope that is taken into account. We are happy and willing to find ways of improving the running of House but we are not averse to sitting here for long hours if necessary. We do not have an 11 o'clock mentality. While it is not good to sit around until a late hour, we will do so if it is necessary to dispose of the business of the House, provided that the time limit for debate and rules of debate are fair and reasonable to us.

I assure the Leader of the House that if these arrangements in the Standing Orders and the sessional order are not favourable to us and the Government abuses its privileges, we will use the balance of the Standing Orders to frustrate the Government's activities as much as possible. That is not a threat; it is a matter of saying we will not be dictated to or steamrolled, in the words of the now Leader of the House in 1974. We have a sincere commitment to improving the running of the House. I hope we can arrive at that on the basis of mutual trust.

Amendments to Motion

I move an amendment—

Under Item (1)(b) after the word "Bill", add the following words—"other than for that part of the debate involving the second reading speech of the Member introducing the Bill and the first Member responding thereto."

MR THOMPSON (Kalamunda) [12.25 p.m.]: I second the amendment. I want to make quite a few comments on the main question, but I will confine my remarks at present to the amendment. The proposed sessional order makes provision for all the things the Government wants to see enshrined in it, but asks us to trust the Government in respect of what we want.

Mr Tonkin: I am happy to accept both amendments.

Amendment put and passed.

MR MacKINNON (Murdoch—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [12.27 p.m.]: I move an amendment—

Under item (1) after the final paragraph—to add the following words—"The total time so allotted to a Bill declared urgent will not be less than a total of two hours. Debates to proceed on the Address-in-Reply,

the Budget and the Supply Bill will not be subject to these procedures."

I understand the Government has also accepted this amendment and I thank it for that.

Mr THOMPSON: I second the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Motion, as Amended

MR THOMPSON (Kalamunda) [12.28 p.m.]: A well-known saying in parliamentary circles is that "Oppositions will have their say, but Governments will have their way". It is my fear that the proposal before us today will eliminate that part of the saying about Oppositions having their say. The Leader of the House shakes his head and indicates it is not the Government's intention to deny the Opposition the right to have a say. The practical application of the sessional order will be to deny some members of Parliament a say on a matter that may be of great concern to them. It will be only the controversial legislation to which the Government will want to apply this sessional order. Members want to exercise their right to speak on controversial legislation. Few members feel a necessity to speak on the many mundane Bills that come before the House. It is only on Bills of a major and controversial nature that debate is full and sometimes fairly vigorous.

This sessional order, if passed, will significantly reduce the opportunity of members of Parliament to express a point of view because the time allocated will be significantly less than might otherwise apply in a debate. Individuals in the Parliament will not get an opportunity to have a say because the time allocated will be taken up by other speakers. We have been extremely immature in this Parliament for a long time in relation to the way we operate. I am the first to admit that something needs to be done to streamline our operations to enable this to become a more effective debating Chamber.

While I was in the Chair I attempted to introduce some measures which would make this Parliament more effective. I had very limited success because of the lack of goodwill between the two sides of the Parliament. Unless there is goodwill it does not matter what orders, be they standing or sessional, are put in place. One needs only to look at the operation of other Parliaments to get an appreciation of that statement.

While I was the Speaker in this House I had an opportunity to study many Legislatures, not only in Australia but also in other parts of the world. From the research I have been able to carry out it is apparent that time management and other management procedures within the House work

only when there is goodwill between both sides. There is no way a Government can force an Opposition to bow to unreasonable pressure, because there are many ways in which an Opposition can frustrate a Government trying to suppress it. It would be far better for the time management of this House to occur as a result of an agreement behind the Chair between the two sides rather than simply relying on some sessional order.

The Leader of the House draws for strength on the fact that there are similar Standing Orders in the Parliaments of the Commonwealth, New South Wales, and Victoria. Each of those three Legislatures runs fairly smoothly and there is fair allocation of time. However, this happens not because of a Standing Order, but in spite of it.

We already have provision in our Standing Orders for a guillotine to apply. I query why we do not use our own Standing Orders. In the time I have been in the House, and indeed while a Chairman of Committees, the guillotine provision in our Standing Orders has been resorted to and it has worked perfectly well. It was used in a debate when members of the present Government were taking, as it seemed to the then Government, an extremely long time to deal with a Bill. The Government of the day resorted to the Standing Orders and established a time management proposal which worked. During the life of the Tonkin Government a time management procedure was established on one occasion, although it was not ultimately resorted to because the Opposition did not continue frustrating the Government. I believe an arrangement was made behind the Chair and the time management procedure which had been passed, and which applied time constraints on the balance of the debate, was not put into effect. The Standing Orders of this House have been resorted to in the examples I have quoted. There is no need for a sessional order because the standing orders are already in place. There is a base on which to develop a gentlemen's agreement behind the Chair.

Mr Tonkin: It is not adequate.

Mr THOMPSON: In what way is it not adequate?

Mr Tonkin: If it is applied it allows for unlimited debate as to whether the guillotine should apply.

Mr THOMPSON: It is true that the House can waste a great deal of time in setting up that procedure.

Mr Tonkin: Which defeats the purpose.

Mr THOMPSON: It can take a long time, and experience has shown that it has taken a long time; but Standing Order No. 158 can be resorted

to on setting it up. The Government can gag the debate. I submit to the Leader of the House that adequate provision is contained in the Standing Orders.

Mr Tonkin: We do not agree that it is adequate.

Mr THOMPSON: Time management procedures can be established and can be put in force as quickly as can the proposal now made by the Minister. A sanction is available to the Government if the Opposition is not prepared to honour and adhere to a gentlemen's agreement.

As I said earlier, the proposed sessional order will significantly reduce the democratic rights, not of the members of Parliament but of the people represented by the members of Parliament.

Mr Tonkin: Is the main purpose of members of Parliament to represent people?

Mr THOMPSON: It is a very fundamental reason for the existence of a member of Parliament.

Mr Tonkin: I suggest you look at the electoral districts and see how they pervert it.

Mr THOMPSON: The Leader of the House talks about paranoia—

Mr Tonkin: Paranoia is to fear something that may never happen, but your party has had unbroken control of the upper House for 90 years. It is not fear, it is a fact of life.

Mr THOMPSON: It is a fact that the Leader of the House chooses to raise this question in so many ways.

Mr Tonkin: You raised the matter when you spoke about members of Parliament representing the people. Some members represent many more people than others.

Mr THOMPSON: The Minister can have it his way.

Several members interjected.

Mr THOMPSON: The strict application of this sessional order will result in many members of this Parliament who may wish to make a contribution to a debate on behalf of the people they represent—no matter whether 20 or 20 000—being denied the opportunity to express a point of view. That is not democratic and I submit to you, Mr Speaker, it is against the very essence of this institution. The Leader of the House, who is responsible for introducing this motion, reminded the House of that on many occasions when his party was in Opposition. I remember two or three occasions on which he stood on his high horse and renounced the things which happened. He pointed out how the democratic rights

of people were being denied because of actions taking place. He made accusations on a couple of occasions when the gag was moved.

The Bill will significantly reduce the democratic rights of people in this State. If a sensible arrangement was made behind the Chair it would be possible for the representatives of the two sides to be aware of who wished to speak and adequate provision could be made for those members to speak. Certainly under that arrangement some people would have to accept less time in which to speak than might otherwise have been available to them. However, at least their right to speak would be protected. The strict application of the sessional order will mean that the allocated time will be taken by a few speakers. The question will be put and many members in Parliament will be denied an opportunity to express their points of view.

The Committee stage of a Bill handled under the time management proposal will not be adequately dealt with. The Committee stage of some Bills can be very complex and the Minister has previously said that legislation is becoming more complex. Members of Parliament cannot give adequate attention to a complex Bill in the Committee stage if time constraints are applied. This could result in inferior legislation being passed.

How many times do we see deficiencies within the Bill exposed during the Committee debate? Those deficiencies would never come to the fore if it were not for a full and comprehensive Committee debate.

Mr Blaikie: It is not appreciated that this Parliament passes laws for the people, and the Parliament must be able to review those Bills sufficiently.

Mr THOMPSON: There is something sinister in the fact that the Government has decided to bring this into the House by way of a sessional order. It wants the best of both worlds. It is prepared to have us argue that there should not be time-management proposals. Members opposite listen to our arguments, nod their heads, and then, having the numbers in the House, get their way. This provision will continue in the next session and in all subsequent sessions until this Government's defeat at an election, despite the fact that all of us on this side of the House protest against it. Then, when we become the Government and attempt to introduce a sessional order, members opposite will trot out all the same reasons—

Several members interjected.

Mr THOMPSON: They will trot out the same arguments that we have used against the sessional

order. These will be trotted out against us. The Labor Party, then in opposition, will be saying, "For all the reasons you said there should not be a sessional order, we now think there should not be a sessional order".

Several members interjected.

Mr THOMPSON: The Minister says that he is convinced, with the success as he sees it in the Commonwealth, New South Wales, and Victoria, that this device is necessary for the Parliament. I submit that it is not and that we should not have it.

Reference has been made to question time in this House. I have very good reason to have an appreciation of the way question time in this House has developed. During the time I was in the Chair, by mutual agreement between members on both sides of the House, we dispensed with the way in which questions on notice were handled. Members will recall that questions on notice were answered in full by the Ministers each day and it took something in the order of an hour or 1½ hours. When questions on notice were answered each day, there was a period set aside for questions without notice—a very short period. In fact, no more than three or four questions without notice would be dealt with.

At my suggestion, the question time provision was changed, and I adopted the practice of allowing 30 minutes for questions without notice.

The time allocated particularly to questions without notice is one of the most important parts of each day's proceedings. I believe that questions without notice should be a lively session where the Opposition predominantly has the opportunity to put the Government on the spot. However, question time as I envisaged it, and as it worked for a little while, has been prostituted. That prostitution is not something which started with the present Government; it was something which started when the former Government was in office. It saddened me to see the way in which question time evolved. What I saw to be a very important part of the day's proceedings has been relegated to something which amounts virtually to nothing.

A classic example occurred in this House yesterday when a member of the Government back bench asked a question of the Premier who replied by making a policy pronouncement. Question time was never intended to be handled in that way. It is certainly not handled in that way in other Parliaments I have had an opportunity to study.

Although I welcome the fact that question time will be extended to 45 minutes, I hope that mem-

bers of the House will accept that question time should be treated in a different way from the way in which it has been treated over the past few years.

I do not blame the present Government for the way in which question time is being used. All this Government did was to follow the example set by the earlier administration. I believe it has resulted in question time becoming a nothing time.

During the course of the Minister's speech, there was an interjection from the Minister for Agriculture, when there was talk of urgency motion provisions. The Minister for Agriculture said in effect that the Government was looking for a more liberal provision for urgency motions, but that at the same time there should be access to grievance debates.

I am not sure of the history of the establishment of a grievance debate, but I assume it was originally intended to be something of an urgency debate provision. However, under the way Standing Orders are written, the practice of the House has been that grievances are not debates; they are simply opportunities for individuals every second week to raise issues which are not debated. There is an opportunity for a response from the appropriate Minister, but no-one else may participate in the debate. So the grievance provisions in our Standing Orders cannot in any way be construed as an opportunity for a grievance debate.

There is a need in this Parliament for a more liberal opportunity for urgency matters to be raised. During the time I was in the Chair, I took a different view of the urgency provisions in our Standing Orders from that which had been applied previously.

Mr Tonkin: That I acknowledged.

Mr THOMPSON: Yes, I accept that. But I recognise that whoever occupies the Chair of the House will always have the question of urgency motions, no matter who the Speaker is. There will always be a certain amount of pressure, overtly or covertly, on the Speaker to allow or not to allow urgency motions to be pursued.

Our Standing Orders need to be amended to make it more readily accessible for urgency matters to be raised in this House. Again one has to look only at the Federal House and compare its procedure with what occurs in this place.

Almost every week in the Federal House opportunity is provided for an urgency motion to be debated. A provision of that nature is not contained within the Standing Orders of the Federal Parliament, but that occurs simply as a result of co-operation between the two sides.

We need to become a great deal more mature in our approach to parliamentary debate and the workings of this institution. The Government of the day, of whichever political colour, should be big enough to allow the Opposition to bring forward matters that it perceives to be urgent. If a Government is worth its salt, it should be able to tolerate and adequately deal with criticism from an Opposition. It brings no credit on the Government if it suppresses opportunity for members to bring embarrassing issues to the Parliament. Indeed, the reputation of this institution would be enhanced if Governments were more prepared to allow matters that may be embarrassing to them to be brought before the House.

Mr Tonkin: We certainly have not tried to stop that.

Mr THOMPSON: Perhaps we might see a rise in the number of occasions when a request is made of the Speaker to bring urgency motions to the Parliament, and I am pleased to note that the Leader of the House is prepared to allow more opportunities for urgency motions to be debated in the House.

When the Leader of the House introduced the motion in respect of this sessional order he gave as one of the reasons for it, the increase in the amount of legislation that is coming before the Parliament. He said that not only is more legislation coming here, but also that the legislation we are dealing with is more complex. That is true.

However, the percentage of legislation that comes to the Parliament as a result of the implementation of the policies of the Government of the day and, therefore, legislation which is most likely to attract debate, is no greater now than it was previously. While much more machinery legislation is coming before the Parliament, that is not the legislation to which the proposed sessional order will apply. It will apply to controversial legislation—legislation which is likely to generate the most debate.

Mr Tonkin: That is one view of it.

Mr THOMPSON: Well, it is my view and it is a view I hold very strongly.

Mr Tonkin: I could quite easily have been persuaded to the view that we should not apply the sessional order to the really controversial legislation, because we want to make sure the Parliament has adequate time to debate it; whereas there is not a great deal of controversy surrounding the machinery legislation and, therefore, it can be dealt with expeditiously.

Mr THOMPSON: I ask the Leader of the House whether he envisages that the sessional order about which we are talking will apply to the

industrial arbitration legislation which was introduced in the Legislative Council yesterday?

Mr Tonkin: I have not considered that yet. I don't know. I would have to confer with the Minister in charge of the Bill and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr THOMPSON: I put it to the Leader of the House that if he is looking only for a time saving device for the machinery, non-controversial legislation and that he intends to allow full debate on the controversial legislation, we are wasting our time with this debate today.

Mr Jamieson: He can't give you that assurance. If you start to filibuster on an issue just for the sake of it, the Government is entitled to take the action that is proposed here. In all fairness, it would not do so under normal circumstances.

Mr THOMPSON: In response to the member for Welshpool, let me say this: Adequate provision exists already in our Standing Orders for that to be dealt with.

Mr Jamieson: There isn't adequate provision, you know.

Mr THOMPSON: Well, there is, you know, and it has applied, you know! It applied in 1963, when members opposite created such a pandemonium that it caused poor little Iven Manning to be removed from the Chair.

Mr McIver: What a disgraceful exercise that was. You know both sides of the story.

Mr THOMPSON: I also noted it applied on another occasion, because I was in the Committee Chair and had the responsibility to enforce that time management procedure. Therefore, it can be seen provision exists already in our Standing Orders for that to happen.

However, members opposite are drawing me away from the point I was pursuing, which was the type of legislation to which this sessional order would apply. I say quite deliberately that the sessional order will apply only to those Bills which are controversial.

Mr Tonkin: That has not been the proposal that I put to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr THOMPSON: I shall watch with interest how the Leader of the House applies this sessional order, and when it is applied in respect of controversial legislation only, I shall remind him of the discussion we are having now.

Mr Tonkin: I am not saying it won't apply to controversial legislation, but I don't see it applying to that alone.

Mr THOMPSON: If the sessional order is designed principally to cater for the non-contro-

versial machinery Bills, we are wasting the time of the House debating setting it up, because the Government would have no difficulty obtaining the co-operation of the Opposition on non-controversial issues.

The Leader of the House drew attention to the fact that the House has risen at approximately 11.00 p.m. on the two sitting days this week. The House rose at approximately 11.00 p.m. on those occasions because of co-operation between the two sides. We have already heard my colleague, the member for Karrinyup, point out that he cut short his speech on a matter because he was aware of this.

Mr Tonkin: He was talking about last year.

Mr Clarko: I did it last night also.

Mr THOMPSON: The member for Karrinyup cut short his speech last night, too. That sort of co-operation can happen. Indeed, it is more likely to happen if we do not have these severe measures proposed here.

I appeal to the Government to drop its proposal to put this sessional order into effect. The committee of the Opposition parties has been meeting for a long time. Long before this sessional order was trotted out, it was meeting with a view to trying to find a way to better manage the Parliament. This side of the House intends the Parliament should operate in a more rational manner and this trend has been in progress for some time. Before the change of Government at the last election—

Mr Tonkin: We had better have a talk then.

Mr THOMPSON: I understand that is why the Leader of the House is talking with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I say to both the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the House that I have been very heartened by the discussions which have taken place thus far and I believe if there is more of that we will see an improvement.

Mr Tonkin: To which discussions do you refer?

Mr THOMPSON: I am referring to the discussions the Leader of the House has had in respect of the management of the House. That is the way to achieve the desirable objective. To come in here and attempt to change the Standing Orders and establish a sessional order is not the way to do it. Such a move will not succeed unless both sides come together with the intention to co-operate so that the management of the House is more effective. Are we to assume that once the sessional order is applied the call will be given only to members from the Opposition side? Of course we cannot assume that.

Mr Jamieson: You would not want a debate any more loaded than the one on FID, when you had 13 speakers in a row.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.15 p.m.

Mr THOMPSON: Let me summarise what I have said. We see no reason for the adoption of a sessional order of this nature because we believe that the only way to achieve the reforms the Leader of the House sees as being delivered by the sessional order will be by co-operation between the two sides.

I should mention the method by which the Government seeks to amend the practices of this House; in fact, it seeks to do this in two ways. The first is by way of sessional order, the one we are now debating, and the second is the motion to amend the Standing Orders, which is to follow.

In my experience in this House and from the research I have done, Standing Orders and sessional orders have been adopted by this House only when there has been a clear consensus that those moves should be made.

At the beginning of each session, motions are moved for sessional orders, and those motions take but a few seconds to dispense with in the House. The reason for this is that it is accepted by both sides of the House that there should be a change, or those sessional orders should be introduced.

The Standing Orders Committee of this House was asked by you, Mr Speaker, to give some consideration to amendments along the lines proposed by this sessional order and along the lines of the motion to follow to amend the Standing Orders. However, the three parties represented on that committee did not accept the changes and so no recommendation came forward for the amendments.

The Government chose to bring forward this motion for significant amendment to the practice of the House. This is an undesirable way in which to operate. There needs to be full acceptance of change to the way in which this House operates, and it is clear that a very significant proportion of the House that is under your control, Mr Speaker, does not want this change. It will be difficult for you in the Chair to administer proceedings in this House when you have a significant group within it who do not believe there should be change.

If the Government elects to use its numbers to amend the practice of this House, and if it chooses to use the power it has set up in that way to suppress the Opposition, it will only lead to trouble in this House.

At this very late stage, I appeal to the Government to withdraw its motion and to resort to the only method by which peace will be maintained in this House—by negotiation and discussion between the principal groups within the Parliament.

MR MENSAROS (Floreat) [2.20 p.m.]: It would be no exaggeration to call the introduction of this motion into this House an historic occasion because it does very drastically change the procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia, procedures which have been adopted over many years, over a period longer than anyone here can remember. While I welcome the spirit of agreement and co-operation which has been referred to by previous speakers on this motion, I have a somewhat different view about a motion such as this having been introduced, a motion which will introduce such a drastic change.

It is not fair for the Government of the day to initiate such a change. For instance, the important change to extend the time for which members of Parliament are elected has not been introduced or implemented by any political party during its term in office.

In recent times in New South Wales, the Labor Government having agreed with the other party, said, "These are the changes we will implement in case we win the election". By this means, when a very drastic change was proposed, having involved the electorate, the electorate knew what would happen, how their representatives were going to be elected and what sort of rights they would have if that party were elected to Government. This side of the House has particularly observed that custom, because even if we talk about the comparatively recent past, we did not make changes like this, particularly unilaterally, in the nine years we were previously in Government, nor in the 12 years we were in Government preceding that. Nor had the Hawke or Tonkin Government attempted to do this. Those Governments were perhaps somewhat more—I would not say orthodox—conservative in their approach by tradition which worked reasonably well.

Although there have been small changes, as the member for Kalamunda has pointed out, these changes introduced during the life of a Government worked always to the advantage of the Opposition, so it was not the case that the Government unilaterally introduced a change which worked for the Government. For instance, discontinuance of the reading out by Ministers of answers to questions and the longer period for questions without notice definitely work for the Opposition. Consequently, the Government of the day could not have been accused of taking steps to

curtail the rights of the Opposition, just because it was in power.

The other point I briefly mention—I do not like to repeat anything which has been argued in a debate—is that to the best of my recollection there has never been a move to amend Standing Orders unless the Standing Orders Committee has discussed the matter and reached a decision. I asked a question on notice of you, Sir, in regard to whether this is so or whether in the past Standing Orders have been amended without discussion and decision by the Standing Orders Committee of which I was a member for some time during the term of Speaker Norton.

If anything hurts the reputation of legislators, members of Parliament—and we often hear that our reliability is questioned because members take a different view of the same subject depending on whether their origins are in Government or Opposition.

To state the same case entirely differently, albeit the period of time from having been in Opposition and becoming the Government could have been comparatively short, such a behaviour understandably underlines our reliability. Of course, everyone in business, the community and especially in public life, needs this reliability. I do not think anyone could possibly deny that this happens on scores of occasions. Indeed, if one were to go back to the *Hansard* of the last Parliament one could open any page at random and point out that this is what the Opposition has said, which is exactly contrary to what it is saying now.

It is not universal, though fortunately I would, for example, challenge anyone in this House to point to one occasion, or one section in *Hansard* during the 16 years I have been a member of this House where I have taken a different stance in Opposition than I have in Government or where I have reneged on statements I made in Opposition after becoming a member of the Government, or vice versa. Inside or outside the Parliament, I have adhered to everything I said pertaining to the Parliament of Western Australia.

I emphasise that the Standing Orders provide reasonable scope to deal with the situation to which the Leader of the House has pointed; namely, when the Opposition obstructs a debate unduly. There have been occasions on which this has been done by both sides of the House, but that is the purpose of the guillotine and the gag motions under the Standing Orders which have been used very sparsely in the past. They have been used on occasions when they were justified.

They were also used in the spirit of the Standing Orders as they were meant to be used.

Many people comment on the workings of Parliament and say that Parliament is only a rubber stamp, because the party which has the numbers will decide who wins on any matter. The answer to this is that we have a two-party system. Considerable arguments can be heard on both sides. That applies definitely on our side before we come to Parliament, when different opinions are expressed in meetings in the party room.

So the Parliament itself, albeit it might have made a decision which could be called a foregone conclusion, is still one of the remaining instruments for the checks and balances which are built in explicitly in the presidential system, in which, of course the Administration is divorced from the Legislature.

In Parliament, albeit the decision may be a foregone conclusion, the time available to members can be used for open public criticism, and depending on how it is judged by the media, that criticism is disseminated among the electors and constituents of the various members. To curtail that right is actually to curtail one of these checks and balances which are important in a democracy.

I know that it could be argued that this is only a very small step, but unfortunately if the first step is taken and it turns out to be the thin end of the wedge that could easily lead to a system which will do away with the checks and balances, a system which is still called in many places a Westminster system. This could and has occurred within the commonwealth of nations which are members of the CPA, where there is a one-party system. In that case, of course, power of criticism of the Executive or the Administration is not given to the legislators on virtually either side of the House or of either denomination.

Mr I. F. Taylor: You could hardly call this the first step. We already have the opportunity for gags and guillotine motions.

Mr MENSAROS: I do not know what would be the first step, unless the member wants to think that a one-party system could only happen drastically and quickly. If we look at the history of some of these places where there is a one-party Government in the same system as we have, in some places it has evolved fairly slowly in one generation, but step by step—and I am particularly pointing to African countries where it was introduced. If we consider Zimbabwe—and I think one would not have had to take a very high odds bet that it would have happened in due course—that was the forewarning of past so-

called minority Government under which there was at first more democracy than there appears to be today.

Mr Tonkin: You have done more than any other party to introduce one-party Government in this State. Look at the Legislative Council: Ninety years unbroken rule by one party.

Mr MENSAROS: This opens up another argument which I do not think the Speaker will allow me to pursue and, of course, which raises a lot of questions; but we can debate this argument at another time.

This debate has two significant indicators to both sides. Number one is the seriousness and perhaps the frankness of the Opposition when we compare the length of the speeches of the two lead speakers. That is not insignificant; it is a spontaneous demonstration of how we consider the time of Parliament, and it could be seen in the expression and the preparation even of the speeches that have been delivered.

The other significant point, I am afraid, is the comment of the Leader of the House. He commented—I do not know whether unconsciously or deliberately, but I think it is one of his comments to which he would hold strongly—that the Opposition does not acknowledge and realise that the traditional way is not acceptable for the present Government. We know that, and this is precisely what I am complaining about. It did not occur to Bert Hawke or John Tonkin that the traditional way—and I do not think it occurs to the member for Welshpool—just because it is traditional, has to be done away with. I think those people would look at whether or not it is a good way.

What I am arguing about is my opposition to change for change's sake. That does not lead one anywhere. Tradition was built up in this House by the side of politics of the present Government just as it was by the side of politics of this Opposition. I wish to make these further observations: To manage the time of the House is, of course, up to the Government, and that implies also that the Government might have to impose a certain discipline to prevent the proliferation of legislation on the following debates and the sittings of the House.

I will point to one little example: Possibly this afternoon we will debate the Water Resources Council Act Amendment Bill. In my humble view that Bill is absolutely superfluous. What the Government wants to achieve could have been achieved with the existing provisions. We know what the Public Service is.

Officers of the Public Service come and say "There is an amendment necessary", the Minister

accepts it and pushes it through. The Government of the day should have a little more discipline so as not to take any amending legislation or any sort of advice to amend legislation immediately on board. The Public Service needs to be strictly disciplined and has to be more careful after putting forward one amendment not to come back in six months time with another because the very same Crown Law Department which drafted the previous amendment says that legislation is bad, or it does not do what was wanted.

Yet the briefing is there. Then that legislation again has to be amended, and amended again. How many times have we seen the same legislation amended by Parliament because of faulty drafting? Parliament's time is taken up introducing legislation and going through the different procedures, just because of a lack of discipline of mind by those people in the Public Service who are not formally responsible, but ultimately responsible to the Government of the day.

I think if that is kept under control it would be one more way to keep the superfluous debates and time of Parliament in check.

It seems to me that we have this proposed change and that we appear to agree on it, although I am saying that it is not fair for the Government to do it in its term.

Whatever agreement I can refer to, or whatever co-operation, in the bottom of their hearts the people concerned must agree that such an agreement made by the Opposition which is in minority must have come about under a certain amount of duress.

I am not saying that the Leader of the House pressed the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, but the position in which the Government is in, and the position in which the Opposition is in indicates to anyone that the agreement must have been made under certain duress.

Consequently the fair way to have a drastic change like this is to announce it as a policy, before the election, and let the people decide.

Mr Jamieson: That is ridiculous.

Mr MENSAROS: It is not ridiculous.

Mr Jamieson: The people outside of this Parliament would not have a clue about Standing Orders. You are just being impossible now. That is stupidity in its worst form.

Mr MENSAROS: The member does not have a good view of his electors. Maybe his electors do not have a clue, but mine do.

Mr Jamieson: You go out and ask your electors at any time now what they know about them.

Mr MENSAROS: My electors do understand the matter. I go to a lot of meetings and they ask questions and they do understand it. That may be the difference between the member's constituents and mine.

Mr Jamieson: You go to some of your constituents now and I guarantee they couldn't tell you a thing about it.

Mr MENSAROS: Why is it then that even the Labor Party proposed a four-year term of Parliament, after the election?

Mr Jamieson: That is a different thing from the Standing Orders of Parliament. What are you comparing that with?

Mr MENSAROS: It seems to me that this motion is virtually passed. I remind the Government that it should use it with caution and should apply it in a way that will not harm the system that we have.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [2.40 p.m.]: One wonders who is conning whom in this debate. I have heard a lot of nonsense. Members have attempted to usurp your powers, Mr Speaker, because I heard a member say that he was glad that an agreement had been reached by both sides of the House for questions without notice to be extended to 45 minutes.

Mr MacKinnon: If you check that point, you will find that we agreed to approach the Speaker for such a request.

Mr JAMIESON: I am not concerned about what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition says. An ex-Speaker spoke about an agreement concerning questions without notice, and he should know that they are subject to the Speaker's tolerance. If the House gets into a state of turmoil during question time, the Speaker has the power to conclude questions without notice and to proceed with other business.

With regard to my comment about who is conning whom, we know very well that the Opposition very often sets out to frustrate the legislative programme of the Government. I have been in Opposition long enough to know that. One of the classic examples of the Opposition's frustrating the Government, which probably forced this issue, was the debate on the FID Bill which was held last year. During that debate we had 13 speakers in a row who all used the same speech. No member will influence the people outside this House by that sort of performance and by sitting in the House until 2.00 or 3.00 in the morning. All the people would think is that the Parliament should be able to handle its business in a better way.

The only members who obtain any media coverage are the lead speakers on the various Bills before the House, unless of course someone calls you, Mr Speaker, a nasty polecat or one of the Opposition uses a term of low endearment to a member of the Government. This is the only way that members gain any press coverage.

What does this House become? Does it become a debate Chamber—a debate in which answers are being provided to questions raised by members from the other side of the House.

This type of filibustering does occur. It is time we looked at some other form of governing the circumstances which control the House. We must bear in mind that this is only a sessional order. The way that some members are behaving one would think it is a change to our Standing Orders for all time. It may be found after this session that it is not a successful change, and that the situation needs to be reviewed.

A member suggested that we have sufficient Standing Orders to cover the existing situation—provision for a guillotine motion and procedures for terminating a debate. I have never seen anything cause a greater riot in this House than the use of those procedures. Surely members of the House are sane enough to come to an agreement on this matter.

The member for Kalamunda mentioned the Federal system, and I was shocked to learn that he did not know as much about it as I thought he would. Not only does the Federal Parliament have provision under its Standing Orders to order the time to be spent on debate, but it also provides for managers of the House to draw up a time schedule for debate on every Bill. Of course, lengthy debates do not ensue on Bills which are not controversial; and in such cases only two members speak to the Bills. In addition to the Notice Paper the Federal Government publishes a time schedule or programme of how the matters before the House will proceed for the day.

Mr Rushton: It is agreed to between both parties.

Mr JAMIESON: Yes, because it is an established practice which has gone on since time immemorial.

Mr Rushton: We should do it here.

Mr JAMIESON: It cannot be done here. As far as the Federal Parliament is concerned, in the early days if they had not had this schedule available they would miss their trains, etc. This type of schedule has been in existence for some time; it has not been thrust upon the Federal Parliament recently.

In more recent times we have seen this situation occur. It only applies to two or three Bills in each year. Members should be able to agree to some form of fixation of time of debate in order that members from the various parties would know where they stood and would have a chance to debate the legislation when they wanted. No-one is suggesting that members of the Opposition or Government backbenchers should be denied the opportunity to speak on Bills. However, members should stop using Standing Orders for the purpose of frustrating the legislative programme. The most sensible thing would be for members on both sides of the House, after consultation, to make a declaration on the time available for each Bill.

No-one will convince the Government or the Opposition that they are wrong if the debate on a Bill concerns some kind of philosophy—it would not matter if we had 10 weeks in which to debate it. We should be sensible about this matter and show the public that we can govern our affairs on the basis of our own knowledge, and that we will not satisfy one another's point of view on some issues.

Mr Thompson: You were a member of a Standing Orders Committee over which I presided, and you did not come up with any matters concerning time management.

Mr JAMIESON: No, it was never suggested.

Mr Thompson: It was discussed.

Mr JAMIESON: Not this type of thing.

Mr Thompson: Indeed it was.

Mr JAMIESON: We discussed the possibility of introducing a Standing Order dealing with the guillotine procedures, but we did not discuss this type of thing, and I repeat that for the benefit of the member for Kalamunda.

Mr Thompson: I heard—that is why I am in here.

Mr JAMIESON: This proposal is to operate for one session to see if it is successful. If it is as bad as the Opposition envisages, I am sure there will be a lengthy debate about it in the future; but if it proves to be successful, what has been lost in trying out this venture? We have to try something.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

Mr JAMIESON: The member for Mt. Lawley was associated with this proposal because the existing procedure had remained static for so long that it had become ridiculous. When gas lights were still being used in this Chamber, those Standing Orders were in force. It is time that we modernised the procedures of the House even

though we should not change things merely for the sake of change.

As far as the time limits imposed on speakers are concerned, they should be subject to an amendment to Standing Orders, but insofar as the general speaker is concerned, it seems to me that in this day and age a timetable could be set that would suit all parties. No-one will be in trouble over this. A member may be hurt when his time is terminated, but he would certainly be more hurt if he were subject to a closure motion or a guillotine motion. That is when the sparks would fly. This has been experienced in previous years, and there has been a state of turbulence in the Chamber when the House has risen under such circumstances.

We will gain nothing by using the present Standing Orders, but if we adopt this sessional order or one that becomes part of our Standing Orders, and it proves successful and we get a better system, we should opt for that better system. The member for Floreat said we should not change for change's sake. We should also not keep the old orders just for the sake of keeping them if they are not satisfactory. I do not see how we will not succeed by having a go at something different. We tried hard in the last years of the previous Government to conclude our sessions at 11.00 p.m. and got away with it fairly well, but last year we sat absurd hours. The hours of sitting last year were longer than at any other time during the 30 years I have been in this House. To what avail? Did the Opposition achieve anything; did it get any more Press coverage than a few words to say that the House sat until 5.30 a.m. or 6.00 a.m. when the newsreader read the news bulletin the following evening? The Opposition achieved nothing at all. We will not reconcile our differences on legislation on which fundamental differences exist and on which we will not debate one another's point of view. We can haggle and talk and go on all night, but it will not alter the situation.

Mr Thompson: We are not saying change should not take place; it should be by mutual consent.

Mr JAMIESON: Let us see how mutually we can act by adopting this order for one session. If it does not work, what is wrong with that? The Opposition seems to be worried about the industrial legislation. Such legislation has always caused a furore whichever side of the House has introduced it. I do not know whether that will happen this time.

Mr Hassell: It is different this time; this is different sort of legislation.

Mr JAMIESON: It is always different. It was different when the arbitration court was abolished and people were hanging over the Public Gallery trying to drag members out of the House. That happens when philosophical differences exist between the parties about a legislative programme, and it will continue to do so.

It seems to me fair and proper that when a sticky piece of legislation is coming along the Leader of the House should be able to say to the responsible member of the Opposition that it looks as though difficulties may arise and that the Government wants matters to proceed in a certain way. Reference has been made to the dominance of speeches from one side, but I point out that when the FID Bill was debated there was no opposition. If members opposite are talking about winning an argument I remind them that they won that one by 15 to one, judging by the number of speeches made. But it did not achieve anything at the end of the debate when the numbers went up. We should give this order a chance to work. If it does not, Opposition members can go mad about it when it is brought before the House again.

We will get nowhere if we do not try new approaches. This proposal has been tried in different formats in the Victorian and Federal Parliaments, and it is high time we tried something here. We need reasonable and ordered times of sitting to get through the legislative programme, rather than have to sit here all night and be faced with starting the same programme the following day, knowing full well that when the vote is taken the foregone conclusion we all knew existed at the start of the debate will eventuate.

This is a sensible approach to a situation that has got out of hand, more so in recent years than in the past. There always has been and always will be controversial legislation that will require more debate and more attention by members of this House than the departmental legislation that rarely creates much debate except when people want to nitpick and cross every "i" and dot every "i". About such legislation one might be able to say, "Scrap it; I am not interested in it".

I favour this proposition. If it does not work I will be one of the first to have my few words to say about it. Let us give it a try and see if we cannot develop a better system than we have at present.

MR STEPHENS (Stirling) [2.55 p.m.]: The National Party is totally opposed to this motion as we believe it points to a further reduction in the relevance of the Parliament. The National Party has been concerned for some time at the

irrelevance Parliament is assuming. The Labor Party has put out a lot of publicity about the need for electoral reform. The people and the interests of Western Australians would be served much more effectively if the Government devoted its energies to making Parliament a more effective debating Chamber. This motion does not achieve that at all. In its proposed electoral reforms the Government has argued for a better form of representation. If we accept this motion it will mean members will be elected to Parliament and then be virtually gagged. We would be allowed to vote, but not to speak and record our reasons and points of view.

Several members interjected.

Mr STEPHENS: Government by Executive is not new to the labor Party.

Mr O'Connor: I agree with you on that.

Mr STEPHENS: I thank the member for Mt. Lawley. I knew if we persisted long enough we would get the Liberals behind us one day. But perhaps I will have to examine my thinking if the Liberals are supporting us; I must be on the wrong track.

At present a motion is before the Parliament to set up a Select Committee to look at electoral reform. I read recently that the Premier said the Labor Party will not proceed with electoral reform until it has discussions and the Opposition is prepared to come up with some acceptable propositions. I suggest to the Premier that a Select Committee which would involve all parties of the Parliament would be a much better way of trying to reach consensus. He has not done that; he has ignored the Parliament just as this motion, if carried, would further reduce the importance of Parliament by allowing the Government to gag members at any time.

It is all very well for the member for Welshpool to say this is only a sessional order, it is different from the Standing Orders, and we should look at the furore that occurs when Standing Orders are imposed and a gag or guillotine motion is before the House. The effect of this motion, if carried, would be identical because the Minister would declare a particular Bill to be urgent. He does not have to give reasons for declaring it urgent. No debate takes place and no reasons are necessary. I can assure him there would be a furore about that.

This proposal is a retrograde step. Members of this Parliament are paid, I presume, for 365 days of the year; we are paid in 12 equal instalments. We can sit until 11 o'clock each night; let us sit more frequently. If we tried that and members spent more days in this Chamber, they would

come to their senses and make sure their speeches were brief and to the point. We would overcome the problem. After all, we are paid to do a job; let us be prepared to sit here and do it. We should not be cut off because an Executive decides it has had enough and it does not want to waste time in this House. That alternative could be looked at; we could sit until 11 o'clock each night, and if we sat for 50 weeks of the year, so what? We are paid to represent the people and to put our point of view.

It is all very well for the member for Welshpool to say that debate changes nothing. That is proving the point on which I started. We should be restoring the relevance of Parliament so that good and factual debate will change something.

Mr Jamieson: I did not say that debate changes nothing; I said that where fundamental differences exist we will not change one another's point of view by debate.

Mr STEPHENS: I accept the correction. Unfortunately the failure to change anything is possibly more pronounced when philosophies are involved. However, it is also prevalent when other issues are involved and Cabinet has made a decision which cannot be changed, even though the argument against it may be perfectly valid. This is true not only of the Labor Government but also of the Liberal Government. I can recall an occasion during the third reading of the Mining Bill when I said that had there been an adjudicator, the arguments advanced by those opposed to certain provisions in the Bill would have won the day. However, they did not have the numbers. I also paid tribute to the contribution to that debate by the member for South Perth; he had the points and won the debate, but the argument was lost.

We should debate issues in the House with open minds and we should be prepared to concede points put forward which improve the legislation. I am certain that fewer amending Bills would be brought before this Parliament if we adopted that approach. We all know that when perfectly valid points are made they are not accepted at the time but six or 12 months later amendments are brought forward in a slightly altered form and passed. The Government thinks it is a sign of weakness to accept amendments. However, in the last session of Parliament I was impressed by the Labor Government which was starting to go along the right lines. I urge the Government to continue in that manner because it will strengthen the role of Parliament.

It is regrettable that we are now debating this issue, which goes against improving the relevance of Parliament in our society. The Deputy Leader

of the Opposition referred to the next motion which will come before the House. If carried, it will reduce the speaking time of members by one-third. If we carry this motion it might reduce the speaking time entirely because we must all accept that some members, certainly from this side, would be denied the opportunity to speak at all. Members of Parliament come to this House representing their electorates. Many people do not read *Hansard* but others read and comment on the debates in *Hansard*. People in the electorates want to know, and would like to think, that their member is putting their point of view, irrespective of whether or not the debate is won. They are interested in knowing that the member is doing his job and expressing the electorate's points of view. That is important and both parties are aware of its importance. In several of the previous election campaigns the fact of whether a member spoke and the number of times he spoke in the House was used in an effort to denigrate a sitting member. That action was taken by both sides. I did not suffer such denigration in my electorate although it was attempted because the people were well informed and did not fall for such cheap political propaganda.

A Government member interjected.

Mr STEPHENS: They have obviously satisfied their electors in other ways and I accept that. That is only acknowledging that a member has at least two roles; one as a legislator and the other in a pastoral capacity.

A member interjected.

Mr STEPHENS: The member for Stirling would spend much more time in this place than the average member. I challenge the man who made that comment to look at the record. I have certainly never sat in my seat and slept through a division and found I had voted against my party's direction.

Mr O'Connor: You have been absent from the Chamber, which he was not.

Mr Hassell: Not only were you absent from the Chamber, but on one occasion you were not here to vote on a motion you had moved.

Mr STEPHENS: I accept that. I was not in control of the House. The Leader of the Opposition would realise that on certain occasions it is imperative for members of Parliament to attend functions in their electorates. It ill behoves him to make such cheap criticism.

The man to whom I referred was in the House asleep in his seat with his colleagues around him. It reflects badly on those members who left him to sleep; they did not have the common sense to wake him up.

Several members interjected.

Mr STEPHENS: I was rather surprised that the Leader of the Opposition raised the question of that motion, because members of the Liberal Party voted for it when they thought they were voting against it. How confused they were! Once again the members of the Liberal Party showed that Parliament is hardly relevant because they had a motion passed by this Parliament and they ignored it. That is what I am talking about when I refer to the concern of the National Party. We would like to restore the dignity, integrity, and effectiveness which are essential to Parliament. We will not achieve that by passing motions such as those before us today. I am totally and utterly opposed to the motion.

Finally, the motion by the Leader of the House indicates a classic degree of hypocrisy. I will quote again from a speech made by the Leader of the House when he was in Opposition. I refer to page 1460 of *Hansard*, Thursday, 12 September 1974 when Mr A. R. Tonkin was speaking against the guillotine motion during the Fuel, Energy and Power Resources Act Amendment Bill, and I quote as follows—

If democracy is to flourish—and it is not flourishing in Western Australia at the moment, and certainly it did not flourish in this place this afternoon—it is essential that we allow and encourage people to take part in public debate. If we steamroll legislation through this place with a guillotine motion we do not allow the people to gather their wits about them, to discuss the matter with their neighbours, to write to their members of Parliament, and to call meetings in order to discuss a Bill which, in this case, has very grave parallels in history.

This is another example of the Executive riding roughshod over the Parliament. Members of Parliament have become rubber stamps.

What Mr Tonkin said then is patently true today. I cannot understand how a member who, on that occasion displayed such sincere convictions, has the gall and the audacity to come before the House with the motion we are currently debating. It indicates that he has one point of view when in Opposition and another when in Government.

Several members interjected.

Mr STEPHENS: I am paid to do a job.

Mr Bateman: The worst exhibition of any Opposition during the 16 years I have been in Parliament was displayed by this Opposition over the FID Bill. How could members not support this legislation?

Mr Hassell: Everything we said has come to pass.

A member: The Government has made a hypocrisy of this place.

Several members interjected.

A member: Members accepted absolute garbage.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr STEPHENS: I am sorry, these members are trying to pad out my speech for me. I do not think that is absolutely necessary. I have not always agreed with what the Liberal Party has advanced. I cannot agree with a man who makes definite statements like that, but when he is in a position of power, he puts before the Parliament the exact reverse.

Several members interjected.

Mr STEPHENS: I am asked whether I want to speak here until six o'clock in the morning. I suggest to the member for Canning that after 12 months in Parliament, members should come to their senses and then we would have a reasonable arrangement.

I come back to this trial period. This is only a sessional order for a trial period. It is very easy for the present Government to take a kid-glove approach to the matter for the trial period. In effect, there is no trial at all; it is false pretences.

The Government will move a step forward after the trial period and incorporate this in Standing Orders. We might then find we have even less time to express our points of view.

The other point the Leader of the House made when he was moving this motion earlier today was that it was not going to cut down the time available to the Opposition. If he believes that, why worry about this motion? That creates in my mind a question as to his sincerity in this matter. If he really means the time available to the Opposition will not be reduced, then why have this motion?

Finally, even if we pass this motion, I still guarantee that at the end of the session there will be a rush of Bills with long sittings when members will have insufficient time to do their research or to study the Bills adequately.

Perhaps the Government—and this would apply to previous Governments also—should better manage the way in which it introduces Bills so that they are brought up in an orderly fashion and there is no sudden rush at the end of the session. The Government should look to improve the efficiency of this House.

I think I have said sufficient to indicate that we in the National Party totally oppose the motion.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley) [3.14 p.m.]: I support very strongly the comments made in the last few minutes by the member for Stirling. I have not always done that, as the member knows.

Mr Stephens: It is a little late now, unfortunately. If you had supported me, you might still be on the front bench.

Mr O'CONNOR: It is rather strange that this motion was introduced by the person who introduced it today. He is the person who, when he was on this side of the House, opposed very strongly the measures he is introducing today. This shows how hypocritical he is. His views depend upon what he is and what he stands for.

I believe he has let down the people of this State, the electors of the State, and the members of Parliament in Western Australia. He has brought forward a motion which is not only dictatorial, but also abominable, as far as I am concerned. He has introduced a motion which can restrict members of this House to something like two or three minutes of speech on an issue when he has gone ahead and spoken for an hour on that particular issue himself.

It is all right for him to take the time to represent his electors and to give their views, but not for other members of this House to have their say in areas where they ought to have it.

Mr Gordon Hill: Is this your swan song?

Mr O'CONNOR: No, nor should it be the honourable member's. If he is not concerned for the electors in his area and does not want more than two minutes to speak on an issue, I hope he will indicate that. There may be a better member for his electorate than he is. Whoever it may be, he should have more than two minutes in this House to express his views on what may be an important issue for him and for his electorate.

Mr Thompson: You are limiting him to two minutes.

Mr O'CONNOR: The Minister, in this legislation put forward—

Mr Tonkin: It is not legislation.

Mr O'CONNOR: The motion put forward proposes to restrict the time available to members, apart from the introducer and lead Opposition speaker, to debate legislation.

Mr Tonkin: Would you have everybody speak for two hours?

Mr O'CONNOR: Why should a member of this House not speak for 15, 20, or 30 minutes on

an issue which is important to him or to the people of this State?

Mr I. F. Taylor: Tedious repetition is what you indulged in at the end of last year, and you know it.

Mr O'CONNOR: The honourable member was one of those who participated in tedious repetition when he was on this side of the House. Now he wants to dictate to the people of this State and to restrict members of this House who represent the people of Western Australia from saying what they think they ought to say.

Several members interjected.

Mr O'CONNOR: I have been in this House for 26 years, and quite frankly, I will be glad to get out of it, because what we are doing now is restricting a member of Parliament from saying what he wants to say in this House.

Government members: Rubbish!

Mr O'CONNOR: I have, over the 26 years I have been in the Parliament, had the opportunity to speak for 15 or 20 minutes without further restriction on what I want to say in this House. Now this Government wants to stop that. It wants to prevent public views from being expressed, and a member of Parliament from getting up to express his views on how the people feel in his electorate.

Several members interjected.

Mr O'CONNOR: I know the member for Kalgoorlie, who is squawking at the moment, had problems in his area connected with the hospital. He wanted to speak about them in the House. He should have had the opportunity. We have before us industrial relations legislation, and if the Minister wants to declare that as urgent legislation, and if everyone in this House wants to speak on it, the maximum time each speaker will have is three minutes. That is quite unfair, wrong, and contrary to the democratic principles of this Parliament. I object very strongly to it.

The Minister says this will be for a trial period of only six weeks. I do not accept that. I do not believe the Minister will have it for only a trial period of six weeks, but will try to have it enforced all the time he is a Minister and this Government is in power.

This motion has been brought forward by a Minister who has spoken in this House for something like seven hours on one subject, yet he wants to restrict all of us to three minutes. The Minister also spoke for seven hours in this House on another subject and he wasted a great deal of the time of this Parliament, although he may not believe he did.

Mr Tonkin: The lead speakers will still have unlimited time.

Mr O'CONNOR: Who was the lead speaker at that time?

Mr Tonkin: How did I get more than 45 minutes if I was not lead speaker?

Mr O'CONNOR: I was here at the time the Minister spoke for seven hours and he spoke a lot of rubbish.

Mr Tonkin: Was I the lead speaker?

Mr O'CONNOR: Apart from one occasion, never has another member of this House spoken for so long. As a member of this side of the House—

Mr Tonkin: You know what the subject was, don't you?

Mr O'CONNOR: What was the subject?

Mr Tonkin: It related to the Kimberley and the way you took votes from people up there. You took votes from people who had a right to vote. That is disgraceful, and yet you have the cheek to talk about democracy here today! It was the most disgraceful Government that the country has ever seen!

Mr O'CONNOR: In relation to the industrial legislation and, indeed, other legislation, should we not have the right to speak on behalf of the people of this State?

Mr Tonkin: You were trying to save the seat for Mr Ridge, because he couldn't hold on to it on his own ability.

Mr O'CONNOR: And what is the Leader of the House trying to do now? He is trying to take away the freedom of the people to express their views through their elected representatives. He is trying to say that people will not be able to do that in the future. He is trying to tell people who want to work that they cannot work and he will let the union dominators do what they will!

The Parliament should be established on a basis which enables each of us to say what he feels. The Leader of the House said Parliament ought not to be a rubber stamp, yet he is trying to turn it into a rubber stamp so that he can push legislation through the House irrespective of whether such legislation is important to the people of this State. On the basis of allowing two hours for debate, each member of this Parliament will not be guaranteed more than three minutes within which to express the views of those in his electorate. That is insufficient time and I will not accept that proposition under any circumstances.

The Leader of the House is attempting to deprive the Parliament of the ability to debate issues

properly. He is attempting to steamroll legislation through the House—legislation which might disadvantage the people of this State.

Mr I. F. Taylor: And you were never part of steamrolling legislation through this house!

Mr O'CONNOR: No, I was not; not like this.

Several members interjected.

Mr O'CONNOR: Let us hear the member for Kalgoorlie. When did we, as a Government, ever pass legislation which restricted the debating time of each member to less than three minutes on any issue?

Mr Tonkin: It will not do that anyway.

Mr I. F. Taylor: You have used the gag.

Mr O'CONNOR: We did that after members opposite had spoken for hours and hours. The Government is afraid of debate in this House. It is afraid of letting the people come forward and express their views to members of Parliament, who, in turn, can relate them to the House. The Government is afraid of what might be printed in the Press. It is trying to restrict what occurs in this place in order that it can push through legislation which will disadvantage the community and the Parliament. I will not have a bar of it.

Whenever a Minister uses jack boots to steamroll legislation through on this basis, I cannot support it. In the past we have tried, with the co-operation of the Government and the Opposition, to put forward legislation on which proper debate takes place. However, the Government is trying now to prevent that and I certainly will not go along with it.

Earlier today the Leader of the House indicated that co-operation in the House had improved greatly. Now he wants to tread on us with his jack boots and prevent us from taking part in proper debate in this House. Why does the Leader of the House believe members should have less than three minutes each to debate an issue in this place?

Can the Leader of the House tell me the reason for that? Does he believe each member should have less than three minutes to speak on legislation which may be of vital importance to his electors? Such legislation may involve the freedom of the individual. The unions may want to prevent a person from working who wants to work—they may want to stifle the freedom of the individual—and they may want to allow the Government to take over and control this State. I came into the Parliament approximately 26 years ago on the basis of the freedom of the individual.

Mr Tonkin: On the basis of crooked electoral laws.

Mr O'CONNOR: The Leader of the House should stop trying to shy away from this issue. He knows he does not want freedom of the individual.

Mr Tonkin: Look at the Legislative Council. It has always been under the control of one party. Talk about the freedom of the individual! The people of this State do not have the freedom to elect the Legislative Council that they want.

Mr O'CONNOR: Let us look at the International Labour Organisation.

Mr Clarko: Can you give me an example where the minority of the voters got the majority of seats in the Legislative Council?

Mr Tonkin: It happened at the last election.

Mr Clarko: That is only half. You must take two of them together, because it is a Parliament elected over two periods—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mt. Lawley is on his feet, not the member for Karrinyup.

Mr Clarko: I hope the Leader of the House realises that, too.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Mt. Lawley to resume his seat. I shall take one further opportunity to point out to the member for Karrinyup the procedure I have adopted since I have undertaken this role; that is, any member of the House, irrespective of the Standing Orders, in my opinion at least, is entitled to make what could be termed "reasonable interjections" to the person on his feet. That does not entitle other members of the House to indulge in cross-Chamber interjections. That is the interjection to which I referred and I hope the member will refrain from that practice in future.

Mr O'CONNOR: The Leader of the House moved the motion and spoke for approximately an hour. He seeks now to preclude a member—if all members wish to speak on an issue—from speaking for more than three minutes on an item. He stated also that the co-operation in the House had improved recently and things were going better. I ask the Leader of the House why he does not continue in that spirit of co-operation? He is not prepared to do so, because he wants to use his jack boots, steamroll legislation through, and ensure Bills are passed without proper consideration, control, and debate in this place.

Let us look at the position in respect of the industrial arbitration legislation. Irrespective of what the Leader of the House may say, it is important legislation. I came into the Parliament on that issue, because I believe in the rights and freedoms of the individual. However, as a result of this motion the Leader of the House could restrict

me to speaking for no more than five minutes in this House on that issue. That is wrong and it is contrary to all the principles he has espoused in the past. The industrial arbitration legislation is important.

Mr Tonkin: Are you expecting a two-hour limit to be placed on that?

Mr O'CONNOR: The Leader of the House could impose such a limit on that legislation, could he not?

Mr Tonkin: We could apply the gag after two minutes! That Standing Order has been there for years.

Mr O'CONNOR: And the Leader of the House may use it.

Mr Tonkin: You are too stupid!

Mr O'CONNOR: Could the Leader of the House declare the industrial arbitration legislation to be urgent and use principles contained in this motion in respect of it?

Mr Tonkin: I could, yes.

Mr O'CONNOR: Of course the Leader of the House could do that, and that is what I object to.

Mr Tonkin: But that would not be two hours.

Mr O'CONNOR: The limit would be two hours, apart from the time taken by the lead speakers.

Mr Tonkin: It wouldn't be. Read the motion.

Mr O'CONNOR: I have read the motion. Is the Leader of the House telling me that, apart from the time taken by the two lead speakers, debate can proceed indefinitely?

Mr Tonkin: Not indefinitely.

Mr O'CONNOR: For how long could debate proceed?

Mr Tonkin: For the period that is decided.

Mr O'CONNOR: Could the Leader of the House restrict debate to two hours?

Mr Tonkin: On a major Bill, I could also apply the gag after two minutes!

Mr O'CONNOR: I asked the Leader of the House whether he could restrict debate to two hours.

Mr Tonkin: And I could shoot you too, but I don't intend to do that either.

Mr O'CONNOR: The Leader of the House does not intend to do that, because he might be shot in return! Nevertheless, that can be done, and that is the aspect which worries me.

Mr Tonkin: It can be done now. We could apply the gag on the industrial relations Bill five minutes after debate started.

Mr O'CONNOR: I have struck one of the Leader of the House's nerves. Members opposite who sit behind the Leader of the House may laugh, but they do not want to represent their electors. They do not care that legislation may be steamrolled through the House.

While I am in the Parliament—I will not be here for much longer—I want members to have the opportunity to debate issues properly. I want my electors to be able to bring issues to my attention in order that I may present them to the Parliament.

However, as a result of this motion, once a Bill is being debated in the House, I will not be able to move amendments which might rectify errors, even if the Minister responsible is not aware of those errors. I will not be able to do that, because, as a result of this motion, two hours' notice will be required. If a member spoke on a Bill and indicated the existence of an error in it, he would not be able to move an amendment to rectify it. That is quite wrong and it is contrary to anything that has happened in the House previously.

The Leader of the House should reflect on this issue in order to obtain an understanding of what he is attempting to do. I ask him again: If we were debating a Bill on which he had placed a time limit and I found an error in it, could I move an amendment to rectify that mistake?

Mr Tonkin: Of course.

Mr O'CONNOR: Not according to this motion.

Mr Tonkin: You should read the motion before you debate it.

Mr O'CONNOR: I have read it.

Mr Tonkin: You can't read, then.

Mr O'CONNOR: The Minister is now leaving his seat because he has been beaten.

Mr Tonkin: The day you beat me will be a joke.

Mr O'CONNOR: What we ought to do is try to give members of Parliament the opportunity to do what they are here for—to represent their electors, the Press and Parliament. If we are to be restricted to several minutes each there will be no opportunity for members to make their points. I am glad to see the Minister is taking some advice and returning to his seat. We are here as members of Parliament to represent the people of this State, and that is all I want to do.

The Minister's motion provides specific times in which members can comment. He wants to cut down from 45 minutes to 30 minutes the time in which members can speak to the Address-in-Reply and to the second reading and third reading of Bills. Can the Minister tell me when I have

spoken for 45 minutes on one of these issues? Most members speak for less than their allotted times. The Minister wants to restrict the time in which members of Parliament can say things against the Government. The time provided to members in which they can speak on subjects is very dear to members of Parliament, so the motion before us represents a disservice to the Parliament.

The Minister's motion, if passed, will mean that after the commencement of a debate, no amendment, no schedule, and no modification can be made. I think this is wrong and contrary to what we require in this Parliament.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has made certain recommendations, and as the Minister himself indicated that this motion is to apply just for a particular period, I wish to move an amendment.

Amendment to Motion, as Amended

I move—

Add after item (5), the following item to stand as item 6—

(6) This motion shall not apply after 20 May 1984.

Mr HASSELL: I formally second the amendment. Mr Deputy Speaker, may I reserve my right to speak at a later time?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes.

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Leader of the House) [3.36 p.m.]: This applies only for the remainder of this session, which will expire some time in May.

Mr O'Connor: Does it say that in the motion?

Mr TONKIN: Say what?

Mr O'Connor: That it applies only to this session.

Mr TONKIN: It is a sessional order! That means it applies to a session, "sessional" being an adjective taken from the noun "session".

Mr Clarko: But how long will the session go? Last year's session has continued since March.

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Leader of the Opposition) [3.37 p.m.]: I support the amendment moved by the member for Mt. Lawley, and in particular in a broader sense, I support the very strong speech he made in opposition to the Government's motion. I will come back to that when we return to debate on the motion itself, hopefully as amended.

Quite simply the issue is whether the Opposition can be reassured of the bona fides of the Government's intentions by having the Govern-

ment accept an amendment which carries out precisely what the Government says it is doing. We have been asked in this whole exercise to accept a lot of things on faith. All that the Government wants will be written into the Standing Orders or into the sessional orders.

Mr Tonkin: And all that the Opposition has asked for, too—two amendments. Whatever you asked for. That is the kind of stuff you never accepted when in Government.

Mr HASSELL: This is the third amendment. I am not speaking to the whole issue but to this particular amendment.

Mr Tonkin: You are being inaccurate when you say that we have not put in anything that you wanted, because we have.

Mr HASSELL: The purpose of the amendment is simply to formalise the situation so that what the Government says it wants is clear for all the world to see. That seems to me to be a totally reasonable proposition and one which I am amazed the Minister suggests cannot be accepted. There is no need to waste our time debating this. I did not think it would be necessary for me to speak, but the problem is that the Minister opposes the amendment, and that disappoints me. This is simply a formalisation of what he says he wants.

Mr Tonkin: It doesn't formalise it at all.

Mr HASSELL: What does it do?

Mr Tonkin: It says it will finish on 20 May, but what if the session goes on till 21 May?

Mr HASSELL: The one day when it did not apply would not matter.

Mr Tonkin: It will end when the session finishes, anyway.

Mr Clarko: But we don't know when the session will finish.

Mr Tonkin: It will be in May or June.

Mr Clarko: We expected the previous session to finish in December.

Mr Tonkin: We didn't give an assurance.

Mr Clarko: I am not criticising you, but it shows it can happen.

Mr Tonkin: This session will end when this sitting, which is usually called the Autumn sitting, ends.

Mr HASSELL: It will end only if the Government prorogues Parliament—is that not so?

Mr Tonkin: I will act in the proper way.

Mr HASSELL: When Parliament is prorogued?

An Opposition member: When will that be—1985?

Mr Tonkin: It will be a new session.

Mr HASSELL: What if Parliament is recalled? What if the Government suddenly gets the idea into its head in June that it wants to introduce a new industrial Bill and Parliament is recalled this session?

Mr Clarko: Or another price control Bill?

Mr HASSELL: Be dinkum. The Government said it wanted this until the expected end of the session in May. We have asked the Government to formalise this matter and not to take it on trust. That is a reasonable proposition and, if the Government is being reasonable, it should accept it.

MR STEPHENS (Stirling) [3.41 p.m.]: We support this amendment, and in doing so we would hate it to be taken that we support the concept at all. I would have preferred the amendment not to be moved because I am totally opposed to the motion in itself. If we amend it even in this form it could be construed as some sort of support and that is why I decided to stand and indicate that we are totally opposed to the motion. Although we will support the amendment, I do not want it to be inferred in any shape or form that that indicates any support for the motion.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 20

Mr Blaikie	Mr MacKinnon
Mr Bradshaw	Mr Mensaros
Mr Clarko	Mr O'Connor
Mr Court	Mr Old
Mr Cowan	Mr Rushton
Dr Dadour	Mr Spriggs
Mr Grayden	Mr Stephens
Mr Hassell	Mr Thompson
Mr Peter Jones	Mr Tubby
Mr Laurance	Mr Williams

(Teller)

Noes 26

Mr Barnett	Mrs Henderson
Mr Bateman	Mr Hodge
Mrs Beggs	Mr Jamieson
Mr Bertram	Mr McIver
Mr Bridge	Mr D. L. Smith
Mr Bryce	Mr P. J. Smith
Mrs Buchanan	Mr A. D. Taylor
Mr Brian Burke	Mr I. F. Taylor
Mr Terry Burke	Mr Tonkin
Mr Burkett	Mr Troy
Mr Carr	Mrs Watkins
Mr Davies	Mr Wilson
Mr Evans	Mr Gordon Hill

(Teller)

Pairs	
Ayes	Noes
Mr Crane	Mr Grill
Mr Watt	Mr Parker
Mr McNee	Mr Pearce
Mr Coyne	Mr Read
Mr Trethowan	Mr Tom Jones

Amendment thus negatived.

Debate (on motion, as previously amended) Resumed

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Leader of the Opposition) [3.45 p.m.]: I will speak only briefly to conclude the debate on behalf of the Opposition. The essence of the fundamental liberty of free speech is that, subject to some obvious exceptions, no man is entitled to judge the quality, the value, or the right of any other man to express his opinion. If ever there is a place in which that principle should be upheld, it is the Parliament.

It is not just a question of the convenient administration of Parliament as if it were a Government department; it is a question of the essential nature of Parliament and the essential right of every member, equally with every other member, to represent both his constituents and the broader State-wide public interest.

The Opposition is totally opposed to the proposed sessional order and to the proposed amendment to the Standing Orders. We have indicated this on numerous occasions during the past year, in fact, from the very first indication by the Government that it wanted to introduce such a system. We have said throughout that the issues raised by the Government should not be dealt with in this way, but rather on a basis of management involving co-operation between the two sides and a reasonable understanding of the needs of Parliament. However, as the months have gone by, the Government has made it clear that, regardless of the strength of our feeling on this issue, it intended to introduce amendments to restrict the right of members to speak and to restrict debate on legislation. That is an amazingly dangerous power to give to a Minister when it is recognised that the Government has everything to gain and very little to lose from avoiding debate on legislation which it finds uncomfortable, embarrassing, or politically sensitive.

It does not surprise me, although it is contrary to my expectation, that the Minister should have indicated already, in the first few days of this part of the session, that he wants to use the sessional orders for legislation already before the House. Quite simply put, he wants us to get used to the idea of his restricting debate; and when we and the public are used to that idea it will ease the

way for the Government to apply those rules to legislation about which the Government is embarrassed or which is politically sensitive.

There is no need for this sessional order; the Parliament could operate both effectively and efficiently without it. In addition, without extended late night sittings, Parliament might need to sit for a longer period in the year. That would not matter if the sitting were to deal with substantial business.

When it became clear to us that, despite our objection, the Government would persist, we examined our position and decided that the only thing for us to do, other than to protest as we are doing, would be to seek some concessions which might balance the picture a little. The Government has made some concessions, and it is entitled to credit for that.

The Government is entitled also to credit for having adopted a more reasoning approach than that adopted on a number of occasions last year; but the Government is entitled to no credit for introducing this motion. The Government is not entitled to any credit for seeking to apply it at this stage of the session, or on a regular basis.

The member for Canning raised a very interesting example, during his outburst of interjections, when he referred to the actions of the Opposition in dealing with the FID Bill last year. What we did with that Bill was precisely what an Opposition should do: We put the Bill to the test of a thorough debate and we found weakness after weakness, flaw after flaw in the Government's legislation.

Mr Tonkin: But you did not have to restate every weakness 10 times.

Mr HASSELL: The weaknesses were not restated 10 times; they were restated in relation to different clauses; and they were different weaknesses. That is the essence of a Committee debate. It is very often only in Committee that the flaws of legislation emerge, when under test a Minister sees things for the first time, such as implications which have not previously been drawn to his attention as well as deficiencies which have not been the subject of other debate.

A genuine process of education goes on in Parliament in a Committee debate, especially in a vigorous Committee debate. There is a process of enhanced understanding by both sides of the Chamber, and that is the process that the public elects us to carry through.

There have been occasions when a Government, of whatever colour, has discovered that its best laid plans are really much more damaging to certain people than it ever expected. I can say

these things with the hindsight of experience, because there have been times when as a Minister in this House I went away from a vigorous Committee debate convinced that changes needed to be considered, and brought about those changes in the other House, or in new legislation at another time. There would not be a Minister who has done his job who would not on occasions have had the same reaction, even though the Government might not have conceded at the moment of attack, or if a change has not been made on the spot.

This sessional order will strike at Committee debates particularly, and they are the ones which epitomise the essence of the parliamentary process of dealing with legislation. What we sought from the Government was a trial period for these sessional orders to operate, without formal changes, without formal resolution, and without amendments to the Standing Orders. That has been refused. With the exception of two amendments accepted by the Minister, this sessional order requires us to trust the Government on all the issues about which we are concerned and in respect of which the Government has given us assurances. The Government is protected by the formalities of a sessional order and amendments to the Standing Orders.

Our opposition to this proposal is total. Our discussions with the Minister, the changes which have been agreed upon, and the concessions which have been made are accepted gratefully, but they do not alter our fundamental belief that the essential workings of the Parliament do not require this sessional order and would not be improved by its being carried. We will divide if necessary to oppose this motion, because we must put on record the formality of our opposition to the motion, and what it intends to do.

I oppose the motion.

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Leader of the House) [3.57 p.m.]: I would like to make a few points in reply. We have to remember that the gasbagging that goes on in this Parliament costs the taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars. No-one is denying the right of members to make speeches, but there is a Standing Order which prohibits tedious repetition applying to members' arguments or the arguments of another member.

It is impossible for any Speaker, no matter how assiduous he is, to control that situation. It is a Standing Order, and it was never intended that Parliament should be abused in this way with speaker after speaker saying the same things over and over again. That was prohibited in the Standing Orders which have been in force since the

Parliament started, but no Speaker can police them. It is a very difficult situation.

Members of Parliament on both sides of the House need to exert some discipline and to say, "Look, that point has been made three or four times; we should not make it again".

My speech on the guillotine motion in 1974 was quoted by the member for Stirling and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. It seems to be a much quoted speech.

Mr Bertram: Pearls of wisdom; that is why.

Mr Hodge: A very good speech.

Mr TONKIN: The people who used the term "jack boots" when referring to me or the Government are very ignorant people. Jack boots is a term used in respect of a fascist.

Mr Spriggs: You are worse than a fascist in this House.

Mr TONKIN: Fascists are people with an extreme right-wing leaning, who prevent freedom of speech. They are people in a one-party State such as we have in this State in the Legislative Council.

Mr MacKinnon: Is not the same applied to extreme left-wing States like Russia and Iron Curtain countries?

Mr TONKIN: The term "fascists" is not correct when applied to left-wing regimes. But I would say the Soviet Union is a fascist State.

Mr Hassell: What is the difference in practice?

Mr TONKIN: The point I am making is that if one wishes to talk about jack boots, one needs to know something about history.

The fact is that the only Governments which have used the guillotine in this Parliament have been conservative Governments. Therefore who is being hypocritical when members of the Opposition say that we should not have this motion? I have examples in front of me—the dates on which the guillotine motions have been used—and on every occasion a conservative Government was in power.

We talk about jack boots. Who would have been a greater wearer of jack boots than the former Premier, Sir Charles Court, who in the eight years he was in office never accepted an amendment from the Opposition? I have accepted more amendments today than Sir Charles Court ever accepted; and members opposite were the lackeys who were prepared to sit behind him and accept what he said.

Several members interjected.

Mr TONKIN: The amendments that we have accepted indicate that the Government does be-

lieve in consensus. It believes in co-operation, and it believes that Parliament should legislate and that the Executive should take notice of the Opposition. Time and time again last year the Government demonstrated that it was a very different Government from that of the conservative Government—at times a reactionary Government—of which members opposite were members and which refused to accept amendments. The smart alec comments by the member for Karrinyup—that is why members opposite were no good—bring this place into disrepute. The last thing the people want are smart alecs.

Mr Clarko: You should know. Look in the mirror.

Mr TONKIN: To talk about jack boots is nonsense.

Only yesterday the member for Floreat had an interview with officers from the Public Works Department over two Bills which are before the House. That courtesy was never afforded me as a member of the Opposition. I was forbidden to speak to public servants. I can say that not only was I forbidden to speak to public servants, but also I was never once given the opportunity which was given to the member for Floreat when I had finished reading the Bills that were before the House. I went to the member for Floreat and said, "After you have read the Bills feel free to discuss them with me or my officers". Conservative Governments have never offered that courtesy.

Mr Clarko: You never asked.

Mr TONKIN: Neither did the member for Floreat—I went to him.

I had a case where the member for Murray-Wellington complained to me because he was not permitted to sit in on a deputation that people had sought with me. It had nothing to do with him and he had not raised the matter. I would not have had the impudence to write to a Minister and ask if I could sit in on a deputation that had nothing to do with me. He also told me in a letter that I had not told him when I would be in his electorate. Not once in my five years in Opposition was I informed by a conservative Minister that he would be in my electorate.

Several members interjected.

Mr TONKIN: I received my first letter the other day from a Minister—the Minister for Local Government—telling me that he was meeting with a shire in my electorate. It is the first notification I have had of this type. It is clear that when in Government one does not care at all about the Opposition. The only time the guillotine has been used was by a conservative Government against a Labor Opposition.

The Liberal Party brought in legislation to ensure that the Legislative Council stays within its control. It was legislation that was dishonest and it cheats the public of being able to change the composition of the upper House.

The conservative Government forbids members of the Opposition to speak to officers of the departments.

Mr Clarko: That is false.

Mr TONKIN: That is not false; I was forbidden to speak to them. Not only was I forbidden, but I also had an appointment with the chairman of the products safety committee, and on the morning of the meeting I received a telephone call from the Consumer Affairs Bureau advising me that Mr Shalders had heard of the meeting and had forbidden it to take place—I received only an hour's notice. It is a contrast to what happened yesterday when the member for Floreat, with my blessing, met with officers from the Public Works Department.

The way members of the Opposition carry on about democracy is a scandal. I do not know how that word does not stick in the throats of members opposite after what they have done in this place to ensure that this Parliament will never have a Labor majority. It is not a slight on the part of the ALP, it is a slight on the people of this State who are told it does not matter what they do at an election, when it is finished the Liberal Party will have the majority in the upper House. Members opposite talk about democracy!

It appears that the agreement I received from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to this matter, provided that I gave concessions, has been broken. I regret that because the concessions I indicated we were happy with, such as the 45 minutes for questions without notice, etc., were sincere. I understood that because of the concessions the Opposition would support the motion.

Once again in the Opposition's typical unfair manner it wants the concessions and amendments, but it still reserves the right, like sulky schoolboys who have not got their way, to oppose the motion. I regret the agreement has broken down and that the concessions I offered are no longer applicable.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

	Ayes 26
Mr Barnett	Mrs Henderson
Mr Bateman	Mr Hodge
Mrs Beggs	Mr Jamieson
Mr Bertram	Mr McIver
Mr Bridge	Mr D. L. Smith
Mr Bryce	Mr P. J. Smith
Mrs Buchanan	Mr A. D. Taylor
Mr Brian Burke	Mr I. F. Taylor
Mr Terry Burke	Mr Tonkin
Mr Burkett	Mr Troy
Mr Carr	Mrs Watkins
Mr Davies	Mr Wilson
Mr Evans	Mr Gordon Hill

	Noes 20
Mr Blaikie	Mr MacKinnon
Mr Bradshaw	Mr McNee
Mr Clarko	Mr Mensaros
Mr Court	Mr O'Connor
Mr Cowan	Mr Old
Mr Coyne	Mr Rushton
Dr Dadour	Mr Spriggs
Mr Grayden	Mr Stephens
Mr Hassell	Mr Trethowan
Mr Laurance	Mr Williams

	Pairs	(Teller)
	Ayes	Noes
Mr Grill	Mr Crane	
Mr Parker	Mr Watt	
Mr Pearce	Mr Tubby	
Mr Read	Mr Peter Jones	
Mr Tom Jones	Mr Thompson	

Question (motion, as amended) thus passed.

STANDING ORDER No. 164

Amendment: Motion

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Leader of the House) [4.10 p.m.]: I move—

That Standing Order 164 be amended as follows:

- under the heading "ADDRESS-IN-REPLY" delete "Any other Member 45 minutes" and substitute "Any other Member 30 minutes";
- under the sub-heading "SECOND READING" under the heading "OTHER BILLS" delete "Any other Member 45 minutes" and substitute "Any other Member 30 minutes";
- under the sub-heading "THIRD READING" under the heading "OTHER BILLS" delete "Each Member 45 minutes" and substitute "Each Member 30 minutes"; and
- under the heading "SUBSTANTIVE MOTION OR A DIRECT MOTION

OF WANT OF CONFIDENCE"—delete "Any other Member 45 minutes" and substitute "Any other Member 30 minutes".

I am sure, Mr Speaker, that you will allow me to refer to a matter which arose in the previous motion and which I forgot to explain. The reference to amendments not being able to be presented without two hours' notice related to Government amendments. That was done purely to protect the Opposition, otherwise the Government might ambush the Opposition with a new clause five minutes before the vote was taken and it would be over before people knew what was going on. That was done for the protection of the Opposition.

Mr Hassell: Did I hear correctly that you have reneged on your agreement?

Mr TONKIN: I have not reneged on any agreement. It was agreed that certain concessions would be made if the Opposition supported the motion. That was the understanding I had in discussions with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Hassell: You people obviously are looking for real strife. You are looking for a fight. If that is the line you are going to take it is a reversion to your tactics of last year.

Mr TONKIN: When the Deputy Leader of the Opposition came to me he said, "Look, we may be able to go along with some of this stuff but we want some concessions". He did not say, "We are opposed to it and we want concessions". How would it be if the Opposition were to come to me and say, "We are opposed and we want you to do this?" It was put to me as, "What about these concessions?" As I indicated in my speech earlier I conceded all those requests, barring the one that was asked yesterday.

Mr MacKinnon: It disappoints me that it has come to this. Did we once discuss whether the Opposition would support or oppose the motion?

Mr TONKIN: I believe that, especially in our first meeting, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said he might be able to get his people to go along with the motion, but that he would want certain concessions. I believe those were his words. Of course I do not have a recording of that and my memory may be faulty. I understood that he was asking for certain concessions in return for his party's support. Surely the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is not saying that he was asking for concessions even though he opposed the whole motion? How could he come to me and say, "We are opposed to it", because I would have said, "Oppose it, and that is the end of the talking".

Mr Hassell: Why have we wasted today? You are carrying out a tactic at the direction of your Premier.

Mr TONKIN: Not at all; I have not discussed it with him.

Mr Hassell: Are you going to withdraw what you said before?

Mr TONKIN: Withdraw what?

Mr Hassell: Your proposition that all the arrangements are off.

Mr TONKIN: I made it clear—

Mr Hassell: Are you going to continue the approach you adopted before or not?

Mr TONKIN: My approach was to talk and try to get agreement. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition came to me, I think on three occasions—certainly there were three letters—

Mr MacKinnon: Three occasions.

Mr TONKIN: —and on each occasion certain questions were asked. I certainly was not under the impression that we were making all the concessions and that the Opposition was making none at all. Why would the Government, knowing the Opposition was implacably opposed to the proposition, say, "What about this and that?"

Mr Hassell: You know full well what you are doing is contrary to the forms and traditions of this Parliament and that you intended to do it through the blatant exercise of numbers.

Mr TONKIN: The Leader of the Opposition may well talk about that! How long was he on this side of the House and how many amendments did the then Government accept from the Opposition?

Mr Hassell: How many guillotines did we put through?

Mr TONKIN: The only guillotine motions were moved by conservative Governments, including the Government of Sir Charles Court behind which the now Leader of the Opposition sat.

Mr Old: They were pretty rare.

Mr TONKIN: All right, but they were the only ones.

I do not intend to make many comments about this motion. Members already will be aware of the problems associated with the running of the House. I have given assurances which the Opposition has laughed at. Opposition members said "How can we take any notice of what you say?" They came up with amendments and said, "Look, why should your propositions be in the motion and not ours?" I accepted those amendments. There seems to be no goodwill whatever on the Opposition side; it is the Kerr-Whitlam syndrome all over again. "We lost the election but we will

not accept it. We will not accept the right of the people to change the Government and we insist that the Legislative Assembly be run in the same way as we ran it". That is unacceptable to the Government.

A problem exists and this was demonstrated by Hitler at Munich: When concessions are given it is interpreted by some people as weakness. When one accepts amendments those people say, "We have them on the run". I believe that is why Sir Charles Court, for example, never accepted an amendment. That is how he saw it. If he accepted the amendment he was admitting he was wrong or that the Opposition had a good idea. He was not secure enough in himself to do it and he refused to accept any amendments.

Mr Hassell: You are not secure enough to keep the word you gave.

Mr TONKIN: My word was in exchange for support. What was it for, if not for that?

Mr Hassell: It was in exchange for your sense of decency.

Mr TONKIN: That is not an exchange; the Leader of the Opposition does not understand the word. The Opposition has broken the agreement by dividing against the motion.

Opposition members: Nonsense!

Mr Hassell: Are you going to maintain the arrangement you made or not?

Mr TONKIN: The Opposition has broken the arrangements. I have maintained them and the Opposition has broken them.

Mr Hassell: Are you going to maintain the arrangements?

Mr TONKIN: I have done so and the Opposition has broken them. The agreement was that certain concessions would be made if the Opposition supported the motion.

Mr Hassell: There was no such agreement and you know it.

Mr TONKIN: Yes, there was.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will have a chance to speak.

Mr Hassell: Are you backing off from what was arranged?

Mr TONKIN: I am not backing off from what was arranged. I am saying those concessions were given.

Mr Hassell: I am trying to clarify what you are doing.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have asked the Leader of the Opposition to desist because he will

have a chance to speak. We have been going on about this all day.

Mr TONKIN: Concessions were asked for and concessions were given. Apparently the Opposition thought it could eat its cake and have it too. The members thought they could get concessions and not give an inch. That is the arrogance of the Whitlam-Kerr syndrome; the Opposition thinks it has the right to rule and the people do not have the right to change the Government.

Mr Hassell: You want to transfer debate to the other House. You want to transfer the effective work of Parliament to the other House.

Mr TONKIN: I hope that the member's threat was picked up by the Press—that I want to transfer the work of this place to the other House. The Leader of the Opposition is saying that the Opposition lost the election but it will not accept the people's verdict. It will bring in the bully-boys from the Council who were not even elected in 1983 and they will do the work for them. The Opposition cannot win on fair boundaries.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

MR MacKINNON (Murdoch—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.21 p.m.]: It is a very sad day when we come to the Parliament having debated and spent many hours endeavouring to reach an agreement—that we thought was a reasonable agreement with a reasonable man—only to find the leopard has not changed his spots.

Earlier today I tabled all the correspondence I had with the Leader of the House following my meetings with him. I confirmed our meetings by correspondence for the very reason which is demonstrated today. We made agreements and we had understandings which are clearly outlined in that correspondence. Nowhere and at no time was I asked to give the Opposition's word in exchange for support of the motion and nor would I have done so. In fact, the Leader of the House is condemned by his own words when he admitted that when we discussed the legislation I asked for time to go back to the party room and report to the members because I did not have such authority.

Mr Tonkin: That is right, and the party has not supported your attitude.

Mr MacKINNON: I was never asked to give any support to the Government in exchange for any arrangements we might have made. I was of the complete understanding that the Leader of the House was a man of his word and he was working in line with the Premier's commitment when he first announced this procedure on 6 December. I

remind the member of the Premier's words on that occasion when he said the Government will seek consensus on the need to avoid legislation by exhaustion and on the need to schedule efficient sitting hours. We were negotiating all the way along the line on the basis that we would arrive at some form of consensus.

Mr Tonkin: We have given everything and you have given nothing.

Mr MacKINNON: Whether the Opposition supports or opposes what has happened today in the sessional order motion is irrelevant. It is now in place and the agreements we made should also be in place. As I have indicated, the Government has the numbers to determine what it wants and the Opposition has always recognised that. As our Leader has indicated, we were operating from a position of weakness and that was our clear understanding.

Mr Tonkin: If we had acted as you did, we would not have given any concessions.

Mr MacKINNON: I am not one who looks to the past; people who look to the past are reactionary and backward looking, and they remain in the past. I look to the future. I do not intend to defend everything we have done in the past, whether it be right or wrong. I am endeavouring to arrive at a better working relationship in this House, and the Leader of the House knows that quite well.

I am dismayed that all of the time I put in has now been washed down the drain because the Leader of the House is in a fit of anger, because the Opposition chose to oppose a particular motion which will take benefits away from it. This is despite the fact that we reached agreement on what is contained in the motion and sessional orders. The member has now taken that agreement away and has decided to take his toy, run away with it, and play elsewhere.

Mr Tonkin: You have not conceded a thing.

Mr MacKINNON: Let us examine that statement, "not conceded a thing". Let us consider what has happened today to the Opposition in the House. I refer to my last letter to the Leader of the House to indicate what the Opposition is giving away. The agreement was on the basis that—

Several members interjected.

Mr MacKINNON: —we are giving away the following concessions—

The speaking times on Bills and motions be as per your proposed Notice of Motion . . .

A notice of motion which gives members one-third less time to debate an issue at every available opportunity.

Mr Tonkin: You are not accepting that; you are opposing it.

Mr MacKINNON: The Leader of the House is not half-wrong; we are totally opposing it. I did not say we were accepting it. I said we were having to give away one-third of our speaking time whether we like it or not. We will oppose it but we will be giving it away. We are opposing it, but it will be gone; what is the difference whether it is given or taken away? We are being robbed; it is theft. The Government is taking it away and we cannot do a thing about it. The Leader of the House has the temerity to say we are not giving it away. The next concession was—

That the time management procedures be implemented as per paragraph five, six and seven of my letter to you of 28 March 1984.

I thank the Leader of the House for agreeing to the amendments. However, without our having moved them, they would not have been encapsulated in the motion; the Minister's fit of anger would have ensured that those agreements would also have been abrogated.

The next item was—

That the time allocated for Questions Without Notice now be 45 minutes each sitting day.

That, Mr Speaker, is a decision for you to make. I understand you have received letters from the Government and from the Opposition asking you to confirm that agreement and you will make your decision in due course. It appears that you will soon receive another letter from the Government because the Minister has taken his toy and run away to play elsewhere because of what has happened today. That 45 minutes is now no longer agreed upon and we are back to 30 minutes question time—25 minutes for the Premier in which to repeat Press statements from the day before, the day before that, and the day before that, and five minutes to members of the back bench of the Government and of the Opposition to ask questions of the Ministers. The letter continues—

That the Urgency Motion proposals be agreed as per my letter to you of March 28.

Again, that agreement has been totally abrogated by the Minister. It goes on—

That except in cases of agreement, a minimum of seven days time be provided between their second reading introduction and the resumption of debate.

I assume that we shall now have, and not just towards the end of the session, Bills introduced today and debated tomorrow on what the Leader of the House calls "time management" and what

we shall call "urgency motions". They will all be urgent and it will always be necessary to cut down speaking time because the Premier and the Leader of the House do not have the stamina or gumption to sit here after 11.00 p.m. at night. If they cannot stand the pace and they cannot take the heat in the kitchen, they should get out of it.

I repeat my earlier statement that all concessions are being made by the Opposition or benefits are being taken away from the Opposition without its agreement. They have been taken away and have been encapsulated in a Standing Order, or a sessional order. The agreements we arrived at were based on trust. I mistakenly placed my trust in the Leader of the House and the agreements made have now been forgotten. I was naive to think we could approach this on a manly, friendly basis where trust could be built up. I was genuine in my desire to try to achieve a better working relationship in this Parliament. It is clear that this Leader of the House had no such genuine desire. I totally support my colleagues. There is no variance in their attitude.

Mr Hodge: Why did you go back on the agreement you reached?

Mr MacKINNON: The Minister clearly has not been listening.

Mr Hodge: I have been.

Mr MacKINNON: The Minister for Health was not at any of the meetings the Leader of the House and I had. At no time did the Leader of the House say to me that the agreement we reached was dependent on supporting a motion in the House. Even if he had, I would not have given him the undertaking.

Mr Tonkin: You led me to believe—

Mr MacKINNON: I did not. I never said that at any time.

Mr Tonkin: You hoped to get that from your party.

Mr MacKINNON: If the Leader of the House had that doubt he would have come back to me.

Mr Tonkin: Why did you think I was giving you all these concessions?

Mr MacKINNON: Because I believed the Leader of the House was trying to carry out what his leader had indicated on 6 December. He was trying genuinely to reach an agreement with the Opposition on procedures.

Mr Tonkin: That is right.

Mr MacKINNON: He was doing exactly what we would have been doing if we were in his position. We would not have gone back on the agreement.

Mr Tonkin: I have not gone back on any agreement.

Mr MacKINNON: The Leader of the House has and he well knows it. Not at any time did I say to him that these details were dependent upon us supporting his motion.

Mr Tonkin: At the very first meeting he said he believed the party would go along with it, but there were some matters he wanted to discuss.

Mr MacKINNON: I said that I believed I could get my party to agree to the proposals that I was putting to the Leader of the Opposition. I never said—

Mr Tonkin: That is right, you agreed—

Mr MacKINNON: We never discussed, as I have indicated, whether we would support the motion. The correspondence I have already tabled today indicated just that.

Mr Tonkin: You said you hoped you could get your members to agree. They just divided.

Mr MacKINNON: There were individual items of agreement.

Mr Tonkin: They just divided against it.

Mr MacKINNON: The Leader of the House is dead right. We have.

Mr Tonkin: Do not talk about me breaking agreements.

Mr MacKINNON: The difficulty with the Leader of the House is that we do not agree on the restriction of speaking times, as I indicated earlier today.

Mr Tonkin: You should have made that clear.

Mr MacKINNON: However, in the interest of parliamentary procedure we have decided to help in the running of the House. We oppose what the Leader of the House is trying to do. We recognise the power of the Government. The Minister for Health has laughed about it. In the interests of consensus, we would like to get back to a working relationship between the two parties. That was the basis on which we entered into those discussions, as the Leader of the House well knows. It seems to me he has just gone back completely on an agreement. That is what I started with.

Mr Tonkin: You started when you divided.

Mr MacKINNON: That is where I came in at the beginning. I said that we in the Opposition are most concerned because the Leader of the House is asking us to give concessions, to give away speaking time and the like. All these items would be encapsulated in Standing Orders or in a sessional order. My approach to him was that it should not be in writing, it should not be in a sessional order, and it should not be in a Standing

Order; it should be by agreement between the two of us. We would see if the agreement worked. If it did work, well and good; if not, the Government could resort to its numbers.

As a consequence, now what has happened? Because we have opposed the sessional order on the basis I outlined previously, the Leader of the House is packing up his toys and going home.

Mr Tonkin: That is your right. You must not expect the Government to give concessions, and when you go back on your agreement, not to withdraw those concessions.

Mr MacKINNON: Had the Leader of the House listened to our approach in the first place, when we were genuinely trying to arrive at an agreement, we would not be standing here today. We would not even have had the debate we have had. There would have been a meeting behind the Chair, and we could have arrived at those arrangements which we had hammered out previously. Today we could have been debating under these particular guidelines.

I indicated to the Leader of the House quite sincerely that I believed I could get our members to agree. The member for Stirling might not have agreed—he is not a member of our joint Opposition parties, neither is the member for Merredin. Other members of the joint Opposition parties would have abided by the agreement on the basis that it was a trial for the balance of this session. If we broke that agreement at any time the Government could use its numbers. We were prepared to give that a go. But no, the Leader of the House wanted to proceed on the basis that he originally proposed.

That is where the first mistake was made. We now arrive at the position where, because we have opposed the changes—not for any other reason at all—the Leader of the House is saying, “I am going to pack up my bags and go home”. That is a small-minded and childish attitude to take. If we are to arrive at any agreements of any importance in the working procedures in this House, if any trust is to be built up, it should be started today. It seems to me that it is most unfortunate that that is not the case.

As I indicated to the Leader of the House, and as he well knows, there are plenty of ways for us to manipulate and frustrate the Government if we so desire. It is not our desire to do that. But if that is the position we are forced into, we will obviously have to mount the strongest possible protest. We will not shirk from that responsibility. We will not be cut down or cut back unfairly. We want to approach the thing in a proper, workman-like, sensible manner. But it seems that the trust I

placed in the Leader of the House was totally misplaced. For that I can only say I am most upset.

I indicated also, right at the very beginning of today's proceedings, that any changes made to Standing Orders or sessional orders would have to be approached very cautiously from the Opposition's point of view. Had the Minister been on this side of the House we would have adopted the same attitude. The Leader of the House and his colleagues would not have wanted the changes to be rushed either. They would not have wanted the changes encapsulated in Standing Orders straightaway. They would have liked them to proceed gradually on the basis of agreement so that opportunities for debate were not restricted at any time.

I return again, so that they ring in the Minister's ears every day from here on, to his own words, not mine. These are the words of the Leader of the House back in 1974, when he said—

Mr Tonkin: This is tedious repetition. You quoted them earlier today.

Mr MacKINNON: No I did not, not this section. He said—

This afternoon we have seen in this Chamber a disgraceful set of circumstances arise. We have before the House a guillotine motion—

This is not a guillotine motion, it is an amendment to Standing Orders. It continues—

—which will deny us the right properly to debate a Bill of a serious nature

Mr Tonkin: Did I split an infinitive there?

Mr MacKINNON: I do not think so. He went on to say—

There is a great deal of accumulated wisdom and hundreds of years of experience on both sides in this Chamber; but the Government by this motion intends to prevent us from drawing on that wisdom and experience and debating at length this Bill of great gravity.

Today, thankfully, this sessional motion is not in place, it has not been declared urgent. Next Wednesday or Thursday, when we get around to finishing this debate, it may well be declared urgent. But what we are debating now is an amendment to a Standing Order, an amendment that we totally oppose.

I hope the Leader of the House does not now have the gall to get up and say I agreed that we would not oppose the amendment. I continually

said to him all the way through that we would oppose it.

Mr Tonkin: That is certainly not my understanding. I understood these would be taken as a package and you could possibly get your party to support it, provided certain concessions were given.

Mr MacKINNON: In order that I confirm my understanding, I return to what happened at our meeting on 3 April. That was Tuesday of this week, so my memory of it is fresh. My letter reads as follows—

Following our meeting of today's date and our subsequent joint party meeting discussion on House procedures, we would like to suggest the following approach to these changes: That the changes be implemented immediately on the basis of our agreement (not by a motion,) for the first three sitting weeks of the Parliament; that is, up until the Easter break.

Mr Tonkin: That is the request with which I did not agree.

Mr MacKINNON: Subsequently we discussed those three sitting weeks and the Leader of the House said, "Let us have it for the six weeks; that is, the balance of the session" and I said, "Fair enough, on the basis that it not be by a motion". My letter continues—

At that time—

That is, after the six weeks. To continue—

—the changes be reviewed to assess their success or otherwise and the appropriate changes made (if any are required to be made).

That looks to me to be straightforward. It indicates that the changes be implemented immediately on the basis of our agreement, not by a motion.

Mr Tonkin: I didn't agree to that though, did I?

Mr MacKINNON: No, and here we are today. If the Leader of the House did not agree to that, it seems, *ipso facto*, to follow that our opposition to the motion today is totally in line with the Leader of the House breaking that part of the agreement.

Mr Tonkin: I never agreed to that.

Mr MacKINNON: Neither did we, and if we oppose the motion—

Mr Tonkin: Okay, there is no agreement.

Mr MacKINNON: There was no agreement on whether we would oppose or support the motion. We did not agree to that. We agreed to the pro-

posals which were subsequent to the Leader of the House moving the amendment to the Standing Orders and the sessional order.

Mr Tonkin: It seemed to me you said that, if we agreed to those concessions, your party would agree to our proposal.

Mr MacKINNON: Nowhere can the Leader of the House verify that was the case. I never made that commitment.

Mr Tonkin: You said you hoped your party would come to that, but there were some things that concerned it and it wanted this. It seems to me you were saying that if we agreed to those concessions, the party may well agree to our proposals. You have not agreed to our proposals, but you have taken all the concessions. That is very one-sided.

Mr MacKINNON: The one-sidedness is clearly on the side of the Government, not the Opposition. If I said that at the first meeting—I think I did say that I hoped to be able to gain the agreement of our members to those proposals—surely the Leader of the House would have followed it up at a later time and said, “Are you going to support the motion?” Surely he would have done that if he were in doubt. At all times I indicated clearly the basis on which we were discussing the items. That is why I followed it up in writing with the Leader of the House every time. That is why my letter of 3 April is couched in the terms I have read out twice to the House. I could read it again if the Leader of the House wants me to.

Mr Tonkin: But your letters did not exactly sum up what we agreed.

Mr MacKINNON: I think they did.

Mr Tonkin: Well, don't let us pretend that is a minute or a true record.

Mr MacKINNON: No, but clearly they represent my recollection of that matter and our agreement and understanding. The letter represents an accurate understanding of what we decided.

Mr Tonkin: I wouldn't have offered the concessions for nothing. When you said, “Look, I hope to get my party to agree, but we are worried about this”, I would have understood that. However, when you conceded that, you did not say, “Thank you very much, but we are not agreeing anyway”.

Mr MacKINNON: The Leader of the House knows, and I recall that during our discussions I said to him, “You are the Government. You have the right to undertake whatever you wish. You can decide the order of business and the pro-

cedures at any time”. The Leader of the House has reiterated that and I agree with him. We were trying to arrive at some form of agreement on the basis of the starting point the Leader of the House let us have on 13 March.

Mr Tonkin: The agreement has been a dismal failure because you have just divided. You can't do any more than divide on a motion, so obviously the attempted agreement with goodwill by both of us has broken down.

Mr MacKINNON: The Leader of the House is not wrong! I return to the point from which I began at the beginning of the day. Partnerships and agreements are built on trust, and trust and goodwill can never be built into Standing Orders, sessional orders, partnership agreements, company agreements, or whatever one likes to call them; if the parties do not have that trust, the agreement is not worth the paper it is written on.

Mr Tonkin: I agree.

Mr MacKINNON: That has been my attitude from the first time that I became aware of what the Government was proposing to do.

As the Leader of the House knows, I have never until this minute criticised him for his actions and what he proposes to do in this sessional order. I have never done that publicly until now, but I am doing it now.

We received the Leader of the House's letter on 13 March and I remarked on the issue to Ted Barker, who reported my comments as follows—

The Opposition was studying the proposals and would seek a meeting with the Premier, Mr Burke, and Mr Tonkin to hammer out an agreed basis for operation.

He was anxious to have a good working relationship with Mr Tonkin so that the business of the House could proceed smoothly and Parliament could sit at reasonable hours.

That boiled down to goodwill on both sides.

He was disturbed that the Government had set down its proposal without previous consultation. Such an approach was not very encouraging.

Whatever rules and regulations were imposed, they were only a guide.

What really mattered at the end of the day was the way in which business was approached by both parties, Mr MacKinnon said. He hoped that good sense would prevail.

Those comments appeared in *The West Australian* of 15 March and were made following the

receipt of the Leader of the House's first letter to me on the issue. That was my consistent attitude right up to and including the first debate on the matter today, but the Leader of the House has now chosen to go back on that agreement.

Mr Tonkin: Come on! The agreement is broken. I have not gone back on it. We couldn't agree.

Mr MacKINNON: Subsequently the Leader of the House has gone back on that agreement, so all of that time and effort was wasted. That vain hope I had that good sense would prevail has gone.

Mr Barnett interjected.

Mr MacKINNON: The member for Rockingham clearly has not listened, so I shall read again a portion of my letter of 3 April so that he is aware of exactly what I said—

... That the changes be implemented immediately on the basis of our agreement (not by a motion), for the first three sitting weeks of the Parliament; that is, up until the Easter break.

The meaning of that is quite clear to me. It was not to be done by a motion, but rather by an agreement behind the Chair—by an agreed procedure that we would arrive at following the lengthy discussions which had taken place already.

Mr Barnett: He agreed that he made you an offer.

Mr Blaikie: You can't go by the offers the Leader of the House makes behind the Chair. He goes back on his word.

Mr MacKINNON: I would not go by any offer he made in front of the Chair. It is really a dark day for parliamentary procedures in this House when we have a situation where, for most of the day, the Leader of the House has been reverting to comments about the Legislative Council and electoral change, and for the balance of the day he has abrogated an agreement we arrived at initially.

Mr Tonkin: How can you call it an "agreement" when you divided? How can that be an agreement? If that is an agreement, I would hate to see what a disagreement was. What would you do if you disagreed—throw hand grenades?

Mr MacKINNON: Can the Leader of the House explain to me where he said that anything we were discussing was dependent upon us supporting or opposing his motion?

Mr Tonkin: Right at the very beginning you—

Mr MacKINNON: I am asking the Leader of the House whether he ever said to me that this

agreement was dependent on our supporting or opposing his motion. I am asking him whether he said that.

Mr Tonkin: I don't think I had to, because you said it at the very first meeting, didn't you? You said that the party had some problems with it, but there were some things that you thought that the party might go along with if I agreed to concessions. I gave you all the concessions, bar the last one, and it has not been enough.

Mr MacKINNON: I rest my case. Once again I ask the Leader of the House whether he ever said to me that this agreement was dependent upon our supporting the motion.

Mr Tonkin: I don't know that I ever used those words.

Mr MacKINNON: The Leader of the House never used any words even faintly like those.

Mr Tonkin: Perhaps not, because I was trusting and I believed what you said at the first meeting.

Mr I. F. Taylor: And now you have learnt, to your bitterness, that that is not the case.

Mr MacKINNON: I have learnt to my bitterness that that is not the case. The member for Kalgoorlie would be the least trustworthy person in this House. He is certainly not qualified to be making comments on this issue. He is another of those backbench members who are in the majority on the Government side who sit in their seats, follow their leader, and do not comment except to interject. The member should have the gumption to stand and make a speech; he should not just sit on his big fat behind.

Mr I. F. Taylor: The Leader of the House is doing an excellent job.

Mr Clarko: What about their Dorothy Dix questions?

Mr MacKINNON: Yes, the Government backbenchers do stand to ask Dorothy Dix questions—my apologies.

The SPEAKER: I suggest the member return to commenting on the motion.

Mr Bryce: The show of unity on the Opposition's front bench is very encouraging.

Mr MacKINNON: Any one of our frontbenchers is worth two of the Deputy Premier's, so we do not need many of them to match the Government.

Mr Bryce: So that is why you malapportioned Parliament as you did.

Mr MacKINNON: Which Parliament?

Mr Bryce: This Parliament.

Mr MacKINNON: If we malapportioned the Parliament we must have made a few mistakes, because we lost the last election. We must do a better job next time.

The motion is designed to severely reduce and limit the speaking time available to members of this House. Clearly the previous Leader of the Opposition (the member for Mt. Lawley) very eloquently put the case today to explain what the Government is proposing to do.

The amendment to Standing Order No. 164 will mean that even debate on the Address-in-Reply will be limited, while our amendments to the sessional order will ensure at least that an urgency motion could not be moved during the Address-in-Reply debate. Our time to speak to the Address-in-Reply is to be reduced from 45 minutes to 30 minutes. Members of Parliament, including backbench members of the Government, would, if they had any brains, use the Address-in-Reply, the Supply Bill and the Budget Bill to make representations in this Parliament on behalf of their electors. Many of us have large electorates—I am one who has a large electorate—so we have many problems we want to put to the Parliament during the Address-in-Reply debate, the Budget debate and the supply debate. They are the three occasions when we have an opportunity to raise general issues that do not relate precisely to the debate at hand.

Mr I. F. Taylor: When you were a backbench member of the Government, you were happy to make representations to your Government and your Ministers outside the Parliament rather than in the Parliament. You should have a good look at the index in *Hansard* for when you first came into Parliament. In the first year or two the references to your contributions took up just three-quarters of an inch.

Mr MacKINNON: When I first came into Parliament, unlike the member for Kalgoorlie, I did not think I had all the answers. I sat, listened and learnt a bit before I made a few speeches, and as I gained experience, I started to make a few more comments. The member for Kalgoorlie has been here for perhaps four years and it seems it has taken him two or three years to come to grips with what Parliament is all about, because he rarely makes a speech.

Mr I. F. Taylor: I make my representations outside this place, and Kalgoorlie is doing very well, thanks very much.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member should return to the motion.

Mr MacKINNON: I am discussing the amendment to Standing Order No. 164 which will mean members will have their speaking times limited,

taken away or robbed, so that they have 30 minutes instead of 45 minutes. The point I was making is that it is the Address-in-Reply, the supply and the Budget debates that give members the opportunity to use their 45 minutes to raise matters of a general nature pertaining to their electorates.

Mr Bryce: It should be 10 minutes, like the House of Commons.

Mr MacKINNON: The Deputy Premier's interjection suggests that next year we will probably see another amendment reducing the time from 30 minutes to 10 minutes.

Mr Bryce: I said, "Like it is in the mother of Parliaments".

Mr MacKINNON: Would that be a good proposal?

Mr Bryce: Yes. If all speeches were limited to 10 minutes it would force a certain amount of discipline on everyone.

Mr Blaikie: You would not get in your questions.

Mr MacKINNON: It is painfully obvious to us in Opposition that the Deputy Premier is not comfortable filling that position and is not comfortable answering questions asked of him; further, he is even less comfortable when he is participating in debate. Perhaps that is why he believes a 10 minute time limit would be better.

Mr Bryce: Perhaps it is because I have difficulty finding the words.

Mr MacKINNON: The Deputy Premier rarely has difficulty finding words, but he does have difficulty finding the right words. We would be more than happy to limit him to 10 minutes. He has spent more time in Opposition than I have and he will be spending much less time in Government than I will be. He should be aware that Parliament provides one of the few opportunities for members of Parliament to raise issues. He would know that when Parliament is not sitting it is much more difficult for a member of Parliament to raise an issue or to gain information from the Government than when the Parliament is sitting.

When the Government is back in Opposition in two years' time, its members will be rueing the day they passed this motion.

Mr Bryce: I would not, because as you are a man of great principle you would hasten to change this proposition back to what it was.

Mr Thompson: Exactly my point. You have confirmed the fear I have.

Mr Bryce: I am saying he would because the member for Murdoch is a man of great principle.

Mr Blaikie: And you will cry the loudest, except perhaps for the Leader of the House.

Mr MacKINNON: When we are back in Government and the Opposition comes to us with a sensible proposal, we will be more than happy to give it a try if it is in the interests of improving the proceedings of this House. I give an undertaking now that we would attempt to do that, not by using sessional orders or amending Standing Orders, but on a basis of trust and agreement. We believe that is the right way.

Mr Brian Burke: Why not just admit that your party did not cop the agreement you made and sit down. They turned it up on you—everyone knows that.

Mr MacKINNON: The party of which I am the deputy leader supported me wholeheartedly in my efforts to achieve consensus with the Leader of the House. Several members of my party warned me that I would be unlikely to get him to agree to our propositions and that he would be unlikely to be sincere in his approach. I foolishly said, "No, I think he is a man of his word and I am prepared to meet him on that basis". Unfortunately those members who urged caution were right and I was wrong. I am prepared to admit the mistake I made.

I have the support of my colleagues for what I was attempting to achieve, and that was what the Leader of the House started to say today, although I do not think he meant it, which is unfortunate because it is a much more sensible and rational way to conduct Parliament. We would like to see that achieved by sensible understanding, but that will not be arrived at by drawing up hard and fast rules, laws, motions, and amendments to Standing Orders. We should try to reach agreement between the two of us and get on with the business of running the House on a basis of agreement, gaining in confidence and ability to improve its running as time goes by. Unfortunately, that is not to be. The Standing Order will now amend the rules concerning the Address-in-Reply debate and all members including backbench and Government members will at times be severely restricted on particular debates.

The next proposed amendment deals with second-reading debates, and means that not only will we have the urgency time management procedures forced upon us now much more regularly than previously, but also we will have second reading debates limited to 30 minutes at any one time irrespective of whether, as the member for Mt. Lawley said, a member has a sincere wish to put some point of view on behalf of his constituency. I will be interested to see whether

the Premier stands up to the indication he made earlier today and whether the Government will look at extensions of time very favourably when they are moved.

Mr Gordon Hill: The same applies in the current situation of 45 minutes. One could easily argue that one needed an hour on a particular point for one's constituents.

Mr MacKINNON: Then the member would support our moving an amendment to the provision for the Address-in-Reply debate so that it might be increased to one hour?

Mr Gordon Hill: That is nonsense. That is not what I am saying. A member may want to say something that might require an hour and it will have to be trimmed back.

Mr MacKINNON: This is going from 45 minutes to 30 minutes, not to an hour. The point is that second reading speech times are now being trimmed back to 30 minutes. Members will be restricted in their times. It will be interesting to see what happens if and when a member does have a burning issue to discuss. The member for Vasse might want to raise a very important issue concerning the forests and the sunlands in which the Minister for Agriculture would be most interested as he is the local member. He will be limited, unfortunately, to 30 minutes when he could well need a far longer period in which to discuss the detail involved in that issue. The Minister knows this.

The third amendment deals with the third reading debate, and is designed to reduce debate from 45 minutes to 30 minutes. That is probably an area that could be readily agreed to by most members. Third reading debates are not often held and when they are, rarely do they go for any length of time. Perhaps that is an area on which we could have arrived at an agreement on a different basis had we not had it encapsulated here in amendments to the Standing Orders. It would be easier to arrive at many other agreements had we had the opportunity which we will now be denied to do so.

Mr Blaikie: Just on that point, I wonder how long the Leader of the House would want if he were speaking on electoral reform matters. He would want all day and all of the following week as well. He would not agree to this amendment, would he, particularly if there were a second speaker?

Mr MacKINNON: No, he would not. I thank the member for Vasse for those comments.

As has been indicated by the Leader of the Opposition, if we reach a point where an urgency motion is moved, and if it is a complex Bill, we

will have extreme difficulty in debating that Bill properly or in any detail if you, Mr Speaker, administer the Standing Orders correctly, because at the second reading stage we will be debating the principles and not the detail. Of course, once we go past the second reading stage, we will be in the urgency or time management stage and subject to his action.

Mr Tonkin: Which Bill is this?

Mr MacKINNON: I am talking about any Bill which is a detailed Bill requiring Committee debate.

Mr Tonkin: Won't you make allowances for that?

Mr MacKINNON: We hope we would be able to do that by agreement, yes. I am not so sure now that that agreement will be honoured.

The fourth amendment falls under the heading, "Substantive motion or a direct motion of want of confidence". Let us assume we have a motion like the one we had last night. The member for Gascoyne most ably moved a motion of censure against the Minister for Local Government. While the member for Gascoyne may well have had unlimited time in responding to that motion, any other member speaking would be limited in time. Let us assume it is the member for Karrinyup, who has a great deal of knowledge in this area, or perhaps the member for East Melville, who similarly has a great deal of knowledge in the area. Both members could easily have spoken reasonably, effectively, succinctly, and properly, in my view for well in excess of 30 minutes, but under these amendments to the Standing Orders they will be denied that opportunity.

I come back to the very beginning of this issue; in other words, to 13 March when the Leader of the Opposition received a letter from the Leader of the House indicating the following—

When Parliament resumes I propose to move the attached motions for time management for debates and minor reductions in the times allocated for certain debates.

At that time he adjusted or added to the actual letter appendix "A" on the sessional order and the amendments to the Standing Orders he previously adopted. While we were able this morning to arrive at an agreement to amend some of those sessional orders to bring them into line with our agreement, it would seem that the rest of those procedures proposed by the Leader of the House at that time are not to be agreed to. It really does make one wonder. When the Leader of the House agreed to those amendments in the course of the sessional order—

Mr Gordon Hill: This is tedious repetition.

Mr MacKINNON: —and he agreed to take in the sessional order, why did he then go back on the balance of the agreements? Why did he agree to part of it, but not all of it?

Mr Tonkin: Because at that time I understood you were going to honour our agreement.

Mr MacKINNON: The Leader of the House, or one of his members, had the opportunity after the Leader of the Opposition finished speaking and indicating what our attitude would be, to then get somebody else, if he wanted to move an amendment to go back on those words and part of the agreement we previously arrived at. He chose not to do so, so it really is a bob each way on his part. Is that agreed?

Mr Tonkin: No, it is not at all. All I am saying is that the agreement has been broken and so the concessions to which I agreed are no longer in force—

Mr MacKINNON: Some of the concessions.

Mr Tonkin: —because the agreement is void.

Mr MacKINNON: Some of the concessions.

Mr Tonkin: That does not mean to say that we still cannot agree to those kinds of concessions, but it won't be as a result of our agreement, because you have broken it. That does not mean to say that we still cannot see to it that the concessions are made. Just understand that they are not being made because of anything you have delivered in good faith, but because this Government will not act in the way that you acted as a Government.

Mr MacKINNON: I remind the Leader of the House that whatever the Government might previously have been, it is the Opposition today. I am now the deputy leader and Mr Hassell happens to be the leader. We will approach things as we see them, not as a previous Government or Opposition might have seen them.

Mr Tonkin: We have shown that, by the way we accepted amendments and by the way I permitted Mr Mensaros to see officers of my department.

Mr Clarko: It was in your presence though, I gather; is that right? It was in your presence?

Mr Tonkin: It was in my presence, yes.

Mr Clarko: You do not believe that a member of the Opposition should meet with your people when you are not there?

Mr Tonkin: Actually, I was not there all the time.

Mr Clarko: I am just asking a question. I was not involved.

Mr Tonkin: It would be useful if the Minister at least knew as much as a member of the Opposition.

Mr Clarko: That is a different point. It is not because you went there seeking information.

Mr Jamieson: He wouldn't let officers from his department—

Mr MacKINNON: I finally come to the point on which I started at the beginning of today's debate. Our proposition to the Minister and Leader of the House was that we would have preferred this whole question of debates on procedures in the Parliament arrived at by agreement behind the Chair. We could have "sucked it and seen", so to speak. We could have tried it out and if it worked we could have encapsulated it by a complete agreement from both sides of the House in an amendment to the Standing Orders and not by a sessional order or an amendment to it. The Government refused that key proposal we put forward, and we see now that any of these arrangements, other than those which we were fortunate to have included in the amendments to the sessional order today, have been denied us. The Government has gone back on its word.

Mr Tonkin: That is not true. The thing is, the agreement has been broken, but that does not mean to say we cannot put into effect those concessions which we thought reasonable. That is not as a result of our agreement, because you have broken the agreement.

Mr MacKINNON: Which concessions would the Leader of the House think reasonable?

Mr Tonkin: I am happy for all of them to be enforced.

Mr MacKINNON: The Leader of the House said a moment ago that he would go back on them.

Mr Tonkin: I did not say that at all. What I said was that the agreement we reached was in tatters; therefore, the agreement on both sides was broken. So it does not come to you by force of an agreement between the two sides, because that agreement has been broken. It comes to you because this Government is different from your Government which would not make any concessions when it was in a position of strength. You have only discovered the joys of consensus since you have been in Opposition.

Mr MacKINNON: Am I led to understand that the Leader of the House is coming back, despite whatever we said before in relation to the questions without notice, the urgency debate, and the time between the second readings?

Mr Tonkin: I am happy for all of those concessions to be made; but just realise that they are made in spite of the fact that you have not kept your part of the bargain.

Mr MacKINNON: We can agree to disagree on that point.

Mr Jamieson: The former member for Boulder-Dundas (Mr Hartrey) had a good idea on these long speeches, "If you don't strike oil in two minutes, stop boring". I suggest you might think about that.

Mr MacKINNON: I thank the member for that advice. I was about to sit down before the Leader of the House interjected, but he has now indicated to us that the agreement is back in place.

Mr Tonkin: The agreement is not back in place. You have not kept the agreement. All I am saying is that the things I said I was prepared to cop, as part of the agreement, I am prepared to go ahead with, because I think there is no problem with them; they are good things. That is in spite of the fact that you divided on the motion.

Mr MacKINNON: Let us draw line here and assume that everything that has been said today is past and we now have a new understanding, which provides for a 45 minute question time—

Mr Tonkin: In spite of the fact that you have opposed the motion.

Mr MacKINNON: —an urgency motion as agreed to—

Mr Tonkin: In spite of the fact that you have opposed the motion.

Mr MacKINNON: —and the seven days' Standing Order.

Mr Tonkin: In spite of the fact that you have opposed the motion.

Mr MacKINNON: I thank the Leader of the House for that. I hope that that does not change when we still oppose the Standing Order the Minister proposes.

Mr Tonkin: I understand that you have decided to break your agreement on both counts.

Mr MacKINNON: I will not continue other than to repeat the points I made earlier in relation to our opposition to the Standing Order for the reasons I have previously indicated.

MR CLARKO (Karrinyup) [5.15 p.m.]: This motion seeks to change Standing Order No. 164 so that the maximum time of speaking for an ordinary member will be 30 minutes rather than 45 minutes. Unlike the previous motion we have spent today discussing, it is not just for this session, it is probably forever. It is one of those

things that once a change is made, it is highly unlikely the situation will go back the other way. Therefore, this matter is serious because an attempt is being made to trammel the rights of the Opposition by dramatically reducing speaking time and it will be forever. It will be there when this Government returns to the Opposition benches. It is a most dramatic change; it is a dramatic reduction in the right to speak.

In many Parliaments members have unlimited speaking time. No doubt this Parliament began that way. We do not have to go very far to the other Chamber—the Legislative Council—where I understand members have unlimited speaking rights; I presume on every matter.

We have unlimited speaking rights in this Parliament for the person who introduces a Bill, and the lead speaker on a motion. The lead Opposition spokesman also has unlimited time. That particular rule of this House is to continue; we will continue to have some people in this House with unlimited rights to speak at certain times.

Since the most common speech by a Government member is when a Minister introduces a Bill or a motion, there is to be no cut in that particular arrangement whatsoever. The most common speech by a member of Government will continue to be unlimited.

Mr Evans: How many go beyond 30 minutes? Don't be silly.

Mr CLARKO: The Minister has spoken on many occasions in this House. On private, members' days, I have seen the member stand on his feet for so long that it has been a wonder he did not collapse. He must have been very dry and thirsty when he finished. Occasionally I found his speeches interesting, but I always found the member for Vasse's interjections to be even more interesting, and the Minister's reply less interesting. In the life of the Burke Government the Leader of the House has read at great length a dreadful diatribe produced by a man who has been paid for doing almost nothing—that is Mr Hawkes, his adviser—on the electoral Bill he introduced last year. He went on for hours and hours on this particular matter, and bored everyone to tears. Any second-year history student could have written it, but someone is getting paid \$25 000 or \$30 000 a year to write such speeches. It will be interesting to see if the adviser has a job available for him when the Government changes.

These Ministers have speeches which are prepared by someone else and all they have to do is read it out, in most cases. To be fair to the Leader of the House, he has given a couple of very

peculiar second reading speeches, in which he diverted from that particular traditional path.

If this motion is really about saving time of this Parliament, why not circularise such speeches?

Mr Davies: Why not?

Mr CLARKO: They could all be read at our convenience and it would save time.

Mr Tonkin: I could not get you to read it unless I gave you a test the next day.

Mr CLARKO: I think that is certainly one method, as we both would know, being former practitioners of that particular art. The rest of us will be asked to remain silent, but the Government will continue to do its work in the same way as before. That is the unfairness of it, because it is affecting only one side.

Mr Tonkin: I think we might answer this by taking out the figures on the number of hours spent in debate by Government people and the number of hours spent by Opposition people.

Mr CLARKO: That is a different question. I am saying the main type of speech comes from Ministers with Bills and motions and they have unlimited time in which to speak.

Mr Tonkin: And they don't last 30 minutes.

Mr CLARKO: They do have the right to it. That is what we are seeking on this side of the House, the right to speak for 45 minutes on every occasion. We are seeking to have the right to speak for 45 minutes.

As recently as 10.30 p.m. last night I did that very thing from 10.35 p.m. to 11.00 p.m. in order to concur with the arrangements that had been made behind the Chair by our Whip with someone from the Government side. That is what we have been asking for all day. We are saying if we do more of that, we will be more effective. We would have been more effective today and made more progress had we done something like that. Most of the Parliaments with a Westminster system, I understand, have time limits of 45 minutes. It seems to be the common thing.

Mr Tonkin: Fifteen and 20.

Mr CLARKO: That is not my experience. I would be happy to see the material that is available if the Minister for Housing could get one of his 30 or 40 advisers to compile it.

Mr Wilson: I have not got that many advisers.

Mr CLARKO: Regardless of how many advisers the Minister has he could get one or two of them to send me the minimum time allotted to speakers in other Parliaments which operate under the Westminster system.

I have referred to the frontbenchers and I will now refer to the Government backbenchers—it is an horrific sight. The Government backbenchers do not speak—they are not allowed to speak at the present moment. Even if we did not have the present Leader of the House in control of the business of the House, we would find they would speak very rarely.

Mr Tonkin: Do you see them quivering when I walk past?

Mr CLARKO: It will make no difference to the frontbenchers or to the backbenchers, so it is a fine bargain from their side of it.

The Leader of the House talks about his so-called agreements with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. However, whether members are on the front or back benches they are not giving anything away.

The previous motion with which we dealt today opens the way for debate on all controversial major Bills or motions to be limited to two hours, apart from the time allowed for the Minister and the lead speaker for the Opposition. That is not a fair constraint to place on the Opposition. There are already means within Standing Orders, either by the use of the guillotine or the gag, to allow the Government to have its way when it has had enough, and the public would accept their use.

Mr Davies: Are you only filling in time tonight?

Mr CLARKO: No I am not.

Mr Davies: Are you dinkum?

Mr CLARKO: If the Minister for the Arts will refrain from interjecting, I will continue my remarks.

What the Opposition has gained from these motions is an overall time cut; and individual speakers' times will be reduced. The Minister for Community Welfare said that the 45-minute period was an arbitrary one. I think it is probably related to psychologists and their expression of this being the average span of concentration. The time span for lectures in educational institutions throughout Australia is limited to 45 minutes and in secondary schools in Western Australia it is limited to about 40 minutes. These things come together. It is a time span in which it is considered appropriate for one to express his views. How often does one go to a formal type of lecture which lasts for less than 45 minutes?

I have already given the example that last night I spoke for 25 minutes and that the member for Dale spoke for 35 minutes. Both of us would like to have spoken for a longer period, but because of arrangements made behind the Chair, we

shortened our speeches. I am sure that most members in this House have on occasions reduced their speech because of some agreement which has been made behind the Chair.

There is an abuse of the length of time a member speaks in this House and it applies to those people who have the right to unlimited time. It is passing strange, as Sir Des O'Neil would often say—

Mr Tonkin: What does it mean?

Mr CLARKO: —that the member who is now interjecting is the person who has today controlled the total time to be taken by members to speak on important matters in this House for the rest of this session and, as a result, the Opposition will have its speaking time cut by 33½ per cent which means that speakers in the past would have had 50 per cent more time than we will have. However, that same member has the record for abusing the practice of speaking in this House. The member who is the most fatuous is the person who introduced this motion. He has previously wasted five to six hours of our time and is abusing this House. If the Government wants to do something about trying to get this House to speed up its business, it could do so by providing that Ministers do not have unlimited time. It could also make provision for a Standing Order to prevent the member for Morley-Swan speaking in this House for five and six hours at a time. The main question is how many speakers are involved, rather than how long each one will take.

As members would be aware, on urgency motions, it is the practice of the Speaker to stand up as he did on Tuesday in relation to the motion which was so competently put by the member for Gascoyne and state that there will be so many speakers from this side of the House and so many speakers from the other side of the House. If the Government is worried about the time, it should cut down in other areas.

What we have is the Government controlling the total time of debate on urgent and important matters and at the same time it is proposing to cut the time of each speaker, and overwhelmingly this will be at the expense of Opposition speakers.

In regard to the 30 minutes' speaking time which has been arbitrarily decided, I would like to ask the Government to advise how often the Leader of the House, when he was in Opposition, confined his speech to 30 rather than 45 minutes on important issues. I remember his speaking for the full time on important matters. I also recall that the Deputy Premier did the same. I am not criticising them for it. They wanted to speak for that length of time and they had the right to do so.

Now that they are in Government, they want to set up a different system—the Premier is of a similar ilk.

This motion is not about our saving time. Why is there a need to save time? Since the Burke Government was elected in 1983, on how many days has Parliament sat? Last year, I think we sat for 70 days. When we met on Tuesday this week, we had met for only one day this year.

Mr Tonkin: That is normal for March.

Mr CLARKO: I am trying to present information to the House. I suppose that by the end of this session we would have met for about 20 days and in the spring session we will meet for approximately 40 days. That is only 60 days and no-one could say that 60 days out of 365 is excessive. The Government has more time available to it if it wants it. However, it wants to shut up the Opposition. This motion is aimed at one thing and one thing only. It is to increasingly silence the voice of the Opposition. Our political theorists say that Parliament is for the Opposition, but it is not to be if the Leader of the House has his way, be-

cause we will be told what to do, how to do it, and how not to do it. Perhaps he will give us a list of things and tell us how quickly we should vote on them. This Government wishes to change all the traditions of this House which allow the ordinary member of the Opposition to speak for a fair time. It wants to stop us putting the alternative point of view. That is the quintessence of the Westminster system of Parliament.

Leave to Continue Speech

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

Leave granted.

Debate thus adjourned.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

House adjourned at 6.00 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

2680, 2681, 2698-2700, 2762. *These questions were further postponed.*

2765 and 2766. *These questions were postponed.*

LAND: RESERVES MANAGEMENT

Recommendations: Implementation

2767. Mr COWAN, to the Premier:

- (1) Is it the intention of the Government to implement the recommendation of the task force on land resource management in Western Australia?
- (2) If "Yes",
 - (a) when;
 - (b) will the proposed department of urban and rural planning assume responsibility for administration of the Soil and Land Conservation Act;
 - (c) what will happen to the position of Commissioner for Soil Conservation?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) There are a number of recommendations in the report by the task force on land resource management. The Government has already adopted some recommendations, and it will be considering the remainder over the next twelve months. The Government has accepted the recommendation to form a department of natural land management comprising the Forests Department, the National Parks Authority, and the wildlife section of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. The timing of further considerations on the recommendations relating to land management will be determined by the progress made in forming the new department. The recommendations from the task force which are concerned with land use planning have been referred to the committee of inquiry into statutory planning. It is expected that this committee will make recommendations on land use planning in several months time.

- (2) (a) Answered by (1);
- (b) there is no intention, at this stage, to change the administrative arrangements currently working with respect to the Soil and Land Conservation Act; however, this will be

considered by the inquiry into statutory planning;

- (c) There is no intention, at this stage, to alter the current position of the Commissioner for Soil Conservation, but this will be considered by the inquiry into statutory planning.

2768. *This question was postponed.*

HEALTH

Blood Transfusion Service: Funding

2769. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What amount of funding has been provided by the State Government to the Red Cross blood transfusion service in the 1983-84 financial year?
- (2) What proportion of the total funding of the blood transfusion service does the State Government contribute?
- (3) By what amount does the 1983-84 contribution differ from the previous financial year?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) \$1 822 000.
- (2) 60.5 per cent.
- (3) An increase of \$164 050.

ROADS

Main Roads Department: Community Employment Programme Grant

2770. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Transport:

In what places is the community employment programme grant of \$54 791 (No. WCS155) recommended by the consultative committee going to be used by the Main Roads Department?

Mr GRILL replied:

In the Main Roads Department's Northam division.

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Waterways Commission: Wilson Inlet

2771. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) Has he received a request from local residents and/or the local authority to establish Waterways Commission control over Wilson Inlet?
- (2) What is policy towards such a request?

Mr DAVIES replied:

- (1) No. However, it is understood that the Denmark Shire Council will be making a submission in due course.
- (2) Any such request will be considered in the light of the results of the ongoing monitoring being carried out by the Department of Conservation and Environment, and advice from the Environmental Protection Authority.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Community Employment Programme: Project No. 00076

2772. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for the Environment:

Could he please describe the exact works for which \$126 909 under project number 00076 of the community employment programme is proposed to be utilised, and also the period during which such works are proposed to be undertaken?

Mr DAVIES replied:

CEP project WCS 00076 is employing a total of five people, three for one year, and two for twenty weeks. They will be engaged in assessing and publicising the effects of modified fertiliser practices on reducing phosphate inputs to the Peel-Harvey Estuary. The major works proposed are the establishment of small experimental gauging stations to monitor run-off from paddocks. This will take place on Murray Location 1243 or 1419, subject to the agreement of the owner, Mr R. Carratti. Some additional money will be spent on on-going work on Murray Location 2631 (Mr F. Talbot) and Murray Location 1080 (Mr P. Stacy). Materials and equipment for these stations will cost some \$20 000. All of these locations have been selected by the study team.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Purchasing Preferences: Abolition

2773. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister Coordinating Economic and Social Development:

- (1) Is it fact that Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia have either

concluded or are about to conclude an agreement to abolish State Government purchasing preferences within the States and maintain preference against the other States?

- (2) If this is so, how is the Government going to counter this in the interests of Western Australia?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Minister for Industrial Development is currently discussing proposals relating to the State Government's purchasing preference with Government, industry, and labour groups. The proposals being considered include a flexible procurement policy which would give support to selected industries and break down unnecessary barriers preventing Australian and Western Australian firms winning Government contracts. Such programmes have been developed in other States. The existing blanket monetary preference will remain in place at least until a consensus has been reached on the proposals and a new policy is operational.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Medical Insurance Funds: Retrenchments

2774. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) How many people have lost their employment in Western Australia with private medical insurance funds after the introduction of Medicare?
- (2) How many of these have been employed with Medicare—
 - (a) in Western Australia;
 - or
 - (b) in other States?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) and (2) The member is referred to the answer given by the Premier to a question without notice on this subject in the Legislative Assembly yesterday, Wednesday, 4 April 1984.

2775. *This question was postponed.*

WATER RESOURCES

Reservoir: Murray River

2776. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) Has his department or the Environmental Protection Authority made studies about the effects on the Murray River and its fragile environment of the building of another surface reservoir on the upper reaches of the Murray or Dandalup Rivers?
- (2) If not, is he going to cause such study to be undertaken?

Mr DAVIES replied:

- (1) No. However, the Metropolitan Water Authority is currently preparing an environmental review and management programme for the Environmental Protection Authority on a major reservoir on the North Dandalup River in which any such effects will be addressed.
- (2) Not applicable.

WATER RESOURCES

Meters: Non-residential

2777. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Considering the continuation of reduction in the quantity of water to be allowed to be used free by non-residential consumers, as started by the previous Government, can he say what proportion of non-residential consumers affected had meters already installed at their premises by January 1984?
- (2) In what time span are meters planned to be installed to achieve a 100 per cent coverage of non-residential consumers?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) An assessment of the effect of the proposed further reduction in allowances for the 1984-85 rating year indicated that nearly 80 per cent of properties that required metering already had meters installed by January 1984.

It should be noted that the commencement of the consumption year, relative to the 1984-85 rating year, ranges from January 1984 to June 1984 according to the district location of the property concerned.

A metering programme is currently under way to meter the remaining 20

per cent of the properties believed to be affected, prior to the commencement of their respective consumption year.

- (2) The move to 100 per cent metering is still under consideration, and it must have regard to the cost benefit involved. It may prove advisable to maintain a nominal allowance, to avoid uneconomical installation of meters where consumption is very small and the revenue recovered through usage charges would not cover the cost of metering.

WATER RESOURCES

Dam: Stinton Creek

2778. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Has the Metropolitan Water Authority submitted to him the summary of the submissions received on the proposed Stinton Creek dam?
- (2) If so, could he table this summary?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) and (2) I am still considering the review by the Metropolitan Water Authority of submissions on the proposed Stinton Creek water reserve; and the document cannot yet be tabled.

PUBLIC WORKS: DEPARTMENT

Country Areas Water Supplies: Projects

2779. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

Can he please list the country water supply projects constructed during the last 25 years (in sequence according to the years when the decision to proceed with each project was taken) where cost-sharing arrangements prevailed between the Public Works Department and the reticulated consumers?

Mr TONKIN replied:

I have assumed that the member is referring to community supplies and not mining developments.

While there have been numerous arrangements under which a few consumers contributed to the cost of minor extensions, none of these, to my knowledge, has involved more than ten consumers. No specific record of these extensions is maintained, and it is therefore not possible to provide a comprehensive list.

SHIPPING

Statships: "Irene Greenwood"

2780. Mr OLD, to the Minister for Transport:
Adverting to question 2661 of 1984, what number of crew were required to man the *Irene Greenwood* prior to her acquisition by the Western Australian Government?

Mr GRILL replied:

The information I have is that there was a crew of 25 when the vessel operated under a foreign flag.

FISHERIES: PRAWNS

Licences: Mandurah

2781. Mr OLD, to the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

- (1) Did he grant two licences to trawl for prawns between Becher Point and Robert Point, near Mandurah, on 19 January 1984?
- (2) Was one of these licences granted to Mr R. Hunter?
- (3) Was Mr Hunter advised by the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife that they doubted the ability of the fishery to fully support two boats full time?
- (4) Did he subsequently grant three more licences for boats to trawl in the same area?
- (5) If "Yes" to (4), on what criteria did he base his decision?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) to (4) Yes.
- (5) The merits of three of the applicants who had appealed against the original decision.

TRAFFIC: ACCIDENTS

Information: Withholding

2782. Mr OLD, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

- (1) Is it a fact that—
 - (a) in October 1983, the Commissioner of Police issued a direction to Police officers, particularly in the accident actions section, that they shall not give any information to any person inquiring as to action taken in regard to a traffic accident, as the re-

lease of such information was a breach of human rights;

- (b) because of this instruction, a driver of a vehicle who was personally injured and whose vehicle was badly damaged, while being in no way responsible for the accident, cannot ascertain if the responsible party was charged in court, and penalised;
 - (c) the party who was not responsible for the accident is now deprived of taking any legal action against the responsible driver because he cannot obtain any information in regard to the results of a court case, if any?
- (2) Did the instruction issued by the commissioner as stated in (1) (a) come about by—
 - (a) an amendment to the Traffic Act; or
 - (b) an amendment or proclamation of a traffic regulation?
 - (3) If so, will he advise the section of the Act amended or the number of any such regulation under which the instruction was issued?
 - (4) If not, will he advise what, if any, redress the injured party has recourse to?

Mr CARR replied:

- (1) (a) No;
- (b) not applicable;
- (c) no; action taken by police under the Road Traffic Act and regulations does not preclude civil action for damages in a competent court. It is not unusual for a police traffic accident file to be subpoenaed in support in support of such action.
- (2) (a) No;
- (b) no.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) As in (1)(c).

STOCK

Cattle: Computer Selling

2783. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is the computer selling of cattle still operating?

- (2) If so, how regular are the sales?
- (3) Has the computer selling of cattle been successful?
- (4) Has the computer selling of cattle been up to expectation?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Weekly.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) Numbers of cattle per sale have approximated expectations for the first year of operation. However, there will need to be an increase over the next 12 months for the scheme to become self-financing.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Number Unemployed

2784. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Minister representing the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) What was the unemployment figure in Western Australia at the last announcement?
- (2) What was the unemployment figure in February or March 1983?
- (3) Beside job projects established under wages pause money and the community employment programme what job creation schemes has the Government instigated in the last 12 months?
- (4) Does the Government have any job creation schemes for the future, and if so, what are they?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) The unemployment rate for Western Australia in February 1984, the last announcement, was 10.8 per cent.
- (2) The unemployment rate in February 1983 was 10.4 per cent.
- (3) As to specific schemes as opposed to general employment stimulations, the community employment and wages pause programmes have created a significant number of job opportunities in this State. A significant State Government input in terms of both funding and resources has also been injected. The member would also be aware that the community employment initiatives unit has recently been established. Details of its structure, objectives, and goals have been supplied to all parliamentary members.

- (4) The Government is finalising a number of significant employment-related proposals, and the details of those proposals will be publicly announced in due course.

RAILWAYS

"Indian Pacific": Task Force

2785. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Tourism:

- (1) When did the *Indian Pacific* task force last meet?
- (2) Who is the Western Australian member on the task force?
- (3) What improvements in the *Indian Pacific* service is the task force currently pursuing?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) In Alice Springs on 26 and 27 March, as part of an Ascot meeting.
- (2) The Chairman of the Western Australian Tourism Commission, who also chairs the task force.
- (3) The task force chairman and the Executive Director of Railways of Australia are in regular contact on a range of marketing and operating issues.

The major improvement currently being pursued is a proposal to introduce a major timetable alteration later this year.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Community Employment Programme: Jobs Created

2786. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) Under the community employment initiatives programme designated as co-action, how many people have been assisted?
- (2) How many applications for the programme have been received?
- (3) How much has been allocated to the successful applicants?
- (4) Will he provide me with a list of the successful applicants?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) and (2) Since the co-action programme began operating, more than 100 groups have been contacted and the guidelines

explained. Ten projects are currently being developed, and three have been approved.

- (3) A total of \$1 475 for three approved projects.
- (4) Yes.

BUSINESSES

Self Employment Business Ventures Scheme: Applications

2787. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) How many applications have been received for funds under the Government's "self employment business ventures scheme"?
- (2) How many applications have been approved?
- (3) How much has been approved?
- (4) What procedures are undertaken to ensure the funds are expended in line with the application?
- (5) Will he provide me with a list of successful applicants and their projects?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) Since the scheme was announced there have been in excess of 3 000 telephone calls, 500 requests for interview have been received, and 150 interviews have been arranged.
- (2) Four written submissions have been received and are being researched.
- (3) None.
- (4) Procedures are well documented for each successful applicant. A key aspect of the scheme is the selection of a responsible community nominee who oversees the expenditure of funds for each venture.
- (5) Yes.

STATE FORESTS

Conservator

2788. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Forests:

Who is the current Conservator of Forests?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

As clearly indicated in the answers to questions 2005 of 16 November 1983

and 2134 of 22 November 1983, this position is vacant and Mr P. McNamara is Acting Conservator of Forests.

PUBLIC SERVANTS AND GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

Salaries: Increase

2789. Mr MacKINNON, to the Treasurer:

In reference to question 2665 of 3 April what is the estimated increase in the 1983-84 year for award increases granted to salary and wage earners provided for in the State Budget?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

\$84.4 million.

HOUSING

Willetton: School Site

2790. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) With the State Housing Commission subdivision in Willetton, will the proposed school site now be subdivided?
- (2) If so, by whom?
- (3) When will the subdivision take place?
- (4) Of developed lots, how many will be developed as rental properties, and how many for purchase?
- (5) Will the lots be sold privately by builders under the joint venture proposal as is the land in the stage 2 estate?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) Yes, when agreement is reached with the City of Canning regarding public open space and adjoining land owned by the city.
- (2) The State Housing Commission.
- (3) During the 1984-85 financial year.
- (4) Numbers have not yet been determined, but rental and purchase properties are intended to be on a similar ratio to the previous adjoining development.
- (5) It is intended that lots will be available on a similar basis as in the previous adjoining development.

2791. *This question was postponed.*

TOURISM

*"Budget Tourist Guide to Western Australia":
Advertisements*

2792. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Tourism:

- (1) Did he write an introduction to the publication *Budget Tourist Guide to Western Australia*?
- (2) What steps did he take to check out the advertising content of the publication prior to agreeing to do so?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The advertising content was not checked because the request for the foreword was made on behalf of a reputable company, Budget Rent-a-Car System Pty. Ltd.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND
INSTRUMENTALITIES*Efficiency Audits*

2793. Mr MacKINNON, to the Treasurer:

- (1) Has the Government carried out any efficiency audits other than that which included the Artificial Breeding Board?
- (2) If so, which departments, or authorities, have been, or are being, so audited?
- (3) Who is carrying out, or who did carry out, these audits?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) Not as such. Following completion of the reorganisation of the Treasury Department, attention will be given to appropriate performance indicators which will be integrated within the programme budgeting system, and will form the basis of "efficiency" or "performance" audits.

In addition, the functional review committee is conducting reviews of specific functions and has initiated a number of general reviews.

- (2) and (3) Answered by (1).

2794 and 2795 *These questions were postponed.*

HOUSING

State Housing Commission: Staff Levels

2796. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) What was the staffing level of the State Housing Commission as at 1 March 1983?
- (2) What was the staffing level of the State Housing Commission as at 1 March 1984?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) and (2) The staffing level of the State Housing Commission is as follows:—

	SALARIES STAFF	WAGES STAFF	TOTAL
1 March, 1983	702	261	963
1 March, 1984	704	259	963

HOUSING: STATE HOUSING
COMMISSION*Staff: Acting Appointments*

2797. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) What senior staffing positions in the State Housing Commission are currently occupied by staff on an acting basis?
- (2) In each case, how long has the permanent position been vacant?
- (3) In each case, when will the position be filled?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) The following senior staffing positions in the State Housing Commission are currently occupied by staff on an acting basis—

deputy general manager
divisional manager, finance and administration
divisional manager, corporate services.

- (2) and (3) These acting moves have resulted from the vacancy of the deputy general manager's position. A permanent appointment has now been made, and the appointee will formally occupy the position from 6 April 1984.

HOUSING: STATE HOUSING COMMISSION

Board: Membership

2798. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Who are the members of the State Housing Commission Board?
- (2) When were they each appointed, and for what term?
- (3) What remuneration does each board member receive?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) to (3) Chairman—Mr S. W. Parks. Appointed for 3 years from 1/1/84. Remuneration \$5 000 per annum + \$600 allowance.

Deputy Chairman—Ms A. Sinclair. Appointed for 3 years from 1/1/84. Remuneration \$2 500 per annum.

Commissioner W. R. Munro—Appointed for 3 years from 1/1/83. Remuneration \$2 500 per annum.

Commissioner Sir Donald Eckersley—Appointed for 2 years from 1/10/82. Remuneration \$2 500 per annum.

Commissioner P. N. Gorton, Deputy Director, Department for Community Welfare.

Appointed for 2 years from 1/1/83. Remuneration not applicable.

Commissioner R. P. Healy, General Manager, State Housing Commission. Ex-officio appointment. Remuneration not applicable.

Position of one commissioner currently vacant.

2799. *This question was postponed.*

TRANSPORT: BUSES

Perth Terminal: Working Party

2800. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Who are the members of the working party formed to examine the feasibility of a new bus terminal in Perth that would cater for tourist coaches and non Metropolitan Transport Trust regular passenger services?
- (2) Has the working party completed its report?

- (3) If so, when?
- (4) If not, when is it anticipated that the report will be completed?
- (5) Will the report be made public?
- (6) If not, why not?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) Mr R. J. Ellis—Commissioner of Transport (Chairman)
Mr L. Hitchen—Chairman, Tourism Commission
Mr N. Lamb—Chairman, licensed coach operators' division of the Road Transport Association
Ms M. Readhead—Representative of small coach operators
Mr D. Meadowcroft—Representative of small coach operators
Mr G. Ettridge—Representative of interstate coach operators
Mr A. Chisholm—Representative of interstate coach operators

- (2) No.
- (3) Answered by (2).
- (4) No completion date has been set.
- (5) and (6) I have not made any decision on publication of the report as yet, but I cannot envisage any problem with its release.

PUBLIC SERVANTS: RETIREMENT

Age 55: Superannuation

2801. Mr MacKINNON, to the Treasurer:

- (1) To what weekly benefit would a public servant be entitled should he retire at 55 after 20 years service under the proposed amendments to the State Superannuation Fund?
- (2) To what weekly benefit would an employee of the Police Force be entitled should he retire at 55 after 20 years service under the proposed amendments to the State Superannuation Fund?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) The benefit would be approximately 36 per cent of final salary, provided the person had contributed for the maximum available number of units.
- (2) The benefit would be approximately 45 per cent of final average salary provided the person had contributed for the maximum available number of units.

HEALTH

Orthotics

2802. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many people are currently employed in the orthotics department at Royal Perth Hospital?
- (2) How long would a patient requiring a body brace from the department have to wait?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) 22.
- (2) Each case is considered on its clinical priority by a specialist surgeon. The objective is to complete each body brace in a four week period. Depending on work load pressures, the period could extend to a maximum of six weeks.

TOURISM

Travel Agents: Working Party

2803. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Who are the members of the working party he refers to in question 2578 of 22 March 1984?
- (2) When is it anticipated that the working party will complete its report?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) Commonwealth

Dr Bryan Ward—Tourism Division, Department of Sport, Recreation and Tourism

Mr D. Maddern—Consumer Policy Branch, Department of Home Affairs and Environment

Mr C. Lewis—Consumer Policy Section, Department of Home Affairs and Environment

States

Mr B. Cooney—Deputy Director, NSW Department of Leisure Sport and Tourism

Mr T. McVeigh—Acting Marketing Manager, Victorian Tourism Commission

Mr M. Noblet LL.B—Director General, SA Department of Public and Consumer Affairs

Mr S Trenowden, LL.B—Acting Chief Project Officer, SA Department of Public and Consumer Affairs

Ms Judith O'Neill—Assistant Director (Policy), Victorian Department of Consumer Affairs

Mr P Glanville LL.B—Senior Legal Officer, WA Department of Consumer Affairs

Mr J. Holloway, LL.B—Registrar, NSW Credit Tribunal

- (2) The working party has given initial drafting instructions to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Counsel.

2804. *This question was postponed.*

HEALTH: DENTAL

Subsidy Scheme: Funding

2805. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has the allocation of funds for subsidised dental treatment in country areas risen, stayed the same, or decreased, compared with the previous financial year?
- (2) Has he attempted to obtain more funds to overcome the "waiting list"?
- (3) Under the present system can he see the waiting time becoming even longer?
- (4) Is he prepared to have the patients assessed and written to explaining that they have been approved and that they will be able to have the treatment carried out after a certain date, or let the patients know that a delay is being experienced and will be told at a later stage the results of their application for subsidised dental treatment?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) In 1982-83 the budget allocation for subsidised dental treatment was \$587 500. In 1983-84 the allocation was \$653 400.
- (2) Additional funds are not available this financial year.
- (3) The waiting list is increasing and discussions are being held with the Australian Dental Association with the objective of limiting the waiting period in future.
- (4) This process will be considered as part of the review referred to in (3).

FISHERIES

Rock Lobster: Regulations

2806. Mr CRANE, to the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

- (1) Is it a fact that in accordance with recent amendments to regulations covering amateur fishermen two licensed amateurs cannot carry their four pots at the one time in the same boat, even if both are present?
- (2) Is it a fact that when a man and wife each have an amateur licence the man cannot assist his wife in the pulling of pots registered in her name?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) This has been the situation for many years.
- (2) The conditions attaching to an amateur fisherman's licence require that the relevant rock lobster pots may only be pulled by the holder of the licence.

FUEL AND ENERGY: ELECTRICITY

Contributory Extension Scheme: "Package Deal"

2807. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) Is the rural electrification programme still being carried out in accordance with the "package deal" negotiated between the State Energy Commission and the various local government authorities involved in the south-eastern wheatbelt?
- (2) If so, how many properties have been connected to the State Energy Commission grid since 1 July 1982?
- (3) How many potential subscribers is it estimated still remain to be connected under the "package deal" arrangements?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) 129 customers have been connected to the commission's system under the "package deal" arrangements.
- (3) 382.

FUEL AND ENERGY

Methanol: Investigations

2808. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) Is the State Energy Commission conducting investigations into the use of methanol in various alternate types of engines such as stationary diesel engines and gas turbines as well as vehicle engines?
- (2) If so, what progress is being made with these investigations?
- (3) When is it next intended to publish any information on the investigations being conducted, if any?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) The commission has completed its initial programme of testing methanol in vehicles, and it has issued interim reports on this work. Currently a watching brief is being maintained on work being carried out in other States and overseas. The commission is not currently undertaking any projects involving methanol.
- (2) and (3) Not applicable.

FUEL AND ENERGY

Electricity: Rottnest Island

2809. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) With regard to the provision of electricity at Rottnest Island is it intended that the State Energy Commission should assume full responsibility for the provision of the above supply?
- (2) If so, would it be intended that domestic electricity tariffs would be the same as applying elsewhere within the State?
- (3) If so, what direct and/or indirect financial subsidy would be involved in providing this service?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) The Government has agreed in principle that the commission should assume responsibility for the provision of electricity on Rottnest Island, subject to acceptable arrangements being developed between the commission and the Rottnest Island Board.
- (2) It is intended that standard tariffs be applied as far as possible.

- (3) The matter is being jointly investigated by the commission and the board to determine the costs involved and the various options available.

A final decision will be made by the Government when the investigation has been completed and a detailed cost analysis is available.

FUEL AND ENERGY

State Energy Commission: Debts

2810. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

What was the amount of bad debts written off by the State Energy Commission in:

- (a) 1979-80;
- (b) 1980-81;
- (c) 1981-82;
- (d) 1982-83;
- (e) to 31 December 1983?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (a) \$851 000;
- (b) \$901 000;
- (c) \$881 000;
- (d) \$981 000;
- (e) to 31 December 1983, \$440 000.

FUEL AND ENERGY

State Energy Commission: Housing

2811. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) Are State Energy Commission personnel occupying State Energy Commission housing paying the same rental levels as apply to all Government Employees Housing Authority dwellings?
- (2) If "No", are efforts being made to bring State Energy Commission rentals into line with the rentals paid by other Government personnel required to pay Government Employees Housing Authority rentals?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Yes. Considerable work is being undertaken on this subject following an interim rental increase in April 1983.

STATE FINANCE

Financial Institutions Duty: State Energy Commission

2812. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) Is the State Energy Commission required to pay the financial institutions duty on all its financial transactions?
- (2) If so, what was the amount of financial institutions duty paid by the State Energy Commission during February 1984?
- (3) What is the estimated total amount of financial institution duty that will be paid by the State Energy Commission for the financial year ending 30 June 1984?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) \$12 612.94
- (3) Approximately \$75 000.

2813. *This question was postponed.*

FUEL AND ENERGY: STATE ENERGY COMMISSION

Staff: Reclassification

2814. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) Has any reclassification of personnel employed by the State Energy Commission been undertaken since either the wages pause legislation or the 10 per cent salary cut for senior personnel was implemented?
- (2) If so, how many positions within the State Energy Commission have been reclassified resulting in salary increases?
- (3) What was the total additional cost to the State Energy Commission of salary increases resulting from the reclassification of commission personnel?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) Yes, the Western Australian Salaries and Wages Freeze Act 1982 was not applicable to the Federal awards covering salaried personnel of the State Energy Commission; and in any case, nothing in the Act prevented an increase of remuneration in consequence of the reclassification of the position or office held by a person.

- (2) From 23 December 1982 to present date—

7 positions reclassified downwards
73 positions reclassified upwards
118 positions reviewed but not changed.

- (3) Cost data is being prepared and will be provided as soon as possible.

BEEKEEPING

Apiary Sites

2815. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Lands and Surveys:

- (1) What has been the annual number of apiary sites provided by the Department of Lands and Surveys in each year since 1980?
- (2) What has been the—
- (a) cost per site;
- (b) yearly return,
- in each of the above years?

Mr McIVER replied:

- (1) and (2) This matter does not come within the ambit of my portfolio of Lands and Surveys. It is suggested the member re-direct his question to the appropriate Minister.

BEEKEEPING

Apiary Sites

2816. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) What has been the annual number of apiary sites provided by the department in national parks in each year since 1980?
- (2) What has been the—
- (a) cost per site;
- (b) yearly return,
- in each of the above years?
- (3) If nil to (1), why?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) I am advised that the number of apiary sites licensed by the Forests Department on behalf of the National Parks Authority and included in the answer to question 2761 of 4 April 1984 are—

1979-80—4
1980-81—2
1981-82—14
1982-83—8

1983-84—18 to date.

- (2) (a) \$10 per site at 30 June 1980
\$20 per site at 30 June 1981
\$24 per site at 30 June 1982
\$27 per site at 30 June 1983
\$30 per site from 1 September 1983.
- (b) 1979-80—\$40 approximately
1980-81—\$40 approximately
1981-82—\$336 approximately
1982-83—\$216 approximately
1983-84—\$540 approximately to date.

- (3) Answered by (1).

AGED PERSONS

Senior Citizens' Centres

2817. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has he had any discussion regarding forward programming for capital expenditure for senior citizens' centres under the States Grants (Home Care) Act from the Federal Government in the next triennium?

- (2) Is he aware of any decision whereby \$7 million will be available to the States in 1984-85 and would he list any projects that this State is recommending, and the level of funding expected for Western Australia?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Yes; however, no formal advice has been received from the Federal Government. Priorities for projects are being assessed in anticipation of such advice being received.

MINISTER OF THE CROWN

Deputy Premier: Overseas Trip

2818. Mr COURT, to the Deputy Premier:

For how many days was he away on his most recent overseas trip?

Mr BRYCE replied:

2½ days.

ALUMINIUM SMELTER

South-west: Sites

2819. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) What sites have been considered for the location of an aluminum smelter in the south-west?
- (2) (a) Has the Government made any decision that indicates a region in the locality of Collie or Bunbury;
(b) if so, for what reason?
- (3) When is it expected that a final decision regarding the site will be made?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) Initial screening of possible smelter locations in the south-west has resulted in two sites being the likely subjects of further investigation—on the coastal plain near Kemerton and on the escarpment near Worsley Siding respectively.
- (2) (a) No;
(b) not applicable.
- (3) A final decision regarding site selection will be made following the completion of an environmental review and management programme.

FUEL AND ENERGY: ELECTRICITY

Power Stations: South-west

2820. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) What discussion has he or the Government had and with what consortiums regarding construction of additional power generation in the south-west?
- (2) What level of foreign capital equity does the Government expect will be necessary to get this project underway?
- (3) What sites are now favoured by the Government for this project?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) In 1981 there was a careful evaluation of international and local consulting engineers considered appropriate for the development of specifications and management of turnkey construction of new power plant in the south-west and, subsequently, Bunbury.

Immediately following the above consideration, consortiums were requested to register with the State Energy Commission for turnkey construction of the

proposed new power station. A selection was made and some seven consortiums accepted as suitable for this turnkey project, if it should proceed.

Subsequently in June 1982 the Government and Premier approved and signed an agreement with ICC Construction Company/Kukje Group and agreed that power plant for the proposed new station linked with the smelter project would be supplied by Korean Heavy Industry and Construction Co. Limited and that ICC Construction Company would have a major role in the construction of the power station.

During the period which I have been Minister for Minerals and Energy the major discussions have been with the companies referred to in the preceding paragraph.

The commission, with Government approval, has utilised the services of Burns and Roe Inc., of New Jersey, USA, to work with commission staff and to provide target estimates and certification that the negotiations which have proceeded with Korean Heavy Industry and Construction Company Limited have led to prices being offered and accepted in conditional letters of intent which are competitive with, or better than, current world competitive equipment prices.

- (2) It is expected that a large proportion of the capital involved in the power station will be Australian equity. However this continues to be part of the negotiations, and studies are still proceeding.
- (3) The Premier announced on 7 March 1984 that the Government has now decided to ensure the greatest overall economy of power generation and greatest prospects for this project, and that the new power station site will be located within the Collie Basin area.

STATE FORESTS: PINE

Plantings: Estimated

2821. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Forests:

- (1) What is the amount of pine trees the Government expects will be planted on—
(a) Government land;

- (b) private land leased by the Government;
 - (c) private land purchased by the Government,
- in each year to 1990 in the Manjimup region?
- (2) What shire areas are likely to be included in this programme?
 - (3) Further to (1) what is the anticipated employment increase in each year?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) (a) Not known at this stage; the final area will depend on current investigations;
- (b) not known at this stage; details of leasing schemes have yet to be developed;
- (c) 165 hectares in 1984; 45 hectares in 1985; further planting depends on finalisation of future land purchases.
- (2) Manjimup, Bridgetown/Greenbushes, and Boyup Brook.
- (3) Answered by (1).

DRAINAGE

Rates: Preston

2822. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) With the Government's decision not to charge individuals and businesses in the Preston drainage district, does that mean that shops in the Bunbury Forum shopping complex, including Woolworths Supermarket, Big W, Red Rooster, Hungry Jacks, and Westpac Banking Corporation, will benefit by the Government's action?
- (2) Who will be meeting the ongoing costs of maintenance and construction associated with drainage in this area?

- (3) Can he say when other business proprietors could expect similar favourable treatment by the Government in respect of drainage costs where they are applied in other towns in the south-west?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) Yes, they will each benefit by \$13 in 1983-84.
- (2) The State is to continue to maintain the Preston River levee system utilising CRF, on the basis that it is a flood mitigation work, without charge to the Bunbury community. This is to continue until such time as the Land Drainage Act is revised and a decision is made concerning the financing, construction, and maintenance of flood mitigation works throughout the State. The City of Bunbury has been advised that as a result of the abolition of the Preston drainage district, the State will no longer maintain the Glen Iris drain, and it becomes the city's responsibility.
- (3) Ratepayers in the other drainage districts do not presently pay rates for flood protection works; therefore, there is no justification in abolishing or reducing the rates currently paid.

KINGS PARK

Board: Membership

2823. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Lands and Surveys:

- (1) Who are the members of the Kings Park Board?
- (2) (a) What is their term of office;
- (b) what interest areas do they represent;
- (c) when were they appointed?

Mr McIVER replied:

- (1) and (2)

Kings Park Board

MEMBER	TERM OF OFFICE	AREA OF INTEREST	DATE APPOINTED
HON. SIR R. HUTCHINSON (PRESIDENT)	3 years		16 October 1981
HON. JUSTICE BRINSDEN	3 years		16 October 1981
MR W. H. EASTMAN	3 years	Appointments made under Section 3 of the "Parks and Reserves Act, 1895". Area of interest not defined.	16 October 1981

Kings Park Board—*continued*

MEMBER	TERM OF OFFICE	AREA OF INTEREST	DATE APPOINTED
MR J. W. ROBERTSON	3 years		16 October 1981
MRS A. CULLITY	3 years		16 October 1981
MR R. P. EVANS	For a term expiring 15 October 1984		16 March 1984

GAMBLING: CASINO

*Burswood Island: Mallina Holdings Ltd. and
TNT*

2824. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Premier:

In view of the fact that for the past six months stories have been circulating in Perth that a casino complex is to be constructed on Burswood Island and that a commitment in respect of the project has been given to an organisation in which TNT and one or more principals of Mallina Holdings Ltd. are involved, will he either confirm or deny that the assertions have a basis in fact?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

I refer the member to the copy of a Press release I made in respect to this matter this morning, which is hereby tabled.

The Press release was tabled (see paper No. 699).

FISHERIES

Rock Lobsters: Restrictions

2825. Mr CRANE, to the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

- (1) Is it a fact that he is seeking the co-operation of the Federal Minister for Primary Industry with a view to introducing restriction on boats holding rock lobster authorisations, preventing them from fishing north of south latitude 26° 10' for other than rock lobster?
- (2) Is he aware of the hardship this will cause on many fishermen in the Jurien Bay-Lancelin area who have spent a considerable amount of money to carry out snapper fishing?
- (3) Is it not a fact that no decision was to be made in this matter until the results of the current research programme are known?
- (4) If he has altered a previously reversed decision, what are his reasons?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) to (4) See (1).

TRANSPORT: TAXIS

Control Board: Election

2826. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Have allegations been made of irregularities in the conduct of the poll for election of members to the Taxi Control Board?
- (2) What do the allegations relate to?
- (3) What action is he taking in respect of these allegations?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) I am advised by the Chairman of the Taxi Control Board that allegations of misconduct with respect to the board elections have been made to his staff.
- (2) I am not aware of the contents of the allegations other than to say that I understand they relate to tampering with ballot papers.
- (3) The chairman advised he has drawn these allegations to the attention of the State Electoral Officer, who I understand has placed the matter in the hands of the CIB.

TRANSPORT

Buses: Purchase

2827. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Transport:

Is it still the intention of the State Government to proceed with the purchase of 200 buses for its urban transport system using funds provided through the Australian Bicentennial road development programme?

Mr GRILL replied:

It has never been the Government's intention to purchase 200 buses through the Bicentennial road development programme.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

ACTS AMENDMENT AND REPEAL (INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS) BILL

Building Workers' Industrial Union: Letter

678. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

- (1) Has he seen or been advised of the letter dated 4 April from the Building Workers' Industrial Union to builders—and a number have been delivered—in which it is said in part, and I have a copy of the letter in case the Minister has not seen it—

At two recent meetings of subcontractors in the housing industry it was unanimously agreed that if that section of the proposed legislation dealing with the definition of an employee is not passed by the Legislative Council a campaign of industrial action against selected builders would begin. In order that your company not be included in any industrial action we invite you to sign the enclosed letters and forward them to the Building Workers Industrial Union, the Hon. Brian Burke, the Hon. Des Dans and the Hon. Mr B. Hassell.

- (2) Does the Minister regard the letter as threatening and intimidating?
- (3) Does he dissociate himself from the letter?
- (4) Will he refer the letter, a copy of which I have provided to him, to the Commissioner of Police for investigation of any possible criminal offence?

Mr CARR replied:

- (1) to (4) I had not seen the letter prior to it being passed to me a moment ago. I have no knowledge of the contents of the letter and I have not had time to study it while the Leader of the Opposition has been on his feet. I am prepared to read the letter in due course and take whatever action I might consider appropriate after I have had an opportunity to study it.

ACTS AMENDMENT AND REPEAL (INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS) BILL

Building Workers' Industrial Union: Letter

679. Mr TROY, to the Premier:

- (1) Has the Premier's attention been drawn to a letter circulated this week to builders which purports to come from the Building Workers' Industrial Union, regarding the proposed amendments to the State's industrial legislation?
- (2) Does the letter suggest industrial action will occur in the building industry if the section of the legislation dealing with the definition of an employee is not passed by the Parliament?
- (3) Does the letter also suggest that builders who write to the Government or to the Leader of the Opposition supporting the proposed amendment will not be included?
- (4) Does the Government support such attempts to gain support for the legislation?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (4) I am aware of the letter, and had the Leader of the Opposition asked me about it I would have been able to answer the question he posed.

Mr Hassell: I asked the Minister for Police for the simple reason that the letter may constitute a criminal offence.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am not criticising the Leader of the Opposition's decision to ask whomever he likes. I am indicating that had he asked me I would have been able to answer the question. I am aware of the letter and the contents as referred to by the member for Mundaring and the Leader of the Opposition. The Government regards the letter as threatening and intimidating and advises those companies to whom it was addressed not to reply or to sign the enclosure that came with it.

As far as the Government is concerned it will have no part of efforts such as this to attempt to force a point of view on the community. Our attitude is quite clear in the nature of the legislation we

have introduced. If a cause is worth fighting for it is worth protecting from efforts to support it that detract from its value. That is, if we are to adopt intimidating and threatening methods—as this letter appears to be—by which to pursue a cause, it is likely the cause will suffer as a result of the sort of method used in a wrong attempt to further it.

I can say no more except that I am perfectly happy for the Minister for Police to consider the letter in the terms of his answer to the Leader of the Opposition. It is a matter of great regret, as far as I am concerned, that this particular union should have chosen to act in this way.

It will do nothing to advance the cause it seeks to support and it falls into the category of those people who in supporting other causes use extreme methods to promote their views, for example, on pornography or other matters, and whose efforts are counter-productive, and on that basis—

Mr Hassell: Do you know this union uses those tactics every day on building sites around the city? Has your Government taken any action?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The letter which was the subject of the Leader of the Opposition's question was also the subject of the member for Mundaring's question. I am trying to answer that question and not some extraneous interjection the Leader of the Opposition wants to make as a result of his failure to elicit a satisfactory response from the Minister for Police.

The Government is appalled at this apparent attempt to support a cause which the Government has incorporated in its legislation. The Government is appalled at the nature and the way in which support for the cause has been expressed. We can say it no more clearly than that; and it is a matter of great regret to the Government that the letter should have been sent.

LIQUOR: WINE

Viticulture: Reorganisation

680. Mr STEPHENS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is the Minister aware that the reorganisation of viticulturists within the Depart-

ment of Agriculture has resulted in the withdrawal of the resident officer from the Plantagenet-Frankland wine area?

- (2) Is he aware that under the new arrangements two officers and one laboratory assistant are stationed in Perth, one officer is at the Swan research station, and one at Busselton?
- (3) Is he aware that the officer at Busselton is expected also to service the Plantagenet-Frankland area?
- (4) Will the Minister review the situation with a view to stationing an officer in the Plantagenet-Frankland area and having the Busselton area serviced from Perth, which is a much more convenient arrangement as regards transport?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) to (4) The situation to which the member refers arises because the oenologist at Margaret River terminated his contract and, I understand, has gone back into the private sector of the wine growing industry in another State. That leaves resources in the Department of Agriculture depleted to that extent. The arrangement will be to ensure that in the three major wine growing areas—the Swan, the Margaret River region, and the area of Stirling in which the member is particularly interested—the available resources will be distributed to the greatest effect, having regard to the size of the industry in the region, the nature of the problems and other factors involved.

It has been arranged that Mr Elliott will be moving to Perth and the Vasse region will be serviced by Mr Gerardi.

I recognise that and, of course, Stirling will be served on an itinerant basis in the main from Vasse but possibly on occasions from Perth. I would agree that this is probably not the optimum or perhaps the most satisfactory way of providing the total service but at present it is the most effective approach we have to maintain the service to viticulturists. However, if the situation can be improved every endeavour will be made to do so.

TECHNOLOGY

Incentives: Government Policy

681. Mr P. J. SMITH, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

What is the Government's policy on the question of incentives for high technology companies which may wish to establish in Western Australia?

Mr BRYCE replied:

The Government is prepared to offer any reasonable package of incentives in order to induce high technology companies to establish in Western Australia. However, it should be made quite clear that the Western Australian Government does not intend to match the kind of incentives offered in many developing countries with respect to high technology.

The Government is not prepared to give away land or incentives simply to induce foreign companies to establish in Western Australia. The Government intends to create a process of technology transfer into Western Australia; that is, in return for incentives to establish in the State the companies must demonstrate and commit themselves to substantial transfer of research and development capabilities to this State. The strategy proposed by the Government is to establish a critical mass for research and development in Western Australia. It is the intention of the Government that any agreement or arrangement with any company in Western Australia which involves incentives will also involve technology transfer in terms of employment, skills, knowledge base and the associated elements of research and development base. Any discussions between the Government and any company must be seen in that context.

If either the former Minister or the apprentice from Nedlands would like to ask some supplementary questions I would be delighted to accommodate them.

ACTS AMENDMENT AND REPEAL (INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS) BILL

Effect on Housing Industry

682. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Housing:

I ask the critical mass for research and development, the Minister for Housing—

(1) Will the Minister table the State Housing Commission report which shows that SHC building costs will rise by 14 to 15 per cent if and when the proposed amendments to the Industrial Relations Act become law?

(2) If not, why not?

Mr WILSON replied:

(1) and (2) When the member has the decency to address his question to me as I would expect any member in this House to address anyone else, I will reply.

JETTY

Point Samson

683. Mrs BUCHANAN, to the Minister for Works:

(1) Is it correct that the Public Works Department has recommended total demolition of the Point Samson jetty?

(2) If so, what is the reason for the decision and when is the demolition work likely to commence?

(3) Would the Minister make himself available to inspect the Point Samson jetty before the start of demolition work?

Mr McIVER replied:

(1) No. However, the Executive Council on 7 February 1984 gave its approval under section 6(1)(c) of the Jetties Act for the closure and removal of that portion of the Point Samson jetty extending seaward from pier 102.

(2) The reason for the demolition is a matter of safety. It is planned to carry out the removal work in June-July 1984.

(3) I would be pleased to make myself available to inspect the Point Samson jetty in the company of the member for Pilbara at a mutually convenient time, prior to the demolition works.

GAMBLING: CASINO

Burswood Island: Extension of Time

684. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Premier:

In view of the fact that the Dallas Dempster-Genting Berhad organisation, together with any other individuals or organisations which may be involved with that organisation, had many months prior to last November when details of their proposed \$250 million casino-hotel complex on Burswood Island were disclosed, and five months since that date, to work on their proposed complex, and for that reason alone have a flying start—

The SPEAKER: I remind the member that this is question time. I allow a sentence of preamble but not a long preamble. The member must ask the question.

Mr GRAYDEN: To continue—

—on all other applicants for a casino complex on the site, and must therefore be regarded as the front runners, will he extend the two month period—which he has announced as the period during which other applicants will have the opportunity to revise their proposals and adapt them to the Burswood Island site—to six months, in order that all applicants may compete for the casino complex on a more equal basis?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

I will give the member the benefit of the doubt by presuming that he does not know the details of the announcement made today. The situation is as follows: During last year people interested in submitting proposals for a casino development were given a period of between seven and eight weeks to submit those proposals. After that period—I presume the member does not know this—those applicants were not permitted to revise or work on their proposals from the Government's point of view. They had had seven or eight weeks at that time.

The Government has today announced there will be another seven or eight weeks from this time for those people who did not nominate Burswood Island as the site for the proposal casino to set out proposals if they wish to. However,

those people who had previously submitted proposals for Burswood Island will not be allowed to modify their original proposals.

Mr Grayden: The others cannot catch up 12 months in two months.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Perhaps the member did know of my announcement. Those people who originally put in proposals for Burswood Island did so in seven to eight weeks.

Mr Grayden: The others did not realise this was the only site.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: They are getting the same amount of time to submit proposals in respect of Burswood Island as they did in respect of the sites they chose.

They will have the same amount of time as they previously had and presumably, although I am not sure, many things will not have to be done in order to submit a proposition on the basis of their previous experience.

Let me reply to the unstated part of the question, which is the nub of it. I gave the member the benefit of the doubt in presuming that he did not know of my announcement today but if he has seen it I do not know how he could frame a question stating that one organisation has had six to seven months—

Mr Grayden: They have had 12 months to develop.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The proposal has been lodged with the Government since the closure of that previous period and it cannot be modified. What has been done cannot affect the proposals to be considered because they are not permitted to modify their original proposals.

I will answer the unstated question. The member was so confident that a certain applicant would be allocated the casino development that he led with his chin.

Mr Grayden: No, I did not. Some 1.5 million people have been defrauded as a result of those shares and you have done nothing about it.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The truth is that the Government has today thrown open to all potential applicants the same period previously afforded to them to submit a proposal. I am sorry if that does not suit the members of the Opposition. I simply

restate that those applicants who wish to submit proposals for the casino development on Burswood Island will have the same period to submit their proposals as was previously allowed. Those people who nominated Burswood Island will not be allowed to modify their proposal. The licensing of the operating company to run the casino will be decided by the Totalisator Agency Board.

TRANSPORT: TAXIS

Control Board: Election

685. Mrs BEGGS, to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform:

Is there any truth in the statement in today's *The West Australian* that police have been asked to investigate allegations as to the conduct of the ballot for the Taxi Control Board?

Mr TONKIN replied:

I thank the member for Whitford who has discussed this matter with me today. Allegations had been made on irregularities concerning the Taxi Control Board. I discussed the situation with the Minister for Transport and we agreed that this was a matter for the police. It is to be greatly regretted that a ballot conducted by the Electoral Department is treated in this way.

I want to say, as the Minister responsible for this department, that there is no way in which I would agree to officers of the Electoral Department being used if people will not abide by proper and decent standards. If organisations in the community want ballots conducted under the aegis of the Electoral Department, that is their concern. If bodies want to use the excellent facilities and reputation of the electoral office, we must insist that the ballots are conducted in the most upright and correct manner.

GAMBLING: CASINO

Burswood Island: Class "A" Reserve

686. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Premier:

As the area known as Burswood Island is a Class "A" reserve which I understand is vested in part in the Perth City Council for the purpose of recreation, what action will his Government take if

parliamentary approval is required to change the vesting order to allow for a casino to be built but it is not agreed to by the Parliament?

The SPEAKER: Members may not ask hypothetical questions.

BIRDS

Declared Species

687. Mr GORDON HILL, to the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is it a fact that the Agriculture Protection Board has proposed to restrict the keeping of certain birds in Western Australia?

(2) What action will the Minister take in relation to this matter?

Mr EVANS replied:

(1) and (2) There is a list of declared birds which should be restricted in all States. The adoption of this list in Western Australia would place restrictions on only three additional species. Our situation is unlike that in other States. There is no intention to make any change to the existing regulations unless it is required in the interests of Australian uniformity. I understand it is not expected that any concerted action by the States is likely to occur at this time.

TRANSPORT: TAXIS

Control Board: Election

688. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform:

(1) Is he aware whether any of the candidates in the recent election for the Taxi Control Board has any criminal record?

(2) If he is unaware of that information, will he undertake to determine whether any of those candidates has a criminal record?

(3) If any of the successful candidates has a criminal record, would he then undertake to see whether he would be a fit person to hold a position in the Taxi Control Board?

Mr TONKIN replied:

(1) to (3) In answer to the member for Gascoyne, the administration of this Act is really a matter for the Minister for Transport, and I have taken note of the question. I will discuss the matter with the Minister.

HOUSING: LAND

Leeming: Sale

689. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Has he been able to check the contentions about the sale of SHC land at Leeming made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition during the Supply debate on Tuesday night?
- (2) If "Yes", will he indicate the accuracy or otherwise of that member's contentions?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes, and these checks have only served to confirm my conviction that this innovative and imaginative approach is maximising the benefits of disposing of these Government assets for the whole community and for job creation in particular.

In fact, more time than usual was given to considering the 11 tenders for the sale of this land, contrary to the deputy leader's ill-informed assertions.

His contention that the successful tenderer stood to gain nearly \$10 000 profit per block fails to take into account costs such as rates, taxes, interest—or in the case of T & C, forgone interest—rebates for early construction, advertising, estate improvement, and selling commission.

Based on a retail price of the land at \$25 000 per block, a gross profit of approximately \$5 000 per block will emerge from the sale of the land, which when taking into account the onerous commitments and risk factor due to the cyclic nature of the industry is certainly not excessive and in fact would be considered by the private sector to be inadequate.

In other words, the member has overstated the likely gross profit by some \$2 million.

He is in error in claiming that the Government is not investing any of the returns from this sale in replacing land stocks. As part of the commission's programme of housing applicants on the waiting list, land is being purchased in corridors where there are no existing stocks, for example, the south-east corridor.

In any case the tender arrangements are flexible and would allow a developer to come up with a land exchange as part of a proposal.

This Government was the first to take action to identify SHC land holdings, categorise these holdings into various uses, and account for the needs of the SHC's construction programme for the next three years and also its residential lot sales programme which is fundamental to its pending arrangements.

I would like to re-iterate that the T & C tender provides a commitment to lot production which is greater than the other tenders and maximises the employment creation potential of the development.

T & C WA Building Society has offered 100 per cent financing arrangements to builders at concessional rates of interest with no repayment required until sale. This will be very important to many companies in a tight financial position due to ravages of the severe recession in the recent past. They will provide \$15 million of end finance.

Its commitment is to a total of 350 houses being commenced within the first three years, and any other tender fell far short of this.

It is estimated that the savings to home buyers will be in the order of \$2 000 to \$3 000 as a result of the special financial arrangements to be made by T & C WA Building Society.