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promised one thing and is delivering another. If the Government were a used car, people would send it back. If the Government really does have new plans for jobs I urge it to tell us where they are coming from. If the Government does care about the environment I ask it to share its good news with us. We certainly need it!

Finally, I will tell members some of my personal aims in this place. The young people of this State have been alienated. Our greatest resource is being poisoned. I noticed that the coalition's social initiatives were largely about the gaoling of children, putting up fares on public transport and scrubbing out graffiti. It is not what I would call a social program. What annoys me about the Government and the *Sunday Times* is that they are waging a campaign against kids who are hitting out at the system. No mention has been made of the majority of young people, many of whom have worked hard for tertiary qualifications and have been discarded by the Government and ignored by the media. I have interviewed young Honours graduates who are seeking jobs and they have told that me their interview, despite many applications, has been the first in many years. This Government, like previous Governments, is dealing with effects, not causes. Nobody seriously believes that mining will employ these often highly trained young people. We cannot go on being diggers; we must start using our intellectual talent which has been locked away in these kids. I urge the Government to lift its game.

Another personal interest of mine is urban planning and regional development. Our city is becoming less communal. Because of poor planning people are becoming more isolated. The city is becoming polluted, and even though we know better, we continue to build highways and neglect public transport. Worst of all, we are not meeting with or listening to the needs of our citizens. At this time, we have many solutions and technologies to deal with the problems of our developing world. Only the political will to make necessary change holds us back. I urge members of this House to have the courage to listen with an open mind to ideas that are not their own, openly express their concerns, accept valid criticism, discard outmoded thinking, put aside prejudice and work together to improve our State.

I conclude by leaving with members the thoughts of Professor Ian Lowe, which address the responsibility which each individual member of this House and of the community has to this State. He states -

What the individual can do is think about how they contribute to the political process of changing the structures. We can only use public transport if there's economic, accessible, reliable, clean, safe public transport. We can only cycle to and from work if there are cycleways so we don't have to risk being mown down by a truck. Politicians respond to what they think people will let them get away with. I believe we all have a responsibility to play a part in that political process of maintaining the pressure for change, so that the structures are there to enable us all to live responsibly.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

[Applause.]

**HON J.A. COWDELL** (South West) [8.21 pm]: One is always a bit apprehensive about a first speech. Of course, I could speak for five minutes, sit down and make a virtue out of brevity. I understand it may be a virtue indeed in this parliamentary era of talking under wet cement. I have suffered some of the filibusters in years past in this place as a spectator in the Public Gallery. Having said that, I will perhaps take more than five minutes in this address. It was nearly zero minutes and the onion debate. I am grateful to the House that it is more than that on this occasion.

This evening I will take the opportunity to introduce myself to the House and address some comments relevant to our parliamentary and governmental system and the findings of the recent Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters. Firstly, I thank the 38 000 electors of the South West Region who placed their confidence in the Australian Labor Party at the February poll and elected me to this place. I shall not disappoint them. I shall adhere to the platform on which I was elected and address those immediate concerns about quality of life, job creation and security, the provision of health and education services, and environmental protection that were and are foremost in their minds.

I have been actively involved in politics for the last 22 years as a member of the Australian Labor Party. For almost 10 of those years I served as Assistant State Secretary of the Australian Labor Party. For five years I served as a Commonwealth public servant, working with Senator Peter Walsh, Mr Graeme Campbell and Mr Kim Beazley as Minister for Employment, Education and Training. Over those years I have met and worked with people whose commitment is great and whose principles have served as a guiding light. I am privileged to count among that number our former Premiers John Tonkin, Bert Hawke and Frank Wise, who have advised and encouraged me over the years.

I pay tribute to Edward Gough Whitlam. When the Whitlam Government was elected in 1972 a revolution was started. To that revolution I owe my tertiary education. The restoration of the University of Western Australia to a free university was an achievement of the Whitlam Government from which I benefited directly. The Whitlam Government also ended our involvement in Vietnam and conscription. Without the change of Government in 1972 I would have been subject to the infamous death lottery in 1973. I always find it sobering to look at that list of 500 young Australians who needlessly lost their lives as a result of the arrogance and self-serving stupidity of one Australian Government. Over the years I have appreciated the friendship of Mr Whitlam. He has been generous in his advice and counsel. He is our greatest constitutional advocate and reformer.

I have learnt much from my colleagues on the State Executive of the Australian Labor Party over the nearly 20 years that I have been a member of that body. I acknowledge in particular the late Colin Jamieson, Hon Tom Butler, Hon Cheryl Davenport and Stephen Smith, the Federal member for Perth. I make special mention of two people. I mention firstly the Reverend Keith Dowding, a former moderator of the Presbyterian Church in this State and a longtime member of the Labor Party. What can one say about a man who performed a Christian burial ceremony for the first Japanese pilot shot down over New Guinea? He was cashiered as a padre by the Army High Command. He then joined as an ordinary private and spent the next four years in the front line. It was this man who was expelled from the Australian Labor Party for opposing the white Australia policy. He did not come back to the party; the party came back to him. The ALP eventually caught up with Keith and I am happy to say that it was my pleasure to propose his life membership of the ALP a few years ago. Keith's Christian socialism has been and must remain a central element in the ideology of the Australian Labor Party.

The other person whose guidance and friendship I particularly value is Mr Gil Currie, an old style union secretary, if you like. He was a gentleman of the Trades Hall, who served his fellow workers in peace and his country in war. I do not think Gil's union ever went on strike in the 40 years that he was associated with it.

Mr President, I congratulate you on your re-election to the office of President. I know that you have enhanced the standing of this Parliament, particularly through your role as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Your mission to South Africa to advise on progress toward democracy, as well as the reorganisation of the CPA headquarters in London with the appointment of a new secretary general, must significantly enhance the ideals to which we all subscribe. Mr President, I believe that your role in the next four years will be crucial to the development of parliamentary democracy in this State, the fulfilment of the expectations of the royal commissioners and the continued relevance of this House.

I turn now to the institution of Parliament in this State. The absolute dominance of the Executive and of the Government over the Legislature has been well documented. The disturbing level that this dominance has reached was noted in the recent Report of the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters. I note the fine words of many members of the current Government when they were in Opposition in respect of the meagre resources available to ordinary members of Parliament. They were quite right. The legislators of this State cannot hope to fulfil the role ascribed to them with the resources, particularly staff resources, at their disposal. I hope that now the new Government members are in a position to do something about it, they will. I fear, however, that the words of the current Ministers will become as meaningless and their promises as hollow as those of all of their predecessors now that they have ascended to the ministerial purple. We all know the so-called supremacy of Parliament is a sham. The status of this place is clearly evident by the state of the premises which we occupy.

There is nothing behind the fine facade that faces St George's Terrace. In fact, I notice that even the facade has started to crumble in places. I cringe when international guests are brought up here. The heart of this place, between the two Chambers, looks like the back of an ablutions block, except of course for the kegs waiting to be collected from the parliamentary bar. The so-called Cabinet dining room is a plastic partition pulled across part of the main dining room. Library facilities are minimal. What staff there are in this place find themselves operating from temporary cubicles that line most of the corridors. They freeze in winter and boil in summer in the extremities of this building. Many staff members operate in prefabs and lean-tos scattered around the neighbourhood. Members are bundled up three or four to an office. Their one staff member is back in the electorate office trying to cope with all the constituency problems while Parliament is in session. The Chambers are conveniently unairconditioned so that members are encouraged not to dally too long in questioning the Government or considering proposed laws.

At least the Crown used to be more direct and forthright in dealing with the Legislature. Louis XVI had the Third Estate locked out of its meeting Chamber. They ended up adjourning to a nearby tennis court. I often think that this Parliament would have more notice taken of it by the Executive Government if it adjourned to the tennis court next door. At the very least, the Parliament of this State deserves some space and functional buildings. If the 91 legislators of this Parliament swapped places with 91 senior officers of the State Public Service I would like to see how long it would take before conditions were rectified.

My views are not unique, of course. Members have been trying to upgrade this place since they moved in, in 1904 or thereabouts. In 1911 it was suggested that the building be given to the university. We have not progressed very far since then. We may as well go back down the Terrace to something that is more functional if nothing happens in the near future. I know that the Presiding Officers have fought in recent years to have some of the problems rectified. I commend you, Mr President, and the former Speaker, Mr Barnett, for your efforts. However, I am not advocating the sort of solution that requires huge expenditure or the building of a palace based on the Canberra model; far from it. With a little imagination Harvest Terrace could be closed off and a parliamentary precinct created that includes this House, Dumas House, the old Observatory, and the old Hale School buildings. The various parliamentary annexes around the place could be moved into the precinct. Our long mooted constitutional history museum could be created and various departments, currently squeezed into this building, could be relocated. We could do something to give decent working conditions to parliamentary staff and members, and involve the general public more in the functioning of their own Parliament.

I now turn to the role of our own Chamber in the scheme of things. Second Chambers must earn their keep. We are not the popular Chamber where the Government is formed. We do not initiate financial policies that determine the course of the State. Some have held the view that there is no role for second Chambers at all. St Simon offered the view that if a second Chamber agreed with the first, it was superfluous; if it disagreed, it was obnoxious. Either way it should go. Put somewhat more vulgarly, Sir George Read, our only conservative free trader Prime Minister, stated that if he needed a second Chamber he would use a kerosene tin. Ah, the cry goes up, but we need the Western Australian Legislative Council because it acts as a check and balance. But in Australia we have a constitutional system that has many checks and balances. We have a Federal system which involves checks and balances. We have a judicial system which acts as a check, and we have local government. But, more importantly, we have a long history of democratic government and a pluralist society; the people are the ultimate check on Governments. I do not think that a majority of Western Australians would even know that we exist. Do we need yet another check in the form of the Western Australian Legislative Council? In a country with almost 1 000 paid politicians people must start to become a bit sceptical as to whether all these politicians are necessary. There is perhaps a case for a national bicameral Legislature, but people must begin to wonder about the necessity for 700 or 800 State politicians. The Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory and Queensland operate quite well with a unicameral Legislature. May not the other five States do just as well with a single House? We could cut out a couple of hundred superfluous politicians. Who would notice the difference?

If the taxpayers were to judge this Chamber on its record I suggest that we would be out of a job tomorrow. For half of its existence this House has not acted as a check or a House of

Review. It has acted as a partisan Chamber, slavishly following the dictates of conservative Governments. One need only look at the number of Bills defeated during periods of Labor administration compared with periods of Liberal administration. Even when, during periods of Liberal Government, eminently defeatable Bills or regulations - such as 54B of the Police Act or the measures to restrict electoral enrolments by requiring a justice of the peace to act as a witness - were presented to the Council, they were blindly allowed through. This Chamber, when it has acted as a check on Government and the Assembly, has acted only as a check in the most reactionary and retrograde manner. Which Chamber knocked back a divorce Bill on the basis that it was too liberal? It allowed a woman to sue for divorce on the grounds of adultery, six years' desertion, three years' habitual drunkenness, three years' irreversible insanity or 10 years' proven and consistent ill treatment. Who blocked a Bill to limit the working week to 44 hours for women and children? Which Chamber blocked a Bill to allow women to stand for Parliament? Which Chamber blocked for 36 years Bills to allow women to serve on juries? Picture, if members will, the scene in this House as late as 1957 when the first female member addressed her colleagues. Hon Ruby Hutchison stated in debate on the Juries Bill -

I support the Bill. We all know that a similar measure has been introduced in this House many times previously. I hope that we shall have the satisfaction in the present session of Parliament of putting on the statute book a much needed reform and, one eagerly anticipated by the women of Western Australia. Time has brought forth the report of the select committee; and I make bold to say that the evidence has been overwhelmingly in favour of women serving on juries.

... There is no evidence in the select committee's report to support the suggestion made in this House that the provisions of the Bill were not needed in this State and had not been sought by women.

The debate then meandered down a very familiar path. Who blocked for 60 years initiatives to grant the franchise to all citizens and end plural voting? No prizes for guessing the right answer.

During World War II the bolshie Labor Government attempted to give all soldiers who were fighting for their country the right to have a vote. No prizes for identifying who saw this as the thin end of the wedge and knocked it off. Which Chamber refused to give Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver's abolition of the death penalty Bill even a first reading? Who kept the whipping of juveniles on the Statute book for decades in the face of Government attempts at reform?

It is interesting to read some of the debate. Hon H. Seddon, in horror when he realised what was going on, said that the clause cancelled the power of the magistrate to order a boy's whipping. The Labor Minister said that it was now agreed by practically all authorities that the young should not be whipped. No such thing! This was the Legislative Council of Western Australia to which he was trying to talk the language of care, compassion and reason.

Which august Chamber would not allow universal suffrage in local government until the 1980s? Who prevented Aborigines from gaining citizenship rights for decades? One reads with dismay the shameful actions of this Chamber in the 1950s. The Minister introducing the Bill to give Aborigines citizenship rights said -

I think it was as far back as 1841 - long before Responsible Government - that the first measure was introduced which had any relation to the native community. Over the years, various Acts were passed until 1886, when what is known as the Aborigines Protection Act was passed and in 1905, after Responsible Government was granted, the Native Administration Act was placed on the statute book. However, if one will study the provisions of the Native Administration Act dispassionately, one must come to the conclusion that many of them are not in the interests of the native community; that many of them are punitive and many reprehensible as far as the natives in this State are concerned. I propose to quote a few sections of the Act which it is hoped Parliament will remove from the statute books.

The Minister then went on to point out how Aborigines could apply for citizenship. He said -

They had to apply to a magistrate, and if the magistrate was satisfied that the applicant was a suitable person, he or she would be given those rights. Briefly, an applicant had to indicate that for two years prior to the application, he or she had not mixed with the native community or had not lived the way of the aborigine, had to understand English well and was free from certain diseases. The applicant had to produce two references from responsible people in the community. Under the Act, certain of those people were granted citizenship rights which could be cancelled. I opposed the principle in this Chamber on previous occasions. I shall not rest until that stigma and unfairness are removed. This stigma or unfairness does not apply to any of us. Under the present Act the Commissioner for Native Affairs or any person can apply to the magistrate for a cancellation of citizenship rights, after those rights have been granted. I suggest that citizenship is something far too important a thing to be bestowed on a person one day and then cancelled the next. That Act still stands.

The Act continued to stand after debate was concluded in this Chamber. Once again, it was only after the responsibility for Aboriginal affairs was taken out of the hands of the State of Western Australia and put into the hands of the Commonwealth, as it had previously been in the hands of the Imperial Government, that we got some real progress. In the 1980s this Chamber killed an Aboriginal land rights Bill that may have affected up to nine per cent of the land area of the State. We could not even contemplate the crumbs off the table. Spurious arguments of equality saw us justify all the nineteenth century alienation of the best Crown land in this State to white settlers for nothing or next to nothing, while a century later we could not even bring ourselves to vest the native reserves in the Aboriginal people. We have much to answer for in our stewardship. I can in this context understand easily Oliver Cromwell's injunction to the Rump Parliament on 20 April 1653. He said -

You have sat too long here for any good you have been doing. Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go!

But the recent Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters said that we should give bicameralism another go. Redemption is possible for the Legislative Council. The royal commission's report says the Council has an unrealised place in our constitutional fabric, that it should be a House of vital importance to the public, that measures can be adopted that will enable the Legislative Council to more effectively serve the public interest. Members will note that the royal commissioners spoke in the future tense. How far we are from an ideal situation may be ascertained by the long list of upper House reform proposals contained in the royal commission's report.

The royal commission is quite right - we need to clean up our act. There is no place for us to continue as an unreconstructed House of Lords with all the powers and pretensions of the pre-1911 House of Lords. We must give up our pretensions to being a House that can make and unmake Governments. That is the role of the Legislative Assembly. To its credit this House has never blocked the Budget or Supply, but it has come close. I remember 20 years ago sitting in the Public Gallery of this House when directions were received from the other place that Liberal and Country Party members in this Chamber should block the Budget. That was only six months before a scheduled general election. It was a proposition to rip up all constitutional conventions for the sake of power, six months early. To their credit the Liberal and Country Party members of this Chamber voted the Budget through and the election was held in the normal course of events in 1974. The Court Liberal Government was elected to office. The efforts of the National and Liberal Parties in trying to outdo each other in threatening Supply in this Chamber over the past couple of years was an unedifying spectacle. We must give up this posturing and get on with more constructive things.

Both the 1984 Royal Commission into Parliamentary Deadlocks and the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters were of the opinion that this House should not have the power to defeat money Bills. In that I concur. Nor should it have the power to block money Bills indefinitely. There must be a deadlock resolution procedure whereby disputes between the Houses may be referred to the people. The current resolution procedure of a Conference of Managers is unsatisfactory. I do not know whether this is still National Party policy, but it certainly used to be.

We must not become the Administration's poodle. The royal commission recognised the danger of Executive domination and proposed a number of measures to prevent this

happening. It suggested that a proportional representation system would allow for the representation of minority interests with significant community support. The implication of this recommendation is that the Council would operate more effectively as a House of Review if the system counted against the Administration of the day, whether it be Labor or Liberal, having a majority in the Council. I have no difficulty with a Statewide system of proportional representation with, say, a five per cent threshold for representation. The royal commission also recognised the danger of ministerial domination by means of the presence of Ministers in this Chamber and the influence that ministerial preferment may have on upper House members. It is a matter of concern that the proportion of Ministers to other members in this House appears to be escalating dramatically in recent times. The escalation to four Ministers under the previous Labor Government and five in the current Administration was and is unwarranted.

The royal commission's report also refers to questions that can be raised about the current legitimacy of the Legislative Council given its present electoral system. We clearly cannot continue with the grossest malapportionment in the Commonwealth. The current 17:17 split between the city and country must end and the principle of one person, one vote, one value should be adopted.

I suggest we have the opportunity of putting our house in order on this matter before the courts do it for us. Most persuasively, the royal commission argued that the future of this House lies with the development of the committee system that would allow the Legislative Council to review and scrutinise the management and operations of the public sector of the State. The commissioners' arguments are unimpeachable. The future of our bicameral system depends on these essential reforms. If this Chamber fails to take on the new and important role envisaged for it by the royal commission in scrutinising Executive Government and becoming a genuine House of Review, it will continue to act as a rubber stamp for any Government initiatives. If its role in the next four years were that of Richard Court's poodle, devoid of electoral and public legitimacy, it would sink into obscurity and irrelevance.

Already the trends are ominous. This House is now under the control of the governing party for the first time in 10 years. The coalition has a record five Ministers in the Chamber, covering the most important sectors of Government. I fear that betrayal of the royal commission and its recommendations is in the offing. However, members should make no mistake: Without reform this Chamber is doomed to irrelevance. Already Professor Paddy O'Brien and the populists have denounced our form of representative government as a failure and are demanding a move back to direct democracy. Their cry is that of the initiative, referendum and recall. The Labor Party may yet have recourse to this solution. It was, after all, a Labor Government which introduced a Bill to allow for popular initiative and referendum; that provided that if 15 per cent of the electorate proposed a law, it had to be considered by Parliament. If Parliament did not pass it, it had to go to referendum. We did not get so far as the recall on that occasion. Nevertheless, others are turning to the courts and the Commonwealth to safeguard their interests. No-one looks to us to safeguard their liberties or to protect their rights. We are irrelevant to the whole process of government. It remains for us to make ourselves relevant.

I conclude by referring to our Federal system. I stand by and for the Commonwealth of Australia. Western Australia is not a sovereign State, nor ought it be. I view our latter day secessionists as cheap exploiters of parochialism for personal profit or political gain. Secession has become the last refuge of rogues and scoundrels. We hear the cries already: "Secede to deny the Aborigines any land; secede to save the monarchy and King Charles III." If the embers of parochialism are ever fanned into the flames of secession in this State, as they were in 1933, some of our tin pot demagogues will have a lot to answer for. We cannot ever again afford to have our community divided by a dominion league and a Federal league. Members must be in no doubt that a serious secessionist movement can only lead us down the road of partition and break-up, not of the Commonwealth of Australia, but of Western Australia. I support the motion.

[Applause.]