

I did not intend to speak on this matter, because I had hoped the Minister would have given his answer and presented a solution to the housing difficulty. I thought at least he would have said that we could now give our attention to legislation because everything is in order as far as the State Housing Commission is concerned. I felt the Minister might have said that we would not have to worry Alan Johnson, the Parliamentary liaison officer, at the State Housing Commission any more. Mr. Johnson does all he can to help us, but that help is limited because of the policies of the commission.

We should be in this House to discuss legislation and laws, and not be messengers for people in our electorates with housing difficulties. It is shameful for the Minister, if he has the answer, to sit back and waste the time of every member of this House. He is waiting to see what we have to say before giving an answer. That has never been done before in the six years I have been here, and I expect reasonable courtesy would demand that the Minister explain the Government's attitude so that it could be sensibly debated. The Minister has to answer to this Parliament, and we want to hear his answer.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Fletcher.

House adjourned at 10.16 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, the 3rd August, 1967

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

QUESTIONS (14): ON NOTICE PIG INDUSTRY COMPENSATION ACT

Receipts and Payments: 1965 to 1967

1. The Hon. J. HEITMAN (for The Hon. C. R. Abbey) asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) What were the total amounts received under the provisions of the Pig Industry Compensation Act, 1942, for each of the financial years 1965-66 and 1966-67?
- (2) What number of pigs were slaughtered under the provisions of the Pig Industry Compensation Act, and what was the total amount of compensation paid in each of these years?
- (3) What is the total amount held in the fund at the 30th June, 1967?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) 1965-66—\$28,185.
1966-67—\$28,921.

- (2) 1965-66—

Number of pigs slaughtered—742.
Compensation paid—\$17,007.

- 1966-67—

Number of pigs slaughtered—947.
Compensation paid—\$28,380.

- (3) —\$290,049.

SHARK BAY ROAD

Bituminising

2. The Hon. G. E. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Mines:

Can the Minister advise the House if there is any plan envisaged for the bituminising of the Shark Bay road, from the Overlander turnoff to Denham?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied: Due to the demands of higher priority works, such as the construction and sealing of the North-West Coastal Highway, the up-grading of the Great Northern Highway, and the provision of roads in the Pilbara, the Main Roads Department was unable to allocate funds in the 1967-68 programme of works for the surfacing of the Shark Bay road from the Overlander turnoff to Denham.

MARVEL LOCH SCHOOL

Teacher's Residence: Renovation

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

Is it the intention of the department concerned to call tenders for the renovation and painting of the Marvel Loch school teacher's residence during this financial year?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

The Government Employees' Housing Authority advise that a tender has been let for complete repairs and renovations to be carried out at the Marvel Loch school teacher's quarters during this financial year.

SERPENTINE, LOGUE BROOK, WAROONA, AND WELLINGTON DAMS

Cost, and Surface Area

4. The Hon. N. McNeill asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) What was the total cost of construction (including environs) of—
 - (a) Serpentine Dam;
 - (b) Logue Brook Dam;
 - (c) Waroona Dam; and
 - (d) increased storage capacity of Wellington Dam?
- (2) What proportion of the cost of each of the foregoing has been

expended on provision of tourist facilities, landscaping and the like?

- (3) What is the total surface area of water impounded by these dams at peak capacity?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

	\$
(1) Serpentine Dam	4,045,232
Logue Brook Dam	1,521,782
Warooka Dam	1,323,738
Raising of Wellington Dam	2,552,958
	Per cent.
(2) Serpentine Dam (approximately)	8
Logue Brook Dam	1.5
Warooka Dam	3.1
Raising of Wellington Dam	2.4
	Acres
(3) Serpentine Dam	3,004
Logue Brook Dam	488
Warooka Dam	358
Wellington Dam	3,982

STAMP DUTY AND ROAD MAINTENANCE TAX

Reduction

5. The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Mines:

As the Premier is not prepared to repeal the inflationary legislation contained in the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act, No. 69 of 1965, and in the Stamp Act, No. 67 of 1966, both of which have produced very much more revenue than he estimated, will the Premier consider reducing the impact of these taxes on rural communities?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

Reduced income from these sources must result in a reduction of works and services in rural communities and accordingly the Government does not intend to take any action which would prejudice the development of those communities.

MINING OF BAUXITE

Excavation of Land in the Darling Range

6. The Hon. N. E. BAXTER asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) What area of land has been excavated to date in the Darling Range to provide bauxite supplies for the Western Aluminium N.L. refinery at Kwinana?
- (2) With the installation of a further crushing plant at the Darling Range deposits, what is the estimated area per annum that will be excavated?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) 110 acres.
- (2) The area excavated is related to ore requirements at Kwinana—not the crushing plant at Jarrahdale. It is estimated that each unit operating at Kwinana will require approximately 32 acres annually for excavation to provide sufficient ore for that unit. Two units are at present operating and a third is under construction.

CATTLE INDUSTRY COMPENSATION ACT

Receipts and Payments: 1965 to 1967

7. The Hon. J. HEITMAN (for The Hon. C. R. Abbey) asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) What were the total amounts received under the provisions of the Cattle Industry Compensation Act, 1965, for each of the financial years 1965-66 and 1966-67?
- (2) What number of cattle were slaughtered under the provisions of the Cattle Industry Compensation Act, and what was the total amount of compensation paid in each of these years?
- (3) What is the total amount held in the fund at the 30th June, 1967?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) The Cattle Industry Compensation Act was proclaimed on the 14th February, 1966, and the following balances were transferred to the Cattle Industry Compensation Fund:—

	\$
Dairy Cattle Industry (Butter Fat) Compensation Fund	135,143
Beef Cattle Industry Compensation Fund	284,277
Dairy Cattle Compensation Fund	20,000
	<hr/> \$439,420

Receipts:

	\$
14th February to the 30th June, 1966	58,014
1966-67	132,756
(2) 14th February to the 30th June, 1966:	
Number of cattle slaughtered	51
Compensation	15,800
1966-67:	
Number of cattle slaughtered	205
Compensation	30,277
(3) \$506,861.	

ROADS IN THE NORTH-WEST***Allocations under Commonwealth Aid Roads Act***

8. The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) What amounts of moneys allocated under the Commonwealth Aid Roads Act will the Government receive this year in respect of—

(a) area;

(b) population; and

(c) motor vehicle registrations; in
(i) Pilbara Statistical Division; and

(ii) Kimberley Statistical Division?

(2) Excluding grants for beef road construction, what moneys from the above sources have been allocated for expenditure this year in each division?

Road Maintenance Tax: Receipts

(3) What amount of tax was received from hauliers through the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act in each division during the last financial year?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

(1) Of the total amount of \$28,600,000 allocated to this State in 1967-68 under the Commonwealth Aid Roads formula for distribution among the States, the Pilbara and Kimberley statistical divisions will attract in respect of—

(a) Area: Pilbara, \$3,590,000; and Kimberley, \$3,400,000,

(b) Population: Pilbara, \$33,000; and Kimberley, \$36,000.

(c) Motor vehicles registered: Pilbara, \$27,000; and Kimberley, \$25,000.

(2) The 1967-68 Main Roads Department programme provides for the expenditure of Commonwealth Aid Roads funds in each division as follows:—

Pilbara—\$1,254,000.

Kimberley—\$2,444,000.

(3) Separate statistics of road maintenance contributions by statistical divisions are not available.

ROADS***Warburton Mission-Alice Springs: Upgrading***

9. The Hon. G. E. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Mines:

With the possibility of great tourist potential and growing mining activity in the Warburton Range area, has the Main Roads Department any plan for the up-grading of the road from the

Warburton Mission up to the Western Australian border en route to Alice Springs?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

The department has no plans for upgrading the road between the Warburton Mission and the Western Australian border. Many other projects have a much higher priority at present.

10. *This question was postponed.*

GASCOYNE RIVER***Investigation into Damming***

11. The Hon. G. E. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Mines:

Can the Minister advise what progress has been made with investigation of a suitable area for damming the Gascoyne River?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

Preliminary field investigations including drilling and seismic surveys have been completed for a dam at Kennedy Range. The results are now being evaluated. Similar investigations are in progress for an alternative scheme based on a dam at Rocky Pool.

MITCHELL FREEWAY***Supply of Sand***

12. The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) What quantity of sand has been deposited on the Mitchell Freeway site, and at what cost, up to the 30th June, 1967?

(2) From which fund is the money supplied?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

(1) 3,644,367 cubic yards of sand have been deposited on the embankments of the Narrows interchange. This is the only area where substantial quantities of sand have been placed on the Mitchell Freeway. The total cost to the 30th June, 1967, was \$2,260,397.

(2) Commonwealth Aid Roads Act—\$26,609; State funds—\$2,233,788.

POULTRY INDUSTRY TRUST FUND***Total Funds***

13. The Hon. J. HEITMAN (for The Hon. C. R. Abbey) asked the Minister for Mines:

What is the total amount held in the Poultry Industry Trust Fund at the 30th June, 1967?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:
\$66,943.72.

14. *This question was postponed.*

SUPPLY BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 2nd August.

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [2.49 p.m.]: During the last session of Parliament a measure entitled Kewdale Lands Development Bill was passed. We considered that this represented a different approach to the resumption and acquisition of land from the people affected in any particular area, one of the reasons being the references made by the two Ministers in their introductory speeches to the Bill. I refer to the remarks made by Mr. Court in another place, and on page 2355 of last year's *Hansard* the following appears:—

Clause 8 defines the functions of the authority. The costs and expenses of administration of the Act are to be a charge on the proceeds of the sale of the land. Provided sales reach current expectations—and we have every reason to believe they will—

In dealing with clause 13, Mr. Logan had this to say, and it appears on page 2659 of last year's *Hansard*—

Clause 13 deals with finance. It authorises the Treasurer to make advances to the authority to enable resumptions to be settled pending redevelopment and sale. Land will have to be acquired and then the redevelopment will take place, followed by a resale. Some people, of course, who are the present owners, will finish up as the final owners, provided they are prepared to join in the redevelopment scheme; but this is all provided for in the existing legislation. Subclauses (2) and (3) of clause 13 authorise the Treasurer to guarantee any sum borrowed by the development authority.

In the Committee stages of the Bill in the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Court is recorded on page 2686 of last year's *Hansard* as saying—

We have not finalised the methods to be employed, but it is important that when the land is redeveloped we attract industries which are particularly suited to this area. For instance, there are many industries which have no particular use for a standard gauge or narrow gauge railway line. In our programme of redevelopment, we have already started to lay emphasis on the need to seek industries which require this type of land and which need connection to both standard gauge and narrow gauge railway lines. The reason for this is obvious. Land of this kind is at a premium, and there is no other land within reasonable distance connected to the marshalling yard. It is also a great advantage to operate a company which needs rail connection

to both gauges for the efficient operation of its industry. Further, it is an important generator of income to the railway system.

In any event, it is good sense to have these industries serviced by the railway direct to the sites of the industries. Already a number of industries have shown an interest in establishing themselves in this area. They appreciate, of course, they will have to enter the area at a proper value, which will include the redevelopment cost; and I am not the least bit pessimistic about the prospects of recouping the redevelopment costs and getting suitable people into this area quickly.

Those remarks gave a false impression to the people whose land was to be resumed, because they felt that the area to be taken over would, in the main, be regarded as industrial, and that the compensation would be paid on that basis. That did not turn out to be the case. The large area, known as the marshalling yard, is proposed to be taken over on the basis of rural land prices, plus the normal compensation applicable to land resumption under the Public Works Act. The basis of paying compensation at rural land values when it is required for industrial purposes—therefore morally such land has an industrial value—is very difficult to arrive at by any method other than mutual agreement.

Although a particular piece of land might, at the relevant time, be gazetted as rural land, if for the purpose of acquisition it is to be used as industrial land, then I believe the valuation should justifiably be made on an industrial basis. The very fact of placing machinery on land to develop it for an industrial purpose would seem to bring the valuation onto an industrial basis. An example is this: If an oil company were to buy a piece of land for the purpose of establishing a service station or an outlet for its products, the value agreed upon would be at a very high figure.

The form of negotiation which has been conducted among the residents of Kewdale has led to disappointment on their part, because in no instance have the people who have been approached by the land resumption officers been offered anything more than a price which is basically the rural valuation.

I asked a question in the House this week as to the principles of valuation adopted by the land resumption officers, and the reply I received revolved around the principles of section 63 of the Public Works Act. One point of interest is that the term "value" is defined in the reply as "value to the owner." It is on this point that there is a sharp difference of opinion between the land resumption officers and the owners of the land concerned in the Kewdale area.

It is found that with the amount of money being offered per acre to the people whose land will be resumed, and who will have to look for other land, they suffer a disadvantage; because in an endeavour to find similar land the same distance from Perth, with similar facilities, they will not be able to purchase the same acreage with the money they receive. Alternatively, these people will have to go further afield and suffer a loss of amenities.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: Is this land which is land being reasonably developed, or is it land which is virtually vacant land?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: The areas to be resumed vary. There are several small lots in which poultry farmers have developed the land to the limit. It is on this point that they experience difficulty. If they do not receive sufficient money for, say, a 10-acre property they will have insufficient money to purchase 10 acres somewhere else. Then they will have to utilise the money received to buy less land elsewhere, which will mean they cannot have businesses as big as the ones they have been conducting. Either efficiency will suffer, or with the smaller area of land to be bought elsewhere they will not be able to get by.

There are considerably larger areas of land involved on which different valuations have been placed. The larger areas have been valued at a lower price than the areas where development has been undertaken.

One further point that is causing a great problem to these people is the valuation of a house at a depreciated price, instead of the replacement value being paid. Several of these people are living in houses which they built many years ago and they are perfectly satisfied to remain there for the rest of their lives. However, the difficulty arises when they are given a depreciated value for their homes and they are told that is all the money they will get. They then have to build new homes at today's prices. The attitude of the resumption officer is that the people are getting new homes, and it does not concern him. He deals only with the depreciated value of the house.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What was the value of this land prior to the advent of the marshalling yard?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: I do not know.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Would it have been appreciably less than it is now?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: Advertisements in current newspapers show that people not affected by the resumptions are advertising their properties at industrial prices. The point I am making is that the people wish to stay on the land. We are moving them from one parcel of land to another, and they should not suffer because of the necessary resumption.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: They are in a different category from the man who is doing nothing on his property.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: That is right. They are also in a different category from the elderly people who would accept the money and go into retirement. However, in the main these people want to continue with the form of livelihood, or semi-livelihood, which they have adopted.

Many of them took a long-term view and had in mind that the value of land increased over the years and they were looking forward to receiving a lucrative return for their investment. But when this project is interrupted by the Government, in the course of public interest, it is not possible for those people to start again.

Take, for example, the poultry farmer who came to this country 20 years ago and has been on his property for the whole of that period. He has lived on it, worked on it, and reared his family there. At this stage of his life he has not the energy or the desire to go out and locate another property to start again. His programme has been interrupted and this breaks the continuity of his life. Now, the only compensation that man can receive is the money available to him as a result of the interruption. Therefore, in that case I submit compensation has to be on a basis different from the usual valuations made under the Public Works Act.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: This is injurious affection.

The W. F. WILLESEE: I think that is one of the terms which apply. I do not want to labour this issue at any great length. In my view, land resumption officers are not getting to the real point at issue. Whilst they are giving a compensation figure, it does not measure up to the particular problem in this area.

The Public Works Act was amended in 1966 by Bill No. 41. Section 63 of the Act was amended to read as follows:—

(c) Where land is taken or resumed compulsorily—

- (i) the respondent may include in the offer of compensation such amount, not exceeding ten per centum of the amount of compensation determined under this section, as the respondent considers sufficient, for compulsory taking; or
- (ii) if a Court is determining the amount of compensation, the Court may include in the award such amount, not exceeding ten per centum of the amount of compensation determined under this section, as the Court deems proper, for compulsory taking; but where the respondent or the Court, as the case may be, is of the opinion that the application of the provisions

of this Act would not result in the assessment of compensation adequate to meet the special circumstances of the case, the respondent, or the Court, may determine such compensation as it considers adequate for compulsory taking.

I feel if that section of the Act was applied to these people, who wish to be re-located, and who wish to carry on the same type of business, they would be able to buy land in the same vicinity. The application of this section would mean that they would not have to buy a smaller section of land than they previously had. A person who has to move also has to build a new house, new sheds, etc. New machinery has to be installed and I think he should be compensated for that. It is interesting to note that a valuation placed upon some poultry sheds in one case was not sufficient to buy secondhand material for replacement sheds.

There is a great difference in the application of the Act by the land resumption officers in the developmental area of Kewdale and in the rural sector. I do not want to mix the two areas.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: I was going to ask if you were mixing the two areas. The rural section of the marshalling area is not in the Kewdale area. They are two different areas.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: Most of the resumptions are taking place in the Newburn area, which is known as Kewdale in the overall plan. The important thing is I cannot see that point A can be called an industrial area and point B a rural area, when the overall plan is for a railway which will be used entirely for industrial purposes.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: We must take notice of the zones.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: So far as zoning is concerned it is a matter of convenience at the moment. It is easy to say that because an area is rural it cannot be used. However, it is also easy to put a notice in the *Government Gazette* and call that area industrial.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: It is not as easy as that.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: Perhaps I am over-simplifying it but, in reverse, that is what the Government is doing. It will use the land for industrial purposes and buy it at rural rates.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: It will only be industrial land and be increased in value because of the developmental plan of the Government.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: Quite. Everybody would like the *status quo* of 18 months ago. The people I have mentioned do not want to get out.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Some of them want to get out because they cannot develop further in that industrial area.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: I am talking about the rural area. The industrial area is a totally different matter. I think the valuations there are in the thousands and the valuations in the rural area are in the hundreds. The point is that these people do not want to move; they are contented where they are. If they have to move then I think they should be given the complete cost for a replacement of their properties. That is not the basis of resumption at present.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: They are getting \$1,500 an acre now for rural land.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: That is about the highest price paid for it—about \$1,500.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: That is not a bad price for rural land.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: But it is developed land.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: But it is not a bad price for rural land.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: That is all very well. If the Minister had five or six acres of land and, as a resumption price for that land he was given only sufficient to enable him to buy three acres elsewhere, he would not like it, particularly if it was through no fault of his own that he had to move. We all know that this land has to be resumed and that we have to progress. We on this side supported the Bill which provided for it, but we also support the right of the individual to be given a fair go in the situation that is developing. At the moment these people are not being given sufficient reimbursement for their land to enable them to settle elsewhere. The 14 or 15 people who are the principal ones concerned will, in the long run, be contributing a good deal towards the cost of the scheme.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: They are that few in number?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: There are 14 homes involved but there would be 30 odd people in all affected, and some of these have broad acres. However, there are 14 homes with small surroundings.

However, as I said at the beginning, I do not want to labour the point although I intend to pursue it as far as I possibly can in the hope that these people will get a just compensation, and I believe this is possible in view of the amendment which was made to the Act last year. The people concerned should be given satisfaction, without dealing with their claims in an extravagant way. It should be possible to give satisfaction to both sides.

THE HON. R. THOMPSON (South Metropolitan) [3.12 p.m.]: I support the Bill which is one of those measures giving us the right to speak about many

subjects. I wish to support Mr. Willesee, too, because I agree entirely with everything he said. In the area I represent I have encountered many cases where people are being pushed around through resumption of their properties; and I use the words "pushed around" advisedly for the reason that at no time have I found adequate compensation being paid, or compensation which would enable the people affected to re-establish themselves on some other site.

That leads me to the thought that the Minister for Local Government should have a very close look at the position to see whether the ban on the five and 10-acre subdivisions can be lifted; this is, the ban he brought in a couple of years ago.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: It is only because of all these subdivisions that these fellows cannot buy land now at a cheap rate. That's the trouble.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is not the trouble at all.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Yes, it is.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is not the trouble at all.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: That is where the values got out of hand.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Anything that is left now is worthless so far as a farming proposition is concerned—or at least that is the position of these people who are having their properties compulsorily resumed. They cannot set themselves up in business again.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: They cannot buy the land because of the price.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: So much for that.

I have had several complaints made to me and in view of the Press statements, and the concern being felt by all sections of the community, including the Police Department, regarding the carnage on the roads, and under-age drinking, I feel it is time something was done to try to block off the source from which young people are getting liquor.

On four occasions during the past month I have been in a motorcar which has been driven into drive-in bottle departments and on only one occasion did the person who served us go to the driver's side of the car; at the others, as is common with most drive-in bottle departments, the attendants went to the passenger side of the car and took the order.

My daughter has been in my car on several occasions when we have driven into drive-in bottle departments and she has ordered two bottles of beer, and paid for them. Admittedly I have been sitting alongside her but that is what happened. This was not done as a trap, or anything

like that; it was just force of circumstances. However, when these drive-in bottle department attendants are busy they come up to the car and they do not look into the car to see who is ordering the liquor. The attendant merely says, "What do you want?" and then returns with the beer or spirits, puts the bottles into the car and takes the money. My daughter is 13 years of age and I might have been only 16 years of age for all the drive-in attendant knew.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: If you were driving a car at 16 years of age you would have been in trouble for that.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I should have said 17 years of age. However, there are many people who drive cars at 16 years of age, 15 years of age, and even younger than that—they steal them and drive them.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The police and the courts deal with them when they catch up with them.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is so.

The Hon. J. Dolan: But they do not always catch up with them.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is the point I am making. The police should endeavour to control drive-in bottle departments more strictly because this is the source of supply of liquor to young people. Only last week I observed four young chaps who drove into a drive-in bottle department. The four of them got out of the car, went inside the building for three or four minutes and then came out with wine and so on; and I would guarantee that not one of those lads was 21 years of age. However, they are free to go and buy liquor in the majority of drive-in bottle departments—or at least they are in the ones I have seen.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: They are not free, you know.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: They are free as far as the publican is concerned; because the publican could not care less so long as he is getting his money—at least that is the position as I saw it in hotels which are owned by the largest hotel owner in Western Australia.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: They are not free. It is breaking the law and you know it.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: They are breaking the law completely, and without any concern about it.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I do not condone it but I say they are not free.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I do not condone it, either. However, that is the position and I believe the police must do something about it; the Licensing Court must do something about it; and when these young people are caught the publicans' licenses should be taken from them.

If a person under age is caught buying liquor he is prosecuted, and if he is under the influence of alcohol his driver's license is suspended. What is the difference between a driver's license and a publican's license? The same action should be taken in both cases.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Do you think the permissible drinking age should be lowered?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: There is an answer to that one, too. If the permissible drinking age is to be lowered to 18 years of age—and that seems to be the fashion these days—I would not have many complaints about it because young people are drinking at an earlier age now than used to be the case. However, if that is done I think we will have to extend the age at which a driver's license may be taken out to 21 years; so that if young people want to drink before they are 21 they cannot drive. In that case they would have to wait until they were 21 before they could drive a motor vehicle.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I am surprised at you. You do not disagree with lowering the drinking age but you want to extend the age at which somebody can get a driver's license because of the irresponsibility shown in driving cars.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I would rather see this type of drinking made lawful than allow it to continue unlawfully, as is the position now.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Really now! Because the law is being broken you would like to see it made lawful so that they would not be breaking the law. That is not the way you usually argue.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Do not twist my words.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: There is another aspect into which I feel the Licensing Court and the police should look. It has been brought to my notice that there are certain canned concoctions of alcoholic liquor which are on sale at the moment, which can be taken by young people in cars to stomps and other places where young people gather. These canned drinks are being given particularly to girls who, unsuspectingly, think they are being offered a cool drink. It is not possible for them to discern the exact nature of the drink in the dark. I have never tasted vodka, but I believe that the vodka and orange mixture which is sold, and which is being given to young girls, is a very potent and heady drink. The result is that the girls get quite drunk. There is no doubt, of course, that these potent canned concoctions are given to the girls for a very good reason.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You cannot blame the hotelkeepers for that. You must blame the designing characters who give the girls these drinks.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I did not blame the hotelkeepers. I merely said that the Licensing Court and the police should look into this matter of the sale of canned concoctions.

Quite candidly, I do not think it is necessary that alcoholic mixtures of this nature should be put into cans, particularly when they can be drunk by unsuspecting people who might think they are cool drinks. That is the sort of thing that is happening.

The other night at about 11 o'clock a person who lives not far from me came to my home and asked me to go and see her daughter who had been out. She had been given a can which, to all intents and purposes, contained a cool drink; but when the matter was thoroughly investigated it was found that the can contained vodka and orange, and the girl was half-drunk. She did not want a drink of that nature as she is a good girl. Some restriction should be placed on the sale of such liquor, particularly when it is drunk quite unsuspectingly by people who imagine they are being offered a cool drink. So much for that aspect.

I have a few letters in my hand which deal with the damage done to a home in Spearwood, and it was caused by the construction of the standard gauge railway. During the construction of this railway the owner of the house and the land had some of his land resumed for the railway, and this brought the line to within approximately 28 ft.—it could have been 22 ft.—of his front door, or the nearest corner of his home.

Before the line could be placed in this area it was necessary to blast away a hill. The contractors employed on the job sent some valuers to have a look at the house in order to assess its condition at that stage. This was done six or eight months prior to the commencement of the work.

Ultimately some 230 charges were detonated—some of them were detonated up to 60 at a time—and this resulted in serious damage to the house, which further deteriorated as time progressed. I know this house quite well, because I have visited it regularly over a few years. The first time I visited the house was 27 or 28 years ago.

I would like members to picture the type of home in question, because I imagine they have seen this type of house before. It was built by a Yugoslav who quarried the stone and sawed every piece of it by hand. It was one of those craftsman jobs. There was no iron or steel over the doors or the windows. Everything was made so that it keyed and fitted into place. It was a work of art and a real craftsman's job.

The house in question was in perfect condition structurally when the present owner bought it. Some four or five years ago he contacted a well-known firm of contractors in Fremantle—an old established firm—with a view to having certain renovations and additions made to the house. This

was done, including a new roof, and the installation of cellite in several of the rooms. The house was put into tip-top condition both inside and out.

At the present moment the junction of the interior walls and the exterior walls is completely broken away. It is virtually an island sitting up in the room. The same thing applies to the adjoining walls of the two front rooms. An eastern side wall which was recently cement-rendered has cracked right through, as has the stone work, which is 14 in. thick.

When this damage first appeared the owner approached the railway construction contractor, who has an office on the site, close to where he lives, and complained on numerous occasions of the damage being done to his home. All these complaints were verbal and there was no record either of them or of the investigations carried out.

This situation continued till the 12th April, last year. When the person in question found he was getting no satisfaction from the contractor, he wrote to the Taxation Department, which was conducting valuations and resumptions of some of his property for the standard gauge construction work.

He did not keep a copy of the letter at that stage, but he tells me he listed the damage that was done to his home, and asked for some remedial action. On the 14th April, he received the following reply:—

I have to acknowledge your letter of the 12th inst. regarding the above work through your property. A copy of your letter has been forwarded to the Railway Department for their urgent action regarding the damage caused to the house, and no doubt they will contact you as soon as possible.

Then it goes on to say something about his assessments and finishes by saying—

An officer of the department will call and discuss the problems.

This letter is dated the 14th April, 1966. The officer mentioned called, as did some officers from the Railway Department. On the 26th January, 1967, there were several telephone calls, and personal complaints made, and several letters written to the various parties. Between April, 1966, and January, 1967, he received no concrete advice as to what would be done, but a letter from the Public Works Department dated the 26th January, 1967, file No. 236/65, states—

Dear Sir and Madam,

Your claim that structural damage has been caused to your property has been investigated by both the contractors for the railway and the departmental inspector of works and buildings.

Both reports make it clear that there are defects in the building, but it is evident that the new railway construction and operation are not the prime cause.

It is considered therefore that the Department has no liability in this matter, but as an act of grace, I am prepared to recommend payment of \$300 to enable you to carry out necessary repairs.

Prior to the receipt of this letter, the owner saw fit to get in touch with the builders who had previously renovated the house and put it in the A1 condition which I previously described. The builders submitted a quote and estimated that it would take \$1,560 to remedy the damage that had been done. The owner had already carried out additions to the property at a cost of £5,000, and a further \$1,560 was needed to put the house back into its original condition.

I wrote quite a lengthy letter to the Under Secretary for Works on the 23rd February, 1967, telling him that some 230 charges of explosives had been detonated adjacent to the property, that structural damage had taken place, and asked him to meet the cost of repairs to this building. It is interesting to note that the renovations to bring this house up to a modern standard had taken place four years previously, yet the Under Secretary for Works in his letter stated that the railway construction and operation were not the prime cause of the present damage. Whether that be so or not, let us be generous and say it may not have been the prime cause.

I think it was. The damage has come about due to the blasting during the construction of this railway line and the operation of large heavy haulage trains travelling at high speeds past this house day and night. Yet a measly amount of \$300 is offered as compensation.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Did you say previously the damage was caused by the detonation of the charges and now that it was caused by trains going backwards and forwards?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Originally, the detonation of the charges opened up cracks in the building which were there long before the line was laid. Now, however, the cracks have opened up from hair-line cracks to about three-quarters of an inch wide. The key blocks of stone that were sawn to key over the doors and windows are in a bad condition as the mortar has fallen out. This mortar would be either $\frac{1}{4}$ in. or $\frac{3}{4}$ in. thick and the doorways and windows are just holding in position—they are loose and swaying around.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: For what was the £5,000 spent on the building?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: As I said before, this was for a new roof, new

ceilings, painting, and a brick wall on the back of the house.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That is a fair amount of money, and you said pounds.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I should have said £2,500.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It makes a difference when you divide it into two.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I apologise, as I meant to say \$5,000, because pounds are out. It was not my intention to mislead the House I can assure the Minister of that.

The Hon. J. Dolan: They were not out when you got that information.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: On the 23rd February I asked that portion of this property be resumed with the house, that the people be compensated, and the subdivision be allowed to excise portion of the property and the house. I also asked that access be provided for these people and that they be paid sufficient compensation to enable them to build a comparable house away from the railway line on the back of their block. After several phone calls to the department between the 23rd February and about the 18th May, and after several promptings and reminders I eventually received a reply as follows:—

I refer to your letter of February 23rd concerning a claim for compensation for damage to property at 51 Railway Parade, Spearwood alleged to have been caused by the standard gauge railway construction.

This matter has again been referred to the Civil Engineering Branch of the Railway Department, which is the controlling body in relation to the activities purported to have caused the damage and it has been agreed that the Inspector of Works and Buildings make a further inspection of the premises, in particular to ascertain whether there has been any change in the damage since his first inspection was made. I will advise you of any further developments in this matter.

I have not been advised any further. I gave a copy of that letter to the Minister for Railways and I have followed it up with another letter to Mr. O'Connor. However, I am receiving much the same reply to the effect that this work is being investigated and that officers will have a look at the matter. The position has now reached the stage where the department has some type of sticky tape—I do not know its correct name and I am not trying to disparage anyone, or the tests being done—which is placed over the cracks to see whether they open up further. The Minister for Railways has said that a seismograph test will be taken when the trains are in operation.

My object in bringing this matter before the House is to advise that if adequate

compensation is not paid or a resumption does not take place, then later this session—I am not in any particular hurry—I intend, by motion, to take some action in this House. Last year, in connection with the blasting at Cockburn Sound it was necessary to move a motion, but this was ultimately defeated.

I would like to extend an invitation to all members of this Chamber, including you, Mr. President, to go down to the area to see the position for themselves. I would like to pick them up and drive them down to show them the house, because it is a shocking state of affairs when people, over the course of 18 months, have to suffer the inconvenience and the dread of danger associated with this house because of a public work. I can assure members that these people are almost nervous wrecks. I would emphasise that they are very decent and sincere people.

I have many letters here, but some of them are of a personal nature and I do not wish to quote them. Each letter is of a pleading nature and it emphasises the disgraceful way in which the people concerned are being treated. They refer to the noise caused by the trains going by, particularly at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. When trains are carting wheat during the wheat season, they are doubled in size and there are engines in front and at the rear. I do not know the tonnage but I believe it is approximately a 3,000 to 4,000-ton payload which these trains carry. They travel at speeds which these people estimate are in the vicinity of 50 miles an hour. This is not my estimation, because I have not seen these trains which have such a carrying capacity.

Members can well imagine the vibration that would take place so close to a home, and the resultant damage. Yet we find that for a long period of time nothing has been done except to offer \$300 as an excuse. I use the word "excuse" deliberately because that is all it is—it is an act of grace. The payment is made as an excuse for not completely repairing or resuming this property. These people cannot sleep on any one night without being awakened by the heavy haulage trains going past their homes.

This was the subject of a newspaper report earlier this year—in about February I believe—when a feature article on the damage that was caused appeared in *The West Australian*. However, it seems to me that irrespective of whether newspapers take up the cudgels on behalf of these people, or whether members of Parliament take up the complaints, the departments concerned are loth to do anything. I do not mind which way this remark is likely to be taken. The departments are loth to do anything to alleviate the suffering of these people and the damage which is caused to their homes.

My offer stands to all members of this Chamber. I will be only too willing to take them, at their convenience, to the areas concerned in order to substantiate my case, which I hope I will not have to present to the House later this session.

Sitting suspended from 3.43 to 4.1 p.m.

THE HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (North) [4.1 p.m.]: Speaking in support of the Supply Bill I wish to draw the attention of the House and the Government to two very serious disabilities which the people in remote areas of the State—particularly those in the northern areas—are suffering. Number one disability is the continual rise in the cost of foodstuffs in the north-west and far northern towns; and number two disability is the high cost of electrical power.

A good deal of concern has been expressed by people throughout the north over disability number one; that is, the rising cost of foodstuffs in particular, and the increasing cost of commodities in general. This concern is found not only among the people who work and live in the area, but also among others not only from other parts of the State, but also other parts of Australia. Recently, at Derby, I attended a civic reception to representatives of the Employers Federation, some of whom came from the Eastern States, and they were extremely concerned about the high cost of commodities in the northern areas of the State. They gave vent to their feelings during this civic reception and they asked several questions of the shire president and the Assistant Administrator of the North-West as to why the cost of goods in the north was so high. The only reply that could be given to them was that the high cost of transport was the principal factor but the inflated price of goods was also the result of other measures.

Two legislative measures represent the main cause of this inflationary trend in the cost of goods. I have already referred to them in a question which I asked since the commencement of this session. One is the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act which imposes a tax on road hauliers and has the effect of increasing the cost of the carriage by road of all goods going to country areas. These increases are also reflected in the State shipping charges in recent years.

Another hidden factor which has caused an increase in the price of goods in the north is the amendment that was made to the Stamp Act last year. This legislation virtually imposes a turnover tax on every article sold. There is no doubt whatsoever that already during this year there has been a very noticeable increase in the cost of goods in north-west towns. Of course, such increases have also been felt in the metropolitan area. By way of a question on Tuesday last, I asked the Premier whether he might consider abolishing the Road Maintenance (Contribu-

tion) Act and the relevant Stamp Act, which has brought about an increase in the price of goods in order to alleviate the existing situation, and the Premier simply replied with a brief "No."

I followed that up with a question I asked today, which is as follows:—

As the Premier is not prepared to repeal the inflationary legislation contained in the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act, No. 69 of 1965, and in the Stamp Act, No. 67 of 1966, both of which have produced very much more revenue than he estimated, will the Premier consider reducing the impact of these taxes on rural communities?

The reply to that question is not a brief "No," but it means the same, because it reads—

Reduced income from these sources must result in a reduction of works and services in rural communities and accordingly the Government does not intend to take any action which would prejudice the development of those communities.

That is merely a roundabout way of saying "No." A great deal of development took place in the northern areas before the two taxes to which I have referred were mooted or came into operation. For instance, there was the development of new towns close to the iron ore projects. Those towns were developed without the imposition of these taxes on the people in the north, and the residents of those townships are given a guarantee that they will be able to buy their goods at Perth prices. Further, they are supplied with electricity and water free of charge. Each resident lives in a red brick house with a tiled roof, which every member of this House has seen. The house is also air conditioned to offset the extremely high temperatures. The rent of a three-bedroomed house in those towns is about \$6 a week. I do not think it is as much as that, but I will say it is \$6 a week.

Therefore, to suggest that development in the north may be retarded by some alleviation of imposts on the people residing in outback areas seems to be rather contrary to what has actually occurred in those parts. We know, of course, that the lifting of such imposts will have no effect on the development of the Mt. Newman iron ore project and similar projects. As a result, I am very disappointed the Government has not seen fit to arrest the rising cost of goods in the north because it means that the people in the northern areas will simply have to put up with the position.

It has been suggested that those people have never had it so good, or words to that effect. It has been suggested that the working man today has never enjoyed such prosperity. Families of men working in the north perhaps have never enjoyed such large incomes as they are receiving today,

but on account of the high costs of goods the wives of those men have to work as well in order to offset these costs. Everything seems to be upside down. It is a fact that meat products from the Kimberleys find their way back to the towns in those parts after being exported. That applies to Derby particularly, and possibly to Broome.

In such a situation costs must rise and the Government should do something in an endeavour to alleviate the existing acute position. It should attempt to do something to arrest inflationary trends with prices. We know, of course, the Government took steps to ensure that the arbitration system which provided for basic wage adjustments was abolished, with the result that the rising costs which followed mean nothing to the Government. It has nothing to say whatsoever and the family man is the loser all along the line.

My other complaint relates to the high cost of electrical power in the north. In April of this year members representing provinces in the north and north-west attended on the Minister for the North-West and suggested that some of the money obtained by way of royalties on the production of iron ore be used to offset the high cost of electrical power. It was suggested that the money could represent a subsidy with a view to bringing down the cost of electricity to somewhere near the charges in the metropolitan area.

After some months of consideration of that suggestion, the Minister for the North-West advised there was no prospect of royalties from iron ore production being used for that purpose. To bolster up that argument it was stated that the Government does not actually receive these royalties in cash because the Grants Commission deducts the total amount of royalties from the grants received by the State. We are not concerned about what the Grants Commission does; we are interested in the royalties being used to benefit those who reside in the areas where the royalties are being earned. That is the sole basis of our argument.

However, as that proposal will not come to fruition, I have made myself busy in an endeavour to find another avenue whereby some relief can be given to the people in the north. I intend to appeal to the Government on this occasion to give my proposal some consideration. The activities of the State Electricity Commission cover most of the South-West Land Division and I found that consumers of electricity in the metropolitan area are, in effect, subsidising very heavily those people residing in country areas who are supplied with electricity by the State Electricity Commission. To give the House some indication of the true position, I have compiled a few figures.

According to the Auditor-General's report for 1966 the overall picture of the financial results of the State Electricity

Commission shows that for the year 1964-65 the metropolitan system earned a profit of \$2,348,666; the south-west scheme showed a loss of \$675,134; the Northam zone showed a loss of \$104,406; the Geraldton zone showed a loss of \$18,716; and the Albany gas undertaking showed a loss of \$16,574. The figures of profit given by the Auditor-General do not correspond with the figures given by the Minister in reply to a question asked by me yesterday. According to the Auditor-General's report the trading results reveal that the zones supplied by the State Electricity Commission showed a combined loss of \$814,836, which reduced the overall profit of the commission to \$1,533,836.

For the year 1965-66 the figures are little better. The metropolitan system showed a profit of \$2,657,658; the south-west power scheme a loss of \$466,343; the Northam zone a loss of \$147,016; the Geraldton zone a loss of \$58,420; and the Albany gas undertaking a loss of \$15,590. The overall loss on these electricity supplies outside the metropolitan area was \$687,369, and this reduced the total profit of the S.E.C. to \$1,970,289.

That shows quite clearly that the rural areas are receiving quite a substantial subsidy from the metropolitan consumers. My purpose in bringing this matter forward is to endeavour to get the commission, the Minister, or the Government to set their eyes a little further than the wheatbelt, to the areas of the State where the people really need help. If the metropolitan pie is to be consumed around the wheatbelt and the metropolitan area, that is not good enough. The people in the outback areas of the State should get their share of the crust as well.

It would not amount to very much to take over all the undertakings in the north-west, and to sell the current at the same rate as current is sold in the rural areas; that is, according to the information given in reply to a question I asked yesterday, a uniform rate known as the standard and uniform country tariff, under which the first 12 units per month are sold at 5.80c per unit, the next 12 units at 4.10c, the next 4,976 units at 2.70c, the next 135,000 at 1.85c, the next 360,000 units at 1.65c, and all over 500,000 units at 1.40c per unit. The rate for over 500,000 can be left out, because it is of no concern to the north-west towns.

In the same question I asked—

Is it the intention of the Government to extend S.E.C. services throughout the State at a uniform charge to consumers?

The reply given by the Minister was—

It is the intention to extend the commission's central system as far as is economically feasible at the commission's standard and uniform country tariff.

That means the central system is to be confined to the wheatbelt; but that is not good enough. If there is to be a standard and uniform tariff it should apply throughout the State, and not merely to some sections of the State.

I have no complaint against the rate for electricity in the metropolitan area, or in the rural areas. The housewives in those areas are able to use electric stoves, other electrical equipment, and air conditioners. In the metropolitan area an air conditioner is not an expensive amenity, while an electric stove is almost a necessity; but nobody in the north can afford to use such electrical appliances, much less an air conditioner. Their use is out of the question and for a very good reason.

The charges for electricity in the north are as follows:—

Onslow—the first 20 units at 18c, the next 40 units at 12c, the next 40 at 10c, the balance at 8c. That is, \$12.40 for the first 100 units.

I would point out that the charge in the metropolitan area is \$1.90 for the first 100 units, and in the rural areas it is roughly \$2.94 for the first 100 units. I have not the figures of the profit and loss for Onslow or Wittenoom, but I can give them for most of the other towns in the north. To continue, the charges for electricity in the north are—

Roebourne—the first 25 units at 18c, the next 25 units at 14c, and the balance at 8c. That is, \$12 for the first 100 units.

For the year ended the 30th June, 1966, the trading result of the undertaking, which is controlled by the Public Works Department, showed a surplus of \$21,260. Is it any wonder with those charges for electricity?

The charges at Marble Bar are—

The first 25 units at 17c, the next 25 units at 12c, and the balance at 9c. That is, \$11.75 for the first 100 units. The balance is charged at the rate of \$9 per 100 units.

The Marble Bar undertaking showed a loss in its operations of \$1,981.

The charges at Port Hedland are—

The first 40 units at 10c, and the balance at 5c. That is, \$7 per 100 units. The balance is charged at \$5 per 100 units.

At those charges the undertaking, after paying interest and sinking fund, showed a profit of \$11,751 for the year ended the 30th June, 1966. This undertaking is run by the shire, but I understand it will be taken over by the S.E.C. shortly.

The charges at Broome are—

A flat rate of 8c. That is, \$8 per 100 units.

The undertaking at Broome is also run by the shire, and for the year 1965-66 it showed a profit of \$2,580, after the payment of interest and sinking fund.

The charges at Derby are—

First 30 units at 10c, next 20 units at 8c, and the balance at 6c. That is, \$7.60 for the first 100 units. The balance is at the rate of \$6 per 100 units.

Derby showed a profit of \$59,541 for the year 1965-66.

The charges at Halls Creek are—

A flat rate of 17.5c per unit. That is, \$17.50 per 100 units. There is a charge of 10c per week for meter rent.

The undertaking at Halls Creek is run by the Government, and for 1965-66 it showed a surplus of \$4,685. Is it any wonder, with a charge of 17.5c per unit?

The charges at Wyndham are—

First 20 units at 18c, next 25 units at 12c, next 80 units at 8c. That is, \$11 for the first 100 units. The balance is at \$5 per 100 units.

The undertaking at Wyndham showed a loss of \$9,028, after paying interest and sinking fund.

The charges at Kununurra are—

A flat rate of 5c for domestic supply, and 6.25c per unit for commercial purposes. That is, \$5 per 100 units.

Usually the commercial rate is lower than the domestic rate, but that does not appear to be so in this case. This undertaking showed a profit of \$18,606; and it is run by the Government.

Here we find that the people who are really in need of comforts to make it easier to live in the tropical and subtropical areas of this State are being charged high prices for electricity, to cover the cost of running the undertaking as well as to provide a margin of profit; whereas in the lower part of the State, which enjoys a more congenial climate and possesses more amenities, the electricity undertakings are running at a loss; and that loss is borne by the metropolitan consumers. If the pie is to be cut up then the pieces should be spread over the whole State. Let those in the north enjoy some of the comforts which are enjoyed by the people in the south.

Looking at the Auditor-General's report one cannot help wondering whether an inquiry should not be made into the State Electricity Commission.

The report is not a good one and it seems quite obvious that it was held up last year before it was tabled. It is the 1966 annual report and was addressed to The Hon. C. D. Nalder, Minister for Electricity, Treasury Building, Perth. It was from Sir Alex Reid, the chairman, and was dated the 29th September, 1966. However, it was not tabled here until the 25th November, 1966, which was to have been the final sitting day of Parliament. We did not finish on that Friday, but had to come back on the following Tuesday. Why did it take so long to table this report? Why does one have to delve back into the archives to get such reports.

Practically every session I complain that reports from departments are made available too late in the session. In this particular case it looks as though the report was designed to reach us too late, because it was tabled on the very last day of the session. It was to be the last day, but because the Assembly did not finish its business we were back here on the Tuesday. The answers to my questions, asking why the reports have not been tabled, have usually been that the reports are at the printers. That is not good enough. We do not need the printed report. Let us have one such as I have been quoting from, or one like the type written Auditor-General's report which was tabled on the 25th November last year. That is all we need and we would then be able to use some intelligent thought, and express such thought in this House as we are expected to do.

I suspect that the remarks of the Auditor-General might have had something to do with this report. On page 2 of the report he makes two complaints. I am quoting from the report to the Chairman of the State Electricity Commission and it is dated the 10th November, 1966. In paragraph 7 of the report the following appears:—

By-laws prescribing charges.

Under section 43(1)(c) of the State Electricity Commission Act, the Commission may, with the approval of the Governor, make by-laws prescribing scales of charges, etc. As previously reported, the present charges have not been gazetted, nor have the by-laws made under the Government Electric Works Act, 1914, been cancelled.

So the Auditor-General has drawn attention to this prior to 1966, but nothing has happened. He went on to report—

It was stated that charges are not gazetted because they are accepted by the consumer when signing the contract of service.

Well, that may be so but it is not valid. It is distinctly stated that the commission may, with the approval of the Governor, make by-laws prescribing scales of charges. The by-laws should appear in the *Government Gazette* before they become operative, but the commission takes no notice of that, apparently. In paragraph 8 of the report, the Auditor-General had this to say—

The basis for the collection of revenue for the various electricity and gas undertakings is a system of folders containing meter-cards. As it is not known whether these constitute a complete record of all consumers, the Audit is not in a position to satisfy itself that all consumers are being charged.

I do not know whether the Minister has made any inquiry, but if he read the re-

port before it was tabled he certainly hung on to it until the last day of the session so that nobody else would see it. The report rested on the Table of the House from the Friday until the Tuesday, and then it went into the archives. I think the State Electricity Commission might, perhaps, warrant some kind of inquiry to see exactly what is happening.

We know there has been disputation between the coalminers and the Country Party members in connection with the price of oil at Kwinana. Apparently the commission and the Minister are not prepared to tell the consumers what the commission is paying for the oil. However, I hope somebody will tell the metropolitan consumers that they are paying for electricity supplied to rural areas.

I hope the Government will take a serious view of the plight of the people living in the small communities outback. I refer to electricity and other costs. The Government has decided it will not reduce the cost of transport or reduce taxation, but it should be able to use some of the revenue from the S.E.C., or from the Consolidated Revenue Fund—or whatever fund it likes to use—to reduce the cost of electricity in the north so that people who really need air conditioning and electrical appliances will be able to enjoy the benefit of them. As I say, in the new towns such facilities are part and parcel of the houses there.

Most members have seen these facilities. Surely the Government will not let the older towns stay back in the days of the camels and mules, the Coolgardie cooler, and the waterbag. Why are those people not entitled to enjoy some of the conveniences available to people living in what the Minister describes as the central area of the State?

THE HON. V. J. FERRY (South-West) [4.38 p.m.]: I rise to support the Bill before us and I will take the opportunity, as previous speakers have done, to speak on a subject which may not be directly concerned with finance. However, indirectly it is concerned with finance.

We hear a lot about progress in the north. By the same token we hear it stated by those with erroneous opinions that because of the development which is taking place in the north-west and the northern part of this State the south-west is suffering. I deny that the south-west of Western Australia is at a disadvantage because of the progress in the north, and nobody should say that the southern part of the State is stagnating.

I do not wish to delay the House very long on this theme, but I feel I am obliged to mention this state of affairs because there are people in our community who belittle the efforts of the Government in the southern sector. I am privileged to

represent the South-West Province in this Chamber and I feel I am qualified, to some extent, to make some figures clear. The South-West Province does not cover the whole of the south-west, geographically, but the statistics I will quote from do cover the southern area.

May I refer to the comparatively recent figures published by the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, which include population trends, motor vehicle registrations, and the like. I have taken the trouble to observe the statistical divisions of the south-west, and what is known as the southern agricultural division. In 1961 the south-west statistical division had a population of 71,637. In 1966, five years later, the same division contained 73,030 people, which is an increase of approximately 1,400. That is not a big increase, but it is an improvement. Now I turn to the southern agricultural statistical division and I find that in 1961 the total population in that area was 41,623. In 1966, it had risen to 44,541.

I can carry this exercise a little further and refer to shire areas within the particular divisions. It is interesting to note that in my particular electoral division—the electorate of the South-West Province—under the old boundaries the net decrease in population is 1,528, and under the new boundaries to come into effect from the next State elections, the net decrease will be 1,364.

If I wished to emphasise reasons for this I could, perhaps, point to one particular shire which shows the biggest decrease in population. I refer to the Shire of Manjimup which had a decrease from 10,195 in 1961 to 9,167 in 1966; a net figure of 1,028. As far as I could see, this was the biggest decrease in any shire in the south-west.

There is a reason for this. Firstly, in the Manjimup area during 1960-61 there was a collapse of the tobacco industry; an industry indigenous to that area. That was a valuable industry to the extent that in some years Manjimup benefited in excess of \$1,000,000 by way of returns from it. That industry collapsed practically overnight, and with a loss of this magnitude the whole area must be affected. It was not the fault of any one Government; it was because the particular product was not acceptable in many respects.

In addition, over the last few years the timber industry has been highly mechanised, and this trend is continuing. The timber mills throughout the south-west today are turning out a greater volume of products than ever before.

I quickly thought of five timber mill towns in the south-west where the mills have either been renewed or new mills established. At Quininnup a new modern mill has been built in place of the old mill, and the same applies at Northcliffe.

New mills have been constructed and are operating at Pemberton, Nannup, and Jardee. Because I mention those five towns it may perhaps be thought that the mills belong to the one company whereas, in fact, each mill is under the control of a separate timber company. I believe this is indicative of the progress that is taking place in the south-west in the timber industry. The milling companies are renewing their equipment and, in fact, are building new mills to take advantage of the raw product.

Because of the modernisation of the mills there has been a decrease in the work force; and this is not a bad thing because in every section of industry today labour is at a premium. It is hard to get skilled men and it is to the advantage of the workers in the timber industry that they, too, should work under better conditions in more modern mills which have better equipment. That is only right and just.

A further factor in the decrease of population in the south-west generally is the fact that many small landowners are selling their properties to their bigger neighbours and are perhaps leaving rural pursuits. In fact, many are leaving the south-west area altogether, and this is largely a legacy from the early pioneering days, particularly from the group settlement schemes. Although the population is decreasing to some extent because of these small landowners selling their properties, it is gratifying to me to think that whereas in the past they might have been small landowners who had to eke out a meagre existence—and I use the word "existence" advisedly because they had few comforts, and had no alternative but to live under poor conditions—today, because they have been able to sell out, if they wished to do so, many of them are in a different position. This has enabled their neighbours to build up more economic properties, and the small landholders have been able to buy other properties elsewhere which has enabled them, too, to better themselves.

Personally I think this is what should be done. If a person wants to better himself he should be enabled to do so; and by selling their properties many small landowners are able to better themselves. They are able to move from one environment to another and in many cases this is of benefit to themselves and their families. This trend is not peculiar to Western Australia; it is an Australia-wide trend in rural development as I am sure you appreciate, Mr. President, because of your rural knowledge.

When we speak of the south-west, and the people who live there, it is necessary to think of what we can do to take advantage of the raw materials in that area. A moment or two ago I mentioned the loss of the tobacco industry to the Manjimup district, but there is a new industry which

is largely replacing the vacuum caused by the loss of the tobacco industry—I refer to the tourist industry. This industry is bringing foreign capital and people to the south-west in ever-increasing numbers.

It may be of interest to members to know that recently the Manjimup Tourist Bureau conducted a survey and this survey was given a tremendous amount of thought. After research the bureau came up with certain figures to the effect that for the calendar year ended the 31st December, 1966, the tourist industry was worth no less than \$330,000 to the Manjimup township alone—that was from passing trade. This is a step in the right direction and will go a long way towards replacing something that was lost when the tobacco industry went out of existence.

If Manjimup is benefiting from the tourist industry to the extent I have just mentioned, many other towns throughout Western Australia, and particularly in the south-west, must also be benefiting. Those of us who regularly travel the highways of the State, as I do—particularly in the south-west—cannot be anything but impressed by the numbers of visiting cars travelling along our roads. These cars are not only from the Eastern States and the Northern Territory but also from the wheatbelt and the northern and metropolitan areas, and I have seen them travelling throughout the south-west.

Therefore I cannot agree with the remarks that the south-west is stagnating. There is plenty of evidence of progress in any sphere one cares to mention. The harbours at Albany and Bunbury are typical examples and, of course, hospitals in the south-west are being continually upgraded and extended. I would refer quickly to the hospital at Augusta, which is relatively new. There is also the Warren District Hospital at Manjimup where I believe a service to train nursing aides will be established. This involves building extensions for accommodation purposes, lecture rooms, and the like and, as the Minister for Health would know, this hospital is to become a sub-regional hospital for this zone of the south-west.

In addition there is a constant demand for additional classrooms and better facilities to be provided at our schools—and these are being provided. Next week an extension of the primary school at Busselton will be opened and only last May additional lecture rooms and classrooms were opened at the Manjimup senior high school.

Roads throughout the south-west are being continually upgraded and water supplies established. In this regard I could refer to Kirup and the big dam to be established at Manjimup. The people of the area are benefiting from TV coverage—not only from the national station but also from a commercial station transmitting from Bunbury. Telephone services are

being constantly upgraded and extensions are being made to S.E.C. power lines. Mr. Strickland referred to the question of power a short time ago. This is making a tremendous impact on living conditions in the south-west and has a big effect on industrial expansion.

The Forests Department is extending many of its facets, such as scientific research and the like. Its officers are ever-mindful of the need to work towards the provision of a paper pulp mill in the future, and this mill will undoubtedly be based in the lower south-west when the time is ripe. Those concerned are moving towards this end.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The south-west is supplying timber to industry in the north, too.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: That is so. The south-west has supplied a tremendous number of sleepers to projects throughout the whole of the State. Some of the major railway systems which have been developed in recent years have used raw material from our southern forests.

I would now like to add a final touch to this quick picture of what is happening in the south-west by referring to the matter of vehicle registrations in certain areas. In this regard I shall quote figures from the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics for motor vehicle registrations for 1966, which figures I understand are the latest available. I shall quote the south-west statistical division and the motor vehicle registrations in total, at the end of 1965, were 27,631 and at the 31st December, 1966, the figure was 28,560, an increase of 929 vehicle registrations in a 12 months' period.

I shall now refer to a shire which I mentioned earlier, the Shire of Manjimup, where there was a drop in population over a period of five years of 1,000 people. On the other hand, the motor vehicle registrations at Manjimup increased during the 12 months' period to which I have referred from 2,932 to 3,280, an increase of 348 vehicles in 12 months. I think this is clear evidence that there is plenty going on in this particular shire. Although the population has decreased there must be a degree of affluence in the community because of that increase in motor vehicle registrations in a 12 months' period.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: You have convinced me you can do without concessional electricity rates.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: As regards new motor vehicles for the same statistical division, the south-west, in 1965 the total figure was 2,728, and 12 months later, at the end of 1966, the figure was 3,255, an increase of 527 for new motor vehicles in 12 months. The term "motor vehicle"

covers motorcars, station wagons, utilities, panel vans, trucks, omnibuses, and motor cycles.

I have no desire to speak further on this matter except to reiterate that the south-west portion of the State is not stagnating; it is progressing in keeping with the general progress of this State and it is only right that this should be made known.

Like any family, if one member of it is affluent the other members derive some benefits from it sooner or later, and the same sort of thing is happening throughout so many shires of this State. Let me say once again that the south-west is not being neglected and it is far from stagnating.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines) [4.58 p.m.]: I desire briefly to thank the members who have made contributions to this debate—Mr. Willesee, who spoke in regard to the Kewdale Lands Development Act; Mr. Ron Thompson, who referred briefly to the carnage on the roads, and also in regard to one of his electors who encountered difficulty over damage to a house; Mr. Strickland for the matters he raised in connection with the north; and Mr. Ferry for his remarks regarding the south-west.

I am one who is in no doubt about the progress in the south-west. I know from my own experience as Minister for Mines that the South-West Mineral Division is making quite a considerable contribution to the wealth of the south-west; and in fact the division is continuing to grow.

There is not very much I can say to Mr. Willesee on the point he raised. I realise there are difficulties which confront people who find themselves displaced from where they have been living for some time, and when they are obliged to move to another place. But these difficulties are not new; they are very old difficulties indeed.

When I was a member in opposition I encountered the same sort of thing mentioned by the honourable member, though perhaps in a different way. I well recall the wholesale resumptions which took place under the previous Government when the State Housing Commission, under its Act, had power to resume land. One of the interesting factors about this was that in some of the districts I represented the poultrymen, the dairymen, and the man in a small way, found their land was worth very much more because of the activities of a particular Government department.

Point of Order

The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: On a point of order, Mr. President, do I understand the Minister is closing the debate?

THE PRESIDENT: That is right.

The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I was hoping to speak to this Bill. I looked at the clock and thought we would be here till 6 o'clock.

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member had every opportunity.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am sorry if I prevented the honourable member from speaking, but before rising to close the debate—as I always do on a Bill of this nature—I looked around the Chamber to see whether anybody else would rise. In fact a voice behind me attracted my attention when I was about to get up. It was the voice of Mr. Ferry. I apologise, but I do not think this was my fault.

As I was saying, the people who had small holdings found themselves in possession of very valuable properties because of the activity on which a particular Government department was engaged. This is usually the case, and that is why I asked Mr. Willesee during the course of his speech what he thought land may have been worth prior to the development of the Kewdale marshalling yard as compared with its present-day value.

There is no doubt that this sort of activity does increase the value of the land. Whilst I am not trying to make any excuses for the situation, if a person has a block of land which was worth \$20, \$30, or \$50 an acre a long time ago, and the activity of some Government department brings the value up to a very much greater sum than that, then of course the people concerned benefit; but they cannot have the best of both worlds.

What I think the honourable member suggests is that the Government department concerned should pay the inflated value and that it should also put the person concerned in a comparable position to that in which he was before the resumption. I do not think this is practical. I appreciate there are people who live in houses of this nature who do not want to move at all, and no doubt some difficulty is encountered by such people.

Mr. Ron Thompson mentioned teenagers and the access they have to liquor. I realise that this is a very difficult subject, and the Government is very conscious of the difficulty. Members know that as Minister for Justice I have resisted the approaches by gallon licensees to sell single bottles of alcohol because I thought—and Mr. Ron Thompson obviously agrees—that some gallon licensees who set out to break the law provide the avenue by which young people of the kind mentioned are able to obtain beer or some other form of alcohol. I am not sure whether the lowering of the drinking age is a factor which will solve this problem. Perhaps jocularly I posed the question to Mr. Ron Thompson whether he thought the drinking age should be reduced to under 21 years.

The Hon. J. Dolan: I think he meant that if the drinking age was reduced then the driving age should be raised.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I think he would know the point he wished to make.

The Hon. J. Dolan: He did, but you took him up short.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: He made the point that if the permissible drinking age was to be reduced from 21 to 18 years in order to cure the ill-effects suggested by the honourable member, the driving age should not be below 21. That is where I was correct.

The Hon. J. Dolan: I think we are both on the same line of thinking.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: In other words he cannot readily agree that the answer to this problem is to bring something within the ambit of the law and make it legal because the law is now being broken.

The Hon. J. Dolan: I do not think he meant that.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: As I understand it he suggested that the existing law should be better policed and enforced.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: He did, and I can assure the House that wherever the police are in attendance, at least to my knowledge, they enforce the law. But how many times do we come across situations when we wish there was a policeman present? I see so many cranky people and the methods they employ in driving, and I often feel that a particular person ought to have been caught by a policeman; but at that time there just does not happen to be one around.

Mr. Ron Thompson mentioned the damage done to the house of one of his electors. I cannot say anything more about this. The matter is in the hands of the department, and of the Minister concerned, and at this point of time I must leave it at that. I will draw the attention of the Minister to the honourable member's remarks.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I would like to see something speeded up because it has been dragging on for too long.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I now come to the points raised by Mr. Strickland. I hope he can hear me to his satisfaction. First of all I do not know the basis of the complaint about the S.E.C. report. I am told the Minister received a copy of the report on the 22nd November, and it was tabled on the 25th November. There were 35 copies of the report made available to members in the Legislative Assembly and in the Legislative Council. I do not know whether these reports were made available here or not, but I understand they were not. It is customary to make these reports available and to have them recorded for the information of members

that such and such papers are available. However, I think the report was made available in another place.

A copy of a report such as that put out by the S.E.C. is, of course, always readily available. It is not as though there is only one copy, and it does not go into the archives immediately. The 1966 report would not have gone into the archives as suddenly as that.

The honourable member takes the Government to task on questions of taxation. When he is in opposition he always does that. When I have been in opposition I have always found the opportunity available to take the Government to task on the matter of taxes. But we must shape up to this problem. Costs are continuing to rise; wages have been increased here, there, and everywhere; and hospital charges continue to rise. With the cost of wages rising the cost of everything else must go up. The Government of the day must keep the service to the community going.

I know it is the wish of members of Parliament who are opposed to the present Government that it will be defeated at the next election. If this is the case they will find the charges they make against this Government will be placed firmly on their own plates; because I defy any member in this House to say now or at any other point of time that in the event of his party being elected to office it will not increase charges and taxes on the people.

Any Government would find it necessary to do this from time to time. The Government did not introduce a new tax last year in relation to the Stamp Act, as Mr. Strickland indicated. It is not a new tax.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: The system that was introduced was an extraordinary one.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The system introduced simply made a more equitable distribution of the load which had to be carried. If the honourable member calls that extraordinary, I do not.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: In effect it was a turnover tax.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Mr. Watson says it was an extraordinary system. He is complaining because the person who was not paying the whole tax before was asked to share his portion of it. I do not think that is extraordinary; I think it is reasonable.

In the situation in which the Government finds itself it has to provide services to the community, and is it not reasonable that the Government should try to set its own house in order, and that it should examine the various fields of taxation? And road maintenance tax, of course, is one such field. What a terrible argument we had on that matter when we intro-

duced the legislation. However, it is in force in every State. There is no use saying, "Forget about the Grants Commission." We cannot forget what the Grants Commission does to a particular State which is not prepared to tax its people in line with the taxation of the standard States.

From this year onwards we will have to take into consideration the standard of four States, I understand, and not two, because there is some new arrangement coming into force. So long as Western Australia is a claimant State we will have to take these matters into consideration.

I recall the member for Pilbara making the suggestion some time ago that the royalties obtained from iron ore should be spent in the north-west. Mr. Strickland has not gone as far as that, but he has made a suggestion which in part is tantamount to the same thing. This however cannot be done. What sort of a mess would we be in if we decided to employ the income from one part of the country for that part of the country alone? I wonder what would have happened to the north-west if we had followed that principle to date; because it is only recently that royalties have been paid, apart from B.H.P. iron ore at Cockatoo Island and Koolan Island.

If we compare the money spent in the north on a percentage basis of the whole we will find that it works out very much in favour of the north.

I mention these things, because they should be said. From the figures Mr. Strickland has given, I appreciate that certain towns in the north are having difficulty in respect of the amounts they have to pay for electricity. Not all towns in the north are having difficulty; and it strikes me, from the figures he has given, that the difficulty due to the progress which has been made in the north is gradually being alleviated. He did not say what the rates were in Derby or Port Hedland, five years ago, three years ago, or two years ago. I do not necessarily want to know; but as the State progresses, then these difficulties will be gradually overcome, as is obviously the case. However, without the mineral developments that are taking place in the north, I would think the north would have stayed at the level it was previously.

I say again that the tax under the Stamp Act was not a new tax; it was simply a more equitable distribution of the burden among the people of the community than was previously the case.

Last year the State got to within \$27,000 of balancing its Budget. I think I read in the Press that Mr. Tonkin, the Leader of the Opposition in another place, said this was the result of bad management. He said we had collected \$600,000 more stamp duty than we anticipated collecting.

Had it not been for the fact that at the last Premiers' conference the Premiers pressed for more and more money, and the Commonwealth Government decided to give an outright grant of \$5,000,000, Western Australia's share of which was \$1,300,000, and which went into our revenue, the situation would not have been anywhere near as close as it is at the present time. We should be grateful for the fact that the position is as good as it is. We have gone close to balancing the Budget and have a deficit of \$27,000 after budgeting for a deficit of \$600,000.

As I said when introducing this measure, we are now in the fortuitous position that no large-scale tax increases will be necessary, at least in this current period of time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by The Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines), and passed.

House adjourned at 5.21 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 3rd August, 1967

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

QUESTIONS (32): ON NOTICE

SCHOOL CHILDREN

Allowance North of 26th Parallel

1. Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister for Education:

(1) In what year was the away-from-home allowance granted for children north of the 26th Parallel to attend school elsewhere?

(2) What was the amount?

(3) What increases have since been made?

(4) What is the amount paid at present?

(5) Does the Government intend to increase the grant this year; if "No," why not?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

(1) 1946.

(2) £30 per annum.

(3) 1947 increased to £50 per annum. 1965 increased to £80 per annum, years 1, 2 and 3.

£100 per annum, years 4 and 5.

(4) £160 per annum, years 1, 2, and 3.

\$200 per annum, years 4 and 5.