

them with me and ready to place on the notice paper. We may even have time for a conference before then. There is no discord in the arrangements at all. I therefore commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by The Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines), read a first time.

House adjourned at 11.8 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 16th October, 1968.

The SPEAKER (Mr. Guthrie) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

BILLS (2): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Kwinana Loop Railway Bill.

2. Mangles Bay Railway Bill.

Bills introduced, on motions by Mr. O'Connor (Minister for Railways), and read a first time.

QUESTIONS (21): ON NOTICE

LAND AT TOODYAY

Map

1. Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Is there available a map of a larger scale showing more clearly the topography of the land at Toodyay transferred from the Defence Department to the Lands Department than plan 2028/80 tabled in the House on the 3rd October, 1968?
- (2) If so, would he table same?

Mr. NALDER replied:

Week ending

	East Perth Per cent.	South Fremantle Per cent.	Bunbury Per cent.	Muja Per cent.	Collie Per cent.	Wellington Dam Per cent.
8th June	1.88	13.03	15.72	67.62	1.75
15th June	1.34	14.01	18.1	64.93	1.61	0.01
22nd June	4.38	13.93	19.61	60.61	1.47
29th June	1.49	13.77	19.46	63.71	1.57
6th July	2.19	15.51	25.34	55.41	1.55
13th July	2.58	16.6	22.99	56.2	1.62	0.01
20th July	1.35	15.06	19.57	62.47	1.55
27th July	1.14	16.76	19.98	60.55	1.57
3rd August	1.67	16.75	20.54	58.9	1.53	0.61
10th August	1.73	16.22	21.72	58.02	1.47	0.84
17th August	0.58	17.35	15.82	63.84	1.47	0.94
24th August	1.82	20.93	14.12	60.92	1.36	0.85
31st August	2.44	22.54	10.85	61.98	1.44	0.75
7th September	1.41	21.66	8.38	65.95	1.52	1.08
14th September	0.75	21.85	12.6	62.36	1.5	0.94
21st September	2.06	29.45	17.5	48.4	1.6	0.99
28th September	1.62	29.4	16.36	50.15	1.54	0.93
5th October	1.09	25.72	8.19	62.49	1.54	0.97
12th October	2.16	21.24	3.46	70.55	1.62	0.97

Mr. BOVELL replied:

- (1) and (2) There are a series of 40 chains to the inch lithographs available, but the topography is very similar to that drawn on plan 28/80 and the area in question is shown over four different sheets.

A print of an Army 80-chain map showing topographical features of the area bordered red and in more detail has been prepared and is submitted for tabling.

The map was tabled.

MILK

Plastic Containers

2. Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Agriculture:

In view of the more economic way used in Denmark for retailing milk in plastic disposable containers, has the Milk Board given any consideration to pioneering this system in Australia?

Mr. NALDER replied:

The subject of containers for milk is under constant review by milk boards throughout Australia, but the returnable bottle is still proving the most economic.

POWER STATIONS

Percentage of Power Produced

3. Mr. JONES asked the Minister for Electricity:

What percentage of power was generated by the undermentioned power houses on a weekly basis since the 1st June, 1968—

- (a) Bunbury;
- (b) Muja;
- (c) South Fremantle;
- (d) East Perth;
- (e) Collie?

BANK AGENCIES

Pilbara

4. Mr. BICKERTON asked the Minister for Lands:

Reference my question of the 8th October, "Rural and Industries Bank Agency at Tom Price Police Station"—

- (1) Can he give reasons why it would be necessary for the R. & I. Bank to negotiate with the company at Tom Price before erecting a sign outside its agency when the agency is a police station?
- (2) If a company by-law/regulation exists which would prevent such advertising, has the by-law/regulation been tabled in accordance with the Hamersley iron agreement which was ratified by Parliament?
- (3) Was the R. & I. Bank advised that it could not advertise its agency in the vicinity of the Tom Price Police Station; if so, by whom and when?
- (4) Has any evidence come before his notice to show that preferential treatment has been afforded the company's bankers by way of advertising at Tom Price? If so, would this not be contrary to the principles of free enterprise and open competition between banks?
- (5) If a recognised bank, other than one utilised and/or sponsored by the company at Tom Price, decided to establish a branch/agency in that town, what procedure would it have to adopt and what restriction would there be on advertising?
- (6) Will he supply details of the restrictions that would apply, outside of building requirements and land availability, to the establishment of branches and/or agencies in the following towns, assuming it was financially a reasonable bank risk—
 - (a) Tom Price;
 - (b) Dampier;
 - (c) Mt. Newman;
 - (d) Finucane Island;
 - (e) Goldsworthy?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

- (1) In order to reach amicable agreement, if possible.
- (2) So far as I know, no such company by-law/regulation exists and none has been tabled.

- (3) The bank had a sign on the station but took it down on request made by letter dated 27th May, 1968, from the company's general manager of operations at Dampier. The bank was anxious to maintain cordial relationships and by mutual arrangement with the company removed the sign pending further negotiation.
- (4) No.
- (5) Any recognised bank would have to negotiate with the company for a sublease, the term of which, including the matter of restriction on advertising, would be for the parties to agree upon.
- (6) The restrictions would be a matter between the owner or, where the relevant land is leased, then the lessee of the land and the bank concerned.

SHIRE RATES

Payment by Iron Ore Companies

5. Mr. BICKERTON asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) How many of the iron ore companies operating in the Pilbara who have taken up mining leases are paying shire rates on the leases, and what are the names of the companies and the amounts they are paying, and when did payment commence?
- (2) Of those that hold mining leases over iron ore and are not paying shire rates, will he supply—
 - (a) date leases taken up;
 - (b) name of person or company;
 - (c) approximate date payment of shire rates will commence;
 - (d) basis of payment;
 - (e) details of responsibility, if any?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- (1) and (2) The information requested is not readily available. The subject of valuation and rating of leasehold lands, generally, is at the present being examined by an inter-departmental committee.

NORTH WEST COASTAL HIGHWAY

Closure

6. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Is he aware that the Geraldton Council or the Main Roads Department has erected a wire fence across the North West Coastal Highway at the Chapman River?

- (2) Is he also aware that—
- at a reasonable distance from such fence there is no visible sign stating "No Through Road" or "Road Closed;"
 - all route signs still direct traffic along roads through Geraldton to the fence at the Chapman River;
 - the only sign which could be a warning of a change of route to Carnarvon is a normal road sign "Carnarvon" which to all appearances at night time is just a street name?
- (3) What authority has the Geraldton Council or the Main Roads Department to fence off the North West Coastal Highway before such a road is closed by Act of Parliament?
- (4) Has the Geraldton Council the right to fence off other roads thus closing them to through traffic; if so, under what authority?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- Yes. A barricade was erected across the North West Coastal Highway just south of the Chapman River by the Main Roads Department on the 27th September last.
- For traffic moving north along North West Coastal Highway through the Town of Geraldton towards the barrier, the following signs have been erected:—
 - 200 yds. south of Hoskin Street a sign measuring 7 ft. x 1 ft. and bearing the words "Carnarvon 200 yards" and reflectorised with an arrow pointing right.
 - At Hoskin Street there is a finger post sign fully reflectorised and reading "Carnarvon 296." Directly under this sign there is a large sign reading "Road Closed Ahead." Beyond this sign and 200 yards before the barrier is a reflectorised sign reading "No Through Road." The barrier itself has been marked by reflectorised red triangles.
- Authority to close off North West Coastal Highway is derived from section 301 (b) of the Local Government Act, 1960-67. The section provides for the temporary closure of a road during repair, alteration, or other necessary work in a street or public place. It is effective for 28 days. Any

extension of this period requires the approval of the Minister for Local Government. Having regard to the fact that this barrier was erected on the 27th September, the 28-day statutory period has not yet expired.

Section 16 (1) (b) of the Main Roads Act provides that the commissioner may exercise in regard to any main road any power which a local authority could exercise in regard thereto if such road were within its district.

- Yes. The statutory authority for this is contained in the Local Government Act, 1960-67, wherein a road may be closed temporarily or permanently subject to the provisions of that Act.

HAMERSLEY PUBLIC GOLF COURSE

Land Vested and Cost of Project

- Mr. LAPHAM asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

- What area of land is contained in the Hamersley public golf course?
- How is the land vested?
- When did the vesting take place and under what conditions?
- Was the land held in fee simple by the local authority, or how was it acquired?
- What is the estimated cost of the project?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- to (4) Reserve 27391 (Swan Location 7690) was vested in the Shire of Perth in trust for the purpose of public golf course, under section 33 of the Land Act on the 16th December, 1964. It has an area of 118 acres, 2 roods, 21 perches.
- \$210,000.
- This question was postponed.*

BUILDERS' REGISTRATION BOARD

Complaints by M. E. and S. Hutchinson

- Mr. TONKIN asked the Minister for Works:

Relative to complaints by M. E. & S. Hutchinson, Claremont, that they are unable to obtain remedial action in connection with alleged faulty workmanship by a registered builder, will he procure and table the Builders' Registration Board file dealing with these matters?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

No, but I will obtain a report on the complaints from the Builders' Registration Board.

SOCIAL WELFARE WORKERS

Qualifications: Acceptance by Departments

10. Mr. HARMAN asked the Premier:

- (1) Which departments concerned with social welfare have agreed to accept as a qualification for professional division appointment the associateship in social work at the W.A. Institute of Technology?
- (2) Which departments have not and why not?

Mr. BRAND replied:

- (1) Child Welfare Department, Native Welfare Department, and the Probation and Parole Service of the Crown Law Department.
- (2) The Director, Mental Health Services, has indicated that until the associateship in social work at the W.A. Institute of Technology is recognised by the Australian Institute of Social Workers, graduates should not be considered for appointment to the Mental Health Services.

HOUSING IN WARREN ELECTORATE

Septic Systems

11. Mr. H. D. EVANS asked the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Would he please indicate the stage the investigations into the installation of septic systems in State Housing Commission homes located at Donnelly River and Tone River have reached?
- (2) When does he expect to be able to give a final decision on the installation of septic systems in State Housing Commission homes in these settlements?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Costs of both a local sewerage scheme and individual installations have been considered and the commission is awaiting shire confirmation of its acceptance of individual installations similar to those constructed by the milling company.
- (2) On the shire's confirmation of acceptance of the type of installation made by the company.

RAILWAYS

Transport of Potatoes

12. Mr. H. D. EVANS asked the Minister for Railways:

- (1) Is it feasible for the W.A. Government Railways to run special trains on Sunday mornings between the 1st January and the

31st March from the lower south-west for the purpose of carrying potatoes during the harvest season?

- (2) Would the advantages in having potatoes arrive in Perth a day earlier, which would also facilitate the turn around of trucks, justify the inauguration of such a special service?

Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) This would require alteration to locomotive schedules, but a proposal for a train to depart Fremerton at 1 p.m. connecting with a service arriving Perth at 4 a.m. Monday, is currently under consideration.
- (2) Such a service could only be justified by the loading of sufficient tonnages.

IMMIGRATION CENTRE

Brentwood

13. Mr. BATEMAN asked the Minister for Immigration:

- (1) What is the anticipated date the new immigration centre at Brentwood will be opened?
- (2) What is the anticipated number of immigrants expected to be housed at the centre?
- (3) What will be the method of effluent disposal used at the centre?
- (4) Has an area been set aside for the disposal site?
- (5) If so, what is the exact location?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

- (1) The 5th December, 1968.
- (2) The capacity of the centre is 448 persons.
- (3) By broad land irrigation from an extended aeration package plant which has been installed. It will produce high quality effluent conforming to standards as laid down by the Commissioner of Public Health.

Final effluent disposal is by broad land irrigation system. The disposal area is comprised mainly of sand strata, very suitable for this type of disposal. After primary and secondary treatment within the package plant, the effluent is conveyed into contour channels specially designed for this purpose.

- (4) Yes.
- (5) Within Canning Location 27, situated on the west side of Bateman Road and approximately half a mile south of High Road.

14. This question was postponed.

NICKEL MINE AT SCOTIA*Life Span*

15. Mr. T. D. EVANS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

According to the estimate known to his department of potential economic nickel ores at the proposed Great Boulder Gold Mines Ltd. and North Kalgurli (1912) Ltd. mine at Scotia, what is the life span of this mine expected to be?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

Drilling to date has indicated reserves of sulphide nickel ore estimated at 1,500,000 tons. Exploratory and development work is steadily continuing.

The life-span of the Scotia mine will depend on the final assessment of ore reserves and rate of annual production.

PETROL ROSTER SERVICE*Kalgoorlie and Boulder*

16. Mr. T. D. EVANS asked the Minister for Labour:

- (1) Has recent consideration been given to approving of an additional petrol roster station in Kalgoorlie and Boulder so as to provide as near as possible an additional rostered service convenient to both Kalgoorlie and Boulder motorists?
- (2) Have the views of the service station proprietors on the roster system at Kalgoorlie and Boulder been sought in this regard?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) I understand that the matter has been discussed by the recommending authority under the Factories and Shops Act; namely, the Automobile Chamber of Commerce.

KWINANA FREEWAY*Illumination, and Damage to Light Posts*

17. Mr. FLETCHER asked the Minister for Electricity:

Relevant to my question of the 7th August, 1968, and his reply "that poles to carry street lighting could not be placed in the median strip of Kwinana Freeway owing to a need to illuminate both the near and off side kerbs"—

- (1) Is he aware that the east and west sections of Canning Highway are illuminated by lights carried by poles in the median strip from Canning Bridge to Wireless Hill in the Alfred Cove area?

- (2) Why are near and off side kerbs able to be illuminated in this area and not on the Kwinana Freeway as suggested in my question above and previously on the 31st July, 1968?

- (3) How many additional light poles have been damaged or destroyed since the 100 mentioned in my question of the 31st July?

Mr. NALDER replied:

The answers are as follows:—

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Canning Highway is not illuminated to the standard of the Kwinana Freeway.
- (3) Six.

AIR SERVICE*Perth-Meekatharra*

18. Mr. BURT asked the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is he aware that under a new timetable which becomes effective on the 20th October, MacRobertson-Miller Airlines Ltd. have included flights from Perth to Meekatharra on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, the days on which Hicks Airlines Pty. Ltd. are servicing this route?
- (2) Does he not consider that it would be in the best interests of residents of the district and of the public generally for M.M.A. to continue to service Meekatharra on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, as was the case before the company surrendered its Murchison services to Hicks on the 1st October, last?

Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) It is considered that on at least some flights each week the two operators should service Meekatharra on the same day for the benefit of passengers proceeding on to other destinations. These passengers would otherwise be compelled to remain overnight in Meekatharra. Should experience show a need to amend the timetables about to be introduced, this will receive consideration.

ROADWAYS*East Perth: Public Access*

19. Mr. BURKE asked the Minister for Railways:

- (1) Will he please advise whether public access to roadways in the East Perth area will be affected by the development of the railway facilities in the area?

- (2) Which streets, if any, will be affected?
- (3) To what extent will public access be limited or denied?

Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) to (3) Development of the East Perth railway passenger terminal will be carried out within existing railway limits.

Overall road planning for this area is at present under consideration but final determination has not yet been made.

I understand that the planning provides that no property will be denied road access.

MITCHELL FREEWAY

Covering, and Use as Park

20. Mr. BURKE asked the Premier:

Would he arrange for consideration to be given to the feasibility of a plan to cover (roof) that part of the Mitchell Freeway, between Parliament House and the Barracks Arch, and provide for the development of the area as a park?

Mr. BRAND replied:

No. The cost would be prohibitive.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Sales by State Housing Commission

21. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Housing:

- (1) During the last three years, how many housing blocks have been sold by the State Housing Commission other than to applicants under schemes operated by it?
- (2) To whom were such blocks sold?
- (3) What price was obtained in each case?
- (4) Where were these blocks located?
- (5) When were they sold?
- (6) What is the current valuation of single blocks held by the commission, if any, at Dianella, Woodlands, Balga, Karrinyup, and North Beach?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

- (1) to (6) Between the 30th September, 1965, and the close of business on the 11th October, 1968, the commission has sold 563 residential sites; 206 of these were in the country areas and the north-west.

The sites have been sold to individuals, contract builders, project developers, companies, and Commonwealth and State Departments providing essential employee housing; and to the Native

Welfare Department for the building of homes for selected native families; and to the Commonwealth for the construction of flats for migrants. Funds for such housing were not provided by the commission, and construction was required to be undertaken within seven months of allocation of sites, or within two years in the case of an auction.

These sites were disposed of as follows:—

- (i) 360 allocated at values determined by the Chief Valuer, Taxation Department.
- (ii) 122 were allocated at Port Hedland at prices fixed by the commission.
- (iii) 81 sites of high valued residential land in the metropolitan area were sold at auction at prices ranging from \$5,100 to \$7,100 on the condition that the purchaser contracted to commence home building within two years and complete within three years.

It is estimated that single home sites still held by the commission have a range of values of the order of—

	\$	\$
Dianella	5,500 to	7,500
Balga	4,500 to	5,500
Karrinyup	5,500 to	7,800
North Beach	5,600 to	7,500

depending on elevation, aspect, local amenities, school, shopping, and transport facilities.

There is no vacant commission land in Woodlands.

TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 10th October.

MR. LAPHAM (Karrinyup) [4.47 p.m.]: This measure is a step in the right direction. The amendments provide fundamentally for two principles, one of which is a fixed penalty and the other a points offence system. These will be all right if they are effectively administered. That is where the problem arises in regard to the control of traffic. As I see the position, we lay down certain principles in the Traffic Act, but unfortunately the Traffic Code which, in effect, is the regulations, comes into operation, and its interpretation is completely at variance with the Traffic Act.

I remember that a few years ago I asked the then Minister for Transport if he would allow a motor horn to be used for the purpose of a driving aid. He agreed that this was necessary, but I find under the Traffic Code that a motor horn can

be used only in a traffic emergency. There is a big difference between the two. This is where I feel the Minister in control of traffic must always have a good look at what his department is doing.

There is another aspect in connection with what constitutes a bald tyre. I remember this being discussed, and the thought in my mind was that the tread had to be almost completely worn off the tyre. I think most members would think that way. However, I find that if one section of the tread is worn off—that is the first section—that constitutes a bald tyre. I think that when this matter was discussed the Legislature considered a bald tyre was one where most of the tread was worn off.

If we are not careful we will reach a stage where motorists will have to set themselves up as a motorists' protection association against the Traffic Department, and against the legislation. There are many times when I feel that the authority is rather harsh in connection with drivers of motor vehicles. It is well known that ignorance of the law is no excuse. However, one has to wade through the Traffic Act, the Road Traffic Code, and the Criminal Code to find out all the regulations which govern driving a motorcar. All the average person wants to do is to drive a motorcar because it is a modern method of transport. However, he is governed by this set of rules, and that set of rules, and also by the Criminal Code.

It is rather a difficult position for a driver to be in, and I think the whole of the traffic regulations and the traffic code should be administered sympathetically. Candidly, I have waded through the rules on numerous occasions and I do not understand them. Except for some legal men in this Chamber, I do not think anyone else understands them either.

I do not think we need to rush to panic stations, with regard to traffic, just because a number of people are being killed on the roads. This is a fundamental result of decreasing the driving age. At one time a person had to be 21 years of age before he was issued with a driving license. The age was then reduced to 18 years if the driver was to be employed driving a commercial vehicle. Now the age is 17 years for anybody, and as a consequence of making motor vehicles available to youngsters the position has become more dangerous.

There are three major factors we must consider with regard to traffic, and I refer to speed, drunkenness, and inexperience. When there is a combination of the three factors, there is the opening for a tragedy. I think that the speed limit in the metropolitan area could be enforced with the co-operation of the magistrates. I feel that the magistrates, perhaps, have not got their feet on the ground in many instances when dealing with some drivers

who have been apprehended for driving at excessive speeds. An increase in the penalties imposed on some of those irresponsible people could have a very good effect on that class of driver.

The question of drunken driving is rather a problem. It has been the practice for a long time for people to frequent hotels for the purpose of having a drink after work, or before going to a theatre, a show, or a nightclub. Even when people are coming down from the country, a lot of them seem to do a hotel crawl on the way down. This is normal practice; let us face up to that fact.

If this practice is not a good one, it has to be stopped. Candidly, it is not a good practice. The hotel proprietors have constructed parking areas so that their clientele can park their vehicles off the road and then drink liquor as long as they like. However, when those people have finished drinking we do nothing about them. The traffic authorities have the right to check a lot of those people to see if they are under the influence of liquor, or otherwise. The authorities can say whether those people are capable of driving. However, we do not do much about that. Action is only taken after an accident has occurred, or after the abnormal behaviour of a driver indicates that something is wrong. This is the way we find our drunken drivers and, candidly, I do not think it is good enough.

It is high time the authorities started to investigate drunken driving. It need not be a permanent arrangement, but let us have periodical checks. We see police checking the roadworthiness of vehicles, but I do not think the roadworthiness of a vehicle needs anywhere near the supervision which is required for drunken driving.

We have an alcoholic level, in relation to drunken driving, which I think is .15. It is suggested that this figure be reduced to .08. However, before we reduce the alcoholic content, in relation to this regulation, I think the first regulation should be enforced.

The increased penalties to be imposed by the Bill worry me a little. From a perusal of the schedule I find that the Minister—and the Government—has apparently taken panic action in increasing the penalties. This will have the effect of increasing revenue which, I suppose, is all right from the Government's point of view. We need the money to operate the regulations but, at the same time, I do not think the penalties imposed will have any real effect on reducing the number of accidents, and will not have any marked effect on the behaviour of irresponsible drivers.

With the increase in penalties, there will also be the elimination of the long wait before an offender appears in court. Also, the offender will be able to post his cheque to the department in accordance with the fixed penalty arrangement. These measures are good from the point of view of

the Government and, once again, the Government will receive the money from the fines at a much faster rate than it does under the present system.

The question of giving way to the right, or to the left, is irritating at times. It has been said in this House that we, in Western Australia, produce the worst drivers in the world. Well, candidly, I have travelled with drivers from overseas and from the Eastern States, and if I have to drive with them again, I would prefer to do so in a dual-control vehicle. That is what I think of their driving, and they are no different from our own drivers. Perhaps those drivers might have had a greater degree of mind conditioning in regard to the give-way-to-the-right rule, but, generally speaking, I think the Western Australian drivers are just as capable as drivers anywhere else in the world.

Mr. O'Connor: I think that is a realistic view.

Mr. LAPHAM: Yes. There are, of course, problems in relation to the give-way-to-the-right rule—or the give-way-to-left rule, however one wishes to apply it. I have found that the driver who is mature, with regard to driving knowledge, gives way altogether and, as a consequence, he goes through life without being involved in a great number of accidents. However, the individual who is keen on the give-way-to-the-right rule ultimately meets the driver who, through some misunderstanding, just fails to give way and as a consequence he suffers a collision.

I do not think we should endeavour to make our drivers something they are not, or try to computerise them in any way by inducing a certain principle into them. As human beings we are all prone to make mistakes periodically.

If we get back to the fundamental of giving way at intersections we will have some chance of reducing the accident rate. In that regard the insurance companies seem to have a similar view; because in their assessment of accidents at intersections they have adopted the principle of applying a proportionate amount of blame to each of the parties involved. I have had accidents at intersections, and I think there is some merit in the proposition adopted by the insurance companies. As a matter of fact, I had such an accident some years ago after I had delivered a lecture on driving. I hope I do not have one tomorrow.

However, even though a person may be legally right, I take the view that if one analyses the position one will find that such a person was partly to blame. Every person who has an accident at an intersection is partly in the wrong and has committed an offence to some degree. Even if one person appears to be completely in the wrong, the other person in the accident could, perhaps, have avoided a collision.

Mr. O'Connor: There is some degree of carelessness on both sides.

Mr. LAPHAM: To some degree, always. If through the use of a fixed penalty system we can make more patrolmen available—and I think we will be able to do this—it will be a good thing. It is far better to have patrolmen on the roads than to have them hanging around the courts for hours on end waiting to give evidence. Patrolmen should be on the road and, personally, that is where I want to see them. I do not want to see them hanging around behind some obstruction, out of the view of motorists, waiting for somebody to make a mistake.

I want to see our patrolmen leading streams of traffic, because if anyone takes notice he will see that where a patrolman is in front of a stream of motor vehicles the whole stream does not travel any faster than 35 miles an hour, or whatever is the speed limit for the area. No-one in the stream will move out to pass a patrolman, and that is the sort of thing we want because it will make motorists conform to the traffic regulations and the speeds in force on the roads.

I believe that the other night the member for Balcatta made a rather good suggestion when he said that plainclothes patrolmen in motor vehicles should be travelling the roads. I do not want our patrolmen to be on the roads simply for the purpose of apprehending people who are committing minor breaches of the traffic laws. That is not their function. I think plainclothes patrolmen should be on the roads to pick up hooligans and those who are always travelling at an excessive speed—and there are plenty of people like that.

The plainclothes patrolmen could start by travelling around the city block at night, or at weekends. They would find plenty of hooligans and people breaking the speed limits. The patrolmen would only have to go to some of the milk bars and hamburger stalls and it would not be long before they found a number of people using their vehicles in an abnormal way.

I do feel, however, that there could be some easement of the regulations covering minor breaches of the traffic laws, and perhaps a few of the regulations could be wiped out altogether. I suggest that the Minister have a good look at this aspect, because some of the regulations are a little harsh. Under the regulations a cyclist who tows another cyclist along the road could be fined \$6. Candidly, I think that is a little harsh. If a motorcar breaks down, as long as a rope of the required length is attached to it, and the drivers of the two cars involved conform to the regulations, those vehicles can travel at 35 miles an hour along the road. However, they could be a danger to other road users.

In the case of youngsters who are riding bicycles, I think the regulations are too harsh. If the chain of a bike breaks and the rider wants to be towed home by the use of a rope, this is not permitted, even though the lads may be only holding the rope in their hands. I do not think any great harm can be done by that sort of thing, and it should not be a breach of the traffic regulations. That is why I ask the Minister to keep an eye on the department to make sure that the regulations are administered in a common-sense way.

As regards the control of traffic generally, even if country members are not keen on the licensing of motor vehicles being removed from the authority of country shires, I think they should at least agree to allow the control of traffic to be vested in the Police Traffic Department. I think that is a must if we wish to operate a fixed penalty system and the points system, and effectively tutor our younger drivers who have just been licensed. There is a belief that the control of traffic should remain with the local shires, but an inquiry was made into this aspect and the majority recommendation was that the Police Traffic Department should be the authority to control traffic throughout the State.

If country members divorce their minds from their own little areas, I think they will agree that it would be better to have only one authority to control traffic on a State-wide basis, especially in view of the licensing of young people and the necessity to train them to drive properly.

All in all, the amendments produced by the Minister have my support. I do not know whether they will be completely satisfactory but at least they are a step in the right direction. It is a question of how the amendments will be policed, and the Minister will have to keep a careful watch on the whole position. If that is done I think we will make some progress in reducing the accident rate on the roads.

There is another aspect I believe I should mention. Some three or four months ago a person who had had a little extra to drink and felt he was reaching the stage where he should not be driving pulled up on the side of the road and endeavoured to sleep it off. He was apprehended and charged with being in control of a vehicle while drunk. There was not the slightest doubt that he was guilty as charged, but I do not think it was altogether fair. I agree it is rather hard in any legislation to lay down hard and fast rules regarding traffic, but I think the regulations should be administered with a degree of common sense. That is why I said, and I repeat, that the sympathetic administration of the Traffic Act and the regulations made under it is vital to a successful operation. Under the circumstances I support the Bill.

MR. CASH (Mirrabooka) [5.10 p.m.]: The purpose of the amendments introduced by the Minister is to reduce or attempt to restrict the road toll by a more effective control of traffic, and I think that purpose will be achieved because the amendments will ensure a better use of police department manpower, and by this means the roads should be made safer for the motoring public.

I think one way of making our roads safer would be to institute the use of "Q" cars. The policemen in these vehicles could arrest traffic violators. In addition I think the Minister could give consideration to instituting a courtesy squad whose members could point out to minor violators and other road users what they were doing wrong and the need to make a study of the traffic regulations. I am certain that the introduction of such a squad of courtesy cars, adequately staffed by policemen even if the squad was small in number, would make some contribution to road safety and would make the motoring public realise what they were doing wrong and how they could improve their driving. I think such an innovation would help greatly in reducing traffic accidents.

In October, 1967, as was pointed out earlier in the debate, a symposium was held at the University of Western Australia at which 14 well known and well qualified speakers covered every aspect of the road accident problem. The symposium was called, "Traffic Hazards and the Community," and one point emphasised was the need for more information in regard to road accidents. It was felt that much more useful information could be made available and this would be of benefit in making an intensive study of driver behaviour. I am certain that if volunteers for such driver studies were called for they would be easy to find. I have no doubt that many at the University would be only too pleased to assist in this regard.

If such a study does take place, I believe that consideration could also be given to the frequent accidents at traffic intersections. Perhaps frequent traffic offenders could be encouraged to be subjected to psychological studies, and much useful information could be gained from an examination of this type—particularly if frequent traffic violators would submit to such studies.

If a person wants to operate machinery of a certain type, he has to undergo specific aptitude tests to make sure that he can operate it satisfactorily and safely. However, in the case of a motor vehicle, which is a weapon in itself on the road, all a person has to do is to pass a simple driving test and prove that he has a knowledge of a few local regulations.

I believe the Government should give consideration to building up the research and statistics section so that it can obtain accurate and uniform records on accidents, and at a later date the department could use the data processing system to make the information from the statistics readily available to anybody and everybody who wanted them.

One of the speakers at the symposium said he felt we had a major problem in the entering of highways or major roads from minor roads. This matter, too, has been mentioned in the debate and it is a problem. Every time one endeavours to enter a major road from a minor road one has to edge, quite often, into fairly heavy traffic streams coming from both directions. This is a risky procedure for the simple reason that a car approaching from the right or left at a speed of 35 miles an hour, as would be the case on a major highway, needs 148 feet in which to stop. Also, a driver travelling at 35 miles an hour along a minor road needs 148 feet of clear vision before he can safely enter a major road.

It is interesting to know that the present law permits a vehicle to be parked only 20 feet from an intersection. This limits the vision of a motorist wishing to enter a major road to the extent that a driver travelling along a minor road has a line of vision of only 87 feet when he wishes to enter a major highway. This equates to safe movement only when an approaching car is doing 24 miles an hour along the major highway. A driver would not need to be travelling at a speed greater than that if he wished to enter a major road with a reasonable degree of safety, because of the line of vision and the speed of the vehicles on the major road.

This type of hazard exists everywhere in our community, and there would not be a member here who has not seen cars which have been parked too close to a corner.

I can only think of three of these hazards as I drive into town on my way to Parliament House. There is one at the corner of Beaufort Street and Eleventh Avenue; there is one at the corner of Dyer Street and Havelock Street; and there is one at the corner of Parliament Place and Harvest Terrace as one turns out of Harvest Terrace on the way to the Parliament House car park. The Government should act immediately to eliminate these hazards by overruling any other authority. It should restrict parking away from street corners to a distance of 50 feet or 60 feet. The Government should also attend to T-junctions and effect parking restrictions in the vicinity, particularly in narrow streets which are opposite T-junctions. It is often found that if there are one or two T-junctions in a narrow street, people

will park right opposite them, creating a real traffic hazard and increasing the possibility of accidents.

During the debate on this Bill the Deputy Leader of the Opposition made several suggestions, but they were not all original. However, they were certainly a useful contribution to the debate. He supported the 65-mile per hour speed limit; the installation of traffic lights; special treatment of those areas where narrow roads intersect major roads; the removal of "Stop" signs at intersections; and the blocking off of alternate minor roads at those points where they intersect a major road. He instanced Beaufort Street as an example where this could be done. I could also mention Charles Street and Oxford Street, and there are certainly many others that could be cited.

I cannot agree with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in his statement that Western Australian motorists have the reputation of being the worst drivers in the world. I will quote his own words. He said—

In my opinion, the great majority of our motorists would appear to have no road sense whatsoever.

He also said—

It appears the motorists can run riot; they can go mad; and they can write their own laws.

This irrational outburst by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is based only on his own opinion, and not on established facts. If we accept the views of people such as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on the one hand, and those of experts and other people on the other, we can come to quite different conclusions.

At the symposium on traffic hazards and the community, one of the speakers was Mr. D. J. Davies, the Assistant Commissioner of Main Roads, and he had this to say—

... for many years there has been a belief, which has been applied in practice, that human error was the most common cause of accidents.

It was implied that the driver was careless, irresponsible, or inept, and that he did not have the attitude or stability necessary to operate a motor vehicle. He was thus the main cause of accidents. Reasoning on these lines led to a programme for dealing with highway safety as a social and psychological problem. All that needed to be done was to educate the driver and to provide adequate laws and programmes of enforcement. However, with the development of more knowledge and closer examination of accident causing factors, many people have come to doubt that progress beyond a limited point can be sustained by this method of attack. Thus,

the suggestion that all accidents have a single cause is now largely discredited in favour of the belief that an accident is the result of a combination of circumstances or factors. In some cases the situation set up by the combination of factors imposes demands on the human driver which is incapable of resolving in the flash of time which is all the situation permits him.

This view was further supported by two resolutions passed at the 1967 conference of the Institute of Engineers in Melbourne, and the Australian Postgraduate Federation in Medicine. Statements made in the two resolutions were—

Apart from a number of road planning and road design practices, a number of traffic engineering methods, and a few features of vehicle design, it is doubtful if the worth of any counter measure has been positively established.

The resources available for road accident reduction are not unlimited. To make the greatest reduction in loss which the community suffers from traffic accidents, efforts should be directed to those measures which will return the greatest benefits per unit expenditure.

This represents a more sensible approach towards pinpointing the problem of accident responsibility. Unsatisfactory road and traffic engineering is the major cause of our road toll, and many drivers, as pointed out by one of the speakers to the debate, are simply the victims of circumstances over which they do not have a great deal of control. Experience has shown that road safety can run parallel with road improvements. Improved traffic flow, resulting from a reduction of traffic crossing major roads and pedestrian problems, together with the elimination of parking on the highways, means less time spent on the road by each driver when proceeding to and from his destination. This would also mean less occupancy of road space and would certainly result in less accidents. Again, I think the Government should make more extensive studies of the road and traffic engineering problems which exist in Western Australia.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition's critical remarks about Western Australia having the reputation for having the worst drivers in the world are simply based on his own observations, and are certainly not based on accident statistics. The latest statistics are interesting because, at June, 1968, 385,747 vehicles were registered in Western Australia. This figure shows a tremendous increase over the figures recorded in recent years.

For instance, in 1953 the number of vehicles registered was 142,000. Six years later, in 1959, it had increased to 198,000.

After a further six years, in December, 1965, the number of vehicles registered had increased to 291,000, and, after a further two and a half years, the number of vehicles registered at June, 1968, had increased to 385,747.

In comparison with these figures for vehicles, the number of licensed drivers at June, 1968, was 371,682. This is the net figure and does not include the figures in the statistical books relating to conductors' licenses, which total 2,000 or more. If the number of vehicles averaged between 9,000 and 10,000 miles a year it is not unreasonable to assume that the total mileage travelled by registered vehicles in Western Australia was 3,500,000,000. That is certainly a great number of miles travelled by vehicles in this large State for the twelve months to June, 1968.

If an examination is made of the accident statistics, it will be found that in 1967, the number of people killed was 256. In the same year 6,426 people were injured, and there was a total of 20,567 reportable accidents. If these accident figures are compared with the total mileage covered by all vehicles it will be found, on a simple statistical calculation, that one person was killed in every 12,000,000 miles; one person was injured in every 500,000 miles, and one reportable accident occurred in every 150,000 miles; that is, taking a reportable accident as one that involved over \$50 worth of damage. Therefore I think to classify all drivers as bad, after a hasty examination of any statistics, is simply a misuse of statistics.

Dr. J. G. Golledge, who spoke at the symposium, placed the blame for the majority of our seriously injured in road accidents on three groups of people within the community. He did not place the blame on every motorist who drives a car.

Mr. Graham: Did anybody ever do that?

Mr. CASH: I think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition made some reference to it.

Mr. Graham: The honourable member is incapable of understanding anything. No wonder he got kicked out of the Federal Parliament.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CASH: As I was saying, Dr. Golledge placed the blame on three groups within our community who make up the bulk of our seriously injured. He said—

Three groups of people make up the bulk of our seriously injured:—

- (1) The drunken driver and the drunken pedestrian. 50 per cent. of accident victims studied at post mortem by Dr. Pearson (1) had significant alcohol in the blood. In 10 out of 16 fatal accidents, alcohol was a major factor in a Canberra survey.

- (2) The driver travelling at excessive speeds on country roads. An English report stated that some 40 per cent. of these people fell asleep at the wheel.
- (3) The kick-seeking youth behind the wheel. Young drivers have frequently been attacked and frequently defended, but I think we can hardly deny the fact that they appear in our serious accidents with tragic frequency.

In my opinion, therefore, the Government's proposals in regard to fixing a maximum speed limit and in making suspected drunken drivers undergo a breathalyser test are a step in the right direction. However, the third group mentioned by Dr. Colledge appears to represent a problem that is hard to resolve, especially when one makes an examination of the statistics. The 17 to 20 age group, we find, represents 21 per cent. of those drivers killed in a road accident; 27 per cent. of drivers injured, and 28 per cent. of the passengers injured.

Those in the 17 to 24 age group represent 34 per cent. of drivers killed in road accidents, and nearly 40 per cent. of drivers injured in road accidents. Research suggests that those in the 17 to 24 age group are responsible for two to two and a half times the accidents that could be expected from the miles travelled in their vehicles.

In my opinion, the Government has to work out whether these young people simply lack driving experience. Are they able to cope with traffic situations as older drivers do with an unsatisfactory road engineering system? Are we fully aware of their driving history or their training as a driver? Were they self-taught as much as a driver can be self-taught, and then accompanied by someone when they went along to take their driving test? Were they taught by friends or relatives, or by trained instructors? Did they attend the National Safety Council driving school to any degree during their training? These are all questions that should be answered to ensure that a driver is capable of driving a vehicle on our roads.

If I could make a brief reference to driver-training schools, I would like to mention that when driving along the road recently, I saw a person taking a driving school course. Apparently the driver undergoing the course was a very small person. Unlike other members of this House I am a fairly small person, and I always feel that if I have a "Kool-a-Ride" seat or something else under me to give me plenty of road vision, it is well worth the trouble.

Adverting to what I was saying about people being taught by driving schools, I have seen these trainee drivers who are

of much the same stature as myself and I am positive they were watching the road through the steering wheel. Why these people are not pulled up, I do not know; perhaps some mention of it is necessary. In view of the accident statistics that have been compiled it would appear that, in the first place, some drivers could not see the road whilst they were driving their vehicles. Apparently many of the accidents have been attributed to other causes instead of the cause being recorded as the driver not having sufficient vision to see the road properly.

Another point that has occurred to me is that it could be that young drivers who are prone to accidents lack the opportunity for faster driving, and it could be this that encourages them to speed on our urban and country roads. The Government, therefore, could well give consideration to an extension of a National Safety Council course by planning and establishing a much larger centre where all newly-licensed drivers could obtain advanced driving experience without risking their lives and the lives of others on poorly designed urban and country roads.

There has been a difference of opinion among the members of this House on the question of "Stop" signs, and, yet again, the public and other experts have expressed a different view on the efficacy of "Stop" signs. I think that at what we call major roads the "Give Way" sign is the best answer to the problem. Motorists in fast moving traffic along busy highways are reluctant to give way to motorists who are stationary on their right at a "Stop" sign erected at the corner of a minor road.

There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the driver of the vehicle in traffic along a busy highway is faced with the question of when he shall stop, and there is also the problem that the driver on his right who is stationary at the "Stop" sign will often refuse to move. Secondly, the driver in busy traffic is often in fear of a rear end collision if he does give the right of way to the vehicle on his right. This is one of the bad faults of the give-way-to-the-right rule on major highways.

Mr. Davies, the Assistant Commissioner of Main Roads, had something to say on "Stop" signs at the symposium, as follows:—

A study undertaken by the Main Roads Department of Western Australia of the accident pattern at 50 sites for twelve months before and twelve months after the installation of "STOP" signs showed a reduction of 50% in the total number of accidents, and this figure was maintained in the second year after, despite the increase in traffic. The main value of the "STOP" sign was found in the reduction of right angle collisions, which

in the first year after installation decreased by 70%, which reduction was maintained in the second year "after". In addition, there was a decrease in the severity of accidents, as injury accidents also fell by 70%.

In reference to "Give Way" signs Mr. Davies said—

Another useful traffic control device is the "GIVE WAY" sign. It must, however, be used with caution. The basic difference between this and the "STOP" sign is that the "GIVE WAY" sign requires the motorist either to slow down or stop, and yield the right of way to any other vehicle approaching or entering the intersection. There is no legal obligation to stop completely if it is not necessary. In contrast, the "STOP" sign requires a complete stop and normal right of way rules apply.

Desirable as the "GIVE WAY" sign may sometimes seem, it should only be applied when certain aims and conditions prevail. These are—

- (i) To provide exclusive right of way for the traffic flow on a major route to relieve congested traffic routes.
- (ii) To correct a right of way problem which has been brought about by the installation of channelisation at intersections or junctions.
- (iii) At hazardous intersections where protection and control are necessary and where the sight distance is adequate for drivers to make their judgments without coming to a stop.

As motorists have to come to a complete stop at "Stop" signs, one wonders what happens when cars get into a queue, and where the legal responsibility lies for the second, third, or fourth cars. Once motorists have the right of way across a major highway they very often go across in convoy, but the rule says that motorists must stop at these intersections. I would like the Minister to clear up this point when he replies to the debate.

The introduction of a demerit system is a sensible approach because of the problems that have arisen. However, I query the two-points penalty to be imposed on drivers who fail to give way to the right under the circumstances just mentioned, when an accident does not occur; or under the circumstances that quite often arise when the driver on the right simply does not proceed. The Minister should give some thought again to having another look at the proposal for imposing a two-points penalty for this offence.

If we are to have a demerit system for bad drivers, then I can see no reason why a merit system should not be introduced for good drivers. Good driving over a number of years could be rewarded with top-driver standing in the community, either by issuing such a driver with a special merit license of some kind, or by a full rebate of the driver's license fee.

If we calculate that one reportable accident costs the community, in general, \$1,000, then for 1967 when we had 20,000 reportable accidents the cost of such accidents to the community, in general, would be \$20,000,000. For that reason the remission of the driver's license fee to drivers who do avoid accidents is certainly an expense which the community can well bear; furthermore, this would encourage better driving.

Some time ago I saw a newspaper report in which some person desiring to import a car into Western Australia was refused a permit because the car had red colour flashing lights which conflicted with the traffic requirements of this State. That was a fair enough reason for the refusal of the permit. However, when one drives anywhere in Western Australia one will find flashing lights of every possible colour, over which there seems to be very little control by the police officers. One would find many cars with red colour flashing indicators; many with white and yellow brake lights; frequently cars with single headlights; and many vehicles, including Government buses, trucks, and council vehicles, with no brake lights at all. This type of offence should be watched very closely by the patrol officers.

In supporting these amendments to the Traffic Act, I would say that the Minister has made the purpose for the introduction of them quite clear. I hope that all members of the House will support the amendments. In his contribution, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition commented on the Minister for Traffic being away from the State on a tour of inspection of prisons; he said that the Minister should be in the State to solve the traffic problems. I can assure the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that the Minister who has been acting for the Minister for Police and Traffic has certainly done a good job in attending to those portfolios, and in answering the questions in this House quite well. I am certainly happy to support the Bill, as I am sure are other members.

MR. FLETCHER (Fremantle) [5.35 p.m.]: I wish to support this Bill. I consider that any legislation which will achieve the objective of removing traffic constables from office chairs and placing them on motorcycles for the purpose of patrolling our highways is very desirable legislation. I say this not necessarily as

praise to the Government for the legislation it has introduced, but because it is very relevant to questions I asked in this House in previous sessions.

If the Minister were to look into *Hansard* of previous sessions he would find that I advocated just this in order to achieve the purpose of having more patrolmen placed in the saddles of motorbikes to patrol the roads. As a consequence of more patrol officers being on the roads I am sure there would be a diminution in traffic accidents and traffic offences.

It is interesting to note recent Press comment on this legislation. A query was raised in a leading article in *The West Australian* as to how points are to be deducted from drivers who break the law of giving way to the right when no accidents occur. This is an interesting thought, since the responsibility for giving way to the right starts only when a hazard or an accident is likely to occur. I am sure that we have all been confronted with the situation where it was necessary for us to use our imagination at intersections. Unless a driver accepts an infringement notice and pays up, who will decide the points, and to what extent should the offender be penalised?

Since a recent High Court ruling allows the driver some measure of judgment in respect of this issue I would not like to be the magistrate who has to determine cases where no accident has occurred. I am sure there is confusion in the minds of the public, particularly where minor roads and major roads or highways intersect. Since this experience has happened to me, it is reasonable to assume that the same thing has happened to other members: A motorist might be travelling along a highway with five to 100 cars following, and another motorist at a minor intersection on that highway might assume he has the right to enter the highway. Despite the fact that only his car is involved, this motorist often enters the highway and so holds up 100 cars, just because he assumes that motorists have to give way to the right.

This is a false assumption, and it does create confusion. I am sure this makes possible a greater number of accidents. Like the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I believe that greater use should be made of "Give Way" signs in preference to "Stop" signs at intersections where highways and minor roads are involved. The adoption of the give-way-to-the-right rule at the intersections of minor roads could also be valuable.

In my view the roads forming the intersections in new and developing areas should be staggered. Within the last two or three years I have asked, in respect of this matter: Would consideration be given in town planning to ensure that

at intersections the roads do not cross each other directly at right angles? The appropriate Minister who replied to that question said that such consideration would be given. I have driven through many new and developing areas, but I have not seen the roads leading to intersections being staggered. This is very desirable in new areas, although it cannot be done in old-established districts because of the cost of resumption.

If the intersections were staggered there would be a need for cars to slow down; and if "Give Way" signs rather than "Stop" signs were placed at these intersections, the objective which the Minister seeks would be achieved. In that case instead of the mandatory reduction of speed limits on the minor roads, the motorists would have to slow down as a consequence of the staggered intersections.

I notice that a schedule of points is proposed to be applied to motorists: they will receive points as a penalty in accordance with the seriousness of their transgressions; and the full rigour of the law will smite those who have transgressed to the extent of automatic license suspension. I believe this to be very desirable and very necessary. I support the Bill principally because of the cumulative effect of the points that will be recorded against a motorist for transgressions. As the points of a motorist approach the maximum, I hope he will become proportionately more careful.

Provision is made in the Bill for the issue, to a person who has turned 16 years of age, of a learner's license to enable him to drive a motor vehicle in the course of driving instruction conducted by the National Safety Council. Relevant to this matter—and I offer my thanks to the member for Warren for supplying me with this information, because he could use it himself—of the 17 drivers in the Manjimup area who had undergone this driver-training course, not one, over a seven-year period, according to the information given by the police sergeant in charge, had committed a traffic offence. That shows the efficacy of teaching young people to drive at a tender age. This particular provision is very desirable, because students in high schools are given tuition in driving including, for example, the students in the John Curtin High School, Fremantle.

When driving around the metropolitan area I have often been surprised to find a young driver being courteous to me, when some elderly drivers are not. It would be interesting to learn whether these young courteous drivers had been taught under the youth driver-training scheme conducted by the National Safety Council. I assume they have, because it is generally thought that young people drive at a ridiculously high speed, and behave in a car in an antisocial manner. From time

to time I have, therefore, been very agreeably surprised to find very dependable young people behind the driving wheel of cars.

There are other aspects of this matter which I could deal with, but I remember being called to order by a former Speaker for raising a subject which he did not consider to be pertinent to the measure then under discussion. What I am saying now is very pertinent to the Bill before us. As a consequence of this measure more police officers on motorcycles will be patrolling the roads. I suggested previously that fabricated figures of patrolmen could be suitably placed along the highways and at intersections to achieve a desired objective. I recall an instance at the intersection of High Road and Carrington Street, Fremantle, where the mere presence of that patrolman figure, even though it was made of only painted cardboard or tin had an immediate effect on me as, I assume, it had on others.

Mr. Lapham: It did on me.

Mr. FLETCHER: It did?

Mr. Lapham: Yes. I think it was a good idea.

Mr. FLETCHER: So do I. It is an immediate reminder to the driver that he could be, and possibly is, transgressing the law. The sight of the effigy of a patrolman has an impact on the eye with a consequent reduction of pressure on the accelerator.

I have not seen any of these figures around the metropolitan area for the past few years. However, as well as an increase in the number of patrolmen, I believe that use should be made of this type of figure placed at strategic points.

A close liaison exists between the Fremantle Traffic Office and myself. I know some of these traffic constables and I consider them to be fine young men who do a splendid community service. I have a high regard for them because I believe them to be brave men. I am surprised more accidents and fatalities involving patrolmen do not occur. I know, also, that patrolmen have died trying to prevent members of the public killing or injuring themselves and/or others. Any other member of the Police Force would receive a medal if he was injured or died whilst carrying out his duties. This could occur as the result of gunshot or in some similar way. Yet these patrolmen have been killed or seriously injured in the process of carrying out their duties for the benefit of the public, and have received no medal or other recognition.

The patrolmen are highly qualified and capable men. Anyone who has ridden a motorbike—and I have—would be aware of the insecurity of two wheels on a slippery wet road, even if the bike is being driven carefully. Of course I have not driven a motorbike for years and in those

days the traffic was nowhere near as dense as it is today. The proportionate risk must be much greater now with the existing density of traffic. Yet, these patrolmen, with a slippery grip on the road and on their life, speed after the transgressor with a view to catching him and deterring him from behaving in a similar manner in the future.

Another point I feel is worthy of comment concerns drunken driving. It is generally assumed that drink is entirely responsible for the accidents on the road. I have not made a thorough study of the statistics, but I have seen many accidents which were not attributable to drink; and it would be very interesting to know the actual percentage that is attributable to drink. I do not wish to pick on the fair sex, but I have seen elderly women involved in accidents and I do not think anyone would say their accidents were attributable to drink, not on their part, anyway. I have also seen drivers involved in accidents on a Sunday when it is reasonable to assume that liquor is not as available as it is on a week day.

From all my observations I would say that over-emphasis is placed on drinking in relation to accidents. Deterrents are desirable, in the way of breathalyser tests, and so on, but a disproportionate amount of consideration has been given to aspects relating to drink.

I asked a series of questions regarding the casualty rate of light poles on the Kwinana Freeway, and I was informed that 100 light poles had been uprooted or smashed down to the 31st July this year.

Mr. O'Connor: How many?

Mr. FLETCHER: There were 100. I asked a subsequent question today and was informed that this number has been increased by six since that date. I do not wish to dwell on the subject for too long, but in my opinion those light poles should be erected on the median strip thus lighting both sides of the freeway simultaneously with the same pole. In that way no light poles would be on the immediate left of the driver, for the preponderance of drivers use the left lane when driving either south or north. It is only during peak periods that the traffic uses the full width of the freeway and comes in close proximity to the median, strip. My crusade in this respect has been in an effort to have the light poles shifted to the median strip; and in support of that contention I asked the Minister as recently as today—incidentally, I am referring to the Minister for Works and not the Minister for Traffic.

Mr. O'Connor: I was just trying to recollect the question.

Mr. FLETCHER: I asked the Minister whether he was aware of the fact that, despite his statement that light poles were

in their present position in order to light the off and near-side kerbs, light poles were in the median strip in the area of the Minister for Housing, extending from Canning Bridge to the Wireless Hill area in Alfred Cove. The light poles have been placed in the median strip in that area, but not in the median strip in the Kwinana Freeway. I have mentioned this fact to support my contention in relation to the establishment of the light poles in the median strip in the freeway.

My point in mentioning this matter at all is to show that people driving on the left with the light poles on their left can still, for some reason or other, deviate some 8 feet or 10 feet to strike these poles. This has been done 106 times since the poles were installed. I am sure all the people involved were not drunk. Often the reason is inattention; or perhaps it is because the driver is interested in the young lady sitting beside him. Another reason could be that the driver falls asleep. It is certainly not always drink which causes these accidents. As I have said, it could be inattention, or as a result of going to sleep behind the wheel, not necessarily as a consequence of drink but because of long hours of work.

With those few remarks I support the Bill, with a prospect of supporting a possible amendment later.

MR. W. A. MANNING (Narrogin) [5.54 p.m.]: I support the Bill and just wish to make one or two brief remarks. First of all I would like to reply to the member for Karrinyup who mentioned something which is not in the Bill. He said that because of these new regulations it will be necessary for traffic control in the country to be transferred to the Police Department. I would like to say the efficiency of the inspectors specialising in traffic is proving invaluable. These fellows are well trained and therefore I see no reason why they should not carry out the implementation of these amendments.

An interesting point to which I would like to draw the attention of members concerns the definition of "vehicle" which reads—

- (a) every conveyance, not being a train, vessel or aircraft, and every object capable of being propelled or drawn, on wheels or tracks, by any means;

I would like the Minister to inform us whether this would include a pram, a stroller, a bath chair, roller skates, or anything of that nature; and could a mother with a pram lose nine points and have to pay \$40 for failing to stop at the scene of an accident? According to the definition of "vehicle" I think she could be. I would like the Minister to ensure these items are not included!

On a serious note, I would like a provision included to allow the issue, at the commissioner's discretion, of a probationary license for the 17 to 20-year-old age group to drive tractors. Due to the present statutory age of 20 years, this is not allowed and there is no opportunity to train machine operators before that age. Many lads are quite capable of driving tractors, bulldozers, and other farm machinery, but are not able to do so on roads. Therefore, there is no way in which these lads can be recruited for local government work at a younger age than 20. If such a probationary license were issued, it would be to the advantage of some of the young fellows in the country districts who could apply themselves to the job at an early age. I hope this matter will be investigated.

I wish to raise another matter which I think is covered somewhere, but I am unable to find the provision concerning it and would therefore like some advice. What provision is made in respect of a probationary license holder who wishes to plead guilty to an offence for which there is an automatic fine, but for which there is also an automatic suspension of license? What is the exact position of those people?

Those are the only remarks I wish to make, because I feel the Bill is an excellent one and it certainly has my support.

MR. JAMIESON (Belmont) [5.58 p.m.]: While I believe this Bill is an improvement on the present situation, I would like to make a few comments on the debate as it has ensued so far. I do not agree with a lot that has been said; and might I say, that I violently disagree with the statement of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that the drivers in this State are the worst in the world. The figures in Australia disprove this contention; and, apart from that, because I have had a great deal of experience in other States, I would take a lot of convincing that this is the case.

Mr. Brand: The statement certainly received some real publicity in other States.

Mr. JAMIESON: If we—

Mr. Graham: It is right on the ball!

Mr. Brand: It is not!

Mr. JAMIESON:—examine the situation—

Mr. Graham: However unpalatable it is, it is right on the ball!

Several members interjected.

Mr. JAMIESON: I will start again. Perhaps we should examine the situation; and about the only way we can do this is to compare the number of license holders in each State with the number of accidents. I am referring, of course, to casualty accidents, because in some States other accidents are not reported. It is

very doubtful whether all non-casualty accidents are reported, anyway, particularly in country areas. Generally casualty accidents are reported because of the third party insurance claim, and other features associated with these accidents. Therefore, these should give a pretty good picture of the situation.

Mr. O'Connor: Casualty accidents?

Mr. JAMIESON: Yes. Referring to the statistics concerning casualty accidents per 1,000 drivers registered in each State, we find that by far the worst drivers are those in South Australia. They have, over the last five years, averaged 15.68 casualty accidents per 1,000 drivers registered. Next to South Australia comes New South Wales with 12.6 accidents per 1,000 drivers registered. Following New South Wales we get a place with 12.3 accidents per 1,000 drivers registered. Then Victoria has 11.45 accidents per 1,000 drivers. In Tasmania there are 8.56 accidents per 1,000 drivers. Considerable casualty problems are associated with head-on collisions on major highways and, because of the existing circumstances, Tasmania, which has the lowest accident rate, could also have the highest death rate.

Mr. Lewis: Did the honourable member quote the figures for Queensland?

Mr. JAMIESON: No; unfortunately the Minister was unable to obtain the Queensland figures for me. Apparently there was some difficulty with regard to licenses.

Mr. O'Connor: Queensland did not keep the record.

Mr. JAMIESON: The figures I have quoted have been made available by the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics and, consequently, they should be fairly reliable as a guide to a driving pattern. I believe there is more in a driving pattern than meets the eye. Indeed there is much more in it than alcohol and the give-way-to-the-right rule; there is the temperament of the people and the climatic conditions.

Whilst it might be argued that they do not bear on the situation, undoubtedly they do; because fairly densely populated States such as Victoria and Tasmania, which are also fairly cold, have the lowest accident rates. In addition the roads are very frequently wet in those States. It is not very pleasant to drive in the foggy conditions of Tasmania. Besides that, if one goes to a place such as Launceston, one will come to the conclusion that everybody seems to be a Jack Brabham. The motorists line up at the one-way streets at the lights, and when those lights change, they really take off. I have never seen anything like it in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, or any other capital city.

Everyone on the street makes quite sure that he gets out of the road, but there seem to be fewer accidents. I suppose the

pedestrians know what will happen to them if they get in the road of the cars. Here the pedestrians probably think that the drivers might give way and, because of the indecision, we have, possibly, more accidents. However this is a trend which would need to be studied.

I refuse to be panicked to the point of just going madly in and doing something. Some people say it is the worst accident State and others say it is something else, merely for the sake of talking about certain features. Everybody deplores the number of people who are killed on the road. However, by the same token in the early 1900s people deplored the number of deaths brought about by riders being thrown from horseback. There is not much of that nowadays. When there is conflict between human beings and machines, and conflict between machines and machines, the more these conflicts are increased, then, proportionately, the more will the problems be increased.

Mr. Lewis: There are more dead horses nowadays.

Mr. JAMIESON: The only people who seem to be killed by horses nowadays are those on the race track.

Mr. Lapham: There are more dead ones in the country.

Mr. JAMIESON: The problem is not easy, but I suggest it is one which the medicos should study in a different manner from the way in which they have been studying it. They should study the pattern and see if they can come to any conclusions from that. After all, the suicide trend has been studied.

I would have liked to see the Queensland figures, because that State has the highest suicide rate per number of population in the Commonwealth, but Western Australia comes second.

There must be some pattern which has not been fully examined which will reveal why accidents are caused, and also what causes aggravation and frustration. Perhaps in a more torrid climate people are inclined to be testy and want to move when there is not the room to move with the result that they get into difficulties and cause trouble with the other motorists on the road. This is certainly not an easy problem to work out. To my mind it is a matter which needs much thought along different lines from those that have been followed in the past.

Probably the National Safety Council in this State is the best of any State in the Commonwealth, because of the training methods which our safety council has adopted. Nevertheless the situation has not been improved. Admittedly, we have not gone backwards on the statistics.

In the five-year period which I mentioned, 1963 showed the worst pattern in Western Australia and 1964 showed the

best. After that time we were alternatively a little worse and a little better. From the worst pattern of 13.26 accidents per 1,000 people in 1963, the average for the five-year period is 12.43 which is something of an improvement. I am sure we are all pleased to see a slight improvement.

However, to compare the South Australian accident rate with the accident rate of Tasmania and say that the residents of Tasmania are twice as responsible on the road as the residents of South Australia would be a ridiculous kind of assessment in my view. Nevertheless, in looking at the statistics that is what they prove. There must be some reason for that.

I showed my colleague, the member for Swan, the figures which I have mentioned and he said that South Australia is considered to be the wowsier State and it has more churches than any other State. It is true that there are many churches in South Australia and some religious beliefs, such as the Lutheran religion, involve temperance. Members of that congregation do not like alcohol and indeed they frown upon it. This would be the case, particularly in some country areas.

Whilst this must have an effect, it is not very obvious. If alcohol was the prime motivating cause of all the accidents, then surely South Australia, which has the most churches and is described as the wowsier State, would show the best average; but it does not. My colleague suggested that because of the number of churches the people of South Australia are probably more religious and that, perhaps, they place their trust in the Lord and put their foot on the accelerator. Of course that would not work out. One would forget the other somewhere along the line and, consequently, accidents would occur. However the member for Swan's guess is probably as good a guess as anybody could make at this juncture.

I repeat that there must be a reason for a pattern, and the Commonwealth should place some of its resources, in the form of highly-qualified people, at the command of the various States in order to find out what the pattern is. Every angle, not just alcohol, needs to be thoroughly computerised. Members of this Chamber will be talking about alcohol when the '08 Bill comes before the House. There is a lot that the police could do to overcome the problem that some people would have us believe exists. When we examine that legislation we will discuss the subject more thoroughly.

I go along with the views of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition with regard to his comments about confusion. One of the things at which we should aim is less confusion. There are far too many people with confused minds on the roads. I have not yet heard the interpretation of the Minister for Transport on such matters as give way to the right, or what

happens at a "Stop" sign. However I have at least seen the letter from the Minister for Police which was published in the paper and which said, in effect, that if the individual is a strong enough bully on the road he can go through anywhere and get away with it. This is just not reasonable.

Even the Governor became involved in this controversy some way or another and he made a statement that the rule for giving way on a certain section of the Causeway should be different from what it is now. Of course everyone has his own ideas. I recall that the late Mr. H. D. Andrew, who represented Victoria Park, always held very strong views with regard to the rotaries on the Causeway. He maintained the rule for giving way to the right should be reversed and that one should give way to the left. However, not in my wildest dreams would I expect something like that to work, because people would be thoroughly confused. In one instance they would give way to the right and in another they would give way to the left. It simply would not work, unless everybody could read the other person's mind.

However, anyone who has often used the rotary system on the Causeway would realise that there may be some merit in the suggestion, although it would not be feasible to implement. The motorists would only be confused by too many rules instead of one clearly defined rule. The point is to cut down on the number of rules and to make them as clear as possible. They should not be gobbledygook which somebody can interpret one way and somebody else another way.

I have told the House previously that on one occasion I went to a lecture theatre because of a minor offence. I was appalled to hear the sergeant give a lecture which was contrary to what was contained in the regulations. The two versions just did not agree at all, because I had the regulations with me. But for the fact that it would have been rather impertinent, I would have drawn his attention to the difference.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Did you see him afterwards?

Mr. JAMIESON: No, I let it go, but I did mention it in the House afterwards. It is entirely wrong to have a written regulation which states a certain thing and for a sergeant who is giving a lecture to interpret it another way; but these are the difficulties which we are getting into. Some cases have even reached the stage of going before the Supreme Court, which has given interpretations as to what should happen on the give-way-to-the-right system and what should not happen.

If a regulation has to go to the Supreme Court, it is a ridiculous regulation. It should be wiped out and reworded so that everybody, including the police and

all citizens, knows what it means. It should not be a matter for interpretation by the judiciary, by the Minister for Police, or by those one thousand and one correspondents who write to the Press from time to time to make their views known on this matter. This is one of the problems we have to deal with.

The other subject with which we must deal is one of my favourite topics and it has already been mentioned by several speakers; I refer to "Stop" signs. The regulation is hopeless because there is too much verbiage associated with it and the individual cannot clearly interpret it. It becomes quite impossible. Of course we stop, but then what? One person will say that we should do one thing and another person will say that we should do another thing. The individual is supposed to have certain rights as long as the road on the right-hand side of him is clear. However another person will state that one must not interfere with the traffic flow and, if one does, one is in the wrong.

The individual looks at the regulation himself and tries to interpret the meaning from the wording. This is quite ridiculous, and the regulation should go. It should be taken out completely and "Give Way" signs should be erected; or, alternatively, we should have "Yield Right of Way" signs which exist in other parts of the world and which are equivalent to our "Give Way" signs. I have not seen these signs myself, but I have read about them. Probably the Premier has seen them at some stage.

If this were done, the motorist would know where he stood. There would be no need for a regulation and the two words "Give Way" would tell the motorist where he stood. If these signs existed and the motorist went ahead and became involved in an accident he would be to blame. Where there is no give-way-to-the-right rule, this should be the only other regulation needed. The regulations should be refined to the utmost degree of simplicity and, if this were done, there would be no need to worry about interpreting regulations and there would be much less confusion in the minds of the motorists. A limited number of fundamental rules are required but, to my mind, the most important thing is that they should be limited.

Every day new regulations are being thought of and added to the Traffic Code. No member of this Chamber would be able to fully understand what all the regulations mean and, if we were examined, possibly we would not pass a test on some of the more obscure regulations. Indeed, depending upon who marked the test papers, we might not be able to pass a test on some of the more obvious regulations. Because the situation is so confused, how can we expect the general pub-

lic not to be confused in traffic and not to be involved in a considerable number of accidents?

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Do you have any views as to whether one State should act separately from the other States, or whether there should be uniformity?

Mr. JAMIESON: I think they should be able to act independently. If Sir Henry Bolte, say, puts his hand into the fire, that does not mean that our Premier has to do the same thing.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: That is silly.

Mr. JAMIESON: It is the example. If we find that something is not suited to our State, we should be able to act independently. With simple regulations providing for signs such as "Give Way" signs, everybody knows what is meant. It would not matter what State an individual came from, he would know that he had to give way and that is all he would need to know. This is not the case when the regulations become complex; and some of the regulations are very complex. Indeed the wording of the regulations is not the same in different States.

The Opposition has argued this across the Chamber with the Minister before and we have argued on certain features. I recall the debate which took place with regard to the regulations concerning learners' plates. The Minister vowed and declared that the regulations were similar in all the States, but when I produced the regulations from each State it was found that they were not similar.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. JAMIESON: When I was asked whether I would agree to the introduction of regulations which were different from those in operation in the other States I said that if our regulations were simpler, then they were desirable and should be put into operation. I cannot see why we should be hidebound or tied to regulations in operation in other States if they are not suitable to this State.

That position does occur, of course, in certain situations, as I proved by the example I gave just prior to the tea suspension. I am sure many similar examples could be quoted. The Minister for Agriculture admitted this only recently in respect of the question of aerial spraying when he said it was rather hard for each State to finish up with uniform legislation because of the different circumstances applying in the various States. Although Ministers in conference might agree to adopt uniform legislation, when such legislation is introduced in the different Parliaments each Parliament has its own ideas and is just as likely to alter the situation to suit its own purposes. If that is done in one instance then, of course, it can and will be done in others.

If any honourable member cares to compare the traffic regulations in operation in the various States and in the Commonwealth territories—I have full copies of them and can make them available if anyone wishes to see them—he will be amazed to see the different provisions relating to traffic control.

Now I wish to discuss another aspect which has concerned me for some time. A points system is to be introduced to try to curb the careless driver—that is, the driver who takes risks and who does things that are not in accord with our Traffic Code. Probably we should have introduced a points system some time ago, but it will be interesting to see how it works out.

There is one aspect of traffic control with which I do not agree and this has to do with drivers who have probationary licenses. If such a driver commits a breach, then it is a requirement of the law that his license be cancelled immediately. The member for Narrogin dealt with this aspect. A magistrate must cancel a license if such a person is convicted of a charge involving a breach of the traffic regulations.

I think that regulation is too sweeping in its application. I know of an instance concerning a man who was a very responsible citizen. He was travelling in a convoy of cars, which means that he was travelling at the same speed as everyone else in that line, but for some unknown reason the motor cycle constable picked him up for speeding. Why this man was picked up, particularly, I do not know, but he was a driver with a probationary license. When the case went to court the magistrate was very sympathetic but there was no doubt about the constable's story or the story of the driver involved. It was confirmed by all who were travelling in the convoy with him. But there it was; the magistrate said, "Because you have been convicted and you have a probationary license, I have to cancel it for six months."

Mr. O'Connor: He was convicted?

Mr. JAMIESON: Yes. He did not deny that he was in a convoy or the speed at which he was travelling—the convoy was travelling along the Redcliffe stretch of the highway. Strangely enough he was charged with driving at a speed slightly in excess of 40 per hour, and yet, within weeks of the charge being heard, the regulations were altered to allow a speed of 40 miles per hour along that stretch of road.

The convoy was travelling towards Perth and the vehicles were travelling at 41 or 42 miles per hour, which this man did not deny. However, had one of the other drivers—one who was not driving under the probationary license regulation—been picked up for the same offence probably he would not have lost his license.

The convoy was not travelling at an excessive speed and, as I have just said, the magistrate was quite sympathetic about the case. As a matter of fact, only a very small fine was imposed, because the magistrate felt the punishment of a mandatory suspension of the license was quite sufficient.

Mr. O'Connor: Did you say it was for six months?

Mr. JAMIESON: I should have said "three months." That is the mandatory suspension. I am sorry; I realise I said "six months." It seems rather absurd that there should be a mandatory suspension in cases such as I have just outlined, because these drivers have to start all over again. They have to go through the procedure of getting a license and so on, and that in itself is an additional penalty.

New drivers need experience and when a probationary license-holder has been convicted of only a minor breach of the traffic regulations I do not think his license should be suspended. It is the mad fools who keep rushing about at an excessive speed whose licenses should be suspended, and it is proposed that they be penalised. However, I believe that where a probationary license-holder commits only a minor breach of the traffic laws he should be subjected to the points system also. Where these minor breaches occur the same system should apply, irrespective of whether a person is a probationary driver or not. There should be no difference in that regard, because, as I have just said, these are the drivers who need experience in driving on the road.

If we penalise people in such instances by depriving them of their licenses for three months we will be taking away from them three months' experience they could be having with traffic on the road—that is, if it is this sort of experience that makes a proficient driver.

There are many factors that cause drivers to err, but I would say the main one—and this is something that has never been clearly understood—is lack of attention. This is brought out clearly by statistics which were given to the House earlier this evening by the member for Fremantle when he referred to the number of posts on the side of the Freeway that had been hit by motorcars. Nobody in his right mind would drive straight into one of these posts, so it suggests to me that far too many people are driving without paying sufficient attention—either because they are drowsy or for some other reason. I do not know whether drowsiness might be caused by indulging too heavily at a party, or by some other reason, but in my view that is what causes many accidents. We should endeavour to make sure that people who are in a drowsy condition do not drive vehicles.

Mr. Lapham: They could be driving too fast along that highway.

Mr. JAMIESON: That could be so in some cases. However, if one is driving at the permissible speed along the freeway, and one is drowsy, then one is probably travelling too fast. Eventually, if one continues to drive in that condition, one will collect a post. I agree that some motorists do hammer along that stretch of road, but 50 miles an hour is a fair enough speed, even on a highway such as that.

While the system proposed by the Bill has some merit, I still do not think it will achieve what we are after—that is, the solution of the problem of what causes accidents. To penalise people after they have had accidents is not solving the problem of what causes accidents. It is true that if heavier penalties are inflicted, and drivers' licenses are suspended, the people concerned will not commit the same offence again. But it is a little like the old argument in regard to capital punishment: If a person's life is taken away, naturally he does not commit another murder!

However, we do not know whether the proposals in the legislation will cure the situation or whether they will act as a sufficient deterrent. I know that the mandatory suspension of a license under the points system will make people more wary or cautious, but I do not know that it will solve the problem.

There is no doubt that as a driver realises his points are reaching the stage where, if he commits another breach of the regulations his license will be mandatorily suspended, he will become more cautious; but perhaps in serious cases the license could be suspended immediately. This might be a better way of tackling the problem. It will be interesting to see, after the points system has been in operation, whether it is having an effect on the overall problem.

The Minister for Police told us, when he introduced legislation covering breathalysers, that such a proposal would greatly improve the traffic situation, but statistics have proved otherwise. There has been no appreciable difference in the accident rate. In the year before the breathalysers were introduced there were 12.22 accidents per 1,000 drivers in Western Australia, and last year, after the breathalysers had been put in operation, the rate was 12.29 per 1,000. It was claimed at the time that the breathalysers would go a long way towards overcoming the problem of people driving after having too much to drink, but the problem does not seem to have been overcome by that proposal.

I believe we have to look for the reasons for accidents and not just build training centres to train drivers, such as we have at the National Safety Council school. We have to find out why a certain pattern of behaviour occurs. That is vital. We have to find out why the human mind reacts in a certain way. Until we do that we will

not achieve our objective. I suggest it would be as well to have some of our traffic experts examine the situation which prevails in the States of Victoria and Tasmania to see whether any of their ideas that are different from ours are worth adopting.

One feature of the traffic regulations in Tasmania which is different from ours comes readily to mind. In that State the posts along the side of the road in the country have a black "V" on a white background so that a driver knows, from the way the "V" points, exactly which way the road will turn, whether to the right or to the left. How often has a driver come upon a row of posts in this State and found that he does not know which way the road is likely to turn? However, as I have just said, in Tasmania the direction is clearly and unmistakably shown and one knows exactly which way to go.

These are some of the problems that need to be investigated, and there are many others associated with country roads. I would imagine that the fact that there has been no clear indication as to which way the road turns has been the cause of many drivers running off the road and hitting posts or trees. If we could solve these problems by improved engineering methods, and with more information as to the cause of accidents we would achieve a great deal.

However, do not let us become hysterical about the matter—I think the Press has become somewhat hysterical about it. It is important and we all desire the one objective, but we will not achieve it completely. We would do far better to watch the statistics to try to make sure that the rate does not increase. If, according to the statistics, we are showing some improvement, and the rate is not increasing, then we will be achieving something, because more and more cars are being placed on the road these days. Therefore, it is only natural that more accidents will occur, but we have to try to keep the rate at its present level, and improve it if we possibly can. If we can achieve that then we will be achieving something.

Up to the present no pattern has shown up from the statistics, one way or the other, but if the legislation has the effect of improving our accident statistics then we might be able to say that we have at least achieved something by way of legislation.

So far, however, it would appear that the pattern has not been altered at all despite the various types of legislation we have passed over recent years. The pattern in each of the States remains constant. The States that have been bad have continued to be bad; while those that have been good have remained good; and those that have been average—like our own—have remained average.

It will be interesting to compare the statistics in the next few years to see whether any change has been achieved.

MR. CRAIG (Toodyay—Minister for Traffic) [7.46 p.m.]: I would like, if I may, to make a few comments on the Bill before the House. At the outset might I express my appreciation of my colleague, the Minister for Transport, who introduced the measure in my absence.

I feel sure every one of us has realised the seriousness of this particular problem of road accidents and fatalities. As the member for Belmont has pointed out, the Press in Western Australia is inclined to play this matter up to the full. I do not necessarily agree with his view, because I give full credit to the Press for doing just that; for keeping the matter alive—if I may use that expression—and before the public, so that people will be aware of their responsibility and the problem with which they are confronted.

In my recent journeys overseas I found that this subject was not referred to in any way at all by the Press. In only one instance did I read of road accidents and road fatalities; that was in the United States, where over the long weekend—coincidentally it was a Labor Day weekend—there were 614 people killed on the roads. Apart from New Zealand, that is the only country in which I saw a reference in the Press to this problem, which suggests, possibly, that the people in those other countries have come to accept the fact; they feel they must accept the problem, because there is nothing they can do about it.

In Western Australia, however, we are trying to do something about it. This comment also refers to New Zealand and to Australia generally. It is of no use the Deputy Leader of the Opposition criticising the Government for its lack of action during the years it has been in office. The Government is very much aware of this problem and it is always trying to do something to alleviate it.

I do not wish to be critical of the honourable member, because over the years I have been Minister, I have appealed to everyone to come forward with suggestions as to how we can overcome this difficult problem; and if we cannot overcome it at least we should try to contain it.

I feel we have done this despite the alarming figure that faces us today. One has only to read the report of the National Safety Council for 1967-68 to see what the position is. This report has been tabled and contains figures since the year 1951-52 which was the formative period of the council. In that year the number of persons killed on our roads was 15.4 per 10,000 motor vehicles registered.

This figure has been progressively reduced over the years, and in 1966-67 we got down to 7.3 people killed per 10,000

vehicles registered. The previous figure was therefore halved. Unfortunately in this current year, which has caused so much concern, the figure has risen to nine persons killed per 10,000 vehicles registered.

These figures do, however, reveal that we have achieved some success in that not only are we containing the fatality rate but we are reducing it. The Press in New Zealand features this aspect just as prominently as we do in Western Australia. In addition to this, we find large notice boards on the side of the road when one is entering a town or city which draw one's attention to the number of fatalities that have occurred in a particular year as compared with the previous year. Possibly we could do something along these lines.

Over the years we have introduced quite a number of amendments to the Traffic Act and to our regulations which, we feel, have had the desired effect. It is most noticeable that as soon as a certain move is suggested towards applying a new regulation to control drivers the effect is immediate, even before the regulation comes into operation.

After a period of time, however, the effectiveness of the measure seems to wear off, which suggests to me that we must keep bringing forward, and implementing, new requirements to ensure that drivers will control themselves.

I feel this is not a desirable means of overcoming the problem, though this particular feature has made itself quite evident. The member for Belmont referred to the increased penalties for drunken driving, and I am relating what I have just said to them.

If the honourable member casts his mind back to the time when it was suggested that we introduce the breathalyser and the legislation was agreed to by Parliament—I think this was in November—he will find that during the Christmas period it had a marked effect. The number of cases of drunken driving dropped considerably.

The breathalyser tests, however, did not come in until February or March, or later—as far as I can recall—and, as a result, the incidence of convictions actually increased by comparison with the previous year.

Mr. Jamieson: I'll say they increased! I have the figures here for a later debate.

Mr. CRAIG: The honourable member is not the only one who has the figures. I would remind the honourable member that the breathalyser reading is now produced as *prima facie* evidence of drunken driving, whereas in the past, before the introduction of this technical aid, the conviction was dependent on what was known as a sobriety test. Generally

speaking, the person charged with drunken driving was shrewd—and members cannot tell me that a drunken driver is not shrewd when it suits him—and he was only required to sign his name. He then only had to obtain good legal advice and, more often than not, he got out of the charge. But with the introduction of the breathalyser it is quite a different story. The court accepts the reading of .15 as *prima facie* evidence.

I was interested in the comment made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition the other night when he said that the drivers in Western Australia were the worst in the world. I believe that before I entered the Chamber this evening the member for Belmont disputed his remarks on this matter, as I do now.

I feel that the drivers in Western Australia are very good. I admit that we have quite a number who could be classed as very bad drivers; but why should we condemn all our drivers because of the irresponsibility of a few? I would go so far as to say that if everybody behaved himself on our roads—as most people do—there would be no need for a Traffic Act or regulations at all. It is a case of common sense prevailing.

Mr. Jamieson: Your common sense or my common sense?

Mr. CRAIG: I have not even referred to the honourable member.

Mr. Jamieson: I know. The point is: would it be your common sense or my common sense? They will not run along parallel lines, so you must have a code.

Mr. CRAIG: If everybody behaved himself and acted realistically there would be no need for traffic regulations at all. This merely emphasises the point that if there were more consideration and courtesy shown on our roads by our drivers it would support the point of view I am putting forward.

If, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition pointed out, the drivers of Western Australia are bad drivers, is it because we make them so; is it because we do not require them to show their capacity, in the first instance, to a degree that would entitle them to be in possession of a motor vehicle, which has occasionally been referred to as a lethal weapon? In Hong Kong, for instance, it takes at least nine months before a person can acquire a driver's license. This is not because of the buildup of applications for licenses, but because of the stiff tests drivers are required to undergo.

Mr. Graham: As a matter of interest, what goes on during that period?

Mr. CRAIG: The drivers must qualify in an oral examination, after which they must sit for written examinations and for practical tests, including various forms of

driving—driving in, say, heavy traffic, or on the open road, and so on. It takes nine months before an applicant can get his license.

Admittedly, we may have been a bit lenient in the granting of licenses in Western Australia in earlier years, but members will recall that over the past few years this aspect has been tightened up considerably and now an applicant for a license must have a good knowledge of the Road Traffic Code; apart from which his actual physical test in driving is much more severe than it was a few years ago.

Perhaps we can go further and make it even more difficult, though with what result, I do not know; because it all comes back to the fact that the control of the vehicle depends on the individual himself.

It has so often been said that the motor car will only go where the driver puts it. We read various suggestions in the Press from time to time from well-minded citizens who offer solutions which might help overcome this problem. But it all comes back to the individual—you, Sir, and I, and everybody else is responsible.

I would go so far as to say that perhaps in Australia we are a bit backward in the facilities we provide for the everyday driver. One has only to see the road systems operating in the other countries to appreciate how much further we must go to reach their standards. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the member for Gayfer, and the member for Bunbury, would have realised this as a result of their journeys overseas.

We all know that it costs money to implement these large projects, and if we were to embark on them on the same scale as the other countries, someone would have to pay for it; we get enough complaints now about how much the motorist is contributing by means of various taxes in the licensing field.

I know that a considerable percentage of the work force of Sweden is doing nothing more than developing its freeway system. There the people pay something like \$1.11 per gallon for petrol; and, of course, we know about 75 per cent. of that money goes into this road system. We could do the same here, but I can imagine the reaction from the motorists. I was very impressed with their road system. Even if we could adopt certain features of it in a modified form, I am convinced—I am only expressing a personal view; as I stated in the Press it is my own observation—there would be advantages to be gained.

We have far too many streets leading onto our major highways and I consider 75 per cent. or more could be closed off and the entry to the major highways be made by controlled access. Similarly, when one goes off one of these major highways, one drives through a one-way street system at a speed of around 30 to 35

miles per hour; and once one gets out of the one-way street or into a built-up area where there are the normal intersections, the speed limit could be reduced considerably. That is my personal observation of what exists in the United States, Canada, and in the Scandinavian countries. If it works in those places, why not here?

It is claimed that those countries and New Zealand have the lowest accident rate in the world. If this is a solution to the general problem, it is worthy of investigation. That is my objective and I have tentatively had discussions with the Commissioner of Police and the Commissioner of Main Roads to see whether any of these thoughts could be developed in any way. I do not say they should be—I am no expert on these matters—but they represent my observations, and they seem to work so effectively.

In respect of the road systems in some of these countries, there is one thing with which I do not agree and that is the toll roads. I remember travelling in Canada a distance of about 45 miles and, we paid tolls on no less than five occasions, amounting to nearly \$2. I remember another occasion going over a certain bridge in California and there again a toll had to be paid, as is the case with most bridges. This particular bridge was paid for by the toll about 10 years previously, but the toll still continues. Personally, I would not like to see any toll system introduced in respect of our roads in Western Australia.

Mr. Graham: Are there any alternative roads? To illustrate my question, in Italy you can pay the toll and then travel in an unrestricted manner or you can have a free road which takes about three times as long.

Mr. CRAIG: Yes; that is so. One can take three times as long if one wants to, but when one has regard to the cost of petrol, it is cheaper to pay the toll.

There are quite a number of innovations which were very obvious to me. One was the traffic lights in some of the bigger towns. I would not say they are big cities, but they are comparable to Perth. In these places the traffic lights are placed overhead. There are odd places where the standard is on the footpath, as it is here. However, at quite a number of intersections where these overhead lights are placed, there is an indicator speed light below the standard which informs the motorist that over a distance of, say, a mile, he can travel at the speed shown by the indicator—say 40 miles per hour—and when the light changes to green he can go over the whole section without interruption. I thought this was a good idea.

I wish to refer to a few more minor matters. Vehicles which break down on a busy highway are required to have their

trafficators flashing at all times. They have an independent switch which enables both the left and right indicators to flash.

Mr. Williams: Both at the same time?

Mr. CRAIG: They flash alternately. This is a warning to approaching vehicles from the rear or front and quite a number of rear-end collisions are avoided.

Mr. Graham: Both day and night time?

Mr. CRAIG: Yes, day and night time. When one is travelling in the country on a narrow road, one often sees a vehicle ahead that has apparently broken down. One does the right thing by slowing down and asking if one can be of any assistance but the other person says, "No, I am all right mate," and one proceeds on one's way.

When one strikes another fellow, one does not do the right thing. However, in California, if a vehicle breaks down and help is required, the bonnet is left up and the driver needs only to sit in his vehicle. This is an indication to another motorist that assistance is required, and it saves the annoying frustration of stopping for a person who does not actually require help.

Another thing is that many of our vehicles haul boat trailers, caravans, and the like, which protrude far beyond the width of the towing vehicle, which has a fiddling little rear vision mirror on the side. This serves no purpose at all. In the United States it is required that the rear vision mirror be of an oblong type, and it is apparently provided with the caravan or trailer that is hired. It is quite easily attachable to the towing vehicle and easily detachable. It serves a good purpose.

So far as travelling at 65 miles per hour—which met with quite a lot of opposition from certain sections of the community in Western Australia—is concerned, I noticed that the major freeways, motorways, speedways, autobahns, or whatever they might be called—these are roads constructed for high speed—might have six, eight, 10, or 12 lanes, as in Toronto where the maximum speed, generally speaking, is 60 or 65 miles per hour; yet these roadways are constructed for fast-moving traffic. I did notice odd sections where the speed limit was 70 miles per hour and, in one instance only, the speed was 75 miles per hour. However, generally speaking, 65 miles per hour was the maximum speed permitted on these speedways.

Mr. Graham: I think you will have to talk to the honourable member to whom you referred earlier as the member for Gayfer in connection with this matter.

Mr. CRAIG: I saw another interesting thing in New Zealand. For instance, take the Red Hill road, or the Greenmount road, before they were widened and made dual carriageways. In such places, it is

annoying when one gets behind a slow-moving heavy vehicle going up a hill. One has to wait, for safety reasons, until the crest of the hill is reached before overtaking that heavy vehicle. Most of our roads are nearly wide enough, or are wide enough, to take three vehicles; but one, of course, is always hesitant about overtaking a vehicle if there is an oncoming one. In New Zealand the roads traversing long inclines have two lanes going up, and one coming down. This enables slow heavy-moving vehicles to be overtaken while one is going up a hill; but when coming down, the heavy vehicle can maintain a reasonable speed.

Mr. Bickerton: What happens when the heavy vehicle joins the main line of traffic again, having reached the top?

Mr. CRAIG: Once the heavy vehicle reaches the top, it can travel at a reasonable speed; and some of these vehicles can travel at a normal speed, and faster, providing they are not going up a hill. These particular sections have road signs which state that one may or may not pass. They indicate to the motorist whether he can overtake with safety or not.

In regard to safety belts, I believe the stage will be reached when their wearing in Australia will be compulsory. We know, of course, the fitting of the anchor plates and the fitting of the belt to two vehicles is carried out, and the actual wearing, I feel, will become a fact within a reasonably short time. It has been proved conclusively that a belt, if worn, can be life-saving equipment; and it can be installed at such a low cost.

Mr. Davies: What is the position in regard to back seat passengers?

Mr. CRAIG: It is not compulsory in some countries, but the installation of the anchorages is. I did notice in the States, where it was compulsory for seat belts to be worn, that this was not policed. However, if the driver was involved in an accident and it could be proved that he was not wearing the belt, he had no insurance claim. So it amounts to self-discipline.

Mr. Lapham: I do not think that is good legislation.

Mr. CRAIG: It is not my legislation; I am simply telling the House what is happening.

Mr. Norton: Are they lap or sash belts?

Mr. CRAIG: Most were wearing the normal lap belt. On every occasion in which I rode in a car they were lap belts; and in Ontario there is a notice on the dashboard, "Fasten safety belt before starting motor." Like the aircraft, it becomes automatic in a motorcar and the driver gets accustomed to this procedure before starting his car.

Mr. Bickerton: What is your opinion on minimum speed limits as well as maximum?

Mr. CRAIG: I agree with the member for Pilbara; and New Zealand actively follows this. I did read in the Press where there had been so many thousand convictions for slow driving over the period of 12 months. This is another feature of motoring, particularly on Sunday afternoons. The slow drivers on a narrow road coast along at about 20 miles per hour with miles of traffic behind them.

Mr. Bickerton: As a rule you cannot blame the young people for doing that.

Mr. Lapham: The drivers look around and drive at the same time, but they should not do so.

Mr. CRAIG: I agree. This is a problem which calls for a lot of action by the Government and by the responsible authorities. I hope that with the passing of this Bill—I sincerely trust it will be passed—we will not be content to do nothing further. This is a matter that has to be constantly before our minds to see what aspects of the problem can be overcome.

I advert now to a point that was made by the member for Belmont, as it is one that has been exercising my mind for a long time. I refer to the limited resources we have available to us for research into the causes of accidents. It is all right for us to say that so many of our fatalities in the country—roughly half of them—involve single vehicles running off the roads, rolling over, colliding with another vehicle, and so on; but what are the causes? We have to get down to the actual cause, and this can only be done by comprehensive research. We are limited in Western Australia and are carrying out research to the limit of our ability. The other States are doing the same thing and we might be working at cross-purposes in our research.

I have expressed my opinion before, and I do so again: this is a Commonwealth responsibility. It is a Commonwealth responsibility to such an extent that the problem should not be researched for two months or two years, but there should be a permanent form of research. If an aircraft crashes at Guildford, or some other place, a D.C.A. inquiry is set up within five minutes, so to speak. Thousands of dollars are spent on inquiring into the cause of the crash.

However, if two cars collide, as happened a couple of weeks ago, while I was away from the State, and nine people are killed, is there any inquiry into the cause of the crash along the lines of a D.C.A. inquiry? Admittedly, we have a departmental inquiry into the accident. I have the report and I know what the cause was supposed to be. The point I want to make is that research into the causes of so many of our accidents is a matter of Commonwealth responsibility.

It is all right for Western Australia to battle on, as we have done in the past. South Australia carried out a comprehensive research programme three or four

years ago, as a result of which certain recommendations were made. However, those recommendations were applicable to South Australia but, no doubt, a lot of them would be applicable to Western Australia.

Mr. Bickerton: If you do not know the causes, how can you legislate?

Mr. CRAIG: We want research to find out the causes of the accidents.

Mr. Bickerton: What about placing it in the legislation now?

Mr. CRAIG: We do not have the results of the research. I am speaking generally, as other speakers have done, about the problem which exists.

Mr. Jamieson: Surely there is some reason for the present move for legislation. That is the point made by the member for Pilbara. If there is no reason, why are we wasting our time?

Mr. CRAIG: If it is a waste of time talking about the problem of road fatalities; I am surprised at the comment by the member for Belmont.

Mr. Jamieson: Mr. Acting Speaker, I object to the words of the Minister. I ask that they be withdrawn because they are most offensive.

Mr. CRAIG: There is nothing offensive at all. I said I am surprised at the comment—or the remarks—made by the member for Belmont when he referred to the comments made by the member for Pilbara. What the comment was, I cannot remember because it was not significant.

Mr. Jamieson: That is typical of the Minister. He tries to be ultra smart but he does not achieve anything at all. This is a serious matter, and is not a matter for levity, as the Minister is trying to make it appear.

Mr. CRAIG: I think the boot is on the other foot. To get back to the Bill, this is a serious problem. I think the member for Belmont was implying that I was getting away from the contents of the Bill, but I am generalising, the same as other speakers have done.

Mr. Jamieson: The Minister said nothing of the kind when he started the argument with the member for Pilbara.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Mitchell): Order! The Minister will continue.

Mr. CRAIG: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Davies: Did you visit the place in London which is doing a lot of research into this problem?

Mr. CRAIG: No. A comment was made by an earlier speaker on the Press publicity given to fatal accidents. This is related to research, so if I referred to the research to which the honourable

member objected, when generalising, I am now coming back to what was said about fatalities in the Press publicity.

Many of the fatalities could be classified as unpreventable. It would not matter what the Government, or the authorities, did, those accidents could not be prevented. However, unfortunately they are fatalities included in the total, which makes the situation look even worse than it possibly is. However, for all that, it is still a very big problem. We cannot stop elderly people who might be walking around at night, because they suffer from insomnia, from wandering onto the road and being killed by a motor vehicle. There are many of these fatalities which have been included in the total which, as I say, are really unpreventable.

I have taken this opportunity of making a few comments on my observations of this problem. We will never be able to eliminate the problem completely, but it should be our utmost endeavour to reduce it to the barest possible minimum. What the minimum is I just do not know, but we should contain the problem despite the increasing number of vehicles and the increasing number of drivers on our roads. If we could do that at least we would achieve something.

MR. DAVIES (Victoria Park) [8.22 p.m.]: We should congratulate the Minister for his contribution to this debate, although I do not think all members will agree with all that he has said. I am conscious of the fact that during my seven years in this House every member of Cabinet has, I think, gone overseas at least once but this is the first occasion that a report of any consequence has been made direct to the House following a Minister's visit.

At least we have some proof, in what the Minister has told us tonight, that he learned something while overseas. He has certainly had some publicity in the Press and although we do not agree with all that was said by the Press, the Minister brought back some ideas which we would like to see put into operation to overcome the distressing toll on the road.

My contribution will be brief. There are one or two matters in the Bill which I will mention and on which the Minister could comment when he replies, rather than delay the Bill during Committee. I notice there is provision for a youth of 16 years—male or female—to receive a learner's permit when receiving instruction from the National Safety Council. However, that youth cannot get a driving license until he is 17 years of age. I am wondering what is to happen in the intervening period. If a 16-year old boy attends a driving course conducted by the National Safety Council of Western Australia, which only lasts for three months, there is a nine months' lapse before he is able to get a license.

It would seem that some provision could reasonably be made for a person who has successfully passed the National Safety Council test to be given a probationary license. I think it would be of little advantage for a boy to attend a comprehensive and detailed course of instruction and then not be able to put his knowledge and skill into effect for some nine months. I am quite certain it would be possible for the Police Department, in co-operation with the National Safety Council, to evolve some method of granting such a student a probationary license.

I thank the Minister for bringing down this Bill because it caused me to unearth some correspondence I had received and had forgotten about. An elector of mine drew my attention to the fact that her son, when 17 years and three days old, was given a full driving license in a country town, although on her written authority she had only asked that a learner's permit be granted to the boy. He had already had a conviction some six months before for driving without a license. The boy had the normal police test, which I believe consisted of driving once around the block in the country town. There was no reversing and no complicated movements of any kind. He merely drove once around the block and the policeman said he was proficient enough to hold a driver's license. As I said, he was 17 years and three days old, and within six months he was involved in two further accidents.

Mr. O'Connor: Could you give me the details of that case later on?

Mr. DAVIES: Yes. This case clearly indicates that the boy was not a proficient driver and if the policeman had put him through a more severe test this would have been evident to the policeman. I wrote to the Commissioner of Police, and he replied that he had been unable to obtain any evidence of this youth being given a driving license without having undergone the usual test. That is the kind of reply one would expect from the department, and if I were the Commissioner of Police it is probably the kind of reply I would make.

I think it is indicated that it may be easier to obtain a driver's license in some country towns, in circumstances different from those which exist in the city. Of course, although it is only a probationary license it is still a license to drive in the city, or anywhere in the State. This is a matter on which we could be required to clamp down.

My last comment will be on the points system. First of all, I think we must applaud any action taken to try to reduce the road toll. However, I do not think we should take any extreme action unless we are quite certain that it is justified. I

noticed a lack of information given by the Minister, in his second reading speech, regarding the points system.

The Minister mentioned that the points system had been tried in Queensland, but he did not say whether it had any effect on reducing the road toll. I think the points system has also been tried in Ontario, Canada, according to the schedule which was tabled. Once again, we do not know whether it has had any appreciable effect. We imagine it will have an effect, but we should have some evidence placed before us.

Another amendment contained in the Bill provides for instant fines, and I think this is included to reduce the paperwork which is done by police officers. This is to be applauded, but I wonder if the policemen that are released from doing this kind of paperwork will be absorbed in recording the points for minor infringements. I did interject when the Minister was making his second reading speech and asked if the information was to be compiled by computers. The Minister said the system was still being worked out. I think we want something a little more definite than that. If the policemen are not to be released from their paperwork then, in fact, there will be no saving at all.

A second point I want to make in regard to the points system is that the points are to be shown on the driver's license. I do not think this is quite fair. I think that policemen are, for the most part, impartial. If I was pulled up for a minor breach of the Traffic Code, and the policeman saw that I had only another three points to receive before I lost my license, he could either let me off, or he might go for the book.

I think it would be far better if this information were known only to the Police Department and to the driver. He must be very conscious, all the time, of the points he has recorded, but I do not think they should be recorded on his driver's license. I do not think any provision should be made for this, because a policeman, even with the best of intentions, could be influenced by the fact that the driver who has submitted his license has several points already recorded against him.

I also want to know what provision is to be made for recording the points against a driver, in view of the number of accident charges that are heard before the courts. At present there must be some mistakes made at various times. The lad to whom I referred earlier had his driver's license suspended in the country. Although he did not appear to be a very proficient driver, he was subsequently found guilty of a number of charges, and on one occasion he appeared before the court on a charge of not having his vehicle fitted with an efficient silencer. On the same day he had a dangerous driving charge recorded against him. This was on the 14th

December, 1967. For the charge of not having the vehicle fitted with an efficient silencer he was fined \$10, plus 20c costs and on the dangerous driving charge he was fined \$30, plus costs, plus the suspension of his license.

A little more than a fortnight later—on the 11th January, 1968—he was before the court again for failing to give way to a vehicle on his right.

Mr. T. D. Evans: Without holding a driver's license.

Mr. DAVIES: That is the point I am about to make. When, on this occasion, the magistrate imposed the fine for a certain amount and suspended his driver's license for a period, the lad told him that his license had already been suspended. The magistrate said he knew nothing about that and he could forget about it. He told the lad that his suspension would start from the 11th January, 1968. Apparently there was no record of his \$30 fine. One does not know whether it went into somebody's kick or into the 3 per cents., but the fact remains that there is no record of his driver's license being cancelled previously, and no record of his \$30 fine. Yet, on the 11th January, 1968, he was before the court again and had his license cancelled for the second time, together with the imposition of a fine. This was only about three weeks following the date on which his license had been cancelled previously.

I intend to investigate this case further. The Minister has invited me to give him the facts of the case and I will pass them on. If this can happen at times merely because of human error, one wonders what will happen when there are hundreds of thousands of traffic offences being recorded every year, and when the schedule now lists some 30 or 40 charges which can be lodged against a driver for a breach of the Act. In view of this, I think we must pause for a while and think of the vast amount of work that will result from this new system. If the Government can tell us what the approximate cost will be, what safeguards have been provided, and what staff will be employed, I will be much happier about voting for the second reading of the Bill.

With those few comments, I support the Bill, in general, but there is room for doubt on some of the proposals. However, anything we can do to assist to reduce the road toll indeed deserves our support.

MR. GAYFER (Avon) [8.34 p.m.]: I did not intend to speak to the debate until I heard some of the statements made by previous speakers on this subject. For instance, the other evening the Deputy Leader of the Opposition stated that possibly accidents could be reduced if a central licensing authority was set up. Perhaps they are not exactly his words but I think, in their entirety, this is what he meant.

If one were to drive around country areas at present one would find there is more than a real awareness of the problem, and one would also find that the difficulties experienced in those areas in regard to traffic problems are exactly the same as those that have been referred to during the course of the debate in this Chamber this evening. I say here and now that those in this Chamber, like others in the Eastern States, in the United States of America, in Canada, or any other place in the world one would care to mention, do not have an answer to the problem.

If one studies any magazine or reads any literature that deals with the problem we are now debating, one will discover that each and every country of the world is faced with the same problem. I often think that the members of this Chamber are grasping at thin air trying to place the blame, as it were, onto others for the accidents that do take place on our roads.

I recall the Deputy Leader of the Opposition stating that in certain countries of the world great events were happening. I can also recall that when I was in Italy motor manufacturers there claimed that they put only one coat of paint on a Fiat, because if they put two coats of paint on it would never get through the traffic; with only one coat on it would have a chance of getting through.

I have here an extract from the *U.S. News & World Report* which, although published in 1966 states that on the autobahns on the Continent limits of 80 to 100 kilometres per hour were being considered.

Mr. Craig: That is between 60 and 80 miles per hour.

Mr. GAYFER: That is right. The authorities were thinking of them in Stockholm, Sweden. They were fast coming to the conclusion that it was the driver who was at fault. In the United States of America the traffic authorities are now of the opinion that the wide roads and expressways are giving the driver a false sense of security in driving at 60 miles per hour, and they are again fast coming to the conclusion that it would be advisable to lift the speed limit on some of these roads.

I also have here a publication on automobile insurance and traffic safety, an extract from which contains the following:—

Speed is an obvious villain in the accident picture. But it is now recognised by most experts that few drivers actually operate at extremely high speeds, and that most accidents occur at relatively moderate speeds. Speed is primarily an accident factor when it is speed too fast for conditions—not extremely high speed *per se*. More than half of the fatal accidents in urban areas occur at speeds under 30 m.p.h.

I also have here in my possession a copy of *Traffic Quarterly*, dated July, 1968, which is an American publication. It contains the following extract:—

... the safe speed on any facility is variable and may change hour by hour, depending on traffic density and flow, road geometry and pavement surface texture, visibility, vehicle condition, driver judgment and skill, and on driver mental and physical condition. It would require a high-speed computer to determine it for every car and for every section of highway continually.

Again, in the *U.S. News & World Report* the following appears:—

All studies made to date agree that the problem divides into three principal parts: The first is the driver, the second is the highway, the third the car itself.

In this regard one can even instance the State of Western Australia itself. Before we introduced the 65 m.p.h. speed limit, of 100 cases taken at random involving deaths on city and country roads, only two drivers were driving in excess of 60 miles an hour. These facts have been taken from the reports of coroners and others, which reports are in the Minister's possession, in the possession of the National Safety Council, the Royal Automobile Club, and other organisations.

Mr. Graham: Over what period did those deaths occur?

Mr. GAYFER: Those figures, taken in 1966, were as a result of a random analysis of 100 road deaths. Case one is mentioned first and I think the random analysis extends up to case 509. There were not 509 deaths in that year; that was the number of accidents that were reported, and these figures are available for anyone to study.

I am not decrying the 65 miles per hour speed limit at this stage, nor do I intend to decry anyone who speaks on what we intend to do about the road toll problem in this Chamber. All I want to say is that we do not know what we do. We are going to extreme lengths and committing great absurdities in an endeavour to solve the problem. We are ready to place the blame on anyone, including the country shires if it is thought that they are in any way at fault. I admit that we have to prevent this carnage on the road somehow.

I think it was the member for Belmont who mentioned that on the roads in Tasmania certain posts had a "V" on them to indicate which side of the road was dangerous, and he went on to say it was a pity we did not have such signs on posts along our country roads. I would like to point out to the honourable member that along our country roads on every white post flanking the left-hand side of the road there is a red spot, and on

the right-hand side of every road there is a white spot. What better indication can a motorist have that he is running out of road while travelling in a country district? The member for Belmont should get out and drive along some of our country roads.

Those who reside in the country areas are doing their utmost to overcome this problem, the same as anyone else who is interested.

Mr. Jamieson: It is a pity you do not give somebody a list of directions as to what the spots mean.

Mr. GAYFER: Recently I asked a question in this House as to what the figures "95" indicated on a post which is erected on the outskirts of the city. I asked whether it was to indicate the speed limit on that highway, or whether it was the route number, but the Minister gave a most unsatisfactory answer to the question. Surely it would be clear to anyone driving along a country road that a red spot on the left-hand side means danger and a white spot on the right-hand side means that the road is clear. Such signs are universal by virtue of common sense.

Such road signs are used right throughout the Commonwealth, in the United States of America, and in other parts of the world. I have here literature to burn, but I do not intend to quote it all. All I want to say is that we are striving to prevent this carnage on the road, or at least to bring about some decrease in the figures indicating the road toll. This is a most difficult operation, because it cannot be achieved in America, New Zealand, the Eastern States, or anywhere else.

In spite of this we set ourselves up as an authority to say that we will pass a Bill which will resolve all these problems. In Western Australia we have an organisation known as the National Safety Council, and yet the *The West Australian* the other day that published a letter which stated we should appoint a committee to advise the Minister. What sort of committee would one appoint to advise the Minister? On the National Safety Council there is the Commissioner of Police; the Commissioner of Main Roads, and 16 other representatives including one from the Liberal Party, one from the Labor Party, and one from the Country Party, and I am that representative. These men are supposed to represent the brains of the country. If the House desires to replace any one of the members of that committee, it can put someone on the mat, because all that council is trying to do is to find the answers to the problem and these answers are not obtainable as readily as one might imagine.

I think it was the member for Belmont, or the member for Victoria Park, who said that now the Minister for Police has returned from his overseas trip we will hear what is happening in other parts of the

world. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has already stated what he thought should happen. I returned to this House from a trip overseas and stated that in Canada when a driver fastens his safety belt this automatically starts the engine of his car. This is a fact; the motor will not start until the driver has fastened his safety belt. The Minister has returned from overseas and says that over there it is unlawful not to wear a safety belt, following which the member for Gascoyne, who is also a member of the National Safety Council, asked the innocent question: Was that lap or sash? The Minister replied, "They are mainly lap belts".

The member for Gascoyne, however, wanted to show that they were sash belts, because it is only the sash type of safety belt which a policeman or patrolman can pick up to ascertain whether a belt is being worn. These are points which are being investigated at all times by the National Safety Council.

Mr. Bickerton: Is it fair to say that the accident rate was lower in Western Australia before you fellows went overseas?

Mr. GAYFER: That is a fair question and is equally ridiculous as the statement made by a professor who spoke at the University of Western Australia when he said we had the highest accident rate in Australia. That statement is ridiculous because we do not have the highest accident rate in Australia. If figures are required to prove this, we can produce them. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition went one better and said that we were the worst in the world.

Mr. Graham: Very definitely we are. You do not measure this by the number of accidents.

Mr. GAYFER: How do we measure it?

Mr. Graham: One can see thousands of breaches of the traffic laws without major accidents occurring, and some of these are major breaches.

Mr. GAYFER: I remember one point which the honourable member brought forward in his speech; that was the give-way-to-the-right rule. In that respect I sympathise with him greatly. I will say that anyone who drives around Perth, or even in other centres, will find that if he is on the right then in 90 cases out of 100 he is given the right of way.

Mr. Graham: That is not so.

Mr. GAYFER: I am afraid the honourable member must do a bit of driving to find out for himself.

Mr. Graham: I think you had better accompany me and learn something about this.

Mr. GAYFER: We are aiming for a national road safety code to apply to Australia. That is what we think is the right approach. I agree with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that the give-way-to-the-right rule is a bit confusing, but who

will lay down what is the correct and what is not the correct national rule, and whether it be on the left or on the right? Will it be the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the National Safety Council of Australia, or the national code of Australia? As we know, Tasmania has broken away from the Federation of National Safety Councils over this issue. Perhaps we in Western Australia should go our own way and proclaim our own laws on this issue.

Mr. O'Connor: When did Tasmania break away?

Mr. GAYFER: From the information I obtained at meetings in Safety House, I understand Tasmania broke away some two or three months ago.

Mr. Graham: When the late Mr. Perkins was Minister for Traffic, Western Australia broke away from the Australian code, too.

Mr. GAYFER: We are trying to introduce uniformity into Australia to reduce the traffic accident rate, yet some people think they know better and that we should break away to form our own code. Some think we should get away from the world code. Where do we go on these issues? Do we adopt the world principles, or do we adopt the Australian principles? Should we invite people from other parts of the world to advise us on which way we should go, or should we go on our "Pat Malone" on these questions? There seems to be no answers to these peculiar problems. I am not saying we have lost the battle; we have not; but this question was with Coolidge in America in 1924 when the first investigation in the world was set up.

In France the average man still regards his car as an extension of his ego, a form of self-expression, rather than simply a means of transport. Driving is viewed as a bit of sport. That is the position in France, and it cannot be said that the same position does not apply in Western Australia.

Mr. Graham: Who is the author of that statement?

Mr. GAYFER: That is an extract from the *U.S. News & World Report*. Some people think that France has a high road fatality rate, but it has one of the lowest in the world. I have stood up in this Chamber before and said it was the driver who was at fault. It is driver education that counts, and the National Safety Council can give a lead, but it is a lead based on driver education. We have the facilities to provide such education. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition—I compliment him for the part he has played in this matter—the Minister for Police, and all of us are aware of the part played by the National Safety Council; but that council has not got the complete answers.

Mr. Boulton, an executive member of that council, recently returned from an overseas study of these very problems.

No doubt all of us have seen, have read, and have made a study of these factors, and the member for Bunbury has his ideas on the subject, too. How do we put the various ideas together to deal with the whole problem, so that we will have an accident-free State over 12 months? Where is the answer? Is the answer to be found by the passing of a Bill such as this which, in part, will restrict the movement of farm implements on country roads; because to a degree that is what it seeks to do? We are not buying into that argument, because the other parts of the Bill are far more important. If we criticise any part of it we will be doing the wrong thing in some eyes.

The member for Belmont raised a point of objection and I agree with it, because each and everyone of us wants to reduce the carnage on the roads; but I do not think the Minister, the National Safety Council, or anybody else knows exactly where to turn.

I sum up by saying that this is a job in which we have to have close liaison not only with the Australian authorities, but with world authorities. Our Australian authorities have to make a more co-operative effort to obtain the effects of the world decisions. We know that the United Nations has been set up to prevent war; but why not to prevent deaths on roads? We have seen reports that the road carnage in the United States is greater than the number of casualties in the Vietnam war. We should investigate every channel that is available to us, and we should not pick on one point such as bringing in a points system, which has been operating in Queensland. The research into these matters should be much deeper than the research that has been undertaken so far. More observations should be made of the people who drive motorcars.

A few years ago motorists were not allowed to drive along the Terrace with a rowdy exhaust pipe, something which in our youth gave us a bit of ego; yet today the Holden Monaro, a five litre car, is equipped with four exhaust pipes, and the three-inch bell exhaust is something of which the young owner of today is proud, especially when mates of his of the same age see and hear it. Why is it that some young drivers allow girls to sit on their knees when they are driving?

Mr. Jamieson: You speak for yourself.

Mr. GAYFER: Each one of us who has driven along the roads at night has often seen this.

Mr. Bickerton: Some of us have a job trying to get one to sit on our knees!

Mr. GAYFER: Most of us have seen one-arm driving. It cannot be said that this is keeping the steering hands on the wheel and the eyes on the road.

Mr. Jamieson: What would the driver do with his free arm?

Mr. GAYFER: There is enough of this hilarity. It is time that things such as this were investigated—the simple things which cause accidents. We should not get up and pull the country traffic authorities to pieces for an accident that happened in Kambalda where there was no traffic officer on the spot at the time. We should not criticise a local authority just because some motorists speeded through the town when the amphotometer had been shifted to another spot. We should get down to a realistic consideration of the question.

In commending the Bill to the House, I should point out that this is a measure to further tighten freedom in the use of the road. Perhaps we should suggest the need for a person to carry a red flag in front of a vehicle which is moving! We should look into this question very conscientiously; we should look into the research that has been made throughout the world. All of these things—whether they be what the member for Belmont, the member for Victoria Park, or the Minister for Police, brought up—are for the welfare of the people in the long run; but I still do not think this legislation is the answer to the problem. I do not think that future legislation here, or the 40 points which President Johnson has in front of the United States Senate at present, provides the answer to death-free driving.

MR BICKERTON (Pilbara) [8.53 p.m.]: Before the Bill passes the second reading I wish to make a few comments. The ground has been covered fairly well by the members who have spoken. As I do not normally detain the House as long as some members do, on this occasion I will not do so either. I would like to dissociate myself from many of the remarks that have been made in criticising the young drivers of today. The figures are available to show that they are involved in many accidents, but we do not see the figures of how many hours they are driving to be involved in those accidents.

I suppose that a person with a license who drives infrequently is not likely to be involved, as a driver, in a traffic accident. The young drivers spend a lot of time on the road, and it is only reasonable to assume that they are more likely to be involved in accidents than the older drivers. I have driven with many young lads and lasses; I am as observant as the average driver; and in the main I find they can drive very well. In my view they are less often the cause of traffic jams and minor breaches of the traffic laws than are some of the older drivers.

Some older people who drive rarely, or only at weekends, cause a lot of confusion on the roads, mainly because of the slow speed—not the fast speed—at which they drive. If they are involved in an accident, very often they are the cause of it because of their ultracareful nature, which seems to have the effect of making the impatient drivers breach the traffic regulations.

If the young drivers were given a little more encouragement the position would be much better. At present everything is loaded against them. In the case of a young driver, particularly one with less than one year's experience, for a minor breach the penalty is the suspension of his driver's license for three months. This seems to me to be extremely unfair, because the older driver who commits the same breach, or even a more serious one, does not have his license suspended. Whilst I am on this subject, I think the member for Belmont also made some passing reference to this—

Mr. O'Connor: The suspension of licenses applies to both old and young drivers.

Mr. BICKERTON: In the case of a young driver, the suspension of the license is mandatory.

Mr. O'Connor: The suspension of licenses also applies to older people who hold probationary licenses.

Mr. BICKERTON: I am not talking about that. The suspension of licenses is absolutely ridiculous. When a young person of 17 years of age is issued with a driver's license he is given little more than a piece of paper which legally authorises him to be in charge of a motor vehicle. This does not say, and I do not think the authorities believe, that he can really drive a motor vehicle, because he has not had the experience.

To gain experience in the handling of vehicles and in acquiring road sense, a person must actually be in charge of a vehicle. When the license of a person is suspended for three months for some minor breach of the traffic laws, it means that three months in which to receive more experience in the handling of vehicles has been taken from him.

I do not say he should go unpunished; but he could be placed on a restricted driving license. I suppose a lad would be punished the most if he were unable to use his car at the weekend and of an evening. If a person commits a breach during his probationary period, it seems sensible to me, particularly in regard to a first and second offence, that he should be restricted to driving within certain hours—perhaps between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. This would rob him of his car during the weekends and evenings, when, as I say, it would hurt him the most. However, it would not put him completely off the road,

as a result of which he would have to start all over again when his license was returned to him.

Members here might have had the experience of being away from the city for a protracted period of time; say three or four months. After having driven in the country and perhaps in the more isolated areas, when they return to the city they find it takes quite a while before they again get used to the traffic and regain the confidence they possessed previously.

This is the very thing we are robbing the probationer of when we suspend his license. Therefore I sincerely hope that at some time or other the authorities will look into the aspect of finding a punishment which does not entirely prevent the person from driving a motorcar for a certain period of time.

The other point I wish to make in regard to this aspect is that such a course would probably prevent the younger people from feeling they are, as a class, being victimised.

A point of criticism I have concerning the license itself is that a person—young or old—can learn to drive, say, a Mini Minor, on bitumen roads. Indeed, every lesson could have been in fine weather and in daylight. However, as soon as the learner receives the piece of paper which entitles him to drive, he can jump into a Jaguar, and drive at 80 miles an hour on a gravel road. It also enables him to drive a fully-laden truck—

Mr. O'Connor: The speed limit is 65, not 80.

Mr. BICKERTON: In some of the isolated places they do more. The license enables a driver to take on a different class of vehicle altogether—a wider, longer, or heavier vehicle. It seems to me that, with, say, a pilot, the equivalent would be to grant him a license for a Cessna and put him in charge of a Boeing 707. To me that is too silly for words. Surely the license should be in some way graduated, even more than it is, into classes, to show that if a lad is proficient at driving a Mini Minor, then in some way he is restricted to that particular class of car, at least for a period of time.

Mr. O'Connor: Would you distinguish between the automatic and manual gears?

Mr. BICKERTON: I do not think a license should be granted until the learner has driven both automatic and gear models, because he will come up against both types in his driving experience. It is ridiculous, I think, to stipulate that a license gained on a very small car entitles a person to take any vehicle anywhere within the State on any road surface. This could apply to a vehicle of up to two tons. I do think that is one of the points which could be investigated.

I have heard it mentioned by others, and I go along with the thought, that 17 is a bad age at which to give a boy a license. I think he should be granted one much earlier. I am not one of those who agree it should be given at a later age. In these modern times a young person should start having experience with mechanical vehicles, probably at the age of 15. I do not think such a person should be allowed into a vehicle on his own at that age, but it is my belief that the age of 17 is just about the worst age at which we could give a lad the responsibility he has when he takes over the control of a vehicle.

At that age he has reached the stage when he is inclined to think his ideas are right and everyone else's a little ancient, if those concerned are older than he is. I submit that at 15 he is more responsive to discipline; he learns faster and easier because he will do what he is told.

If it were possible for 15-year olds to drive, under certain circumstances, between restricted hours—say, between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.—provided they were accompanied by a licensed driver, then, for those between the age of 16 and 17, the hours could be extended. Such persons would still be required to be with a licensed driver, but the hours could be extended to between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. If this were done, by the time a boy reached the age of 17 and was in sole charge of a vehicle, he would have a certain amount of road training and would have gained some experience with the Traffic Act; and the importance of keeping a clean record would have been impressed upon him.

I do not intend to delay the House any longer; but I do really believe that something should be done in the way of license grading, and I consider a lot of thought should be given to the matter of suspensions.

MR. O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Transport) [9.7 p.m.]: From the contributions members have made to this Bill and the opinions they have expressed, it is obvious that all are concerned about the troubles we are experiencing on our roads. It is because of these troubles the Government has introduced this legislation. It is equally concerned and feels this is a way in which we can endeavour to reduce the toll a little, and also permit more policemen to spend more time on the roads.

Some members stated that the Government has let this particular situation deteriorate to a great degree. None of us can express any satisfaction with the road toll today, and I believe we can all express concern. However, I would like to say it is only during this year that the position has deteriorated to a great degree. The total number of road deaths for 1965 was 252, and whilst this is not a figure about which

we can be proud, it was not considered particularly unrealistic at that time. The fatalities for 1966 numbered 253, an increase of only one; while in 1967 the number was 256.

These figures indicate that over the three years the total increase was only four. Bearing in mind the increased population and the larger number of vehicles on the road, I do not think anyone can say this number was out of all proportion.

However, this year the lid did blow off, and I think the position has deteriorated quite considerably; and this legislation has been submitted—and other legislation will be submitted—in an effort to do something about the situation.

Contrary to what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said last night, I welcome suggestions from any member of the House or public which could in any way help to improve the present position on the roads. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition made a very spirited, and sometimes irrational, speech last night. He made a number of suggestions with which I entirely agree. However, I did not agree with two or three points he made, and I intend to make some comment on them during the evening.

One point he made was in connection with the necessity for more policemen on the roads. I think we all agree with this and, as I have pointed out, 20 of the next school of 50 are to go onto the roads.

The points system and the statutory penalties—the statutory penalties particularly—are measures by which police will be relieved to a great degree of a certain amount of the work they are doing at present, and they will consequently have more time for work on the road where they can contact the various offenders and take the necessary action. On certain occasions large numbers of policemen have attended courts only to find that the offenders eventually pleaded guilty and the necessity for their presence was actually nil.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition also commented on cul-de-sacs and the elimination of crossroads. This is a worth-while suggestion and has been studied. It is one the Main Roads Department, the Police Department, and some local authorities have also investigated. Not very long ago it was hoped to implement such a system in one of the local authority areas, but because of the hue and cry from a number of people in the area, the authority eventually went cold on the plan and would not permit it to be adopted. However, I do believe this is a method which would reduce considerably the intersection accidents, and it is one which I think we must study further and do something about.

It is quite important to note that the Queensland demerits system—and some members, including, I think, the member for Victoria Park, commented on this—has had an effect. It came into operation only in December last year, but for this year, the first year of its operation, Queensland has, so far as fatalities are concerned, shown the best improvement of all States. I know it is a little early to say this system is the reason, but maybe it is, and therefore we should have a go at it, too. I am glad that without exception members have agreed to support legislation in this connection. I certainly hope it will have as beneficial an effect here as it appears to have had in Queensland, and that, as a result, our figures will be similar to the figures in that State.

For about 10 weeks I was Acting Minister for Police, and during that period the situation was not, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition indicated, neglected. I had regular meetings with the Commissioner of Police, the Commissioner of Main Roads, and the Chief Traffic Inspector. I also met doctors of the Royal Perth Hospital twice. We discussed all points in regard to how we felt the position could be improved, and we tried to implement any suggestion which would reduce the toll. This is not an easy thing to achieve here, or anywhere else in the world. As I have said we do not have the complete answer, but we must do what we think is right in an effort to reduce the toll to a standard we consider at least reasonable.

During the time I was Acting Minister I asked for suggestions from any interested persons and I now express appreciation to the large number of members of the public who wrote giving various suggestions. Some of them are quite worth while and we are studying them. Some may not be so worth while. Nevertheless we do appreciate the fact that so many people came forward and indicated their concern, and made suggestions in an effort to help solve this problem.

I wish to make a couple of points in connection with the remarks of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. He said it appears that motorists can run riot; can go mad on the road; and can write their own laws. We know this is not the case. Admittedly Western Australian drivers are not the best in the world, but, on the other hand, they are not the worst. To say they can write their own laws is so completely ridiculous that it does not need any further comment from me.

Mr. Graham: Where, in your opinion, are they worse then they are in Western Australia?

Mr. O'CONNOR: South Australia is no better, as was pointed out by the member for Belmont.

Mr. Graham: No. He quoted the number of accidents; not the number of misdemeanours on the road.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I say that our drivers are not the best; nor are they the worst. I do not think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition brought forward any information to prove they are. He went further and made another remark on which I wish to comment—and these are the only two points with which I disagree. He commented on the Minister for Police. He went on to say that surely we do not expect the captain of a ship to be disporting himself with dusky raidens on a desert island while the ship is sinking. I do not think this becomes the honourable member at all and, to my mind, he stooped a lot lower than he should have done in that regard.

Mr. Graham: You should grow up; that was not a reference to the Minister at all. I followed it up by saying that he ought to be here on his job.

Mr. O'CONNOR: The words used by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition are exactly as I have stated them. They are recorded in *Hansard* and they do not read very nicely at all. The whole question could well have been left alone.

Mr. Graham: I give the Minister up after this.

Mr. Craig: I gave up the dusky maidens.

Mr. O'CONNOR: As far as this State is concerned, the Minister was away on another very important job in connection with a problem which affected the public. We all know the problem which existed in Fremantle. When the riot came about the Minister went away in an endeavour to see whether he could find ways and means of overcoming the problem.

Mr. Jamieson: This is one position where he could use his common sense.

Mr. O'CONNOR: As explained tonight, while the Minister was away he took the opportunity to look at the various traffic problems which exist in other parts of the world. I believe it is necessary for any Minister to be able to do this in an endeavour to meet a certain position which exists in this State and in an effort to bring some improvement to our position.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition went on to say that he himself went away, came back, and had 300 column inches of articles published in the newspaper.

Mr. Craig: Was he paid for it?

Mr. O'CONNOR: I think the comments made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition were quite worth while in most cases. I see nothing wrong with this at all. If he, or anybody else, can get a message over to the public, it is a good thing.

However, the Minister for Police was also able to pick up some points, and he does not deserve criticism. To my mind it was right that the Minister was able to get away and pick up some points.

In addition, the member for Balcatta commented with regard to overways and underways. Obviously they are the best way to overcome the traffic problem, since they reduce the road toll. He also commented that the give-way-to-the-right rule is the best rule of the road, and I believe he is quite right. This is a very important rule and one that should be carried right through.

Freeways were mentioned and in this State we have the Kwinana Freeway and one or two others. There is no doubt that freeways help the situation. The honourable member also mentioned traffic lights and said they could be placed at various points. However, most of these points have been considered and action is being undertaken. Whilst I agree with the member for Balcatta with regard to his comments on lights, I emphasise that most of his points are being implemented. I have already mentioned that cul-de-sacs and median strips are being built.

Comment was made with regard to the necessity for more police to be on the roads. I believe that we should endeavour to achieve this, because the more police on the roads, the better.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition also said that drivers' licenses should be checked by someone other than a policeman. It is very important that drivers are properly checked and we should make sure that efficient people who have a good knowledge of the subject go into this. The department has recently been investigating the possible method of bringing cadets into the force in an effort to relieve policemen of their parking duties, because it is considered that the policeman, who is a qualified man, should not be out marking cars but picking up those drivers who contravene the law.

It is believed that cadets should be brought into this field and, at the moment, the commissioner is investigating this possibility and discussing it with the union. Young fellows would provide a good method of recruitment to the force and would, at the same time, permit more qualified men to go out and do a proper job of catching those who break the law instead of messing around with the minor jobs of checking and marking cars.

Mr. Davies: The Minister will be happy to know that I agree with him.

Mr. O'CONNOR: Another point which is being looked at by the Minister, and which has been looked at previously, is in connection with trying to get more use out of men on bikes. At the present time the policemen go out in various directions. It is felt in some sources that if a car went out which was equipped with a two-way radio and if the bikes were equipped with two-way radios they could go from certain areas to other areas. By having contact

with each other they could help to apprehend much more easily anyone who was breaking the law. Also their time on the road would be much more effectively used. Here again money is involved, but these are points which are being looked at by the Minister and the commissioner.

Mr. Jamieson: Has the Minister any comment to make with regard to traffic inspectors? This subject was mentioned very ably by the member for Avon, and also the member for Narrogin defended them. It is not that they do not do a good job, but of course a lot of their time is tied up with parking problems which place far too much upon them.

Mr. O'CONNOR: This could be the case, as was pointed out by the member for Belmont. However, if I may continue, I will cover certain points and come back to this point at a later stage.

The member for Perth made some comments in connection with governors on cars. This has been mentioned previously, but the adoption of such a suggestion would cause many problems. If a governor were put on a car, in many cases the motor would be burnt out and the cost to the owners would be very high. (c)

The member for Perth also wanted to know why a number of police were placed at intersections in the metropolitan area over recent weeks. This was brought about as a result of discussions with the Commissioner of Police, the Chief Traffic Inspector, and myself. Members might have noticed that people were blocking up the intersections. When the lights changed the vehicles were right across the intersections and cars going in the opposite direction could not get across. They were choking up the intersections.

The action was taken of placing policemen at the intersections for a few weeks and I believe the position has been relieved. However, this is the reason why the police were on duty at those intersections. It is not intended to leave them there for a longer period of time.

The member for Karrinyup mentioned the interpretation of the legislation by the police. There will not be any problems in this regard. However I have due regard for the comments made and I mention that all the points which have been brought forward by members of this House will be sent back to the department for investigation; and I am quite sure the Minister will implement anything he feels worth while in connection with the matter.

The member for Karrinyup also made reference to bald tyres. When is a tyre bald? I believe that once a tyre is dangerous it is bald. It is considered it should be looked at—

Mr. Lapham: What constitutes a dangerous tyre?

Mr. Bickerton: When it is bald!

Mr. Jamieson: Most aircraft tyres are completely bald.

Mr. O'CONNOR: On wet roads, and even on roads which are not very wet, if tyres are bald this increases the distance over which the vehicle moves before it stops and it would increase the chance of an accident. This subject will be left to the discretion of the policeman who is concerned. From my point of view it is very difficult to explain except to say that something should be done about the tyre when it has reached the dangerous stage because of the tread being too worn.

Reference was made to plainclothes policemen. There are a few around but not many at the moment. I think there is some merit in the suggestion. However I believe there is a greater scope for vehicles to be used bearing the police sign; because when people drive past and see the sign they slow down and it deters them from travelling at high speeds.

The member for Mirrabooka made some comment in connection with a courtesy squad. I would like to say that when the police pick up individuals in the metropolitan area, they do not always charge them. In many cases where a minor breach has been committed, they bring the person over to the side of the road and have a word with him. In this way they warn him and I believe this happens in one of every two instances where vehicles are stopped. Virtually this is a courtesy squad to a degree. I believe that discretion is consequently shown in regard to the individual.

The honourable member also commented upon the recording of the data of accidents. This matter is undertaken by the Main Roads Department, but it is a little difficult to keep the records completely up to date. However complete data is kept in regard to accidents which occur at intersections and at various other points. This information is very good.

The member for Fremantle commented that he had suggested legislation of this type previously and that he intended to support it. I thank him for his support. If he has mentioned it previously, which no doubt he has, he will see that some notice has been taken of what he had to say. The honourable member also said he was pleased to see that the young people would receive driver training.

Other members commented on the requirement for a young person of 16 years to receive training. They said that the young person might learn for the first three months but asked what he would do for the next nine months. It is intended to spread the whole of the training over the 12-month period. It will not be given in the last three months or six months of the school year, because it is considered that if the instruction were to be left to the last stage, this is when the young people would be facing exams and would

be busy in other ways. Consequently it was thought better to give this training for the early part of the year and to spread it through the year so that it would have more effect.

One point was raised regarding light poles. The Minister for Police has been concerned over this and has taken the matter up with the State Electricity Commission on previous occasions. I can assure members he is very much aware of the problem and has endeavoured to see whether something can be done about it in the future.

The member for Narrogin asked whether a pram was a vehicle. As far as the definition is concerned, I imagine it would be, but it would be very difficult indeed to form a definition which would cover all types of vehicles which travel on the road. To my mind a pram would probably be considered a vehicle but, here again, I am quite sure discretion would be used, as it has been used in the past, by the members of the Police Force.

I am glad to see that the member for Belmont agreed that Western Australian drivers are not the worst in the world. I agree with him completely; although, as I said before, we do not have a situation of which we can be proud, because they are certainly not the best in the world. His comments in connection with computers seemed to have some merit. I have no doubt this will be examined and followed up in the future.

Reference was made to standardisation and, as far as possible, I think it is also necessary to standardise throughout Australia so that if a person travels from one part of Australia to another he can do so while knowing that the laws and regulations of his own State are implemented right throughout Australia. However, if some deviation meant the saving of a number of lives on our roads, I am quite sure the Minister would give consideration to it. I know he has always endeavoured, wherever possible, to comply with standardisation if it is to the benefit of the State generally.

The Minister indicated quite clearly that when he was overseas he had a good look at traffic, and he has brought back some ideas which are worth while. No doubt he will take these matters up with the Commissioner of Police and others in the future.

The member for Victoria Park passed some comments with regard to the points system and mentioned that some errors could be made in this regard. I agree this is possible. It is always possible to make human errors in any of these things, particularly when a larger number will be going forward as I have indicated. However, if an individual has his license called in and a disproportionate number of points is placed on it, I feel he would very quickly

let the Police Department know. However, as I have said, I agree mistakes could be made in connection with this.

Mr. Davies: Do you think the points should be marked on the license?

Mr. O'CONNOR: I do. I believe they should be put on the license. Certainly the individual would not want them on his license, and that is one of the reasons I think they should be placed there. If the individual has a license and the points are marked on it, this will indicate to him that he has not behaved as he should have behaved. He would not be very proud of it and would not want to show it to anyone. If a person does not have his license with him when he is picked up, a traffic policeman would not have the problem the honourable member pointed out. The member for Victoria Park said that if a policeman saw a license with a number of points marked on it he would suspend that person's license for a three-month period.

Mr. Bickerton: I hope these points never become *prima facie* evidence if someone is involved in an accident.

Mr. O'CONNOR: In connection with this, the individual either agrees or has the chance to disagree before the points are recorded. I do not think they would be taken as *prima facie* evidence; in fact I am sure they would not. This is taken on another basis altogether.

The member for Pilbara commented with regard to a 17-year old driving a Jaguar at 85 miles per hour. Of course this could happen. Nevertheless it would take up a tremendous amount of the time of members of the Police Department if individuals came in with various types of trucks, and other vehicles which had, say, automatic gears or standard gears, and members of the Police Department had to indicate the various speeds at which the vehicles could be handled.

Whether that is warranted or not at this stage I would not know, but certainly it would take up much more of the time of members of the Police Department. To my mind it would probably be the wrong basis at the moment. Even today it is necessary for people, particularly residents of the metropolitan area, to have to wait up to seven days before they can go in for a motor driver's license.

I would like to make some comment in connection with discussions which I had with doctors from the Royal Perth Hospital. Once again I wish to express my appreciation to them for the time and effort they put in and for the information which they gave to me. They indicated that a very large percentage of the drivers who are involved in fatal accidents smell of alcohol. In fact, they indicated the figure is around 90 per cent. The doctors said that of those involved in fatal accidents 90 per cent. smelt of alcohol.

Mr. Bickerton: But 90 per cent. of drivers drink.

Mr. O'CONNOR: That is possibly so, but it would be better if not quite so many of them did. If that percentage were reduced the toll would be reduced to a degree.

Mr. Graham: To drink is not necessarily to be under the influence of liquor.

Mr. O'CONNOR: That would be so and I did not say that it was. I am merely indicating the points that were made and I am bringing them to members' attention. Drink, speed, and inattentiveness are probably three of the main reasons for accidents on the road.

Mr. Graham: I think the interjection of the member for Pilbara was valid—that is, if 90 per cent. of the people drink it is only to be expected that 90 per cent. of those involved in accidents would smell of liquor.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I would not say that 90 per cent. of the people drink every day. There is a difference.

Mr. Jamieson: But 90 per cent. of the drivers on the road at any one time might not be so involved.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I would not doubt that would be the case. While I agree that there is a big percentage, I doubt whether it would be near that every day.

Mr. Jamieson: But it would probably be higher than that on a Friday night after 10 o'clock.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I agree. However, I bring these points to the attention of the House and to point out that fatalities on the road are not the only problem with which we are confronted. A doctor from the hospital pointed out to me that he had handled 75 cases this year where severe brain damage was involved—that is, cases where people had lived. Of that number 25 had been discharged from the hospital and another 34 would be discharged by the end of the year. He said the other 16 were so severely affected that there was no chance of their being discharged for something like three years. Those are cases where the people lived but in some instances they would never be any good in the future.

He went on to tell me that it cost between \$300 and \$400 a week to keep each of these patients in the hospital. That is an indication of the cost of road accidents.

Mr. Davies: What about compulsory crash helmets?

Mr. O'CONNOR: Such a provision is not included in this Bill. I suppose if we had compulsory armour it would reduce the toll, and so we could go on. However, I think compulsory crash helmets are a

very good idea for motor cyclists and would probably reduce the toll with motor vehicles, too. However, I will leave the matter to the Minister concerned to see whether he considers it a worth-while suggestion.

I did point out that in Queensland the road toll this year has been reduced, and that is a State which has gone ahead and implemented the demerit system. It has been in operation only for this year. Also, the Minister has indicated that he intends to introduce the Bill this year which will reduce the alcohol level for breathalysers to .08. This is the level which applies in England and, as members know, it has had a good effect in that country.

Mr. Graham: I suppose you noticed today's report where it states that the percentage has gone up to the old figure.

Mr. O'CONNOR: There was a lowering of the rate. I had an article from England in connection with the matter.

Mr. Graham: But it has gone back to the old figure.

Mr. O'CONNOR: It is still a little lower than that at the moment; but, over the year, it resulted in saving something like 1,000 lives.

Mr. Bickerton: That could have been because of a lesser number of vehicles on the road as a result of the regulations.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I do not mind. If we can save 1,000 lives a year we should do everything we can to that end.

Mr. Bickerton: You could achieve the same result by not allowing any vehicles at all on the road.

Mr. Gayfer: Do you think the position in Queensland has been brought about by giving the licensing of vehicles back to the country authorities?

Mr. O'CONNOR: I do not think that is the position at all. Frankly I do not agree with the honourable member's point of view in that regard.

Mr. Graham: I think the Minister for Transport should be the Minister for Traffic.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I am grateful for the part the Press and television have played in endeavouring to bring to people's notice the problems associated with traffic on the road, and what should be done to try to reduce accidents. Also, once again I thank members for the comments they have made during the debate. It is obvious they are extremely interested in this type of legislation and, in particular, with the problems we have with traffic on our roads. The Government is vitally interested and that is the reason for the legislation being before the House. If any honourable mem-

ber, or any member of the public can produce concrete suggestions which will help to reduce the road toll still further the Government will be only too willing to listen to them and, if thought worth while, implement them.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr. W. A. Manning) in the Chair; Mr. O'Connor (Minister for Transport) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3 put and passed.

Clause 4: Section 16 amended—

Mr. CASH: This clause relates to the transfer of licenses, and I draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that a vehicle owner can transfer a motor vehicle license to a 15-year-old schoolboy or an infant one day old. I wonder whether the Minister would consider refusing such transfers of licenses, or the issuing of initial licenses to under-age owners unless special circumstances warranted special consideration.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I take it the honourable member is not suggesting an alteration to the Bill in this regard. I will have a look at the point and convey the information to the honourable member concerned.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5: Section 25A substituted—

Mr. GRAHAM: It appears to me that an error has been made on page 4 in lines four, five, and six. I refer particularly to the words "by the holder of a license such as is mentioned in paragraph (b) of this subsection or". If we turn to page three and have regard to paragraph (b) we will see that it says the Commissioner of Police may authorise a person who has attained the age of 16 years and nine months to drive a motor vehicle in the course of driving instruction where he is being instructed by a licensed instructor.

Over the page there is reference to a person who has attained the age of 17 years, and then follows the same qualifications regarding a person holding an instructor's license, and so on.

Surely if one at the age of 16 years and nine months is able to do certain things the same would apply to a person of 16 years and 10 months, 17 years, and so on. The Minister looks a little embarrassed, but I can assure him that I conferred with my leader, who felt, the same as I do, that the words were redundant and did not make sense. I will be content if the Minister has the matter investigated and, if necessary, rectified in another place.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I have not noticed the point to which the honourable member refers but I will have the Parliamentary Draftsman investigate the position, and if it is felt that an alteration is necessary, I will have it made in another place.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 to 10 put and passed.

Clause 11: Section 75 repealed and re-enacted—

Mr. GRAHAM: I have had an amendment circulated this evening which is an attempt to be constructive and conforms with the proposition I foreshadowed when speaking to the Bill last week. This clause proposes to impose penalties by way of points being lost on the basis of a formula.

I have already complained in a general way that in my view unfortunately, and perhaps inevitably, our traffic legislation seeks to penalise erring motorists, and when any review of the legislation is made the best we can do is to step up the severity of the penalties; whereas perhaps there is something to be gained by endeavouring to encourage people to behave better when driving on the public roads.

If a motorist is to be penalised for some breach of the traffic regulations—a certain number of points within a three-year period—then surely, if he has a completely clean record he should be given some credit for it. I indicated when speaking last week that a person who is a menace on the road over a period of three years can have cancelled 11 of his 12 points but save his license each time by the skin of his teeth. Yet he can be in exactly the same position as another motorist who perhaps over a period of 20 years has not had a black mark against his name but, because of circumstances, suddenly finds himself, within a period of three years, with all his 12 points exhausted. Although a driver may have an excellent record over 20 years he may relax or overlook some of the many hundreds of traffic regulations that guide us and be caught by a fastidious traffic inspector and penalised. In such circumstances surely such a person should not be penalised out of all proportion when compared with the person who is a regular offender.

I urge the Minister and the Government to accept the amendment I propose to move and I was pleased to hear a member this evening comment in favour of a principle somewhat along the same lines. I think we should do everything to encourage motorists to behave better instead of threatening them with a big stick by way of fines or, as in this case, with a loss of points. As I said, I intend to move the amendment with the best intentions in the world and as a constructive contribution—perhaps one of the first moves that Parliament has made, in respect of traffic mat-

ters—to give credit to a person whose performances on the road have been blameless over a period. I move an amendment—

Page 9—Insert after paragraph (a) the following new paragraph to stand as paragraph (b):—

(b) for a prescribed number of points to be credited to every person who for each complete period of three years has not been convicted of any offence against this Act prescribed for the purposes of this section.

I am leaving it entirely to the discretion of the Minister and his advisers as to whether it be one, two, or three points, or any other number. While the Minister has been good enough to outline the general procedure to be followed, including the number of points and the breaches that will probably form the basis of the regulation, there is nothing specific in the legislation.

Mr. Norton: Will it be retrospective?

Mr. GRAHAM: No.

Mr. CASH: Though the amendment is quite sound, I do not agree with the method involved. The credit system over an X number of years for trouble-free driving has the weakness that the driver would build up a considerable number of points to his credit, after which he might get careless because of the points he has in reserve. Perhaps the driver could be granted a special license of a distinguishing colour which would entitle him to special consideration compared with that extended to a less careful driver. I think the Minister should give consideration to granting a special license to a driver who is free of points for a certain number of years.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for sending me a copy of his amendment. I cannot agree with it, and I hope the Committee will defeat the amendment. The Bill seeks to deter drivers. Those who prove they are good drivers have the benefit now of having no mark on their cards; and if they are good drivers it is unlikely they will build up 12 points.

The Queensland legislation back-dated the stage at which the points commenced by 12 months. That legislation seems to have had the effect of steadying and reducing the road toll. Let us consider the results that accrue from this Bill and make amendments later if necessary.

Mr. GRAHAM: I give up. Last Thursday I said that many suggestions had emanated from the Opposition benches in respect of traffic matters but in every case they had been contemptuously brushed aside by the Government. We now have a further illustration of this and it is disheartening.

I know we indulge in politics and party politics, but there are occasions when members seek to make positive contributions in respect of legislation being considered. At no time does all the balance and sagacity lie on one side of the House. If I were Minister for Traffic and I submitted this legislation, it would obviously be accepted by my party and no doubt receive commendation from the Opposition. It would eventually have the force of law. But no matter what is submitted from this side of the Chamber it is a foregone conclusion that it will not be accepted.

The member for Mirrabooka spoke out long and loud on my amendment and then produced some finicky excuse and suggested that a license of a particular colour be issued to those who were good drivers. I felt that some inducement should be given to those motorists who, over a period of years, proved themselves to be better than the ordinary motorist.

When dealing with traffic breaches, however, the Government seems to have one eye on the legislation and the other on the state of the Treasury; or on the amount of discomfort that can be caused to a motorist. Heaven knows, motorists suffer enough penalties both in the Commonwealth sphere and the State sphere.

All this makes me wonder whether it is worth while giving attention to Bills and preparing amendments. I do not expect the Government to accept all my amendments, but it will be a tremendous break-through, as far as I am concerned, if the Government accepts the one amendment I am now submitting.

Mr. CRAIG: I take strong exception to the remarks of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Graham: All the facts are against you.

Mr. CRAIG: The honourable member said that we have brushed aside all amendments placed before us. The second reading of the Bill was presented three weeks ago, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has had all that time to prepare his amendment and allow us to consider it. This is the first indication we have had of the amendment he has moved.

Mr. Graham: How long does it take to read five lines?

Mr. CRAIG: We are not treating the honourable member with contempt; he is treating this side of the Chamber with contempt by giving us five minutes' notice of his amendment. I appreciate his desire to recognise the motorist who has an unblemished record on the road, but I cannot help feeling that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition misrepresented the suggestions made by the member for Mirrabooka to suit his own purpose. It is completely untrue for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to say that the Government has

accepted no amendment submitted by the Opposition, and I would ask him to cast his mind back to the traffic Bills I have introduced over the years when, on occasions, I have accepted his amendments.

Mr. Graham: Have you?

Mr. CRAIG: If he is an honourable deputy leader he will admit this.

Mr. Graham: If it came from anybody else but you, I would be upset about that remark.

Mr. CRAIG: If we give credit along the lines suggested by the honourable member the measure will contain no deterrent at all. Because a driver has a record of 10 or 20 years of unblemished driving on the road does not mean he is not accident prone. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition might have an unblemished record, but would he say that he is not accident prone? In his opinion he is a good driver, though I must say he did not take advantage of my suggestion that he go down to the National Safety Council to see how good he is; even though I offered to pay for his course.

Mr. Graham: I want to see the colour of your money.

Mr. CRAIG: If the amendment is accepted we will be removing the deterrent.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I have no objection to the suggestions made by the member for Mirrabooka and I will confer with the department to see whether something can be done to issue licenses of different colours.

I, too, take exception to the remarks of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition when he said the Government was brushing him aside by not accepting his amendment. I have previously accepted amendments moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and this is recorded in *Hansard*.

Mr. Graham: When did you introduce a traffic Bill?

Mr. O'CONNOR: I did not say a traffic Bill.

Mr. Graham: I have every confidence in *Hansard*.

Mr. O'CONNOR: We are trying to deter people from driving badly and the points system will help. I might say that the Treasury is not interested in raising funds but in preventing carnage on the roads. The remark made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is unfair, and I trust the Committee will accept the Bill as it is.

Mr. GRAHAM: Before the double-barrelled action of two Ministers was trained on me, I indicated I had said my final word. It is easy for a Minister of the Crown, surrounded by a battery of officers, to attend to matters at comparatively short notice; but when one is a deputy leader and has not even an office boy, and when there are more jobs to be done than there are minutes in the day, it is a different matter.

There is nothing unusual in submitting an amendment before the tea adjournment—more than four hours ago, not five minutes ago. It comprises about five lines of simple verbiage which expresses the reverse from what appears in the earlier paragraph of the same clause.

Mr. O'Connor: You do not expect us to accept something we do not think will assist, do you?

Mr. GRAHAM: I will deal with the Minister for Transport in a moment. At the present time what I have to say concerns the Minister for Traffic; and if he cannot comprehend the merit of this amendment he has no right to be a Minister, because he does not understand the Bill.

In the measure certain verbiage used is under which points are eliminated; and in reverse terms there will be credits. There is no substance whatever in the suggestion that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is being unfair to the Government by not giving it sufficient time to be able to study and understand the significance of what is contained in the amendment.

The Minister for Transport has been acting Minister for Traffic and I would like to commend him. I think he might do better, if untrammelled, as Minister for Traffic, instead of the present incumbent. However, I think he has been influenced by the last named in his opposition to this amendment.

Among other things, the member for Avon said this evening that world-wide authorities are seeking solutions, new treatments, and new approaches to deal with this problem, which is taxing the best traffic brains in the world. Therefore there is nothing revolutionary about this amendment to the law in Western Australia. It will seek to encourage people to be better behaved and is worth adopting as a trial. I remember reading, when I was Minister for Traffic, that on a certain notice, instead of just the abrupt comment, the word "please" was added and this immediately found a response on the part of motorists. It was some sort of psychological reaction and behaviour was better as a consequence.

If this amendment is accepted something can be achieved by those who are meticulously careful about their driving; and that may be worth a trial. It can do no harm.

The theme of many speeches, including that of the member for Avon, was that education in driving on the roads was the principal solution to the problem. This amendment surely would be something in conformity with that.

I pose the question: What difference is it going to make to anybody if his driver's license is black print on a white background as now, or whether it is green print on a yellow background? I do not

know. If the Minister thinks that will have some beneficial effect, he should do some fresh thinking on traffic matters. I conclude by saying I am still disappointed with the attitude of the Government.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

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

DIVIDING FENCES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Council; and, on motion by Mr. Nalder (Minister for Agriculture), read a first time.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 8th October.

MR. MENSAROS (Floreat) [10.8 p.m.] The reasons for bringing down this measure to amend the Western Australian Institute of Technology Act of 1966 are, as I see it, twofold, and accordingly the Bill can be divided into two parts. It is appropriate, therefore, to deal with these two parts separately.

The first part of the Bill, clauses 1 to 5 inclusive, and clause 8, contains technical corrections to the principal Act, expressing the original intention in clearer, unmistakable terms. It is experienced with every new legal document; and, as was said by the member for Victoria Park, Acts of Parliament, being equally the products of human endeavour, are no exception. Seldom, if ever, can they be drafted 100 per cent. perfectly. Their practical application, as time passes, always shows some drafting errors that can be misinterpreted in a way which deviates from the original intention.

Clauses 1 to 4 inclusive, and clause 8, deal with correction of terms of the principal Act, substituting the word "Institute" for "Council" where applicable, and making sure that land is vested in the institute, as a proper legal body corporate, instead of in the council, which is only the governing authority of the institute. This is a very clear and undebatable necessity.

Clause 5 desires to declare specifically that Statutes to be made by the council with respect to fees shall include fees for study and instruction and other facilities and privileges of the institute as well as

fees for examinations, diplomas, and certificates. There is no reason to quarrel with this enlargement of the specified subjects of Statutes which the council may make. The question arises, though, in this connection, how section 34 of the principal Act has to be interpreted. Subsection (1) of this section reads—

The Council may make Statutes, not inconsistent with this Act, with respect to all matters pertaining to the Institute and in particular may make Statutes with respect to—

And then paragraphs (a) to (n) describe these particular subject matters.

If this enumeration of subjects could be interpreted as an exemplification only, if it could be taken as examples of "all matters pertaining to the institute," then clause 5 of the Bill would not be necessary. Surely to charge fees for tuition belongs in the category of "all matters pertaining to the institute" and is not inconsistent with the Act.

I am advised, and the Minister must have been similarly advised, that in strict legal sense paragraphs (a) to (n) have to be interpreted restrictively. In other words, the subject of Statutes—which may be made by council—cannot exceed the subjects as restrictively specified in these paragraphs. If this is so, as it appears to be so, then the further question arises whether it is wise to leave these restrictive paragraphs in the Act at all. It might be wiser to omit them altogether, and leave subsection (1) of section 34 of the Act simply saying that—

The Council may make Statutes, not inconsistent with this Act, with respect to all matters pertaining to the Institute

full stop.

By leaving this restrictive description of subjects of the Statutes in the Act, council might—and in all probability will—find when drafting the Statutes that there are a number of matters which should be included but cannot be because of the restrictive characteristic of the Act. Just to mention one example: Paragraph (c) describes as one subject matter of the Statutes to be made—

the organisation and supervision of the teaching of enrolled students.

There is no mention of examinations.

In the same strict legal sense then, which necessitated clause 5 of this amending Bill because it was considered that the institute will be left without power to charge fees for tuition, the council has no power to regulate the organisation or supervision of examinations of the institute, because according to paragraph (c) it can only do so in respect of teaching.

The reason and necessity for the second much more important part of this Bill—clauses 6 and 7—is the unparalleled,

tremendous rate of progress and development in our State—a rate of general development which spread to the growth of the institute and took such dimensions which could not have been foreseen even two years ago.

This laudable rate of progress for which the Minister, the Government, the members of the interim council and the staff of the institute have to be congratulated, necessitated bringing the permanent council into existence five months earlier than was envisaged in the principal Act. It also necessitated, in clause 7, the creation of an officially recognised student body because of the growth in enrolment and the campus generally.

In my contribution to this debate I would like to enlarge somewhat on the importance of the institute and some problems which may accompany its rapid growth.

The Minister outlined in his second reading speech that the institute is meeting the substantial need for the type of tertiary education it is providing. He went on to say that this is demonstrated by the ready acceptance of the institute courses both by the professional and business communities of the State. I might add that this acceptance embraces all potential employers. In other words, the institute is educating and will graduate students who will be well equipped and destined to go out to industry, commerce, or profession, and take an active part in the exciting development of Western Australia.

This is most important at a time when many people feel that at least some faculties of the University lecture and graduate students for the sole purpose to be lecturers themselves at the University. If this trend grows, it increases, in turn, the proportion of University students who learn to teach the future teachers, and consequently increases a self-perpetuating section with a very commendable aim and result to themselves, but with lesser benefit to the community which, after all, finances this trend.

In contrast to what the Minister rightly said about the acceptance by industry of the institute courses, there is a widespread feeling by many in industry expressing reluctance to employ University graduates because quite an amount of time and expense has to be spent to re-educate them for the practical application of their specific profession in order to be useful in industry.

The institute was created to cater for this purpose, and it is very important that it should retain this purpose—to educate students for the practical education of their science and profession.

With the very commendable rapid growth of the institute, I can see two dangerous developments which may result from this growth but which should be prevented, if possible, when making the Statutes referred to in the Act, as well as in this Bill. The first danger is that the institute may become a second-rate university. This can result from the fact that prospective students of tertiary education—and especially their parents—not quite understanding the institute's importance and purpose, may wish to channel students to the University under all circumstances, attributing to it a greater value—often only snob value. If they fail at the University in the first year they can continue on to the institute.

To prevent this dangerous trend I would suggest that the public relations and educational work by the institute, about its purpose and standing in tertiary education, should be increased. I do not say this in a critical sense because I know that this already goes on. I have here the handbook of the institute for 1968 which spells out the aims, courses, counselling facilities, scholarships and prizes in connection with studies. It is a very informative publication, but I wonder how many parents and prospective students have ready access to it. I have heard Dr. Coombe, the assistant director of the institute, addressing the City Beach High School P. & C. meeting in my electorate. He spoke with great enthusiasm and knowledge and dispelled many misunderstandings about the institute.

Mr. Lewis: Who was that?

Mr. MENSAROS: Dr. Coombe, the assistant director of the institute. I think he is an Englishman.

Mr. Lewis: That is right.

Mr. MENSAROS: These are very encouraging starts but on a somewhat small scale. I would like to see more pamphlets given to pupils in every high school; advertisements, more talks to P. & C. meetings, thorough briefings of vocational and guidance officers, and other methods of promotion. These should spell out clearly that: Firstly, the institute is not inferior to the University, only different. Whereas a university course requires a more speculative embrace of all aspects and developments of a particular science, the institute's courses with their disciplined, more methodical instructions and practical applications, prepare pupils rather to go out and use that science in industry or profession. Secondly, to emphasise the acceptance of the institute's associateship and graduate diplomas in the various fields of profession.

Mr. Davies: They have not decided on the kind of recognition to give the courses yet?

Mr. MENSAROS: As far as I know, that has not been quite decided; the exact terms of the diplomas. However, it has

been decided that certain diplomas will be given, and consideration will be given to their type, and to the diplomas granted in other States.

The pamphlets, which I have mentioned, should generally enhance the standing and reputation of the institute and its graduates, and the spirit of belonging to a campus—to an *alma mater*. In this respect the creation of the student guild is a significant first step. If the guild will develop to a responsible body—which no doubt it will—consideration might be given to include a representative of the guild as a member of the council.

With the passing of years and increasing number of institute graduates, the student guild, I trust, will be followed by the creation of some sort of body comprising all graduates of the institute, similar to the convocation of the University. Future progress might see—similar to that of the University Senate—some representatives of this body of graduates on the council of the institute.

I would like to emphasise that it would be equally important that appointments by the Governor to the council should be made upon the basis of practical contribution which these appointed members can make towards the running of the institute rather than on the basis of a reward and honour to outstanding citizens in their own right. The corollary to this is that these appointments should go to people who have special knowledge of problems of either the institute itself or of the profession, industry, commerce and other fields of the community for which the institute trains graduates.

I might be permitted to suggest here that for the necessary liaison and co-operation between the institute and the University, and for the very reason to retain the institute's characteristic—which I mentioned before—it would be desirable to include an additional position on the University Senate, that of a representative of the institute.

The University Senate, in its present composition, derived from the Wolff report of 1942—at a time when there was not even a projected image of the institute. I am sure that had the institute existed in 1942, the Wolff report would have included the institute's representative on the Senate, as does, in fact, the institute's council include the Vice Chancellor of the University to serve on the interim and permanent council of the institute.

Having reminded the House of what I term the first danger in connection with the growth of the institute—its becoming a second-rate university—and having suggested some remedies. I come to what I term the second danger, which could conceivably be that the institute, becoming more established and recognised in its own right, and acquiring the best in scientific equipment and academic staff, could easily

lose its purpose and the characteristic type of tertiary education it was created to provide.

This could happen through the understandable over-ambition of its academic staff—a sort of yet unwritten Parkinson's seventh law. It would be only human by any highly qualified academic staff member of the institute—and there are many of them with the highest qualifications already. No doubt there will be even more to indulge in research only instead of teaching, especially when they can see that a doctorate can be obtained at the University by throwing marked ping-pong balls into the sea under the auspices of research. This danger of changing the purpose of the institute has to be averted and it could be done by skilfully drawing up the Statutes.

I hope that the Minister will be kind enough to consider some of the thoughts I offer in this connection, the more so because I do not claim at all that they are all mine originally. I had the privilege to serve on an education subcommittee of our party which, when considering tertiary education, had the benefit of hearing very highly educated and experienced people, both from the University Senate and from the interim council of the institute, and most of my thoughts have been derived from the discussions with and the recommendations of those people.

To conclude, may I emphasise again how very important is the subject of this Bill—the practical tertiary education of our youth. It is infinitely more important than the recent motion of the member for Fremantle about the Barracks Archway, and I say this with the greatest respect for the honourable member, but say it deliberately because this Bill is dealing with the future generation of our State. This legislation will not evoke sentiments; it will not fill the galleries; it will not cause telegrams to be sent to members; it will not cause telephone calls to be made to members by possibly the same team of three people; and, as a reflection of the judgment of relevant importance of State matters by our Press—which, after all is said and done, does form public opinion—it will not cause an editorial to be published in the Press. It will be passed almost unnoticed. I would therefore like to put on record, again, my appreciation and very high regard of the Minister, of the interim council, and of the staff of the institute for their most commendable effort and the work they have done. I support the Bill.

MR. HARMAN (Maylands) [10.28 p.m.]: In supporting this Bill I wish to confine my remarks to one particular aspect. I will commence immediately by asking the Minister if he would consider an amendment to paragraph (f) of section 7 of the parent Act. I understand that if the

Minister does approve of this amendment there is a form in another place for an amendment to be made to the Bill. I make that request with all seriousness.

Mr. Lewis: Which section of the Act?

Mr. HARMAN: Section 7, paragraph (f). I make this suggestion with seriousness because I believe this amendment is warranted, and I intend to advance the reasons now. Paragraph (f) of section 7 reads as follows:—

subject to this Act and the Statutes to award appropriate diplomas or certificates to enrolled students who have attained standards approved by the Institute in examinations and to other persons as prescribed.

My request is that the word "degrees" be added after the words "diplomas or certificates." In my opinion, the institute is an excellent centre of learning.

The interim council has been led most ably by Dr. Robertson who is well known to all members as one of the great educationists of this State, and indeed of the Commonwealth. The present director of the institute is Dr. Williams who, again, has displayed his capabilities in the field of technology in this State in recent years. The present staff of the institute has been drawn from many quarters throughout Australia and also from overseas and its members present a very high degree of learning and possess high teaching ability. The excellence of the buildings, the facilities to learn under the best conditions, and to have all the teaching aids available at the institute, cause students to take the utmost advantage of them.

The prerequisites for entry to the institute comprise, in most cases—certainly for the senior courses—the matriculation certificate or the mature age certificate. In short, it is my intention to indicate that some of the senior courses have the width and depth of university courses in similar areas of learning. To further support this argument I will quote some comments from a keynote address by Dr. Coombs who is now the Chancellor of the Australian University. These comments were made in March, 1966, in the opening oration of Technical Training Year 1966 in Western Australia—

Technical education in British communities has suffered in the past from a number of handicaps which have led it to be regarded as the poor relation of the more honoured literary and scientific disciplines.

Firstly, it evolved from and has been largely identified with the teaching of traditional crafts and occupations which remained substantially unchanged, sometimes for centuries. This has adversely affected its pedagogy which often was hide-bound and unimaginative and unaffected by new developments in other parts of the educational structure. It has also

made it difficult to adapt its curriculum and the scope of its work to the rapidly changing needs of industry in periods of technological innovation.

Secondly, it has been isolated from the creative and growing phases of industry and technology. Research has tended to be the function of the university, the specialised research institute or the firm itself. The process of development which follows from the emergence from research of new knowledge or new processes has tended to by-pass instruments of technical education and to be taken up directly by industry itself.

Thus, those engaged in training for rapidly evolving technology have been isolated from the stimulus and excitement which comes from contact with its growing points. Their minds have not been directly stimulated by the work of scientists and research workers or their practicality sharpened by functional contact with higher management.

Thirdly, it has been widely believed that an education with technical or professional foundation provides a less liberal or culturally rich experience for the young than those based on the so called liberal arts. As a result it has tended, with the exception of unusually clear sighted or dedicated characters, not to attract as high a proportion of either teachers or scholars of outstanding merit as other branches of education. This is not true of other countries. In Europe and in particular in France, the "polytechniques" are recognised not merely as providing the highest level of professional and technical training and status but also as the source of a general education as culturally rich as that of the colleges and universities.

He goes on further to say—

Institutions of technical education have, of course, already done much to break down their identification with traditional and unchanging crafts. An ever-increasing diversity of courses related to the newer technology is presented and teaching methods and equipment are developing fast.

The point I am about to quote now is the main one in this part of the address by Dr. Coombs—

No doubt the main obstacles are inadequacy of resources and the conservatism of public and politicians.

Last Thursday week, the 3rd October, 1968, the Federal Minister for Education and Science (Mr. Fraser) was in Perth and he visited the Institute of Technology. The following remarks were reported on the

Australian Broadcasting Commission's news service on the 3rd October, 1968, in the 12.30 p.m. bulletin:—

The Federal Minister for Education and Science, Mr. Fraser, said in Perth today that it was important that Institutes of Technology will be allowed to develop and achieve the same status as universities.

Mr. Fraser had just completed an inspection of the West Australian Institute of Technology, which, he said, was the sort of establishment that was needed to achieve equal recognition with universities.

He said students with talents in fields other than those covered at university needed full training which was no way inferior to a university education.

It was important for Australia's future that it should produce top-quality technologists, and this would be done only if institutes of technology established a prestige of their own.

Commenting on the West Australian Institute, Mr. Fraser said he had not seen a complex as good anywhere in Australia. Those who had planned and built the institute had done a first-class job.

So it can be seen that the Federal Minister feels that the Western Australian institute has reached a standard whereby it is on an equal level to a university.

I now wish to refer to the Victorian Institute of Technology Act, which was assented to in 1965. Under a similar part to that contained in the Western Australian Act, section 5 (a) (iii) of the Victorian Act reads as follows:—

By awarding degrees diplomas and other awards to enrolled students of affiliated colleges who have attained standards approved by the Institute at examination in courses approved by the Institute.

So from that it can be seen that the Victorian Act includes a definition of awards. In the Western Australian Act there is mention only of diplomas and certificates. I understand also that the institute in Victoria grants a degree in pharmacy. All I am asking at this stage is that the Minister should give consideration to inserting the word "degrees" in the relevant section of our Act to give the Institute of Technology the opportunity to grant a degree in one of the courses which it feels warrants the granting of such an award.

Mr. Rushton: What would be the comparison between the degree issued by the University and the degree issued by the Institute of Technology?

Mr. HARMAN: That is, the degree in pharmacy?

Mr. Rushton: We have the degree issued by the University; what are you aiming at in regard to the degree issued by the institute?

Mr. HARMAN: At this stage I am asking that we should insert the word "degrees" in the Act so that if at some future date—perhaps at the end of this year or the end of next—the institute could have a course, say, in engineering, social science, or social work, and if it considers the course is on a par with a course in a university—not necessarily the University of Western Australia, because our University, for instance, does not have a course in social work at the graduate level, but has a post-graduate course in social science—it will be given an opportunity to manoeuvre at degree level, and not be restricted merely to the issue of a certificate. I have advanced the argument that the Victorian Act already contains that word, and the institute in Victoria has granted a degree in pharmacy.

I am prepared to concede that if the institute feels there should be some other body that would accredit some particular course—that is, it would allow some other body to decide whether that particular course warrants the issuing of a degree—I see no objection to this. The Victorian Institute of Technology already follows this course; it is provided in the Victorian Act. This accreditation will be given by another body.

To cite a particular course as an example we could look at the course in social work which is provided by the Institute of Technology. It is a 3½-year course, and in the first year it involves the study of eight subjects, with a lecture period of 17 hours a week. In the second year it involves eight subjects again; they are an extension of the subjects studied in the first year of the course. In the first year the students would study subjects such as psychology, physiology, social history, social affairs, and so on. Again, in the second year they take a further advanced course of psychology, anthropology, social case work, and social affairs. In the third year they study six subjects; administration, mental health, social case work, and so on.

In addition to the lecture theory work they are also engaged, in the second and third years, on practical case work outside the institute. In fact, as students in their second and third years, they enjoy only three weeks' holiday as a break away from the institute. For the remainder of the time they are employed either in one of the social welfare departments in Western Australia performing actual case work, or returning to the institute during the institute's learning period. This particular course is one which, perhaps, the institute might feel is worthy of degree status.

So if my suggested amendment were agreed to by the Minister, and we had a degree in this course awarded, the institute

would have the legal machinery to go ahead to make this decision. That is, by inserting this word in the relevant section in the Act it would have the legal machinery to go ahead. Briefly, that is my argument.

I did want to mention one more matter. Today I asked the Premier the following question:—

- (1) Which departments concerned with social welfare have agreed to accept as a qualification for professional division appointment the associateship in social work at the W.A. Institute of Technology?
- (2) Which departments have not and why not?

This is referring to the departments which have accepted the associateship as a qualification for appointment. These departments are the Child Welfare Department, the Department of Native Welfare, and the Probation and Parole Service of the Crown Law Department. The answer to the second part of the question—that is, which departments have not, and why not—was as follows:—

The Director, Mental Health Services, has indicated that until the associateship in social work at the W.A. Institute of Technology is recognised by the Australian Institute of Social Workers, graduates should not be considered for appointment to the Mental Health Services.

I find it very hard to understand why a Government department refuses to accept graduates from the Western Australian Institute of Technology as appointees to the professional division of the Public Service when three other departments—the Child Welfare Department, the Department of Native Welfare, and the Probation and Parole Service of the Crown Law Department—are willing to accept them.

I believe that the Director of Mental Health Services should be told by the Government that he must appoint these people. I do not believe he has the right to tell the Government that he will not accept them, especially considering the money the State and Commonwealth Governments have poured into the institute. What is the reason given for the attitude of the Director of Mental Health Services? It is because the Australian Institute of Social Workers will not recognise this course.

Who are the members of the Australian Institute of Social Workers that they should dictate to this Government that it will not allow the Mental Health Services to employ graduates from our Institute of Technology? I think this is taking things too far and we should not allow this situation to continue.

I believe that this Australian Institute of Social Workers has some influence in the Commonwealth sphere because I understand the Commonwealth Government

will not—and this is a tragedy—accept graduates from our Institute of Technology because the associateship in social work at our institute has not been recognised by the Australian Institute of Social Workers.

I do not know why these people are a law unto themselves. Certain standards must be accepted by institutes of professional people, but surely it can be demonstrated that the course at our institute is worthy of acceptance. As the Mental Health Services is a State department, I believe it should be informed by the Government that the course at the institute is worthy of acceptance and that these graduates should be employed by the Mental Health Services in the professional division.

In conclusion, I submit this argument to the Minister and hope he will consider the proposition. It is not something new as it is already in the Victorian Act and I therefore hope he will give it the consideration it deserves.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Rushton.

House adjourned at 10.49 p.m.

Thursday, the 17th October, 1968

Legislative Council

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (4): ON NOTICE

1. *This question was postponed.*

SOUTH KALGOORLIE SCHOOL Classroom Accommodation

2. The Hon. J. J. GARRIGAN asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Because of the shortage of classroom accommodation at the South Kalgoorlie School, are children being transported daily to the annexe at Boulder Central School?
- (2) If the answer to (1) is "Yes," will the Government undertake to examine the situation and ensure that sufficient accommodation is available in future at the South Kalgoorlie School?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Tenders have been called for the erection of one extra room.

SHOPPING CENTRE

Calista

3. The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY asked the Minister for Mines:
 - (1) In view of the extensive home building programme at Calista now extending southwards to Wellard Road, are there any plans for a shopping area to be developed to serve the citizens who now have to shop in Medina?
 - (2) Are the plans, if any, sufficiently advanced that a copy may be laid on the Table of the House?
 - (3) If the answer to (1) is "Yes," when will a commencement be made on the building of the centre?
 - (4) Is the site to be sold by—
 - (a) auction;
 - (b) tender;
 - (c) allocation to developers; or
 - (d) on a leasehold basis?
 - (5) (a) If by auction—on what date is the auction proposed to be held; or
(b) if by tender—when will tenders close?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) to (5) As a result of recent agreement with the local authority, the commission is now preparing brochures for the invitation of freehold or leasehold propositions by way of public tender for the development of a small group of shops and a service station on a site located on Calista Avenue, Bright Street, and Sawyer Road at Calista, which was recently zoned for this purpose. On current indications, tenders will be invited in November, 1968, and will allow three months for investors to undertake the necessary preliminaries for a commission decision in February, 1969.

HOLLYWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

Additional Work: Tender Price

4. The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY asked the Minister for Mines:
 - (1) What was the accepted tender price for additional work now nearing completion at the Hollywood High School?
 - (2) When were plans approved?
 - (3) When was work commenced?
 - (4) What is the expected completion date?
 - (5) What additional buildings are in the plans, and for what purpose will they be used?