

Clause thus passed.

Clause 24: Section 61 added—

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Our attitude to this clause is exactly the same as it is to all the other clauses in the Bill. We have told the Government right from the introduction of the measure that we oppose it and, to be consistent, we intend to divide the Committee on this clause.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

#### Ayes—17

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. I. G. Medcalf
Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. T. O. Perry
Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. V. J. Ferry	Hon. J. C. Tozer
Hon. Clive Griffiths	Hon. R. J. L. Williams
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. G. E. Masters	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. M. McAleer	Hon. T. Knight
Hon. N. McNeill	(Teller)

#### Noes—8

Hon. R. F. Cloughton	Hon. Lyla Elliott
Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. T. Leeson
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. S. J. Dellar	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
	(Teller)

#### Pair

Aye	No
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. Grace Vaughan

Clause thus passed.

Clause 25: Section 62 added—

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: This clause deals with the evidential provision, and it relates to the provision that appears in clause 8. When a person seeks an injunction and a court has to decide on the facts, the basis on which it will decide whether a state of emergency exists is laid down in the clause.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

#### Ayes—17

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. I. G. Medcalf
Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. T. O. Perry
Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. V. J. Ferry	Hon. J. C. Tozer
Hon. Clive Griffiths	Hon. R. J. L. Williams
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. W. R. Withers
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#### Noes—8

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Hon. S. J. Dellar	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. Lyla Elliott	Hon. R. F. Cloughton
	(Teller)

#### Pair

Aye	No
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. Grace Vaughan

Clause thus passed.

Title put and passed.

#### Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 12.16 a.m. (Thursday)

## Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 9th October, 1974

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

### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

*Submission: Statement by Speaker*

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Hutchinson): I have a brief statement to make on the submission of questions on notice. It is a pity that more members are not present but perhaps those who are here will inform their neighbours, who are absent, of my request.

Although members are permitted to hand in questions up to half an hour after the House sits, it would be appreciated if members, whenever possible, would try to avoid handing them in in large numbers during that period. One day recently the typing staff had the experience of receiving only a dozen questions before 4.00 p.m., and then receiving an additional 40 with which to deal thereafter.

The co-operation of members, therefore, is requested.

### QUESTIONS (52): ON NOTICE

#### 1. TRAFFIC

*Great Eastern Highway: Speed Limit*

Mr HARTREY, to the Minister for Traffic:

- (1) What is now the maximum permissible speed for vehicles travelling on the Great Eastern Highway?
- (2) What is the metric equivalent of the former maximum permissible speed of 65 miles per hour?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) 110 km/h unless otherwise restricted by provisions of the Road Traffic Code, e.g. heavy vehicle, probationary driver, speed zone or control area.
- (2) 104.607 km/h.

#### 2. KENT STREET HIGH SCHOOL

*Home Economics Facilities*

Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

What improvements are planned to upgrade home economic teaching facilities at Kent Street Senior High School?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

No improvements are in hand at the present time but work on either upgrading or replacement is to be considered from a future fund allocation.

## 3. SCHOOL CLEANING

*Windows*

Mr T. D. EVANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Does the Education Department enter into contracts or other arrangements for the cleaning of school windows where schools are situated in the metropolitan area, so that the orthodox school cleaners are exempt from this task?
- (2) If so, is the practice approved for schools beyond the metropolitan area, and if not, why not?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Schools in the metropolitan area are included in the window cleaning contract administered by the Public Works Department. However, this does not exempt the cleaning staff from window cleaning. The school windows are cleaned twice per year under the contract but if additional cleaning is necessary the cleaning staff is required to do it.
- (2) The window cleaning contract does not operate outside the metropolitan area.

## 4. KALGOORLIE SCHOOL

*Piano*

Mr T. D. EVANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

Would he please advise when a second piano will be made available to Kalgoorlie primary school?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

The school is listed to receive a second piano in 1975. The actual date of delivery is dependent upon the flow of these instruments from the importers.

## 5. FORREST STREET, KALGOORLIE

*Closure*

Mr T. D. EVANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Would the Minister please use his best endeavours to expedite the closure of portion of Forrest Street, Kalgoorlie, adjacent to Kalgoorlie primary school?
- (2) Is the Minister able to indicate when the closure is likely to be effected?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.

## 6. WATER SUPPLIES

*Kalgoorlie-Boulder: New Rates*

Mr T. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) How many domestic water services are connected in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder community?

- (2) How many industrial and commercial water services (global number) are similarly connected?
- (3) What has been the average domestic consumption in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area for each of the last three accounting years and likewise for industrial and commercial consumption?
- (4) Would he indicate the new charges to be made for industrial and commercial water consumed?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) 5 864.
- (2) Industrial 40;  
Commercial 607.
- (3) Average annual consumption (kilolitres).

	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74
Domestic ....	432	423	340
Industrial ....	3 923	3 291	2 590
Commercial	409	423	350

- (4) Industrial—

First 909 kilolitres @ 11c per kilolitre.

Next 8 183 kilolitres @ 22c per kilolitre.

Next 81 830 kilolitres @ 11c per kilolitre.

Next 90 922 kilolitres @ 13.2c per kilolitre.

Next 90 922 kilolitres @ 15.4c per kilolitre.

Next 90 922 kilolitres @ 17.6c per kilolitre.

Next 90 922 kilolitres @ 19.8c per kilolitre.

Over 454 610 kilolitres @ 22c per kilolitre.

Commercial—

First 909 kilolitres @ 11c per kilolitre.

Over 909 kilolitres @ 22c per kilolitre.

7. This question was postponed.

## 8. STOCK EXCHANGE

*Fines: Disclosure of Names*

Mr J. T. TONKIN, to the Premier:

- (1) If, following his request to the Perth Stock Exchange, a copy of the report on its inquiry into the behaviour of certain brokers named in the Senate Select Committee's report on the securities and exchange industry is received, is it his intention that the contents of the report will remain confidential to the Government?
- (2) If "Yes" will he after the report has been studied, express an opinion on behalf of the Government on the question of the desirability or otherwise, in the public interest, of the Stock

Exchange publishing the names of the offending brokers and the amounts they were fined?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Until we see the report, a decision cannot be made on whether its content should remain confidential, either in whole or in part.
- (2) Answered by (1).

# 9. HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE

## *Government Acquisition*

Mr J. T. TONKIN, to the Premier:

- (1) Did the Government recently have an opportunity to acquire Her Majesty's Theatre under very favourable circumstances and conditions?
- (2) If "Yes" was the offer rejected with an explanation that the Government had alternative plans?
- (3) If the Government has alternative plans, will he inform the House concerning them?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) to (3) The future of Her Majesty's Theatre is currently the subject of study because of my policy statement on the matter, as follows—

We will investigate the acquisition of a city property such as Her Majesty's Theatre, for use (in a suitably re-conditioned form) by Ballet, Opera, Gilbert & Sullivan, theatrical and cultural organisations.

Present indications are that the cost of achieving the result aimed at would be prohibitive, so far as Her Majesty's Theatre is concerned, but no final decision has been made.

# 10. TRANSPORT INDUSTRY

## *Royal Commission Report*

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) When did the Tonkin Government appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the transport industry?
- (2) When was the report presented to the Government?
- (3) Has the report been considered by—
  - (a) the Cabinet; or
  - (b) the Minister for Transport?
- (4) Does the Government intend adopting any of the recommendations contained in the report?
- (5) When will the report be tabled in Parliament?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No Royal Commission on the transport industry was appointed by the Tonkin Government. It did, however, commission the late Mr D. G. Sander on the 25th September, 1973 to conduct an inquiry into some aspects of the road transport industry.
- (2) I acknowledged receipt of the report of the inquiry, which was completed by Mr Sander's successor, Mr P. F. Brinsden on 22nd May, 1974.
- (3) The terms of reference did not require the inquiry to produce recommendations and accordingly no formal ones were made. On June 12th therefore I referred the report to the Transport Advisory Council for review and recommendation. The Transport Advisory Council responded on the 6th September and at this time I have recommendations under consideration.
- (4) and (5) This will depend on Cabinet's decision.

# 11. WATER SUPPLIES

## *Collie: New Rates*

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Why have the accounts issued by the Public Works Department at Collie for water and sewerage rates been amended, resulting in householders only paying for domestic water consumed?
- (2) Does this mean that householders are to be charged at the new rates foreshadowed by the Government?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Approximately 300 water accounts in Collie were prepared showing the rate in the dollar which at that time had not been approved. These accounts were amended before they were despatched. All other Collie accounts for the period July to September 1974 were prepared and despatched for water consumption only.
- (2) Yes.

# 12. MUJA POWER STATION

## *Extensions*

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) As in a letter dated 27th June, 1974, the Minister advised me of the estimated workforce that would be employed on the extensions to the Muja generating station at Collie and in view of this

information, will he please advise the number of workers at present employed on the construction?

- (2) Is it correct that the Government has reviewed the extension programme and men currently employed are to be put off?
- (3) If (2) is "Yes" will he please advise of the alterations and the reasons for the change in the original construction programme?
- (4) If (2) is "No" will he advise if any changes in the extension programme are being considered and its effect on—
  - (a) the estimated programmed workforce;
  - (b) the dates the additional 200 mW units will be operating?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) 16.
- (2) The programme is being reviewed by the commission. The men currently employed on the Muja project are on preliminary work prior to contract works commencing. Five of these men will have completed current works this week and will be retrenched.
- (3) and (4) Answered by (2).

13.

### SHOPS

#### *Late Night Trading*

Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Has the Government dropped its election promise to introduce late night trading in the city and metropolitan area?
- (2) If so, why?
- (3) What proposals, if any, are envisaged for late night trading in areas outside the metropolitan area?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) and (2) There was no election promise to introduce late night trading in the city and the metropolitan area.
- (3) A Bill is about to be introduced to provide for extended trading hours in the tourist areas.

### 14. COAL MINES REGULATION ACT

#### *Deputies' Certificates*

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Is the Government considering amending the Coal Mines Regulation Act in connection with the regulations regarding the experience required in an open-cut in order to sit for a deputy's ticket?

- (2) If "Yes" when is it contemplated that the legislation will be brought to Parliament?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) The matter is presently being considered by the Mines Department for recommendation to the Minister.
- (2) Unknown until a decision is made.

### 15. TRADES AND LABOR COUNCIL, AND EMPLOYERS FEDERATION

#### *Educational Programmes*

Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

What amounts of money are being paid to the Trades and Labor Council and the Employers Federation to assist those bodies in their educational programmes during the fiscal year 1974-75?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

Amounts included in the printed estimate of expenditure of the Department of Labour and Industry are—

Trades and Labor Council  
\$12 000.

WA Employers Federation \$6 000.

### 16. DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR

#### *Committees: Meetings*

Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) How many times has the Retail Trades Advisory Committee met since 1st July, 1974?
- (2) Who are the present members of this committee?
- (3) How many times has the Minister for Labour's Industrial Safety Advisory Committee met since 1st April, 1974?
- (4) Who are the present members?
- (5) How many times has the Minister for Labour's Advisory Committee met since 1st April, 1974?
- (6) Who are the present members of this committee?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) Three.
- (2) Mr H. A. Jones, Under Secretary for Labour and Industry, Chairman, and Mr E. Benness representing the occupiers of shops. The third member of the committee representing the purchasers of goods from shops has not yet been appointed since the resignation of Mrs R. Coleman.
- (3) and (4) None. The purpose of this committee is to discuss any proposed safety legislation and it

has not been necessary to convene a meeting to date. The representatives are drawn from—

Industrial Foundation for Accident Prevention.

WA Employers Federation.

Perth Chamber of Commerce.

WA Chamber of Manufactures.

Trades and Labor Council.

Director—Technical Education.

Under Secretary for Labour and Industry.

Chairman—Minister for Labour and Industry.

(5) Once.

(6) The Minister for Labour and Industry is Chairman of the committee. The members are—

Messrs F. S. Cross, J. W. Coleman, H. A. Jones.

17.

### TRAFFIC

#### *Revenue from Fines*

Mr HARMAN, to the Treasurer:

Will he provide the monthly amounts received to revenue from traffic fines for the period October 1973 to September 1974?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

Traffic fines paid as a result of infringement notices are separately recorded.

However, the balance of traffic fines imposed by courts is included with other moneys arising from fines paid into revenue. Consequently, total monthly amounts are not available.

### 18. MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSES

#### *Recording Fee*

Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Traffic:

(1) Why is the recording fee of \$4 shown on motor vehicle renewal licenses under the heading of "other"?

(2) Why cannot it be shown as legislated for?

(3) Will it be accurately detailed in the future?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

(1) This is a temporary solution until the computer programmes stationary is amended.

(2) Answered by (1).

(3) Yes.

### 19. INDEPENDENT HOME BUYERS ACTION GROUP

#### *Reply to Correspondence*

Mr BATEMAN, to the Premier:

(1) Would he state why he has neither acknowledged receipt of nor replied to three letters sent to him

by Mrs Lesleigh Benda, secretary of the Independent Home Buyers Action Group, the letters being—

(a) the first letter contained Press releases following her trip to Canberra and an explanatory note;

(b) the second was in reply to a letter of his saying that either various Ministers were not keeping each other informed, or that statements made by Mrs Benda after meetings in Canberra could only be construed as misrepresentations; and

(c) the third letter being a request for a reply to the previous two and a request that he would make it publicly clear that the Independent Home Buyers Action Group was non-party political?

(2) Will he reply to the above correspondence?

(3) Does he now recognise that, as per the group's constitution and considering it contains committee members of both major parties as well as private citizens with no political commitments, the Independent Home Buyers Action Group is non-party political?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

(1) to (3) My office is examining the papers relating to the complaints raised by the Member. I will let him have my comments as soon as practicable.

In the meantime, I would have thought the group to which he refers would have acknowledged that they had received both prompt and effective attention from myself and colleagues.

There is certainly no desire or intention to be anything but helpful and co-operative with a problem which is of mutual concern.

20.

### BEEF

#### *Minimum Price*

Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Has he received a recommendation from a meat industry steering committee in connection with the establishment of a scheme to set a minimum price for beef?

(2) If so, what are the details of such proposal?

(3) Does the Government intend to proceed with the scheme if such has been received?

Mr McPHARLIN replied:

- (1) to (3) No. The steering committee is submitting a proposal to the combined meat industry meeting for its consideration.

## 21. TRAFFIC

### *Pedestrian Crossings: Formula*

Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Traffic:

Can crosswalks be established where special circumstances of location or unexpectedness occur despite the fact that the numerical requirements of the stipulated formula cannot be met?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

Crosswalks are not recommended in these circumstances as other measures may be more suitable in the interest of safety.

## 22. ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

### *Country Towns Assistance Scheme*

Mr MAY, to the Minister for Electricity:

- (1) Will there be any restriction on the timetable regarding the country towns assistance scheme because of the Government's announced intention to take 3% of the State Electricity Commission's gross revenue?
- (2) How many towns have been assisted since the scheme was instituted?
- (3) What other towns will be taking advantage of the scheme within the next six months?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) The position is being evaluated.
- (2) 21.
- (3) Negotiations for further towns are incomplete.

The answer to the first question might be misinterpreted if read in conjunction with the question. I add, therefore, that the evaluation is by no means due to this 3 per cent levy, but rather to the fact that because of the general tight liquidity situation, the loan funding of the commission does not appear to be very promising at the present time.

## 23. ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

### *Kalgoorlie and Eastern Goldfields*

Mr MAY, to the Minister for Electricity:

- (1) When can a decision be expected regarding the possibility of supplying Kalgoorlie and other eastern

goldfields areas with electricity from either the Kwinana or Muja power stations?

- (2) Have any recent negotiations been carried out between the SEC and the Kalgoorlie Council relating to a conjoint operation of the Kalgoorlie power station?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) When the State Electricity Commission has considered the proposal which has just been referred to it.
- (2) No.

## 24. RURAL AND INDUSTRIES BANK

### *Profits to Consolidated Revenue*

Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

As several people have expressed concern to me at the Government's intention to require the Rural and Industries Bank to pay 50% of its net profit to Consolidated Revenue, can he advise what effect this is likely to have on the savings of persons who have money invested in the bank?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:  
Nil.

## 25. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### *South Perth: Rating*

Mr MAY, to the Premier:

- (1) Is he aware of the extreme financial hardship being experienced by South Perth ratepayers due to the revaluation carried out earlier this year?
- (2) Has he received a submission from the City of South Perth Council requesting urgent consideration of the provision of "notional value" relief to all *bona fide* resident owners of single residences?
- (3) If so, will the Government introduce emergency legislation to remove the "ownership prior to rezoning" provisions of section 533 of the Local Government Act; namely, remove subsection (3c) (b) (i) and (ii) from section 533 of the Act?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) No, but I am aware of dissatisfaction with the amount of rates payable.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) The report of the committee appointed to inquire into rating, taxation and charges, will be awaited before any action is taken.

## 26. WORKERS' COMPENSATION

*Claims: Accidents*

Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

Further to his reply to question 45 on 28th August, 1974 regarding claims for workers' compensation, would he provide the following relevant information—

- (a) the total number of accidents involved in the period mentioned in his answer;
- (b) the number of accidents in each of the industries concerned and the injury percentage increase in those industries arising from such accidents;
- (c) the nature of such accidents and the total lost time involved in each industry arising from such accidents?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (a) and (b) Figures available for Government departments and instrumentalities.

Year Ended	No. of disabling injuries	% increase on previous year
31/3/72	3 234	....
31/3/73	3 850	32.5
31/3/74	4 286	11.3

- (c) The figures on the nature of such accidents are not readily available but an accepted overall pattern usually follows in accident statistics. The total time lost from the above injuries was—

31/3/72—40 456 days  
 31/3/73—50 301 days  
 31/3/74—62 393 days

## 27. HOGGET AND MUTTON

*Marketing Authority*

Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Does the Government propose to extend the operations of the WA Lamb Marketing Authority, or to set up some separate authority, to cover the sale of hogget and mutton for export and/or local consumption?
- (2) If so, would he give details of any proposal?

Mr McPHARLIN replied:

- (1) and (2) The Marketing of Lamb Act, 1971, provides under part IV for the board to trade in hogget and mutton with the approval of the Minister for Agriculture. This section does not empower the board to acquire all hogget and mutton.

Submissions requesting the implementation of part IV will be carefully examined to determine whether such action will benefit the industry.

## 28. MEAT INSPECTION

*Charges*

Mr MOILER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

Further to my question 1 on Tuesday, 8th October, 1974 regarding inquiry into meat inspection fees, when does the Minister anticipate the completion of negotiations and his being able to table the report?

Mr RIDGE replied:

Negotiations should be complete within a few weeks and the report tabled.

## 29. HIGH SCHOOLS

*Toilet Facilities*

Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is it true that no Government department considers itself responsible for providing soap or towels in toilets at State high schools?
- (2) If "Yes" what is the Government's attitude to the situation?
- (3) Is it true that the great majority of State high schools do not provide any washing facilities for students other than water taps and wash basins or troughs?
- (4) Have any investigations been carried out to determine whether outbreaks of gastro-enteritis and associated illnesses are connected in any way with the lack of adequate washing facilities?
- (5) Is it true that in some schools the toilet paper provided is either of the glazed, non-absorbent type totally unsuited to the function it is supplied to perform, or is sometimes unavailable?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The matter has been considered many times and, however desirable, the cost is prohibitive. As funds become available, the matter will be reconsidered.
- (3) Every high school constructed in recent years has change rooms and showers mostly with hot water systems, but there are quite a number which do not have these facilities.
- (4) Outbreaks of gastro-enteritis and associated illnesses are investigated by local authorities or the Public Health Department. Such

outbreaks are usually confined to people sharing a common meal or living in the same household. Outbreaks in school children due to inadequate washing facilities have not been confirmed.

- (5) Normally ample supplies of good quality crepe toilet paper are provided. Machine glazed paper was supplied during a recent shortage and some rolls may remain in use.

### 30. DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND SURVEYS

#### *Secondment of Surveyor*

Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Has any surveyor employed by the Department of Lands and Surveys been seconded to the service of a private company?
- (2) If so, what are the conditions of his secondment and how have his terms of employment been affected?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) No. However, a departmental cadet is currently attached to a private firm for practical experience in cadastral surveys under supervision to meet the needs of articles of indentures. It is anticipated the cadet concerned will shortly return to duties within the department.
- (2) The terms of employment for this cadet with the department have not been affected.

### 31. BEACH BUGGIES

#### *Registration*

Mr T. J. BURKE, to the Minister for Traffic Safety:

Would he please advise the results of an investigation which it was indicated would be undertaken in reply to question 26 of 4th December, 1973, concerning registration of beach buggies and licensing of their drivers?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

The investigation has been completed and the results are currently under consideration. No determination has yet been made.

### 32. PROBATE

#### *Revenue and Administration*

Mr T. J. BURKE, to the Treasurer:

- (1) What was the amount of State death duties obtained in each of the last two financial years?
- (2) What was the cost of maintaining the probate office in each year?

- (3) How many cases were handled in each year?
- (4) How many people were employed in the office at 30th June, each year?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

(1)	1972-73—\$7 656 340; 1973-74—\$10 315 930.		
(2)		1972-73	1973-74
		\$	\$
	Administration	137 000	165 000
	Valuations	69 815	72 343
	Total	206 815	237 343

Total cost per \$ of tax collected—  
2.7c—1972-73;  
2.3c—1973-74.

- (3) Estates assessed—  
1972-73—6 690;  
1973-74—7 633.
- (4) At 30th June, 1973—23;  
At 30th June, 1974—23.

### 33. COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES

#### *Employees: Workers' Compensation*

Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Is it true that employees of the Country Water Supplies who seek compensation for injury are being required to complete forms which allow automatic deduction from salaries or wages in the event that subsequent investigation determines that the injury is non-compensable?
- (2) If "Yes" are employees who refuse to complete these forms being refused permission to claim compensation?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.

### 34. MOTOR VEHICLE AND DRIVERS' LICENSES

#### *Number and Revenue*

Mr SIBSON, to the Minister for Transport:

For the year 1973-74, what were—

- (a) the numbers of motor vehicle registrations;
- (b) the amount collected in motor vehicle registration fees;
- (c) the number of driving licenses issued;
- (d) the amount received from drivers' license fees;



- (e) the annual receipts under the Commonwealth Aid (Roads) Act 1969-74?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (a) 508 267 (as at 31st December 1973).  
 (b) \$16 400 756;  
 (c) 550 763;  
 (d) \$1 620 271;

	\$
(e) 1969-70	32 940 000
1970-71	36 270 000
1971-72	39 250 000
1972-73	43 910 000
1973-74	48 030 000.

### 35. ANSETT AIRLINES

*Preference: Public Service*

Mr T. J. BURKE, to the Premier:

- (1) Has any instruction been given to the State Public Service to give preference to Ansett Airlines?  
 (2) If "Yes" would he table a copy of the instruction for the information of Members and advise the House why it was issued?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Not to my knowledge.  
 (2) Answered by (1).

### 36. RAILWAYS

*Derailments*

Mr T. J. BURKE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Would he please advise—  
 (a) number of derailments this year;  
 (b) date and location of each;  
 (c) cost of repairs to tracks in each case;  
 (d) details of other costs in each case?  
 (2) Has the total cost of repairs been met by the Government?  
 (3) If not, would he please give details?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

The information sought by the Member is not readily available and will take some little time to collate. I will forward a reply to the Member as soon as possible.

### 37. ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

*"Thank You" Advertisements*

Mr T. J. BURKE, to the Minister for Electricity:

Did he or any other Member of Cabinet direct or in any way influence the publication of

"Thank You" ads appearing in the daily Press on behalf of the SEC?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

No.

### 38. LOTTERIES

*Coolibah Tavern: Raffle of Motorcar*

Mr T. J. BURKE, to the Chief Secretary:

Further to my questions of 31st July, 20th August and 11th September, concerning a certain lottery at Coolibah Tavern, Morley—

- (a) was the investigation completed within the 10 days;  
 (b) if not, why;  
 (c) when will the answers be provided and papers tabled?

Mr STEPHENS replied:

- (a) Yes.  
 (b) Answered by (a).  
 (c) The Lotteries Commission upon consideration of the report and recommendation of the Police has requested the Police Department to proceed to prosecution. When the case is finalized consideration will be given to the necessity for tabling the papers.

### 39. POLICE

*Parliament House and Trades Hall Demonstrations: Officers on Duty*

Mr T. J. BURKE, to the Minister for Police:

Would he advise—

- (a) number of police on duty in vicinity of Parliament House and number in each rank on both Thursday, 26th September and Tuesday, 1st October, 1974;  
 (b) number of police photographers on duty at Parliament House on each date;  
 (c) number of police on duty in the vicinity of Trades Hall and number in each rank on Friday, 16th August, 1974;  
 (d) number of police photographers on duty at Trades Hall on that day?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (a) to (d) No.

## 40. POLICE

*Parliament House and Trades Hall  
Demonstrations: Photographers*

Mr T. J. BURKE, to the Minister for Police:

- (1) (a) Were photographs taken by police photographers at Parliament House on—
  - (i) Thursday, 26th September, 1974;
  - (ii) Tuesday, 1st October, 1974;
- (b) if so, why were they taken and where are they now located?
- (2) (a) Were photographs taken by police at Trades Hall on Friday, 16th August, 1974;
- (b) if so, where are they now located?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) (a) (i) No.
- (ii) Yes.
- (b) (i) To provide evidence and to assist in establishing identity of offenders if breaches of the law occurred.
- (ii) Prints were not required. The negatives are at present held in the Police photographic section and are to be destroyed in accordance with normal practice.
- (2) (a) Yes.
- (b) Answered as in (1) (b) (ii).

## 41. MOTOR VEHICLE THIRD PARTY INSURANCE

*Reduction*

Mr T. J. BURKE, to the Treasurer:

- (1) In view of the fact that the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust has accumulated a surplus of \$13 million, would he take action to reduce that part of motor vehicle registration fees charged to third party insurance?
- (2) If not, why?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) (a) The Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust is continually watching the premium rates and, on its recommendation, they were reduced 20% from 1st July, 1973.
- (b) The rates are at present the lowest in Australia, and for the motor car are only \$2.40 in excess of those operating in 1967, despite all limits having been abolished, and the introduction of spouse v. spouse liability.

(c) The surplus is an estimate only and must be sufficient to meet approximately 6 500 outstanding claims which may take 7 to 10 years to finalise.

(d) Hospital charges have increased by 50%, legal costs by 50%, and the average weekly earnings on which payments are based have also increased 20% in the last month. Doctors' fees have also increased.

(e) There has been a decline in the trust's underwriting result over the last year as a result of the reduction in premiums.

(f) The present apparent surplus is the result of high interest rates which have accrued on investments, but may not continue.

## 42. LESMURDIE SCHOOL

*Enrolments*

Mr THOMPSON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) What is the present enrolment at Lesmurdie primary school?
- (2) What is the estimated number for the start of the 1975 school year?
- (3) What is the maximum enrolment proposed for this school?
- (4) When will a start be made on the proposed Burma Road primary school?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) 512 as at 1st August, 1974.
- (2) 530.
- (3) The maximum enrolment of a school is related to the facilities provided. In general terms, primary schools are provided with permanent accommodation to cater for approximately 700 pupils.
- (4) A definite commencement date has not yet been determined and will depend on the build-up of primary enrolments in the Lesmurdie area.

## 43. POLICE

*Officers: Number and Salaries*

Mr T. J. BURKE, to the Minister for Police:

- (1) What is the number of policemen in Western Australia?
- (2) What is the number in each rank and the salary scale in each case?
- (3) What is the number of police-women in Western Australia?
- (4) What is the number in each rank and the salary scale in each case?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

(1) 2 012.

(2) Rank; Salary (including allowances)—

	\$
Commissioner (1) .. .. .	24 620
Deputy Commissioner (1)	19 233
Assistant Commissioner	
(1) .. .. .	17 412
Chief Superintendent (1)	18 290
Superintendents (20) .. .	16 500
Snr. Inspectors (20) .. .	15 140
Inspectors (19) .. .	14 340
Sergeants 1/c (67) .. .	11 916
Sergeants 2/c (125) .. .	10 834
Sergeants 3/c (192) .. .	10 076
Det. Sergeants 1/c (18) ..	12 476
Det. Sergeants 2/c (27) ..	11 394
Det. Sergeants 2/c (36) ..	10 636
Snr. Det. Constables (15)	9 944
Det. Constables 1/c (79)	8 969
Det. Constables 5th year	
(20) .. .. .	8 320
Det. Constables 4th year	
(3) .. .. .	8 103
Snr. Constables (189) .. .	9 384
Constables 1/c (369) .. .	8 409
Constables 5th year (143)	7 760
Constables 4th year (124)	7 543
Constables 3rd year (145)	7 327
Constables 2nd year (130)	7 163
Constables 1st year (267)	7 002

(3) 38.

(4) Rank; Salary (including allowances):

	\$
Inspector (1) .. .. .	14 340
Sergeant 2/c (1) .. .. .	10 994
Sergeant 3/c (2) .. .. .	10 236
Constable 1/c (5) .. .. .	8 569
Constable 5th year (5) ..	7 920
Constable 4th year (10) ..	7 703
Constable 3rd year (5) ..	7 487
Constable 2nd year (1) ..	7 323
Constable 1st year (8) ..	7 162

44. *This question was postponed.*

#### 45. MT. LAWLEY TECHNICAL COLLEGE

##### *Extensions*

Mr T. J. BURKE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

When is it intended to proceed with extensions to the Mt. Lawley Technical College which were approved in 1967?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

The 1967 plan envisaged the extension of the Mt. Lawley Technical College onto the adjacent site

currently occupied by the Department of Community Welfare. Until such time that the site is acquired by the Education Department, the 1967 plan cannot be fully implemented.

#### 46. BEACH BUGGIES AND TRAIL BIKES

##### *Control of Use*

Mr T. J. BURKE, to the Minister for Conservation and Environment:

In view of damage being done to—

(a) beaches and sand dunes;

(b) natural bushland, particularly in the Reabold Park,

by beach buggies and trail bikes, would he take immediate action to control the use of these vehicles?

Mr STEPHENS replied:

I share the Member's concern for the damage being done by beach buggies and trail bikes and refer him to my answer to question 33 of 12th September, 1974. My recommendations have been forwarded to the Minister for Recreation who I understand will shortly be recommending legislation to Cabinet.

With regard to the particular problem of Reabold Park, I understand that the Perth City Council is active in attempting to control the use of such vehicles within its limited manpower resources.

#### 47. CHANNEL 7 STADIUM

##### *Parking*

Mr T. J. BURKE, to the Premier:

(1) What provision has been made for parking on central railway land to cater for the Edgley/Channel 7 project?

(2) What is the area involved and the terms of its use for—

(a) the project;

(b) parking?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

(1) Specific provision has not been made for the parking of cars by patrons attending functions in the entertainment centre, but a 900 bay public car park is under construction by Perth City Council, and patrons will be able to park there as the public normally use such facilities in the city.

At present, there are also three Perth City Council car parks within close proximity. This

ignores any street car parking which might be permissible at various times in the evenings.

- (2) The site areas are—
  - (a) Entertainment centre, 1.5 ha. approximately.
  - (b) Car park in three areas totalling approximately 3 ha.

The respective sites are leased to the developer and Perth City Council, subject to conditions relating to rental, use of land and structures thereon, period of lease agreement with provision for termination or extension, depending upon circumstances.

#### 48. FEDERALISM

##### *Claim of Erosion*

Mr T. J. BURKE, to the Premier:

- (1) Does the provision of elected Assemblies in the ACT and Northern Territory compromise his oft-repeated assertion that the Australian Government is determined to erode Federalism?
- (2) If not, why?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Because the ALP, and particularly the present Commonwealth Government and Prime Minister, are committed to a centralist and socialist form of government. I invite the attention of the Member to his party's basic policy, and to the public addresses, etc. of the present Prime Minister. I assume the Member, as a loyal disciple of his party and the Prime Minister, is committed to do all he can to bring about the demise of State Parliaments and State Governments. I invite the member's attention to the Chifley Memorial Lecture given in 1957 by the Right Hon. E. G. Whitlam on the subject, "The Constitution versus Labor".

#### 49. COMMUNITY WELFARE DEPARTMENT

*St. Francis Xavier's Mission, Wandering*

Mr P. V. JONES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Does the Community Welfare Department exercise control over the St. Francis Xavier Mission at Wandering?
- (2) Has the department title over the property occupied by the mission?
- (3) How many boys are currently resident at the mission?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) The Community Welfare Department would make use of the mission for the placement of State wards and as such has a responsibility to see that standards of child care are maintained. However, the department does not exercise any control over the mission.
- (2) The land occupied by the mission consists of 9 140 acres and the title is vested in the Aboriginal Lands Trust for the use and benefit of Aborigines. The Aboriginal Lands Trust has the power to lease and has effected a 99 year lease to the Roman Catholic Bishop of Perth for the purpose of a Native mission conditional that should the mission cease, the land will revert to the trust. A further 500 acres on which the mission buildings are located is granted in trust in fee simple to the Roman Catholic Bishop of Perth.
- (3) There are at present 20 children in residence, 7 boys and 13 girls. 19 of these children are State wards.

#### 50. HOUSING

##### *Williams*

Mr P. V. JONES, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many Aboriginal families occupy Housing Commission dwellings within the Williams townsite?
- (2) How many houses will be constructed during 1974-75 within Williams townsite for—
  - (a) Aboriginal families;
  - (b) non-Aboriginal families?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) None. Aboriginal families are in occupation of two housing commission homes on the Williams Road outside the townsite boundary.
- (2) (a) It is intended to construct two houses during 1974-75 subject to satisfactory outcome of negotiations with the local authority as to sites.
- (b) It is intended to construct two houses in 1974-75.

#### 51. ST. JOHN OF GOD HOSPITAL, SUBLIACO

*Teaching Institution*

Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

- (1) Does he have any details as to how the \$50 000 to be paid to St. John of God Hospital, Subiaco,

during 1974-75 for the establishment of the first teaching unit, will be spent?

- (2) If so, can he advise please?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) No firm details have yet been determined as discussions are still taking place.  
(2) Answered by (1).

52.

## HOUSING

*Ranford*

Mr P. V. JONES, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Has the State Housing Commission inspected the dwellings occupied by Aborigines at Ranford, in Boddington Shire, with a view to reporting on same?  
(2) How many houses are currently occupied by Aboriginal families at Ranford?  
(3) How many houses will be constructed during 1974-75 in Boddington Shire for—  
(a) Aboriginal families;  
(b) non-Aboriginal families?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Yes, at the request of the local authority.  
(2) 6, but these are not commission owned dwellings.  
(3) (a) It is intended to construct 3 houses during 1974-75 subject to satisfactory outcome of current negotiations with the local authority as to sites.  
(b) Nil.

## QUESTIONS (2): WITHOUT NOTICE

1.

### ALWEST PROJECT

*Press Report: Accuracy*

Mr MAY, to the Premier:

I apologise for not giving previous notice of this question, but I think the Premier will be able to answer it. Will he advise whether the report which appeared on the front page of today's edition of *The West Australian* in connection with Alwest is basically correct, and whether the information was given to the media by the Government?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

Firstly let me say that as far as I am concerned the information was not given to the media by the Government. Secondly, I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the report because it did not come from a Government source. However, it is consistent with conjecture I have noticed in the Eastern States

about this and other projects as a result of the policy of the Commonwealth Government of undertaking negotiations of this kind, without taking the State Government into its confidence.

However, I cannot say whether the information in the report is factual or whether it is just conjecture.

2.

## MUJA POWER STATION

*Extensions*

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Electricity:

In part (2) of question 12 today I asked the Minister—

Is it correct that the Government has reviewed the extension programme and men currently employed are to be put off?

The Minister advised that the programme is being reviewed. I then asked—

If (2) is "Yes" will he please advise of the alterations and the reasons for the change in the original construction programme?

In my view the Minister completely evaded that question. Would he provide a better explanation?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

I can undertake to ask the State Electricity Commission to provide more information to the member for Collie. However, I cannot see the subject of his complaint because quite clearly parts (3) and (4) of his question refer back to part (2), to which I gave the required answer.

## BILLS (3): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Constitution Acts Amendment Bill.

Bill introduced, on motion by Sir Charles Court (Premier), and read a first time.

2. Appropriation Bill (General Loan Fund).

Bill introduced, on motion by Sir Charles Court (Treasurer), and read a first time.

3. Western Australian Institute of Technology Act Amendment Bill.

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Mensaros (Minister for Industrial Development), and read a first time.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

On motion by Mr Moiler, leave of absence for four weeks granted to Mr Jamieson (Welshpool) on the ground of urgent private business.

**BILLS (3): THIRD READING****1. Teacher Education Act Amendment Bill.**

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Mensaros (Minister for Industrial Development), and passed.

**2. Commonwealth Places (Administration of Laws) Act Amendment Bill.**

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr O'Neil (Minister for Works), and transmitted to the Council.

**3. Acts Amendment (Judicial Salaries and Pensions) Bill.**

Bill read a third time, on motion by Sir Charles Court (Premier), and transmitted to the Council.

**LIBRARY BOARD OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
ACT AMENDMENT BILL***Third Reading*

**MR STEPHENS** (Stirling—Chief Secretary) [2.56 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

During the second reading debate last night, I undertook to obtain some additional information for the member for Kalgoorlie, and I am happy to be in a position to give that information now. The member for Kalgoorlie made the point dealing with clause 4, which relates to the restructuring of the board, that the City of Perth and the City of Fremantle were included. I add that the honourable member congratulated the Minister on his apparent valiant endeavours to cover the whole spectrum of interest in restructuring the board. The only reason the City of Perth and the City of Fremantle were included in the Bill is that they were considered to be representative of the larger type of local government authorities. Although the Minister has not informed me of this, I might add that the Cities of Perth and Fremantle are included in the parent Act and I think it is logical that they should continue to be representative of the larger type of local government.

The other query related to new section 32 (1). The honourable member made the point that under certain circumstances, this provision appears to override any Statutes enacted in the past and which have prospective application to any future decision of this Parliament. I am informed by the Minister and his advisers that Parliament cannot commit itself for future legislation, but any future legislation in which it was wished to make a provision different from this would have to say so specifically. That is to say, the later Act would have to say so specifically. The purpose is to enable the archives, which are not allowed to be made available to the general public, to be handed over to the Library Board without such action being

regarded as a breach of secrecy provisions in any other law. I trust that those explanations satisfy the honourable member.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

**LAND***Park at Reabold Hill: Motion*

**MR J. T. TONKIN** (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [2.59 p.m.]: I move—

This House applauds the concept of a new park consisting of 800 acres of natural bushland to the west of Reabold Hill and urges the Government to take the necessary steps to have the area made an "A"-class reserve for such purpose.

I decided to put this motion before the House in order to assist a certain section of the Perth City Council which desires to achieve the objective we have in mind. I felt that if a decision of the House could be obtained on this matter it would help very considerably. It is now recognised that open spaces are an essential element in urban life and we should not neglect an opportunity to provide these spaces when the opportunities occur.

During the period I was in Japan, a couple of years ago, I noticed the great difficulty being experienced there, because of the growth of population and the inability of the Government to do the things it required to do in view of the fact that land was not available. In fact, in some areas of Tokyo it is no longer possible to bury the dead, because all space available for cemeteries has been taken up and used. Therefore the authorities have had to resort to a good deal of cremation.

If we neglect the opportunity which is offering now to reserve this open land, in the future, when it becomes more apparent that such steps should be taken, it will be an extremely costly exercise, because it will involve the resumption of residential areas. In recent times advantage has been taken of opportunities to provide parks, and I refer members to the area known as Wireless Hill on the south side of the river. That area, for many years, had been used by the telecommunications centre and belonged to the Commonwealth Government. When it became apparent that the telecommunications centre was to be moved, the State Government supported the request of the Melville Town Council to the Commonwealth Government that the land should be made available for the purpose of creating a reserve.

The Commonwealth Government did not give the land away, but the Western Australian Government was prepared to pay a substantial sum—not nearly the value of the land, by any means, because had it been used for residential purposes it would have brought a return well above that

which the Commonwealth Government was asking. However, both Governments saw the desirability of having this land reserved for the purpose of a park, and in years to come posterity will appreciate greatly the action taken to reserve this land. I was able to play some part in it myself at the time because I realised that these opportunities do not often occur and when they do we should not pass them by.

For example, what a wonderful asset we have in King's Park. Doubtless many people would like to be able to build residences in King's Park, but Parliament has considered it so important to preserve the park that an Act has been passed which provides that no buildings shall be constructed in the park without the consent of Parliament—the matter has to be brought here for approval. If you will permit me, Mr Speaker, I can tell an interesting story about King's Park. When I was abroad in 1958 endeavouring to induce people to come to Western Australia to help in the State's development, I went to Switzerland to try to encourage somebody to invest money in building a first-class hotel, because in those days that was something this State lacked. I was put in touch with one of the leading hoteliers in Switzerland—Sir Frank Ledger was with me at the interview—and we prevailed upon this very wealthy gentleman to agree to come to Western Australia to look at the possibility of his establishing a first-class hotel in this State.

In due course he came to Western Australia. We suggested several areas that we would be able to make available to him at a very reasonable price. He had a look around and finally came to see me to report on the result of his inquiries. He led off by saying, "Well, Mr Tonkin, I have had a good look at Western Australia and I believe it has good possibilities and I would be prepared to build a first-class hotel in Perth." I thanked him because I thought that was a very good result, and I was very pleased about it. However, he went on to say, "There is only one place where I would build it." In answer to my inquiry as to where that was he said, "In King's Park."

So members can imagine my reply to that. I said, "If that is the only condition under which we can get a first-class hotel in Perth I am very much afraid that we will have to do without it, because there is not the slightest possibility of any Government granting permission for that to be done." I related that story to show that although there is a very large area of land in King's Park we are very jealous of the way in which we consider it should be used, and we would not give much consideration to any request that any portion of it should be thrown open for residential purposes.

In our comparatively small population at present it is not easy for people to realise how important open spaces are,

but when the population of Perth grows—as indeed it will quite rapidly—this need for open spaces will become more and more apparent and the opportunities for providing them will become fewer and fewer. So we have to cast our minds back to the situation which existed when Lord Forrest decided that that large area which overlooks the Swan River should be resumed for a park.

At Reabold Hill we have a similar opportunity to ensure that quite a sizeable area shall be retained as a park. Some people are opposed to the idea purely on financial grounds. They see the possibility of raising a very large sum of money—I think \$15 million has been mentioned—from the development and sale of this land for residential purposes, but the main weakness in this argument is that the finance which would be derived from the development and sale of this land for residential purposes would have a limited area of application. The Perth City Council could not use all the money for improvements and works within its area because the City of Perth Endowment Lands Act specifies that the money must be spent in Floreat Park and City Beach.

These two areas, because of the existence of the City of Perth Endowment Lands Act, already enjoy amenities above the average. To deprive the people generally of a park in order to provide additional money to improve the amenities in these areas would be extremely hard to justify: in fact, I do not think it could be justified at all. Our attitude should be to consider what is necessary for the general good, and the general good suggests to me that it is not a question of providing money to improve amenities in City Beach and Floreat Park but to provide additional open space, the value of which will be far better appreciated in years to come, when the population of Perth is very much larger than it is today.

I do not think it needs a great deal of imagination to realise how important it is that the right decision be made now in connection with this land. To allow the land to be used for any other purposes would simply mean that it would no longer be available to the people. In that event it would be an opportunity lost, and one which we would not regain except at very great cost.

I do not think it is possible for any country to provide too much open space. Our general experience is that because of the pressures for development, it is not easy to retain land as open space; somebody always comes along with a new idea. Sometimes these ideas are very good and they make for improvement in development.

I go back quite a number of years and think of the area where the Freshwater Bay Yacht Club is now located. That land

used to be alongside Manners Hill Park which was available to the people; in fact, it was part of Manners Hill Park. It was available to the people for picnicking, right down to the water's edge. Strong representations were made by the yachting interests, and the Government of the day—that was a Labor Government—agreed that quite a portion of this land should be excised from the park that was used by the people generally, and be made available to the yacht club.

This is an ideal spot for the establishment of a yacht club; and I suppose the place for yacht clubs to be located is at the water's edge. However, this move took away an area of open space, and thus the size of Manners Hill Park was reduced. That was one example.

Pressures are always being exerted for using up open space. Between where I live and the river front, there was at one time a reserve which was vested in the East Fremantle Council. The area was covered with nice trees and grass; it was an area where on a Sunday afternoon the people could walk and enjoy themselves; they could hear the singing of birds. In the summertime it was a very pleasant place for people to be in. However, the council decided that this land could be put to better use, but it was not used for residential purposes.

Mr Nanovich: Used for a club?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: It is used by various clubs—tennis clubs, lacrosse clubs, soccer clubs, and football clubs.

Mr Nanovich: And they are licensed? Who was the Minister at the time?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: In place of this very nice area of bushland we now find a number of buildings where on several evenings of the week gatherings of people are held—such as dances, wedding receptions, and the like.

Mr O'Neill: And for bingo?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Today it is an entirely different scene. At the time quite a lot of objection was raised by the residents. I was not one of them, because I thought I should keep out of it as it was a personal matter to me. However, I did not look upon the proposal with any great favour.

There was an instance, though it was not quite the same as using the land for residential purposes, but nevertheless it took away the use of the area from the general public; and the land was made available for the use of members of the various clubs. It is true that many people now enjoy the facilities that are established there, and they go there to watch soccer games, or to play tennis on the large number of courts provided. That is an example of how difficult it is to retain open space which would be of far more

advantage to the general public, than to the limited number of people who now use the facilities that have been provided.

Such pressure will always be on; so, Governments and local authorities have to resist it; and it is much easier for Governments than for local authorities to resist it. That is why I feel we ought to strengthen the hands of the councillors in the Perth City Council who, in their wisdom, believe that this land should not be sold for residential purposes, but should be retained as parkland.

If the land were made a Class "A" reserve it would be much easier to retain it for the purpose I have mentioned. I submit to the House that the motion before us is one which is worth while to be carried. It is not something from which we would get an immediate benefit, because the real need for such additional open space will become more apparent only as time goes on and the population increases. In years to come, if we reserve this land, the people of Perth will thank us in the same way as people have thanked Lord Forrest who has been appreciated over the years for what he did in connection with King's Park.

No doubt, members are aware that over the years a number of attempts have been made to use King's Park for various other purposes. I recall the proposal of the Perth City Council to establish an Olympic pool in the park. What a lot of opposition that proposal struck at the time, because it was considered that once the proposal was agreed to there would be a large influx of people in motorcars into the park, and greater use of the land would occur with the result that there would be less parkland left.

I mention that simply to show that these pressures are always on, and to point out how difficult it is to resist them. This is an opportunity for us to resist such pressures. I think we would be recreant to our trust if we did not give a lead and a clear indication of what we feel about the necessary provision of open spaces to assist urban living. That is the sole purpose of the motion; and there is no other purpose at all.

Sir Charles Court: Before you conclude, are you prepared to give some indication as to whether your suggestion is to set up some type of statutory board, such as the King's Park Board; and, secondly, as to whether the Perth City Council should be recompensed for the loss of what is virtually freehold land?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: To answer the second part of the question first, this is a matter entirely for the Government to decide and it should be approached on exactly the same basis as the approach to the Wireless Hill land by the Australian Government and the State Government.



In that case the land was owned by the Australian Government. If it had retained the land and opened it up for residential development it would have made a lot of money from the project. However, the Australian Government yielded to the representations of the Melville Town Council and the State Government, and agreed that the land could be made available for public use at what was not much more than a nominal sum in the circumstances. I believe that in the case of the land covered by my motion the same procedure ought to be followed by the State Government and the Perth City Council.

The Perth City Council should realise that the provision of a park in the Reabold Hill area will benefit not only the residents of the metropolitan area in general, but specifically the residents of City Beach. If the council sells the land it will be to improve the conditions in Floreat Park and City Beach. If the council retains the land as a park—I understand the City Beach Progress Association desires this to be done—then the people of City Beach and of the surrounding area will benefit. I believe it should be a question of negotiation between the two parties. I hope that the Perth City Council will take a similar view with regard to its ownership of this land, as the Australian Government did with regard to its ownership of the Wireless Hill land.

The other part of the question asked by the Premier is how the land ought to be retained. I think it would be an excellent idea for a park of this size to be placed under the control of a board, but it need not necessarily be a separate board. In my view the board which looks after King's Park could look after the proposed park in the Reabold Hill area. However, that is a matter for discussion and consideration in respect of the various points involved. It should not be difficult of solution.

I do feel someone should be in charge to look after its development. It would not be enough for the area to be set aside as an "A"-class reserve and for it to be no-one's responsibility to look after it or make certain it is put to its proper use. The area must be looked after because the growth of grass must be controlled or fires will occur and be a danger as well as destroy the bushland.

Obviously someone must be in charge and must be able to derive revenue from some source to meet the cost involved in looking after the area. However, these are matters which would be easy of solution once a decision was made that the area should be retained as parkland and satisfactory negotiations were concluded with the Perth City Council.

I repeat that persons in the community are looking to us for a lead in this matter and it would strengthen the Government's position if the House generally ap-

proved of the idea that the area should be retained as parkland and should not be sold for residential or other purposes.

Mr T. J. BURKE: I second the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Rushton (Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning).

## LAND AGENTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### *Second Reading*

MR BERTRAM (Mt. Hawthorn) [3.22 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Section 3 (1) of the Land Agents Act of 1922 states that from and after the 1st April, 1922, no person shall carry on the business of a land agent unless he is the holder of a license. Then, in the first schedule to the Act there is a form of application for a license in the first instance, or a renewal of license, to be completed by applicants. The application form indicates that the applicant must have attained the age of 21 years. I do not think that anywhere else in the Act an age is specified—more particularly specified in relation to the holding of a license.

In 1972, Act 46, known as the Age of Majority Act, 1972, became law. With the passage of that particular Act a difficulty has arisen which this Bill seeks to overcome. The real purpose of the Bill is to make it possible for people who are 18 years of age to hold a license provided, of course, they have in all other respects complied with the requirements of the Act.

The Age of Majority Act and other Acts have given people of the age of 18 years various powers and a few obligations which for many years they did not have. For example, they now have the right to enter into contracts, can be jurors, can make wills by virtue of a provision of the Wills Act of 1970, have the right to vote, have acquired certain rights under the Liquor Act, and so on; but the Age of Majority Act is the Act which really takes the matter up and, as I say, gives many general powers to persons who have attained the age of 18 years which prior thereto were enjoyed only by people who were 21 years of age or over.

I hasten to point out also that it is not always a question of giving something to the people in this particular age classification; that is to say, to those who have attained 18 years of age. Sometimes it is a matter of burdening them with certain responsibilities, although the Bill with which I am concerned and am introducing gives something to those in that age classification rather than burdens them with responsibility. That is the prime purpose of the measure.

Section 5 (1) of the Age of Majority Act is worth while reading and is as follows—

5. (1) Subject to the succeeding provisions of this section, for all the purposes of the laws of the State—

- (a) a person who, on or after the commencing day, attains the age of eighteen years attains full age and full capacity on attaining that age; and
- (b) a person who, on the commencing day, is of or over the age of eighteen years but under the age of twenty-one years attains full age and full capacity on that day.

Subsection (3) of the same section reads—

(3) This section does not apply so as to affect the operation or construction of any reference in an enactment or instrument to an age expressed in years.

Bearing that fact in mind the Act then goes on subsequently to section 6 (2) which reads—

(2) Each of the Acts specified in the Schedule to this Act is amended to the extent to which the Act so specified is expressed in that Schedule to be amended, and any Act so amended pursuant to this subsection may be cited by showing the figures representing the year of its passing followed by the passage “-1972”.

As I have already said, in the first schedule the Land Agents Act makes reference to an age; namely, 21 years. However, as one reads through the schedule to the Age of Majority Act, which is the schedule I have just referred to when reading section 6(2), one finds a list of Acts affected, including the Administration Act, the Betting Control Act, the Declarations and Attestations Act, the Health Act, the Juries Act, the Land Act, the Limitation Act, and so on. There is quite a list of them, but that list does not include the Land Agents Act. Consequently section 6(2) of the Age of Majority Act in no way affects the Land Agents Act.

It so happens that some persons who have attained the age of 18 years, but who had not at the material time attained the age of 21 years, have been granted a land agent's license.

I can say positively, one person has and I think others have as well which, in itself, indicates that the position needs some clarification. This applies particularly when we bear in mind what I have already stated: That the form of application itself refers to the age of 21 years. In any event, there are those people who take the view that the particular license to which I have

referred should not have been granted, and moves are afoot, by reason of that fact—and that fact alone, and there is no other shortcoming on the part of that person's qualifications—to seek to take the license away from the person concerned.

Basically, what I say is this: In so far as this legislation is concerned—and probably generally, too, for that matter—what we should be concerned with here is not so much the question of the age of the applicant as his character and competence to hold a license. It is difficult to say, really, what age has to do with character. One can say that age does have some relevance to the question of competence, but it is just one of many ingredients; it is not a fundamental question touching on competence.

Having all those facts in mind, I am clearly of the belief that a person who has attained the age of 18 years and who has in all other respects measured up to the requirements of the Land Agents Act should be entitled to apply for, and be granted—and to hold—a land agent's license under the Land Agents Act.

This Bill is rather short in length because that is all it seeks to do and it is able to do what it seeks without very much verbiage. Very briefly, I will outline what it does. It aims to amend section 3 of the principal Act, the first portion of which I read at the commencement of my remarks, and it simply states that no person shall be eligible to apply for, or be the holder of, a license unless he has attained the age of 18 years. The Bill then tidles up certain situations which may exist, and goes further to say that—

(1b) Where a person has during the period commencing on the 1st day of November, 1972 (being the date on which the Age of Majority Act, 1972 came into operation) and expiring on the date when the Land Agents Act Amendment Act, 1974 came into operation lodged an application for a license pursuant to subsection (1) of section 4 of this Act and such application is still pending the same shall not be refused only on the ground that at the date of the lodgment of such application the applicant was under the age of 21 years if he had then attained the age of 18 years;

That outlines the position where an application has been pending during the time to which I have just referred. A further provision states that where in that same period—that is to say, from the 1st November, 1972, until this particular Bill becomes law—a license has been granted, that license shall not be voidable or revoked only on the ground that at the date the same was granted the licensee was under the age of 21 years if he had, in fact, at that time attained the age of 18 years.

A further provision will meet the situation where a person has not only applied during the period which I have described, but has in fact been granted a license but has then had the license taken away from him by a court of competent jurisdiction. If that license, in that case, has been taken away on the ground—and the only ground—that the licensee was under the age of 21 years, then that particular license will, by force of the proposed new subsection, be reinstated fully and from the time the license was originally taken away from the holder.

The only other thing the Bill seeks to do is turn its attention to the schedule of the Land Agents Act in which there is a passage referring to 21 years of age—which I have already read to the House—and to substitute for “21 years” the appropriate age; namely, “18 years”.

That is the position in summary: the amendment enables persons to become land agents at the age of 18 years, provided that they, in all other respects, qualify to become land agents. The other provisions of the Bill meet certain situations which have come about by reason of the fact that the law is not as clear as it should be at the moment as to whether, in fact, it is still necessary to be 21 years of age or over in order to hold or obtain a land agent's license under the Land Agents Act.

I hope members will appreciate that this is a worth-while measure. It is important because it touches upon the livelihood of people. Those people who have licenses, and who are over the age of 18 years and under the age of 21 years, in my belief should not have those licenses taken away from them when they have, first of all, apparently shown to a court that they are people competent to do the job without any disability being suffered by the public and who, having obtained their licenses, have in fact operated since that time and done so efficiently.

I can bring to mind only one specific instance at the moment, but I have little doubt that there are other cases. I hope members will support the measure.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr O'Neill (Minister for Works).

## CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

### *Appointment of Standing Committee: Motion*

Debate resumed, from the 18th September, on the following motion by Mr A. R. Tonkin—

That in the opinion of this House there should be established by it as soon as it is practically possible, a standing committee on conservation and the environment.

**MR MOILER (Mundaring) [3.38 p.m.]**: I wish to support the motion moved by the member for Morley, and one of the main reasons for my doing so is that I believe power has progressively accumulated at the centres of government. The democratic process has been damaged as the Government has grown further away from contact with the people and we believe the time has come to reverse this trend.

Those words were used in a statement—among many others—made by the Premier in his policy speech. I believe that within those statements he expressed the sentiments of many members of this Parliament. We agree that there is an accumulation of power at centres of government, and we also agree that the power should be in the Parliament democratically elected by the people.

We believe the democratic process has been and can be damaged by the public being prevented and even discouraged from participating in the making of legislation and the conduct of the Parliament and the Government. We have come to expect from the Premier fine words and statements but invariably there is little substance in them and virtually no action taken upon them.

Mr Mensaros: During the election campaign you did not say they were fine words, did you?

**MR MOILER**: Those particular statements were fine words. There were many fine words in the Premier's policy speech. We would like to see him adhering to some of them and bringing about some of the promises.

Sir Charles Court: We will, don't you worry.

**MR MOILER**: He implied that he believed, along with many others, that the democratic process was being damaged by the fact that the public were not being encouraged or even allowed to enter into the decisions of Parliament. I suggest that if the members on the Government side do not support the motion moved by the member for Morley it will further demonstrate the doubtful credibility of the Premier.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: Hear, hear!

Mr Carr: And the Minister.

**MR MOILER**: “Power has progressively accumulated at the centres of government”.

Mr P. V. Jones: Is that from your policy speech?

**MR MOILER**: That is an extract from the Premier's policy speech. He said—

We believe the time has come to reverse this trend, as Government has grown more distant from the people.

Mr P. V. Jones: What about reading all of it?

Mr MOILER: It is all very well for the Premier to talk about hotlines, information centres, and the like, but we know that to bring the people closer to the Parliament we must give them a genuine opportunity to participate, and one way of doing so is by the formation of standing committees which would call upon experts and would enable interested persons to contribute evidence which would be of benefit to this Parliament and the State, generally.

A standing committee on conservation and the environment would allow institutions, individuals, and groups who are concerned about those matters to contribute to the decisions made by this Parliament. The establishment of standing committees would not only enable the public to participate but would also bring about a better utilisation of the members of this Parliament: I think this is a very important point. At the present time we have a Parliament of some 81 members.

*Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.04 p.m.*

Mr MOILER: As I was explaining before the afternoon tea suspension, if we desire genuinely to bring government closer to the people it would be far better to develop the principle of establishing standing committees rather than setting up hotlines and information centres. It would be an excellent idea to commence with a standing committee on conservation and the environment. Not only would the establishment of standing committees bring government closer to the people, but it would also better utilise the services of members of Parliament. We have some 81 members of Parliament at the present time, 12 of whom are members of the Cabinet leaving 69 other members. After making allowance for the Speaker, the President, and various other onerous positions, I estimate that we are not fully utilising the potential of about 60 members.

These members are working as diligently as possible, but I believe their potential would be better utilised by the establishment of standing committees. The members could increase their knowledge in specific spheres by attending committee meetings and by their involvement in the business of the committees.

I am sincere when I say that I do not believe the potential of this Parliament is being realised while we continue to operate under a system which has remained virtually the same for almost 80 years. It is high time we took this progressive step to develop a system of standing committees. In my opinion at the present time the Western Australian Parliament is possibly the most conservative Parliament in Australia. In view of that fact, it would be a very major step for us to establish a standing committee in this area of conservation and the environment, for the very reasons that the Minister gave for opposing the motion.

Members will agree that because of the excellent way in which the Environmental Protection Act was drawn up by the previous Government, we already have an avenue for public participation. The public are concerned about the environment and conservation, and under the environmental protection legislation they can be involved in this issue to some degree. This would be an ideal area in which to take this small progressive step. As it is a small step, I believe it is one which even this Parliament should consider. We have a great wealth of information and ability in this Parliament, as well as all the additional information available to it, not just within the departments concerned, but through the individual residents of this State who are concerned about the environment and what is happening to it, and who are anxious to play a part in protecting it.

I believe the effectiveness of this State Parliament will diminish with the three-tier system of government within Australia.

The Australian Government will continue to function as the Government for Australia. We are one nation, and whether we have a Conservative or a Labor Government in Canberra, the process will continue to be the same.

Mr Rushton: You should say "Conservative" or "socialist".

Mr MOILER: Well, Conservative or socialist, if that is what the Minister wishes. I am certainly proud that I class myself as a socialist. The effectiveness of the Federal Government will grow, and the function of the State Government will be reduced. Local government will develop and become more powerful and effective.

Mr Nanovich: Do you agree with that?

Mr MOILER: Whether or not I agree with it, I think it will occur. We must realise this and take steps to act accordingly.

Mr Nanovich: It won't happen under a coalition Government; it might happen under a socialist Government.

Mr MOILER: The process will continue, regardless of which Government is in power in Canberra.

Mr Sodeman: Do you think that is a good thing?

Mr MOILER: Repugnant as it may be to some members of this Parliament, this place and its members will become obsolete if the present Government refuses to ignore the obvious trend which is taking place.

Mr Clarko: I think you put in an extra negative.

Mr MOILER: I meant to say, "if the present Government continues to ignore the obvious trends". If we genuinely believe that we are here to benefit the public of Western Australia, what has the Government or this Parliament to lose from the establishment of a standing committee on

conservation and the environment which would enable better dissemination of information to members of Parliament and the involvement of interested members of the public? I do not think members on the other side of the House could argue against that point. If no harm can arise from the appointment of such a standing committee, why is it opposed? Why not give it a try? What dangers could lie within it?

The Premier has said that the Liberal Party is deeply concerned at the historic trend of government wherein the Government is becoming more and more distant from the people. I agree with that comment. If the Premier sincerely believes that, he should support this motion because the development of standing committees would bring government closer to the people. I believe the Government has the opportunity now to show it is not bigoted, it has nothing to hide, and it is anxious that all members of Parliament should be as fully informed as possible, and that public participation should be encouraged.

By supporting the motion the Government would in some way be putting into effect some of the promises made in the policy speech of the Premier. The Government has the opportunity to take a positive step to reverse the trend towards centralising power within the Cabinet and the Public Service. By complementing the excellent Environmental Protection Act with a standing committee, the Premier would be taking a step in the direction of implementing his implied desire to bring government closer to the people.

We have seen the present Government appoint numerous committees outside of Parliament to study certain matters and report back to the Government. Why cannot committees of the Parliament do this? We have seen the establishment of a committee to examine land rates and taxes and charges, which will report only to the Premier and the Minister for Local Government. That being so, why can we not have a parliamentary committee to take evidence from people interested in conservation and the environment so that members of Parliament would have the opportunity to make up their minds after listening to the evidence?

Mr Nanovich: Did your Government suggest such a committee in its three-year term?

Mr Bateman: Your Government didn't in the 12 years it was in office.

Mr McIver: What about the many "A"-class reserves we created in three years, after the 12 years of stagnation of your Government?

Mr MOILER: Our Government appointed a Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly to inquire into the parliamentary committee system. We were working on the very matter referred to in this motion.

Another committee has been set up by the present Government to inquire into concessions for pensioners in this State. That inquiry was set up outside the Parliament, and its full report may not be given to us. It will be submitted to this House at the discretion of the Premier.

Surely Parliament itself is entitled to call for this type of information. By the establishment of standing committees it could inquire into such matters itself. Committees would be composed of members interested in the subjects to be inquired into, and other members could attend the hearings to listen to the evidence in order to assist them to make a decision.

Mr Blaikie: What was the attitude of your Government to the proposal for a committee to inquire into the dairy industry?

Mr Bateman: That has nothing to do with the motion.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: You are like a lot of school kids.

Mr Sibson: You should know.

Mr MOILER: I suggest the system we are working under has remained unchanged for some 80 years. Surely now is the time to consider the establishment of a standing committee, and the committee we should start with in this Parliament is the excellent committee proposed by the member for Morley.

I suggest to members that for their very self-preservation alone they must support the establishment of standing committees because, as I have said, this Parliament in future will become less effective, the Australian Government will become more dominant, and with the development of regions—which will occur—local government will become more effective and powerful. Therefore we should establish a system of standing committees whereby Parliament may call evidence. A matter which comes quickly to mind is the motion moved this afternoon by the Leader of the Opposition regarding Reabold Hill. I foresee the time when this Parliament will establish standing committees to call evidence from people concerned with such a matter within the State; it will not be merely a matter concerning the Perth City Council and a small number of people. I foresee that a standing committee will call evidence, draw conclusions, and report to Parliament; and Parliament will make a decision either for or against the proposal. I am convinced this will occur, if not in the very near future, then in a later period.

I wonder what the Government fears about the appointment of this standing committee. Does any member opposite suggest that such a committee would do any harm? If it can do no harm, why not support the motion? I have already explained why a standing committee on conservation and the environment should be

established. The public are concerned about the environment.

Mr Nanovich: After listening to all the humming and hawing during the fuel and energy debate, to what conclusion could we come in respect of conservation?

Mr Bateman: For heaven's sake, what is the relevance of that?

Mr Grewar: He has stumped you again.

Mr MOILER: I must admit that I cannot answer that one. I reiterate that the motion moved by the member for Morley is a very modest step for this Parliament to take, for the reasons I have outlined. The Environmental Protection Act was well compiled with the objective of including the public to the greatest possible extent under the legislation as it stands. With such public involvement, it would be a very modest step to now appoint a standing committee of this Parliament. The very reason the Minister gave in opposing the suggestion can be used in support of the motion. Finally, if we genuinely wish to reverse the trend of Governments being removed from the people, this would be an ideal area in which to take the first step. I hope Government supporters will see fit to support the motion.

MR T. J. BURKE (Perth) [4.22 p.m.]: I too, would like to support the motion, because I believe it is worth while. The member for Morley probably is more aware of the subject than any other member in this House, including the Minister, and I believe the Minister would admit that to be a fact. The member for Morley obviously has made a study of the subject over a long period. He is actively interested in the conservation movement and the environment generally and this motion represents a sincere effort on his part to involve the Parliament of Western Australia, on behalf of the people of this State. We are the representatives of the people and, as such, we should work to improve the quality of life for the people in our electorates.

No real grounds for objection to this motion exist. Just as the member for Morley is of great assistance to me on my committee, because I do not have his great depth of knowledge on these matters—I am quite certain other members of the committee would agree with me—so his suggested appointment of a standing committee would be of assistance to the Minister and to all members of Parliament and, indeed, to the State Government in dealing with these issues. Since Parliament met early in August, we on this side have said we believe this particular portfolio is the most significant in the Ministry. We have tried to point this out to the Minister by way of questions, motions, and references to these matters in general debates. We have indicated to the Parliament our readiness to

co-operate with the Minister and the Government in the interests of the people of Western Australia.

There is nothing sinister behind this motion; it simply represents an attempt to provide the machinery to involve the people of Western Australia through their members of Parliament. I really cannot see why the Minister, on behalf of the Government, has seen fit to oppose the motion. Perhaps some backbench members opposite might see the wisdom in it and support the motion. However, we will see that in time.

Ever since the Second World War and the Korean War we have had a whole new attitude to life. Whereas in the past, probably back to the time of the industrial revolution, people thought more in terms of developments in industry, but with all the disease, industrial problems and other difficulties which were created in providing for the modern world, attitudes are now changing. With the First and Second World Wars and the reconstruction of Europe, and with the industrial development of the United States during and between those wars by way of providing arms, ships, tanks, planes and all the other trappings of war, people became aware of the need to safeguard the environment, and to have regard for the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink and use and the other aspects of life. These issues have become uppermost in the minds of many of our citizens. There has been a proliferation in recent years of conservation groups and, thank God, this movement is starting to formalise under Government support. Governments have started to take notice and are providing ministries and departments to handle the people's wishes in this direction.

Over the last five or 10 years, we have found that the quality of life issue has emerged as probably the greatest and most significant factor in the world today. In my opinion, it is becoming the basis of the 20th century revolution. I am sure we will find increasing demands by people for quality and for significant changes in the way we treat the air we breathe, the water we drink, right through the whole spectrum of the environmental issue in order to safeguard their living standards, whether they live behind the smokestacks at Kwinana or in Dalkeith, or whether they live behind the cement works in Welshpool or in the endowment lands area of Floreat Park.

In the past, the Parliament agreed to establish a Public Accounts Committee; this is working very well. I suggest that the committee proposed by this motion is, if not more important, then just as important as the Public Accounts Committee and the Parliament should agree to its establishment. It is incumbent upon us, the representatives of the people, to learn as much as possible from those

who have a genuine interest in this subject. We are all concerned, but perhaps not as aware as other people, of the effects of pollution and of industrial developments of mining, or any other form of intrusion into the natural element on the lifestyle and quality of life we demand for ourselves today and our children tomorrow. We can learn from people like the member for Morley, who takes a very active interest in this area.

I suggest the member for Morley has revealed to this Parliament a more than cursory interest in this issue. He made a studied speech in presenting to us his case for the appointment of a standing committee of this Parliament. I do not believe his case has been answered by the Minister or that any member opposite is in a position to deny that the appointment of a standing committee would be a good move. I believe it would provide the representatives of the people with the opportunity to learn more about these issues and to ensure that, in turn, the people we represent could achieve the quality of life to which they aspire. As I have said, this should apply equally throughout Western Australia, whether the people live in Kwinana, Dalkeith, East Perth, or Flor-eat Park.

Committee systems have worked very well in all their forms. Until the committee system reached the state of development that it has in the Australian Senate I felt that House did not justify its existence. I am still not convinced that a unicameral system at the Australian Government level would not be the best; but at least it has been revealed to all Australians in recent years that the development of the committee system at the Senate level is rendering a very useful service.

Under such a system we had a Senate committee led by a Liberal member to investigate the securities and exchange industry, coming down with a report which cuts right across the political spectrum, and reporting the facts. In that regard it revealed that the Senate is nonpartisan. The report which that committee presented was a very commendable one, and I am sure members are aware of many other similar reports which justify the existence of the Upper House at the Australian Government level. That is a great deal more than I can say about the other place in this Parliament.

As I have suggested, the proposed standing committee would assist all members, but primarily it would be of very great assistance to the Minister himself. I, and other members on this side of the House, have offered to the Minister our co-operation in dealing with questions relating to the environment. We will continue to give such co-operation; and this motion, in fact, is another expression of our desire to co-operate.

There is no doubt that as a result of questions being asked continually by members on this side of the House, the facts being revealed in the answers are causing the Government to take action; such as the action which the Government proposes to take to remove the gypsum from Cockburn Sound. In this regard, several members on this side of the House have asked questions relating to the matter, and at first the Government indicated that nothing was wrong and nothing need be done. However, the Government has decided now that gypsum is to be removed from Cockburn Sound.

It is patent to anyone who spent part of his youth swimming in Cockburn Sound that to consider swimming there today would be foolhardy, because the sound has become a quagmire. I suppose the same can be said about fishing in Cockburn Sound. Questions have been asked by members on this side relating to the mercury content of fish at Cockburn Sound, and the Minister is having inquiries made. Perhaps he would have undertaken that inquiry in any event. However, the Minister has been prompted, and prompted continually. We consider that the continual questioning is tantamount to a demand.

I do not want to suggest that the matter is serious at this stage, but at least the questioning and the inquiry have revealed that some danger lies in that direction and steps should be taken to remove the danger.

I have already said that the proposed standing committee will give all members of this Parliament an opportunity to develop a better understanding of what will become the most significant factor in government in the next few decades. I am quite serious in suggesting that. We are reaching the stage where it has been revealed that Governments throughout the world are fast subjecting themselves to the demands of people who feel that the quality of life is the most important aspect.

Finally, I would like to refer to a book entitled *The Quality of Life Concept*. I quote from the foreword—

The concept of *Quality of Life* has emerged in the last few years as an undefinable measure of society's determination and desire to improve or at least not permit a further degradation of its condition. Despite its current undefinability, it represents a yearning of people for something which they feel they have lost or are losing, or have been denied, and which to some extent they wish to regain or acquire.

I believe it is incumbent on members of this House who represent the 51 electorates throughout the State to take all the time available to them in order to learn as much as possible about this subject, and

then on behalf of the people they represent to work and to fight for improving the quality of life of the people.

I firmly believe that if this motion is carried the establishment of the proposed standing committee will provide a vehicle, which will cost very little, for the improvement of the quality of life. In my honest opinion such a committee will pay very great dividends in the future. I support the motion.

**MR A. R. TONKIN** (Morley) [4.37 p.m.]: I would like to thank all members who have participated in the debate on the motion. I refer to the member for Geraldton, the member for Rockingham, the member for Swan, the member for Mundaring, the member for Perth and, of course, the Minister. I do not think I have missed out any member.

I have just been prompted: I have missed out the member for Victoria Park, who was the former Minister for Environmental Protection, and I extend my apologies to him.

It is very disappointing that the only member on the Government side to speak in the debate was the Minister, who is after all obliged to participate and all he did was to knock the idea. However, no back-bench member on the Government side spoke to the motion.

Of course, we are all aware of the very poor record of past Liberal Governments in dealing with the environment. I hope on this occasion we will not see a repetition of such action. Their past record indicates their attitude towards environmental matters, and in the course of the next three years we will see what lip service this Government will pay to these matters. Perhaps some comment was made in the policy speech of the Liberal Party, but as yet nothing concrete in this respect has been done.

It does not surprise me that members of the public have a very poor opinion of politicians, especially when they hear some of the comments that are made in this Chamber.

**Mr Nanovich:** Are you speaking for yourself?

**Mr A. R. TONKIN:** I am speaking for myself, as long as the member for Toodyay attempts to do the same thing. When I hear an interjection such as "What did your Government do? We did more than your Government did", it does remind me of a mob of schoolboys. We should make an endeavour to lift the level of debate in this House.

**Mr Nanovich:** I see you have your long pants on!

**Mr Taylor:** They look better than the nappy the member for Toodyay is wearing!

**Mr A. R. TONKIN:** I was amazed at the comment made by the Minister which seemed to indicate that he missed the point of my motion. He said there was no point in having a Minister here, because already there was a committee of the environmental council, the CUE committee, and so on.

**Mr Stephens:** Did you say that I had stated there was no point in having a Minister?

**Mr A. R. TONKIN:** I think that at the time the Minister was not listening to what I was saying. That proves what I have said. The Minister said there was no point in having a parliamentary committee.

**Mr Stephens:** You are now correcting yourself. In the first place you said I claimed there was no point in having a Minister here.

**Mr A. R. TONKIN:** There is no point in having a committee; that was what I meant. He said there was no point in having another parliamentary committee, because there were already the Environmental Protection Council, the CUE committee, and so on. He seems to have missed the whole point of my motion.

The proposed standing committee comprising parliamentarians is not to be a committee to supervise the Minister. It is not to take the place of the Environmental Protection Council. It is merely to be a committee comprising members of this House, and the purpose of setting it up is to enable members to become better informed on environmental matters.

We must be able to legislate properly when environmental matters come before us. I am amazed that the Minister misunderstood the whole purpose of my motion. In no way is it intended to derogate power from the Environmental Protection Authority, or any of the other committees established under the authority of the Act. The proposal is for the appointment of a standing committee of members of Parliament who need to be informed on environmental matters. That is the whole point. As I said, I am rather dismayed that the Minister should have made this gross mistake and have this misunderstanding of the whole purpose of the motion.

It is our job to legislate, and it is our job to see that we legislate with some degree of expertise. It is no good saying we have to leave it to the experts. If that is to be the case then let us go home and stop kidding ourselves that we are performing a satisfactory job here, because we certainly are not. We have to make sensible and rational decisions based on knowledge and understanding, and not simply based on a Minister's second reading speech.



We know that many Ministers are controlled by their departments, and that many of them are merely mouthpieces for the permanent departmental heads. That occurs in all Governments but it is not desirable. Ministers should be in charge of their departments because they are responsible to the people, and they have to render an account of themselves to the people at least once every three years. I am concerned that the present Minister may not be in a position to really lead his department. It seems he would rather be told what to do by his department. In particular, with regard to policy matters, the Minister is not able to stand up to the Premier, and has to do what the Premier says should be done on a particular matter.

Mr Stephens: Back on the old gramophone record again.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: If the Minister is able to prove me wrong I will be delighted, but we will want evidence in this House and elsewhere. We need to be experts in this Parliament and we cannot delegate our responsibility. We should not leave matters to the EPA; we need to know what it is doing. To illustrate this point I will give some examples. I suppose members opposite will think I am blowing my own bags—and I suppose some members on this side of the House will think the same thing—but I will mention some questions I have asked in this place.

Mr Blaikle: You could have fooled us.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: I have asked many questions.

Mr Blaikle: One or two.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: One question related to the Prevalence-Duration-Intensity index as a means of comparing pollution. I was written to by the Government Chemical Laboratories asking what the Prevalence-Duration-Intensity index was. Another question concerned the Sollinger method of sewage discharge treatment, and I received a letter from the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Board.

I have raised these matters to indicate we cannot sit back and accept that the experts know everything. Those experts have their jobs to do, but we also have a job to do. If the experts know what they are doing, and we can leave the matter to them, we should go home and leave everything to them. We are here and should become as expert as possible, and one way to become expert is to establish a committee.

I will mention briefly the reason we cannot leave things to chance, and why we cannot accept that the experts know what is best. I will refer to the question of mercury in fish. I raised this matter in 1971, during the life of the Tonkin Government, shortly after I was elected to this House. I received replies to the effect that

something was being done. I raised the question again this year, and on the 6th August I asked the following question—

(1) How often was—

(a) wet;

(b) canned,

fish tested for mercury content during 1973 and to date in 1974?

I also asked what were the results of the testing, and the Minister replied—

(4) The results are part of a pilot survey into levels of heavy metals in fish in W.A. A report is being prepared.

I followed that up on the 7th August when I asked a question without notice, as follows—

(1) With reference to question 38 of the 6th August, part (4), when will the report referred to in that answer be available?

(2) When it is available, will the Minister table the results?

(3) Why cannot the House be notified of the preliminary results of the analyses considering that some of the tests were made as long as 18 months ago, and also considering that this is a matter of vital public concern?

The Minister representing the Minister for Health replied—

(1) Within three months.

(2) A decision will be made when the report is completed.

(3) The report will include an assessment of the significance of the results and suggest future action. Since the survey is a pilot study only, publication of the results now without this assessment would serve no purpose.

That answer was in spite of the fact that some of the tests had been conducted 18 months earlier. Yet I received the reply that the Government was still looking at the matter. That is dynamic action!

A little later, on the 28th August, I asked—

As the Minister has refused to give results of the testing of fish for mercury contents, although such analyses were made as long as 18 months ago with the consequent rumours that the analyses will reveal an alarming degree of contamination, will he—

(a) give an assurance that there is no need for alarm;

(b) table a preliminary report to allay such fears?

The answer to that question was—

No useful purpose would be served by tabling a preliminary report, but having regard to the total situation the indications at this stage are that there is no need for alarm.

The matter was followed up further two weeks later, and on the 11th September the member for Rockingham asked the Minister for Conservation and Environment the following question—

What are the components of the gypsum waste (with particular regard to those which may be considered harmful to humans) which is currently being discharged into Cockburn Sound?

The Minister replied—

The Environmental Protection Authority, in co-operation with the Fremantle Port Authority, Department of Health, Department of Fisheries and Fauna and Government Chemical Laboratories, are currently investigating the discharge of gypsum into Cockburn Sound.

Analytical results of samples taken in this investigation are expected to be available within the next two weeks for consideration by the Environmental Protection Authority.

That was within a period of two weeks. So, once again, we have the suggestion that the Government is looking into the matter but nothing is happening. That has been going on for three years and during that time I have asked a series of questions relating to mercury in fish.

In *The Sunday Times* of the 22nd September an article was published which originated in Canberra. People wonder why there is talk about the "grab" from Canberra but when one sees the lack of action on the State scene one can realise why sometimes it is considered necessary to gee up the very sleepy State Government. The article which appeared in *The Sunday Times* stated—

Government checks on fish being sold in Melbourne have revealed mercury levels which are a serious health hazard to children.

Many samples tested by the Australian Government analytical laboratories showed a mercury content of three parts per million—six times the recommended maximum.

The actual acceptable level is, of course, .5 parts per million. The Minister for Health has refused to answer my questions in this House regarding what was happening. Now, information comes from Canberra. The Minister then wakes up and warns pregnant women not to eat shark because of the danger of poisoning, whereas three months earlier, two months earlier,

and a month earlier no results were available and no warning was considered necessary. The information comes from Canberra and the Minister suddenly decides to warn pregnant women.

What is the point of having a State Government if it is going to go to sleep? Questions are not answered properly in this Sovereign Parliament—the Government waits for an indication that the Eastern States are showing concern before it jumps onto the bandwagon, even though the pattern could well be different here because this report related to fish caught in the Eastern States.

I give that as an example of the need for a greater awareness in environmental matters and a greater responsibility from the Government in answering questions in this House. The Government cannot have the confidence of the people of the State if it continually says, "There is no cause for alarm", but then as soon as something hits the Press and the people start to worry the Government says to pregnant mothers, "It would be better if you did not eat more than one meal of fish a week because we do not know what could happen to your unborn children." That is a criminally irresponsible attitude, and the Government should be censured for its inability to answer properly questions asked by myself and the member for Rockingham. Because of the Government's lack of action we do not know what is happening in regard to mercury in fish. We have to wait for Canberra to make a move, and then the Government starts to wake up. It is no wonder that some people question whether there is a need for Canberra to exert greater control. I do not say the need is there, but we have ourselves to blame for the fact that it is sometimes thought the Government in Canberra is the only Government.

We then come to the question of dieldrin. In response to queries I have raised in this House and elsewhere, the Minister for Agriculture said that there was a ban on certain chlorinated hydrocarbons in relation to food crops. I do not know what the vocabulary of the Minister for Agriculture is like, but he certainly does not give the word "ban" the same meaning as I give it. In a reply to a question asked about a week ago he said that dieldrin is used to control black beetle in potato crops. It is true that dieldrin is put in the furrows before the planting, but dieldrin has a half-life of 2.3 years and I do not suppose the farmers would dust for black beetle five or six years before the crop is put in. So there is certainly no ban on the use of chlorinated hydrocarbons, with their high degree of persistency and toxicity, on food crops.

When we are given assurances of this type, and we see this strange use of the English language, it emphasises the need for a committee system.

It has been said that the Tonkin Government did not accept the report of the Select Committee of which I had the honour to be chairman. Members will remember that report was brought down in September of last year. Do Government members say that in the two remaining months of the session the Government could have rushed through legislation and changed the system? The Tonkin Government knew that Parliament would rise within two months, but it believed that the following Parliament might be responsible enough to look at this report and perhaps to introduce a system of its own. It is quite specious to say the Government did not act on the report.

When I moved for the Select Committee last year, my chief supporter was the Premier of the day. He got to his feet and said, "Yes, we need a committee system, and I am very glad that this motion has been moved." The Government accepted the proposal of a Select Committee to look into the matter and I believe that had the Tonkin Government been returned to power this year, we would have seen our State Government instituting a committee system along the lines suggested. Of course, we cannot prove that either way, and it is childish to say to us now, "You did not do it, and neither will we."

The test we have to apply to this issue is to ask ourselves whether it is a worth-while move, and should we agree to it rather than indulge in this schoolboy habit of name-calling.

Protection of the environment is the most important matter that can come before this Chamber. It is our responsibility to legislate wisely, and to utilise all the expertise available. I believe that concern for the environment should be on a tripod. As I said in my previous speech, the tripod should be made up of the public, the Environmental Protection Authority and the whole machinery of government, and Parliament, with its expert committee, as the third component of the tripod. This is our responsibility and I do not see how we can run away from it. We cannot abrogate our responsibility.

If members care to look at the legislation that has been passed in this Parliament over the last decade, they will see many ways in which it impinges on the environment. Legislation passed here has had a serious effect on our environment, and I do not believe that legislators sitting in this place had the necessary knowledge or, by calling expert opinion before a committee, made themselves aware of the degree to which the environment would be affected by the various agreements brought here and passed. We are legislators. The question is: Are we to legislate out of ignorance, or are we to legislate out of knowledge? It is not good enough for us to say, "Leave it to the experts."

I wish to cite the very famous, or infamous example, of Vietnam. At the time of the Vietnam controversy, people were inclined to say, "All the members of the Menzies Government, the Holt Government, and so on, know what they are doing." However, in actual fact it has been revealed very clearly since then that the Ministers of those Governments had their own portfolios and they said in turn, "Menzies, Holt, and Sir Paul Hasluck know what they are doing." The Ministers took the view that their leaders knew what they were doing and they believed their concern was with their own particular portfolios. Each Minister was concerned about his own portfolio, whether it was Health or Primary Industry, and so we went into Vietnam with just two Ministers pushing the barrow. These two Ministers were convinced of the need for our entry into Vietnam whilst the other Ministers felt, "It is not really my portfolio; I will trust the judgment of my leaders." It is not good enough for us to say, "We will trust the Minister for Conservation and Environment."

Mr Stephens: You are not on the motion now; I think you have introduced new material.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: Is the Minister rising on a point of order?

Mr Stephens: No, I am just letting you know.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: I thank the Minister; it had escaped me. The point is that we in this place are responsible. It is not good enough for us to give the responsibility to someone else.

We often hear the remark that Australia follows the British traditions in Parliament. I believe the Premier prides himself on following certain aspects of the British tradition. It is not a British tradition to have no committee system. Since 1882 the British tradition of Parliament has been to have a committee system in the House of Commons.

Sir Charles Court: Yes, it has 600 members.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: It is no good saying that the House of Commons has 600 members. A conservative, who does not want to do anything, will always work out which question to ask so that he is given a negative answer. But the conservative would not say, "What about the Senate, it has 60 members and that is roughly comparable with our numbers." The House of Commons has a committee system and each committee has 50 members—one-twelfth of the number of members of the House of Commons. What we are thinking of here is a standing committee composed of five members—approximately one-tenth of the members of this House. I think that is within our capacity. Even the

smallest shire council operates with a committee system. If members think of their own shire councils they will realise that my remarks are true. Our shire councils could not operate without a committee system; that is, a health committee, and a committee for this, and a committee for that. The Bassendean Shire Council looks after only four square miles of territory and yet it has a committee system. But the Parliament of Western Australia, looking after one million square miles of territory, does not have a committee system. This is a deplorable state of affairs.

By accepting this motion the Government has a chance to enter the history books as a Government which made a move to make this House more dynamic in the same way that the sleepy old Senate has been rejuvenated over the last four or five years. It is now a dynamic House of inquiry because of its committee system.

I know that members opposite squeal like mad when they are called "Conservatives". I know that when I and other members call them Conservatives they say that they are not Conservatives. This is an opportunity for Government members to show that they are progressive and not conservative. After all, the idea of a committee system was accepted in Britain in 1882, and Britain is not considered to be a very revolutionary country.

I invite members opposite to come into the last quarter of the 20th century. We are entering the last quarter and it is about time this Government looked as though it was in the last quarter. Or will the Government use its toe-first system of seeing whether the water is cold—by first putting in its big toe? Must we always wait for other States; must we always look over our shoulder like scared grey mice to see what other States will do? Why can we not lead the States?

Mr Sibson: In many areas, we do.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: Yes, in many areas we do; let us make this another. As a matter of fact, even if we approved the appointment of a standing committee, we still would not lead South Australia, which has a committee system. Why do we always have to wait for the other States? I believe in public involvement with parliamentary decisions and a committee system which could hear evidence from all interested bodies would actually help to show the public that we are prepared to listen to the submissions of the people. Interested persons and organisations could put submissions to us on legislation before the House on environmental matters generally. It is time we opened this place to the sunlight and to the people of Western Australia. It is their Parliament and their State and if we established a committee of this kind we could listen to these people.

The Liberal Party advertisements for the last State election talked about open Government and showed hands reaching for the telephone. I wonder how many people took those advertisements seriously, and in fact how many members opposite took them seriously. I have not heard of them since the election. Open Government! What about a bit of open Government now? What about a bit of action?

Mr Clarko: The Federal Government increased the charge for telephone calls, so the people cannot afford to use the telephone.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: Let us forget about the Federal Government. It is easy to blame a scapegoat for everything, but that is a sign of weakness. Let us be men and take the responsibility for our actions. I do not know how members opposite are going to blame the Federal Government for not accepting this motion; but they are ingenious and they will try. It will be interesting to see how they twist the entire issue at a later stage.

I suppose these Liberal Party advertisements will be trotted out before the next election, but I wonder how many people will believe them then. I challenge the Premier and the Government to show their sincerity on the environment and on open Government. If members opposite say they are sincere on these issues, I suggest to them that most of the people of Western Australia would not agree. This is a way the Government could show it is sincere, if ever there were a way.

Conservation bodies throughout Western Australia support the appointment of this standing committee. I wonder whether the Minister for Conservation and Environment knows this. In fact, I wonder whether the Premier and the Deputy Premier know that conservation bodies support this motion. I have received a telegram from the Southern Regional Conservation Council which states—

Support your move to form parliamentary committee on conservation.

A telegram from the Secretary of the Australian Wild Life Conservation Committee states—

We support your move for the establishment of a parliamentary standing committee on conservation and the environment.

A telegram from the Kojonup Environmental and Ecological Protection Society states—

Congratulations this organisation welcomes move gives full support to concept of parliamentary standing committee on conservation.

Are these the left-wing organisations that the Premier talked about during the debate on the fuel and energy legislation? I suppose this would be his attitude, considering the telegrams and letters were sent to

me. I received a letter from the Tree Society which, in part, states—

We congratulate you on your enterprise and hope that you will succeed in securing a Parliamentary Standing Committee to collate information which would assist Politicians in making decisions relating to conservation and preservation of the environment.

The Society for the Preservation of King's Park and the Swan River wrote as follows—

We feel the establishment of such a Standing Committee could only benefit members, particularly as the subject, conservation and preservation of the environment is such a relatively new concept.

Of course, the Premier will not listen to these unwelcome reminders that the people of this State want such a standing committee for which I have moved. The letter continues—

Your proposal has our full support.

Roleystone Environment 2000 sent me a letter stating that members of that association supported my move. A telegram from the Avicultural and Wild Life Association states—

In accordance with your move for the establishment of a parliamentary standing committee on conservation and the environment you have the full support of the Avicultural and Wild Life Association which has a membership of well over 1000 in WA.

Kevin Bligh, of the Australian Conservation Foundation sent me a telegram which states—

I support your motion for standing committee and believe the ACF would too.

The West Australian Wildflower Society (Inc.) sent me a letter which states—

The West Australian Wildflower Society wishes to strongly support your proposal that a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Conservation should be set up.

In recent years a great deal of land has been cleared for farming and mining, and this is likely to continue. In the course of this development the indigenous flora of the State is being steadily depleted, and some species have already reached survival levels which are close to extinction. It is therefore considered that the establishment of such a Standing Committee as you propose is now urgent as far as flora protection is concerned. The existence of this Committee would provide a channel for communication between our Society and the Legislature.

I have received communications from one dozen organisations to this effect and I point them out to the Premier and the Minister to support my motion. These organisations are not in conservation for political reasons because it is a popular issue; they are ordinary men and women who realise that conservation is a vital subject. They are sincere and believe in the establishment of a standing committee on the environment.

Mr Shalders: Can I ask you whether their support was solicited or spontaneous?

Mr A. R. TONKIN: I do not know what the honourable member means by spontaneous action, or whether he has ever seen any spontaneous action; I have not. These people held their meetings and let me know of their support for my motion. Ever since I moved the motion, I have received letters and telegrams of support. I do not know what the member means by spontaneous action; rather, it was a considered action by organisations, not individuals, so in that respect it was not spontaneous. The organisations came together to discuss the proposal and decided accordingly. However, I am running short of time, and I must not be side-tracked.

I wonder whether the Premier does not want this committee and has instructed his Minister not to support it because conservation issues get too close to the Premier's god of development. I wonder if this is the reason the Premier will not allow his Minister or his back-benchers to vote for my motion. Or is there to be in the so-called best Liberal Party tradition the free vote that we hear so much about?

Sir Charles Court: We thought about environmental protection and acted on it before you had ever heard of it. Do not talk rot.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: Thank you, Mr Premier. What about the present motion before the House? Are members of the Liberal Party allowed to have a free vote?

Sir Charles Court: We told you why we opposed the motion. The Government is opposing the motion for good reason, and the Minister gave those reasons.

Mr Stephens: If you cared to look, you would see that conservation and the environment will receive a much greater appropriation in the coming year than was allocated to this area in the past. That should give you an answer.

Sir Charles Court: We believe in action.

Mr Taylor: You have not answered the questions asked of you by the member for Morley.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: I am pleased that members opposite are people of action.

Sir Charles Court: Have a look at our record.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: I will have a look at it; do not worry.

Mr Taylor: What does it show—expenditure and nothing else?

Mr Stephens: Concern.

Sir Charles Court: Concern and action.

Mr Taylor: Expenditure only.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: The Premier stated that he had been concerned about environmental matters before I had ever heard of them. I do not know how the Premier could possibly know when I first thought about environmental matters, because I do not know myself. He must be a mind reader, and I congratulate him. I do not know whether he was talking about the Physical Environment Protection Act of 1970—a pathetic piece of paper which did not even contain a single penalty. Is that the sort of environmental action the Premier proposes to take?

Sir Charles Court: Talk sense! You do not have to have penalties to make an Act work.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: Let the Premier introduce a Traffic Act or a Police Act without penalties.

Sir Charles Court: Do not be absurd!

Mr A. R. TONKIN: Of course, the Premier says it is absurd; so was his Physical Environment Protection Act. It was quite absurd.

Sir Charles Court: You are making a complete fool of yourself with the nonsense you are carrying on with in this House.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: No penalties! That is how sincere members opposite were about environmental matters. They put some inebriate in gaol as a penalty and fine someone for jay walking, yet members opposite do not consider that an Act dealing with the environment should contain penalties. Frankly, such a situation leads me to use the word "hypocrisy".

Sir Charles Court: You wasted 12 months; you did not even proclaim the law.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: It was not worth proclaiming a law without penalties.

Sir Charles Court: Oh, rot!

Mr A. R. TONKIN: Of course it is rot, because a law without penalties is rot. Let us not waste the time of the House in talking about the concern of members opposite for the environment because we have already seen a demonstration of that concern. Go down to Kwinana and see evidence of this Government's concern! Look at the gypsum in Cockburn Sound!

Sir Charles Court: Why did you retain the director we appointed?

Mr A. R. TONKIN: I am not criticising the director.

Mr B. T. Burke: Why did you keep the same motorcycles that our policemen used?

Mr A. R. TONKIN: Exactly! The director would not have been able to operate properly under the legislation introduced by the Liberal Government, because that legislation did not have any guts or teeth. I believe the Opposition has shown itself to be concerned with the environment and with the sovereignty of Parliament. The Opposition believes that Parliament should have some kind of machinery by which it could examine legislation of an environmental nature and this is why we believe in the appointment of a standing committee on conservation and the environment. Legislation dealing with the environment needs to be framed by experts and the Government must be prepared to listen to the opinions of experts in this field. The Opposition believes this motion is worthy of support because the environment is the most important issue confronting us today.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

#### Ayes—19

Mr Barnett	Mr Fletcher
Mr Bateman	Mr Hartrey
Mr Bertram	Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bryce	Mr May
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr McIver
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr Skidmore
Mr Carr	Mr Taylor
Mr Davies	Mr A. R. Tonkin
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Moller
Mr T. D. Evans	

(Teller)

#### Noes—25

Mr Blaikie	Mr Nanovich
Sir David Brand	Mr O'Connor
Mr Clarko	Mr Old
Sir Charles Court	Mr O'Neill
Mr Coyne	Mr Ridge
Mrs Craig	Mr Rushton
Mr Crane	Mr Shalders
Dr Dadour	Mr Gibson
Mr Grayden	Mr Sodeman
Mr Grewar	Mr Stephens
Mr Laurance	Mr Watt
Mr McPharlin	Mr Young
Mr Mensaros	

(Teller)

#### Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr Jamieson	Mr P. V. Jones
Mr J. T. Tonkin	Mr Thompson
Mr Harman	Mr Cowan

Question thus negatived.

Motion defeated.

### STATE HOUSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

#### Returned

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

## UNEMPLOYMENT

### *Want of Confidence in Government: Amendment to Motion*

Debate resumed, from the 18th September, on the following motion by Mr J. T. Tonkin (Leader of the Opposition)—

In the opinion of this House, because the Premier said if given the opportunity to perform he would solve the problem of unemployment within six months, and would be prepared to stake his reputation on success and as the State Government has proved incapable of preventing the serious increase in unemployment which has taken place and is fast approaching a record level since the Government assumed office, it no longer has the confidence of this House,

*from which all words after the word "because" have been deleted.*

**SIR CHARLES COURT** (Nedlands—Premier) [5.16 p.m.]: I move an amendment—

Insert in lieu of the words previously the following—

the policies of the Commonwealth Government have—

1. seriously aggravated inflation to a point where it has become a national economic crisis,
2. forced the State Government to impose steep increases in taxes and charges with the prospect of more to follow if the State financial position is to remain stable,
3. withdrawn incentive from basic primary producing agricultural and mining industries,
4. frustrated resource development programmes and damaged public confidence,
5. forced up interest rates to unprecedented levels with devastating results for home buyers and industrial expansion,

it has produced a disturbingly high level of unemployment with, on its own admission, worse to follow. For this the Commonwealth Government is deserving of the condemnation of this House and further, in the opinion of this House, the Commonwealth Government should expedite the programme of Commonwealth-State co-operation offered by the States to prepare a national strategy to defeat the present scourge of inflation.

The **SPEAKER**: Is there a seconder?

**Mr McPHARLIN**: Yes, Mr Speaker, I second the amendment.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

#### Ayes—25

Mr Blaikie	Mr Nanovich
Sir David Brand	Mr O'Connor
Mr Clarke	Mr Old
Sir Charles Court	Mr O'Neill
Mr Coyne	Mr Ridge
Mrs Craig	Mr Rushton
Mr Crane	Mr Shalders
Dr Dadour	Mr Sibson
Mr Grayden	Mr Sodeman
Mr Grewar	Mr Stephens
Mr Laurence	Mr Watt
Mr McPharlin	Mr Young
Mr Mensaros	

(Teller)

#### Noes—18

Mr Barnett	Mr Fletcher
Mr Bateman	Mr Hartrey
Mr Bertram	Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bryce	Mr May
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr McIver
Mr Carr	Mr Skidmore
Mr Davies	Mr Taylor
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr A. R. Tonkin
Mr T. D. Evans	Mr Moiler

(Teller)

#### Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr P. V. Jones	Mr Jamieson
Mr Thompson	Mr J. T. Tonkin
Mr Cowan	Mr Harman

Amendment thus passed.

#### *Motion, as Amended.*

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Moiler.

## INDUSTRIAL SAFETY AND HYGIENE

### *Inquiry by Select Committee: Motion*

Debate resumed, from the 2nd October, on the following motion by Mr Harman—

That a Select Committee be appointed to investigate all aspects of industrial safety and hygiene, the effectiveness of present legislation and administrative practices, the current industrial safety training programmes, the foreseeable needs and report accordingly.

**MR SKIDMORE** (Swan) [5.23 p.m.]: The motion before the House seeks the appointment of a Select Committee to investigate all aspects of industrial safety and hygiene, the effectiveness of present legislation and administrative practices, the current industrial safety training programmes, the foreseeable needs and to report accordingly.

One could perhaps say that on looking at industrial safety in Western Australia we do not have a very good record when we consider our endeavours to inculcate not only into the employer, but also into the employee some sense of responsibility. In saying that I am referring not only to the employer's own particular needs, but also to the particular needs of a worker. In regard to what has been achieved in the matter of industrial safety, perhaps the

appointment of a Select Committee would not be needed to inquire into the wide general aspect of safety.

However when we look a little deeper into the question and review the need to achieve the objective I have suggested, we encounter many wide fields of endeavour in the matter of industrial safety. For the information of members I will quote some of the organisations that exist in Western Australia to ensure that efforts to maintain industrial safety are not only made, but perhaps could be pursued with greater effect than has been achieved in the past. Under the chairmanship of the Minister for Labour and Industry we have the Industrial Safety Advisory Committee, on which are representatives of the following—

Industrial Foundation for Accident Prevention

W.A. Employers Federation

Perth Chamber of Commerce

W.A. Chamber of Manufactures

Trades and Labor Council

Director of Technical Education

Secretary for Labour

Arising from the deliberations of that body there would be a shedding of responsibility among various other Government statutory authorities which are involved in the field of industrial safety and accident prevention. The following Government statutory authorities also come under the jurisdiction of the Minister for Labour and Industry—

Inspection of Machinery Branch

Shops and Factories Branch

Inspection of Scaffolding Branch

We would surely agree that they cover a very diverse field of industrial activity.

There are also many Acts which affect a worker in so far as his safety, hygiene, and the effectiveness of what may be achieved in this field are concerned. When one realises the number of Government instrumentalities and committees that exist at present in Western Australia, one can hardly believe we have such a state of affairs in this State in relation to industrial safety and accident prevention, because we are entirely without purpose in trying to understand the human suffering that results from industrial accidents; and surely human suffering is something that should be avoided if at all possible. To achieve this we must have a work force that possesses the necessary expertise.

When one realises the total number of inspectors employed in the various departments to administer the question of industrial safety throughout Western Australia one wonders whether they would ever be able to achieve the objectives they should to alleviate human suffering by endeavouring to reduce the number of industrial accidents.

A great deal has been said on the question of strikes occasioned by industrial organisations, and the number of man-hours lost following industrial disputation by workers, but later in the closing stages of my speech I shall quote some figures which I am sure will indicate to members that there is a much greater and more insidious cause of the loss of man-hours in industry in Western Australia as a result of injuries sustained by workers in the industrial scene. These figures are irrefutable, because it will be shown that they are obtained from statistics compiled by the Department of Labour.

In returning to the personnel of the various branches that come under the Minister for Labour and Industry and who are involved in the question of industrial safety, I would point out that the total number of inspectors employed in all those branches is 70. In the Inspection of Machinery Branch there is one deputy chief inspector and there are 33 inspectors, making a total of 34. In the Factories and Shops Branch there is one deputy chief inspector and 21 inspectors, making a total of 22, and in the Inspection of Scaffolding Branch there is one deputy chief inspector and 13 inspectors. In speaking of the last figure if one were superstitious, one might suggest that 13 represents an unlucky number but one would not consider the figure of 13 with superstition when it relates to the number of scaffolding inspectors employed, because in my opinion that number of inspectors is quite inadequate to cover industrial safety in this field.

Therefore one could safely say that a Select Committee could direct its inquiries towards that field alone to look at what expertise is available in this and other areas and to inquire whether there is a need for more inspectors to be appointed. I honestly think there is available to us already sufficient information to justify a demand being made on the Government for an increase in the number of inspectors to cover the field of industrial safety. In saying that I am not criticising any particular Government—either a Labor Government or a Liberal-Country Party Government—on this issue, because surely human life and suffering should be placed above party politics.

Mr Grayden: The member for Maylands said there were 12 Government inspectors and you are saying that there is a total of 70.

Mr SKIDMORE: I will quote the figures given to me by the Minister's own departmental officers. If they are wrong, I am sorry.

Mr Grayden: The member for Maylands—

Mr SKIDMORE: I am not concerned with the member for Maylands. The Minister can have a go at him when he



has the opportunity. If he wishes to refute my figures, fair enough; I could be wrong. What I am saying is that the member for Maylands has nothing to do with my speech. The Minister is at liberty to query my figures so if he will just leave the member for Maylands out of it I will get on with my speech.

Mr Grayden: The member for Maylands has quoted different figures.

Mr SKIDMORE: As I have said on previous occasions, I do not object to intelligent interjections referring to my speech, but I do object quite strenuously to interjections which have no bearing whatever on my speech. If I present anything to this House in the belief that what I say is correct, and any Minister wishes to correct me, I will accept it. No-one wishes to mislead the House, and I know the Minister is not implying that.

Mr Grayden: Are you implying that the 70-odd are not keeping abreast of developments throughout the world?

Mr SKIDMORE: No. If the Minister had listened to me he would have heard me say that I believe the 13 inspectors could be better informed if a Select Committee were established to investigate areas in this State, in this country, and overseas, so that they would be better informed to do their job.

Mr Grayden: They already keep abreast of what is happening overseas.

Mr SKIDMORE: That is very good. I am pleased to hear it and perhaps the Minister will elaborate on what he has said when he has the opportunity.

Mr Grayden: They are keeping abreast of what occurs throughout the world.

Mr SKIDMORE: I will demonstrate that keeping abreast is just not good enough in today's age.

Mr Sodeman: That is what we reckon about inflation.

Mr SKIDMORE: That is the sort of interjection I would put in the classic idiot category.

Mr Sodeman: You ought to know; you are an expert.

Mr SKIDMORE: Someone is talking about inflation when I am wishing to make a contribution on industrial safety. It brings me back to what I said earlier; that is, for heaven's sake let us be a little reasonable. We are not dealing with inflation, but with people's lives—human dignities and the suffering sustained as a result of industrial accidents. I am trying to demonstrate that a Select Committee is needed to alleviate the suffering of people who have been injured in industry.

The SPEAKER: It is sometimes wise to ignore interjections.

Mr SKIDMORE: Regarding the question of the training of our industrial people in the fields of endeavour, one would look

at the question of the areas in which it is suggested the Select Committee could ascertain whether or not the present legislation and means of training available to us are being effectively utilised. Quite frankly I do not believe they are. I consider that a Select Committee would have a very good field in which to move to establish that separate training away from the existing training is the essential requirement to educate both the worker and the employer in the fields of industrial safety.

The Workers' Compensation Act was amended to include a section 14A which now provides that the board may engage in and carry on the education and instruction in accident prevention and first aid work of workers and others and may impart such education and instruction by demonstration, exhibits, lectures, classes, and so on.

Here we have a board which, under its own Act, is able to engage in and carry on the education of workers, and no avail is made of the legislation. The Government makes no effort to use it. I am not being critical in that I am not merely saying, "Why in the heck do you not use it?" I am asking, "Has it not been used because it has some faults inherent in it?" It does not matter who introduced the legislation. I am trying to avoid that issue. A Select Committee could have a look and see whether within the confines of that Act we can educate our workers in industry. When we realise that demonstrations, exhibits, lectures, and so on may be used in order to teach workers about industrial safety, we realise it is a far-reaching subject.

Mr Grayden: You are obviously not aware of what is done at the moment.

Mr SKIDMORE: I will come to that later.

Mr Grayden: I will tell you later on what is being done.

Mr SKIDMORE: I have a fair idea, too, because I happened to be a representative on the Industrial Foundation for Accident Prevention up to the time of my joining this particular area of endeavour. So I do have a knowledge of the subject.

Mr Grayden: We will find out what you do know because you are not being very fair at the moment.

Mr SKIDMORE: The member for Swan will not set himself up as being an expert on anything, but I can honestly say that I try to present an issue to this House within my knowledge and ability and if what I say fails to come up to the Minister's expectations, I am terribly sorry. I hope he will bear with me.

Mr Laurance: You mean you know more and more about less and less.

Mr SKIDMORE: This could be.

Mr Taylor: That would sum the Minister up to a "t".

Mr SKIDMORE: That again is a classic example of a time when I could reply if I desired, but I cannot be bothered because I wish to continue with the subject of the establishment of a Select Committee and the areas it could investigate. Some of these I have mentioned. For instance, I referred to the training of our people and I will come back to that later on for the benefit of the Minister who feels I am not being fair about this situation.

I have here a 1973 report which covers the field of industrial safety. I think the report was issued by the Department of Labour, and under the heading of "Industrial Safety" is a section which covers about two-thirds of a page of a report totalling some 20 or 30 pages. That is the sum total of comment on industrial safety. Surely it is the function of the Department of Labour to present some information on industrial safety. One wonders whether a Select Committee would get very much information out of the department to enable it to perform a worth-while function.

Again I am not wishing to criticise that section of the report. I merely indicate its inadequacies.

Mr Grayden: It is not the function of the report to go into that. It is a condensed summary.

Mr SKIDMORE: It appears that the report is unable to establish to any degree what has been achieved by the Department of Labour in the field of industrial safety. I agree that the report is condensed and I am pleased the Minister has drawn this to my notice because it is my intention to enlarge on it later so that he will not be disappointed. Now I have two points in regard to which I must satisfy him; one is the question of the report which is purely a summary; and the other is the question of the training which has been undertaken. However, putting those two items aside for the moment I want to try to establish that a Select Committee is an urgent necessity because it would have much more ability to roam far and wide to ascertain what is required.

People at the top, like Ministers for Labour, Secretaries for Labour, chief inspectors, and other inspectors, are very busy and I do not denigrate them for one moment. They do a tremendous job under great difficulties. However, when we consider how far they can go we find there is a cut-off point. They are unable to go any further in acquiring knowledge concerning scaffolding or whatever the subject might be. There must be many aspects requiring attention and particularly in the building industry which is almost in a state of chaos at the moment.

We could perhaps reflect on the ever-present problem of trade unions which decide that a safety issue is of such importance to them and to their members that they determine their members must go on strike. It is a terrible situation when this occurs and is one of which members surely must be aware. It is an untenable situation and is one which we should not accept as being the answer, because strikes are never the answer.

Mr Grayden: When was the last incident to your knowledge?

Mr SKIDMORE: I am speaking in general terms and I am stating that these strikes occur. The question of when they occur is not relevant. It is a fact that they do occur at a certain time.

Mr Grayden: When did the last one occur?

Mr SKIDMORE: I cannot tell the Minister because quite frankly I do not know but, if the Minister will be patient, he will realise that it is not germane to what I am trying to say. The question of workers going out on an issue of safety is very important and well recognised. I can quote some incidents. For instance, on the 7th July there was a dispute on the oil drilling rig *Margie*. The dispute was over safety.

Mr Grayden: Can you tell us what the incident was?

Mr SKIDMORE: I do not intend to do so, but if the Minister would like to read the letter, I will give it to him.

Mr Taylor: Ask the Minister a question without notice tomorrow, and let him tell the House.

Mr SKIDMORE: The letter indicates that a question of safety exercised the minds of the workers to such an extent that they determined that they should go on strike and a reading of the circumstances will reveal that a logical reason existed for their doing so and the decisions taken at that time and later vindicated the workers.

I wonder whether a Select Committee could at that time have had a look at the problems which had obviously existed on these particular rigs for a long time and done something about it.

Safety is also very important in the iron ore industry. Having made quite a few visits to the areas concerned because I had relatives working in the industry, I find myself aware of the absolute necessity for safety in that industry. The mining companies in the north are very conscious of their responsibility, which they accept. They ensure that the workers are not subjected to any unsafe conditions. At the same time there is sometimes a slip-up and unforeseen sets of circumstances arise and problems occur. In some cases death to the worker results. This is

because of an error of judgment, but by whom? Is it by the worker, the employer, the safety officer, or management? No. It is an error of judgment by Governments which will not accept responsibility for the establishment of a Select Committee which could possibly have prevented such a fatality as a result of an investigation and a revelation of the problems.

Mr Grayden: In the letter you handed me there is nothing about prevention. It is all about after-care at hospitals, and so on.

Mr SKIDMORE: I will not answer the interjection because it would take me right away from the relevancy of my remarks. I am speaking about the appointment of a Select Committee and I do not wish to argue the pros and the cons of what is in the document.

Mr Grayden: You are misleading the House.

Mr SKIDMORE: The Minister says that I am misleading the House. Unfortunately my time is limited as I have only 45 minutes. However, perhaps it would be worth my while to answer the Minister who says that I am misleading the House. I indicated that I submitted a document which shows there was a disputation regarding safety and the question of workers' safety on a rig. The Minister says I have misled the House. If he will return the document to me I will point out why the document concerns safety.

Mr Grayden: It is all about what occurred after the fatality. For instance they want a double door at the hospital.

Mr SKIDMORE: I have been challenged by the Minister who says that the document has nothing to do with safety.

Mr Grayden: It does not have anything to do with accident prevention.

Mr SKIDMORE: Portion of the document reads—

The men also want an assurance that in the event of an emergency due to serious accident, and a helicopter is summoned to do a night flight to take the injured worker to hospital, that all things being equal weather wise, and condition wise that that helicopter would make the trip to the rig to take that worker off so as further treatment could be given at a hospital.

Is it or is it not a matter of safety?

Mr Grayden: The accident has happened.

Mr SKIDMORE: What is the difference?

Mr Grayden: That has nothing to do with what we are talking about.

Mr Taylor: Look at the terms of the motion.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Swan.

Mr SKIDMORE: The Minister leaves me completely behind because of his inability to absorb anything other than what he wishes to debate. I left that question about 12 minutes ago, as *Hansard* will reveal.

I now turn to the aspect of safety on construction sites which a Select Committee could look into. The Trades and Labor Council appointed a board known as the Construction Safety Board to undertake a survey of some of the industrial and construction sites in the metropolitan area—15 of them. I do not intend to read the list but I am prepared to table it so that the Minister can see the wide range of problems associated with industrial safety. Again, I merely say a committee could look into these matters and certainly should be able to come up with far better answers than are coming up at the present time. Surely it is not necessary to wait until someone is injured before we try to prevent an accident. Why do we have so many accidents?

Mr Grayden: Have you been to Chamberlains or to the railways to see what they are doing?

Mr SKIDMORE: I have the greatest respect for the General Manager of Chamberlains (Mr Adams), who sat with me for many months on the Industrial Foundation for Accident Prevention. His record in safety is outstanding and I take my hat off to him, but the fact that one firm is conscious of its responsibilities does not mean all firms are. These documents reveal otherwise. I could quote one Government department which has an absolutely wonderful record in safety—the best I have seen for some time. I give credit to the department; its records are impeccable and far better than those which were made available to me when I tried to check the statistics and analyse the accidents in industry. I will come to that at the appropriate time.

The question of safety on the Rockingham Hospital site was a cause of disputation for a long time. A policeman was stationed there at a period of extreme difficulty during the industrial dispute in order to ensure the workers did not do any damage, and so on. What were the reasons for disputation? The records reveal—

- (1) Extremely poor erection of scaffold around access stairway. Scaffold pipes not of required diameter, top handrail consisted of a piece of string.

I come back to the point I made in regard to the harassed inspectors—only 13 are available to go around to construction sites to ensure these matters are attended to. I

am not criticising the inspectors, but this is the situation which exists. The report continues—

- (2) Lack of handrails in certain places.
- (3) Some handrails inadequate and dangerous.
- (4) Power leads laying in water all over the site.
- (5) Power operated tools in use in wet conditions.
- (6) Oxy cutting equipment laying about in wet and hazardous conditions.
- (7) Inadequate working platforms on steel erection work.
- (8) Poor attempts to arrest water problem—men working in water and slush on all floors.
- (9) Site foreman alleges that a scaffolding inspector told him that a kick board and a waist-high handrail would be sufficient guarding on all lift well openings.

A committee has been set up to investigate safety on lift wells and lifts, and one might say it is inadequately dealing with safety.

Mr Grayden: From what document are you reading now?

Mr SKIDMORE: The report of the TLC's Construction Safety Board. Mr Wheeler undertook a survey on behalf of the Trades and Labor Council.

Mr Grayden: Has that been conveyed to the Department of Labour?

Mr SKIDMORE: I understand it has.

#### *Tabling of Documents*

Mr GRAYDEN: Mr Speaker, may I ask that these papers be tabled when the honourable member has finished with them?

Mr SKIDMORE: I am astounded that the Minister does not listen. I said he could have them.

Mr Grayden: I want them to be tabled.

The SPEAKER: The member for Swan has indicated he is prepared to table the papers.

Mr SKIDMORE: I said when I began that I would table the papers.

Mr Sodeman: You said "if he wants them". He is just telling you he wants them.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Swan.

#### *Debate Resumed*

Mr SKIDMORE: The board also made a survey of the State Shipping Service, which revealed—

- (1) Power leads laying about the decks in wet conditions (raining).

- (2) Men working in holds without hard hats.

- (3) Men are welding without protective screens.

- (4) Boatswains chair contrary to regulations.

Mr Grayden: Has that been forwarded to the Department of Labour?

Mr SKIDMORE: I do not know, but if the Minister wishes me to obtain that information I will do so. If it has not been forwarded to the department it should have been.

Mr Grayden: Someone has been very lax if it has not been.

Mr Bryce: It sounds like a good case for an inquiry by a Select Committee.

Mr SKIDMORE: There are many other instances. I will not go through them all because my time is limited and I do not wish to bore the House by reading a great number of safety reports. I am saying they reveal a terrible lack of ability to understand many safety issues, on the part of the employer or the worker who knows and ignores them, or on the part of both of them in not knowing. It is a question of education, with which I will deal very soon. It is a very important aspect of safety which leads one to believe we really need a Select Committee to deal with this matter.

I now come to an incident which is very relevant to the question now before the House. On Tuesday, the 17th September, a report under the heading "Six brave men in fire drama" appeared in *The West Australian*. Workers were inside a tank where the scaffolding had apparently collapsed. They were caught inside the tank in a flame of some intensity and it was very difficult to get them out. In fact, the firemen had to go in without their safety equipment on and have it passed through to them.

Surely that shows a lack of understanding of safety measures. Obviously the system is falling down and is not taking care of our workers. Someone should have had a look at this tank and found that what was needed was either an escape hatch at the top which could be welded over afterwards, or a bigger door at the bottom to enable the firemen to get in. A Select Committee would have found the answer to this problem because it would have had the time to do so. I do not criticise the departmental officers or the workers—in fact, I admire them—but there is obviously a lack of understanding. If we had a Select Committee on industrial safety the Premier, the Minister, and Government members would be far better informed on these matters.

Mr Grayden: We are already informed.

Mr SKIDMORE: The Minister is one of the most destructive people I have ever met. Frequently, what he says does not

assist. The member for Maylands says 13, the Minister says 70-odd, and it does not contribute to my argument. I do not mind members interjecting because *Hansard* will reveal that I am trying to show in all honesty that there is a great need for people to have a better understanding of industrial safety in the interest of saving life.

We can look at the statistics to see the extent of the understanding of safety matters.

Mr Grayden: There has been a great improvement.

Mr SKIDMORE: I have been around for a long time and the Minister's remarks will not worry me in the slightest because I am prepared to show him at any time that I have the capacity and the knowledge to answer any of his interjections which bear on this debate.

I would like to move on to an area of safety which has been sadly neglected by all Governments in Western Australia; that is, the dangers faced by divers.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member has 10 minutes.

Mr SKIDMORE: Divers are subjected to tremendous stresses and strains in the matter of safety. Construction safety regulations were drawn up in 1973 as a result of an assessment by experts, no doubt in an honest endeavour to achieve the ultimate degree of protection for divers in any given situation of danger. One would imagine that those regulations would give divers a relatively trouble-free occupation; but that was not the case. Divers have experienced near calamities, near death, and tremendous stresses, and they have suggested to the Trades and Labor Council's safety committee that the regulations which were drawn up only in 1973 should be amended to provide for certain conditions. The Minister may care to have a look at the suggestions. I will check whether the document can be made available to him.

In 1973 regulations covering the diving industry were drawn up, and in 1974 we find they are inadequate, which demonstrates there is a lack of understanding, expertise, and knowledge. I am not being critical but I am saying a Select Committee would have the time to go into all these matters in order to avoid the possibility of trouble in regard to safety in industry.

I want to conclude by speaking about safety education. In this matter perhaps we can be guided by a publication entitled *Compensation and Rehabilitation in Australia: Volume 2—Rehabilitation and Safety*, which is a report of the National Committee of Inquiry. On page 120, under

the heading "Training", paragraph 349 reads—

The submission of the Safety Engineering Society of Australasia pointed out that—

'Australia now has the unenviable distinction of being almost the only developed country that still lacks tertiary education in accident prevention.'

When one reads that one might say: Good heavens, what is wrong with Australia? It continues—

'In America, for example, at the most recent count in July, 1969, there were 1,012 courses that were offered in some aspect of accident prevention or safety management by universities or other tertiary establishments. Australia is, of course, a much smaller community with one-twentieth of the American population. It should therefore, on a pro rata basis, have about fifty. To the best of our knowledge and belief, it has none'.

I repeat, "It has none." The submission continues—

'A Certificate course in occupational safety was introduced by the Education Department of Victoria in 1968. Similar courses are being considered by the appropriate Education Departments of some other States, and present indications are that these courses will commence in Queensland and South Australia in 1974.

That committee ranged far and wide during the course of its inquiries, and it took evidence in this State. Its report reveals a complete lack of effort in regard to the training of people in industrial safety. Surely in that field alone there is reason for the appointment of a Select Committee, because Governments of the past have failed to understand and acknowledge that a problem exists which requires attention.

Mr Grayden: Are you referring only to the tertiary level?

Mr SKIDMORE: I am not speaking at the tertiary level; I am speaking at the level of the workers. If the Minister wants to talk about the tertiary level I could refer him to the Industrial Foundation for Accident Prevention to show him what safety courses are available to the working man. To the best of my knowledge the foundation has a forklift drivers' safety course, and a course involving explosives in the north. It has another course the name of which escapes me at the moment. I have not the document with me because I felt it was not relevant to the debate on this motion. On the other hand, many other courses are available in respect of accident prevention, but all of the instruction is aimed at the supervisory level. Many

excellent courses are available for supervisors, and these are of no value to the workers. Many management courses are available for industrial officers, but nothing is available for the workers.

Mr Grayden: You are not aware of what is being done.

Mr SKIDMORE: Mr Speaker, how much time have I left?

The SPEAKER: You have another four minutes.

Mr SKIDMORE: Thank you, Sir. I would like to deal with some of the questions which came to my mind during the speech made by the member for Maylands when introducing this motion. He said that the Liberal Government does not have a good record of approving the appointment of Select Committees, and that he had mentioned this matter before when he moved for the appointment of another Select Committee. The Minister for Labour and Industry then made the following statement—

There has to be some reason for the appointment of a Select Committee.

I do not disagree with that statement; I think it is logical and reasonable. The member for Maylands then said—

I agree. If Western Australia has a record of some 30 000 industrial accidents each year, resulting in some 30 to 40 workers killed, that is a good enough reason.

Mr Grayden: The figure was reduced from 40 to 28 a year.

Mr SKIDMORE: I am coming to that; the Minister should not rush his hurdles. During the speech of the member for Maylands the Minister again interjected and said—

Not if the number of workers killed is reduced from 40 to 28, and continues to decrease. Is that not some indication that something in this direction is being done?

I have asked the Minister some questions in this House apropos of the analyses of statistics available for the purpose of ascertaining how and where injuries are sustained and whether hands, eyes, feet, legs, bodies, or deaths are involved. I have not been able to secure an answer to that question for the very good reason that the statistics for 1972-73 have not been published; the records supplied to the statistician and the department are incomplete owing to the fact that one of the major insurance companies required under the Workers' Compensation Act to submit a return has failed to do so because of computerisation of its records.

So we have a situation in which the figures for 1972-73 are not available to us; and I understand—and I received

my information as late as 1½ hours ago—the 1973-74 statistics from the same department are not yet available. So a statement that the number of fatalities will be reduced from 40 to 28 or 25 is purely an assumption.

Mr Grayden: In the last instance the figure was reduced from 40 to 28.

Mr Taylor: This year's figures are not yet published and last year's figures are not available, so how can you say that?

Mr SKIDMORE: I would like to read out the following figures which reveal the number of fatal accidents which have occurred in industry—

1967-68	....	....	....	....	18
1968-69	....	....	....	....	28
1969-70	....	....	....	....	36
1970-71	....	....	....	....	40
1971-72	....	....	....	....	28

That is the table used by the Minister to prove that fatalities have decreased. He has no knowledge of the present situation. Therefore, in fairness to the workers, surely it is not unreasonable that we should appoint a Select Committee to investigate the question of industrial safety.

I close on this note: In the year 1971-72, according to the State Government Statistician the total work force of Western Australia lost 99 900 working days in industrial disputes, involving a loss of wages amounting to an estimated \$1.72 million. Compared with this in the same period, industrial accidents were responsible for a total of 374 860 days lost with the cost of claims amounting to a staggering \$5.72 million which, put in the simplest terms, means that \$4 million more was involved in accident claims as against wages lost as a result of strikes.

I say no more than that the question of the productivity of this State and its ability to survive in the present economic climate surely warrants an investigation of the matter of industrial safety.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Hartrey.

*House adjourned at 6.07 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Thursday, the 10th October, 1974

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. A. F. Griffith) took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### PAPERS

#### Tabling

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central—Minister for Health) [2.31 p.m.]: I have for tabling the report of the Public Health Department's Technical Subcommittee on