

Legislative Council

Thursday, the 3rd November, 1977

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

FLOUR BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South—Minister for Transport) [2.41 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time. This Bill has been necessary as a means of ensuring access to flour stocks for the purpose of providing bread and other flour products to the public.

It has its origin in the present strike by flour mill employees—a strike that has had a most destructive and disruptive effect on the community.

Members will be only too well aware that we have a situation today where a handful of employees have acted in such a way that flour supplies have been cut off to bakeries, bread supplies have been cut off to consumers, and thousands of workers in allied industries have been stood down.

There can be no denying that the lack of availability of bread has its impact on families, particularly low-income earning families.

It is untenable for a Government to stand idly by whilst the earning capacity of families is eroded by the actions of a small group of workers and other breadwinners in the industry and associated industry are stood down through no fault of their own.

It is only recently that the Confederation of Western Australian Industry called for a new attitude towards creating a better industrial climate in Western Australia.

Those are commendable sentiments; yet, before they were able to settle on the hearing of Western Australians, members of the Federated Millers' Union decided to begin an indefinite strike over a pay dispute.

According to the media the W.A. Trades and Labor Council has condemned the Government's move to intervene and supports the strike's action.

Members know what has happened in the 12 days since—bread supplies have been seriously affected, and thousands of workers have been stood down.

From the outset the union adopted a selfish, obstructionist stance in regard to flour supplies. On the admission of the union secretary (Mr Truslove) a special union committee was to be set up to organise pickets at flour mills. Mr Truslove saw this as a way of ensuring there was no attempt to break the strike.

The consequences, of course, were clear. Picket lines were established to prevent the free flow of flour. As the strike wore on, it became clear that no amount of good sense or goodwill was going to prevail.

An Arbitration Commission conference, presided over by Commissioner J. W. Coleman, recommended that a mass meeting of members be called to consider his proposal that the men should return to work.

The result of that recommendation is well known. It was rejected and yet the Federal executive of the union, in a telegram read out by the commissioner, had also recommended the workers return to work pending arbitration proceedings.

It is important to remember in all this that Commissioner Coleman's recommendation was made after the mill owners had given an assurance that they were prepared to start talks with the union as soon as the men returned to work.

Once again it became a question of playing things the union's way or not playing at all.

The Government's principal concern in all of this was not the merits or demerits of the men's claim—for that is a matter for the arbitration processes—but the interests of the public who are being denied bread supplies.

The Government was faced with a situation, therefore, where unionists were picketing flour mills and preventing flour flowing to bakeries. In other words a strike—an illegal action in itself—stands between the adequate stores of flour on the one hand, and consumers getting bread on the other.

Inquiries revealed that the Government had no power to ensure that the flour stocks became bread supplies.

Information from the Bread Manufacturers' Association indicates that flour consumption for bread alone in the metropolitan area is about 550 tonnes a week. To this can be added something like 250 tonnes a week for use in country districts in the lower half of Western Australia. This does not include the quantities used for the making of pastry and cakes.

It may be said that housewives could make their own bread from the simple recipes which are publicised in daily papers. This again is dependent on packaged flour being readily available on the shelves in shops and this is fast diminishing.

Not all housewives possess the expertise to make quality bread, pastry and other flour products. What is more, they should not be denied access to the daily production of bread, pies and cakes, which are made by proficient tradesmen in such unions as the Bakers' and Pastrycooks' Union who will be placed out of work.

The Bill gives the Government the right—for the period of the present strike and until a certain time next year—to buy such flour stocks as it deems necessary. It gives the Government the right to sell and distribute that flour.

The Bill provides adequately for compensation—and this is additional to the normal rights of citizens to take their rights to the courts.

It provides for a person who, as the result of compliance with any direction given under the Act, or engaged in carrying out any such direction, suffers loss, damage or injury, to have an extra option as regards settlement of claims.

The provision for compensation is additional to the normal rights of citizens to take their rights to the courts. However, it is thought that some persons who may have a claim may in the interests of expedience and reduced costs prefer to apply direct to the Minister for compensation. In other words, the Bill allows persons who may be adversely affected by its provisions to have an extra option as regards settlement of claims.

The Government has no desire or intention of disadvantaging any trader. Once again, it is stressed that the measure is aimed solely at securing the right of every member of the public to have access to a basic foodstuff.

People are fed up with the sort of industrial anarchy that denies them normal everyday services, especially when those same people know that the union concerned has snubbed the arbitration process. In circumstances such as we have today, half-measures are tantamount to no action at all.

The Government went to the extent late last week of lifting all restrictions on bread-baking hours to allow those who had flour to bake at any hour except on a Sunday. That gave some temporary relief, but, of course, the lifting of such restrictions finally becomes meaningless if flour is not available.

In conclusion, the Government makes no apology whatsoever for introducing this legislation. It was elected to govern and no single group should expect to be able to disrupt our community at will and get away with it.

I commend the Bill to the House.

THE HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [2.49 p.m.]: It is apparent the Opposition disagrees most violently with this Bill. Normally when a Bill is introduced into this Chamber one talks about the principle of the Bill and during the Committee stage one talks about the detail of the Bill. However, in respect of this Bill, if one has listened very carefully to the second reading speech by the Minister, one has to consider the intention of the Bill.

On the surface one may think that the intention of this Bill is to supply flour to bakers in Western Australia after the Government had engaged in a little socialist activity by nationalising the flour industry; in other words, acquiring all the flour available in Western Australia. The Bill clearly sets out the machinery to do this; to acquire the wheat, hold it, and sell it, and I presume if it wanted to it could process the wheat into flour.

The intention of the Bill is not for these purposes; the intention is to broaden the dispute and widen the confrontation between capital and labour. That is the intention. If the Government had allowed the normal processes of arbitration to proceed I am sure the dispute would have been settled by now. I point out to members that the millers' unions are under a Federal award and if the processes of arbitration had not been interfered with the men would be at work today; there is still a chance that the mill-workers will be back today.

It is becoming a common practice for the Government to huff and puff and make all kinds of loud noises, but eventually do nothing. If there is to be an arbitration system it should be allowed to operate. The system is there for the prevention and settlement of industrial disputes. The system was established by a Commonwealth Government many years ago and has been sustained by Governments of all political colours.

This Government is now taking certain action to break the dispute, or so it says, although the dispute is really within the province of the Commonwealth industrial process. What does the Government really intend to do? Does anyone think that the passage of this legislation will prevent and settle industrial disputes? Does anyone think it will terminate this particular political

industrial dispute overnight? History shows us that actions such as this only broaden the area of conflict.

We on this side of the House are well aware that it is the policy of conservative parties to divide this nation throughout its length and breadth. The convenient strategy they have adopted is to confront the trade union movement. I consider it is necessary to comment on some of the things that have led up to this dispute, because we are dealing with an award falling within the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth arbitration system.

Before the last Federal election the Prime Minister said he would not interfere with indexation, and his comments were seen on television programmes, heard on radio interviews, and seen in the Press. One of the first actions by the Prime Minister was to start attempting to manipulate the court. The indexation guidelines which had been accepted and adhered to by the unions were completely fragmented. The guidelines were accepted by the people who were dependent on the arbitration system in this country to keep their wages in line with rising prices, and by the Prime Minister's actions they were considerably disadvantaged.

Let us consider the millers' union. I point out that I am not here to use this Chamber as a forum to debate the rights or wrongs of this industrial dispute. The Government should realise that this union has not been engaged in a stoppage since 1927. It has given 50 solid years of industrial peace and tranquility, but what has this got the union? These men have been driven by desperation, because of their compliance with the law, into taking some kind of strike action.

It is not good enough for the Government to come here and say that because the Federal officers of the union give a direction the workers in this State under that award should agree. History and experience prove that most people in Federal unions have branches in various States, and from time to time these branches take unilateral action.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Members opposite are always urging rank and file union members to challenge their leaders.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: On this occasion that has happened. If one wants to accept the view put forward by the Minister in his second reading speech that the Government is concerned for the public at large, let me refer to a radio report I heard this morning. I cannot rightly remember the name of the person speaking, and

I cannot say for sure if it was the "actor" from the other place. He said the intention was to involve the transport workers in this dispute. He may be leaning more to the idea of these small bread shops going along to the mills and picking up bags of flour to be turned into bread. I forget the names of these shops, but there is one at Cottesloe.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Hot breads.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: That is something I have learned from the Government today. This is only a gesture by the Government, and it has no earthly possibility of supplying bread to the population at large. The Government's intention is to broaden the dispute and divide the community.

The Minister referred to an editorial in *The West Australian*. I do not always agree with its editorials and I do not necessarily agree with this one, but it makes the point that the Government's action is provocative. Having embarked upon this action in both the Federal and State spheres the Liberal Governments should watch out, because the public at large may wake up to them.

This type of action has not solved any industrial disputes up to date. Provocative statements by the Minister for Labour and Industry on behalf of the Government are only worsening and lengthening disputes. His comments are likely to broaden this dispute and I agree there could be catastrophic consequences for the work force.

If the Press is to be believed, 2 000 people have already been stood down. I agree that bread for underprivileged families is a very substantial item. However, none of the things the Government proposes to do will militate against this. It may be—and I hope I am wrong—that by the time this Bill is assented to, either next Thursday or Friday, and the intentions of this Bill are put into operation, further provocation will take place. The dispute would then broaden right out.

It is interesting to see in today's Press an advertisement by the WA Flour Millowners Association. I am interested in all the points the association makes, especially in the last point. I do not intend to canvass the merits or otherwise of its case, as that would not be fair to the commissioner or the industrial advocates. The advertisement indicates that the millowners have not requested Government intervention. They are saying to the public at large that anything flowing from Government intervention in this dispute was not requested by the millowners.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: They are frightened of what the unions will do.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: That is an interesting interjection. Evidently the Minister has very little or indeed no confidence in the measure he is introducing to provide flour to the bakers of bread and other incidentals for the public.

The Minister says the millowners who belong to a Federal body—and he must have some inside information—are frightened what the unions will do to them; and he referred to unions, plural, not union, singular. The Minister, by his interjections, has conveyed to me the Government's intention. As I said when I commenced to speak, one debates the principle or details of a Bill, and its intention. On this occasion we are speaking about its intention which is to widen industrial confrontation on the eve of a Federal election and, quite possibly, on the eve of a by-election in the Kimberley. That is what it is all about.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Ridiculous.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: If we look at the provisions of the Bill—and we will go through those in the Committee stage—we see quite clearly that the Bill, without any union intervention, is doomed to failure. After all, what happens when the available supplies of flour run out? Is it the intention of the Government then to acquire the flour mills and to operate them to produce flour? I said earlier in my remarks that the Bill seems to give it that power.

If one wants to go to the highways and byways to consider the people who have sought to deny the work force—and that is the majority of us—their legitimate rights one would find their bleached bones scattered along those highways and byways. If one goes to the Library here and reads the history concerning what occurred before this country was settled, to the introduction of the trade union movement in other parts of the world, and to the early days of the coalmining lodges in New South Wales with the old master and servant legislation, one will find that every action taken, right up to the Clarry O'Shea incident, has been defeated, and always will be defeated because no power on earth, least of all the passing of a Bill by the Government, can destroy people or prevent them doing something if they are resolved in their own minds that their actions are right.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: This is not a punitive action.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: If it is not a punitive action I do not know what it is. It is an industrial Bill, a punitive Bill, a penal Bill, inviting people to do things. It is inviting other unions to participate. It is inviting the public to be led against one another. It is inviting the hot bread shops to seek their own supplies of flour. I can imagine the effect on the big baking combines which depend on transport unions. They will be standing idly by while hot bread shops which want to—and their attitude will be determined by the kind of suburbs in which they operate—seek the flour.

I would have imagined that on this occasion the Government would do a far better job, even if it is a Federal award which is involved, if it decided to act in the same manner as it did during the transport workers' dispute involving the owner-drivers. It should have used some of its good offices to encourage people to use the process of arbitration.

It is good again to remember why people get into these situations. Whenever there is a dispute and the employees talk to the owner or operator involved the answer is generally, "No. Go away. I will not talk to you." Consider what occurs at any industrial conference. We are renowned for this in this country. Before we get into a negotiating situation we must go on strike. Is that not the pattern? We must have a strike and work ceases and the next step is that the workers are told, "You may have a case, but we will not talk about it until you go back to work."

It is like a dog chasing its tail and it happens with monotonous regularity. We do not talk or entertain any sort of conciliatory process. The boys go on strike and then they are told that no talks will be held until they go back to work. I have never been able to understand why in most cases—there have been a few exceptions—the arbitration tribunals will not try to adjudicate while the workers are out on strike. I agree in the total concept of this, because it does immeasurable harm when workers are on strike whether they be transport workers, flour millers, or bakers.

I can picture the situation when the hot bread shops, which are usually one-man concerns, get their flour. I can imagine the situation when one of the big baking combines obtains flour under the Bill. I find it hard to believe that bakers who also belong to a union will take that flour, turn it into bread, and hand it to members of the TWU who drive the bread vans to deliver the bread to the supermarkets and housewives. I

find it hard to imagine that when regular supplies of flour run out, the Government will in fact take over the mills.

So we come back to the intention of the Bill and the intention is quite clear. The Government is not interested in settling this dispute; the Government is not interested in getting bread to the public; the Government really is not interested in acquiring flour supplies. It has only one interest and intention; that is, to broaden this dispute and confront as many unions as it can because it feels this will be to its electoral advantage.

Why did the men go on strike in the first instance? The union has had a peaceful record for some 50 years. Actually I did not even realise that they had a union. We all buy bread and do not think of the people who grind the wheat into flour. No-one gives any thought to them. However, we have read in the paper recently about the wages they receive. We have only to walk around Parliament House and if we are fair dinkum we will realise that most of our parliamentary staff, including the females, or the majority of them, receive far more in their pay packets than do the mill workers. I am not knocking the parliamentary staff because they are entitled to their pay. All I am doing is suggesting that members compare their wages with the wages of the ordinary hand in the mill. Most of them have a wife and family to keep, and yet they receive such a small amount, especially in comparison with the wages received by the parliamentary staff.

There is one sobering effect of modern technology. At one stage it did not matter in our development who went on strike or who worked. However, in the modern economy and technological age we are all important and, day by day, more people come to realise this. They recognise their importance. As the monolith grows bigger, there are more gears and cogs and it does not take much to stop the machine. It is no good saying what we are worth. We are worth what we are worth to the community.

The Government did not rush in when the air traffic controllers had a stoppage and they again belonged to a Federal organisation. The Government did not introduce any legislation on that occasion in order to take over the traffic control powers. The Government did not do anything when the doctors were holding the country to ransom over their remuneration. Again, I am not knocking the doctors for trying to get what they can from this society. After all we live in a dog-eat-dog society. The most powerful take the most; that is Liberal Party policy.

The work force have learnt very rapidly to exist in this kind of society, because they have learned that one has to be one of the animals in the life chain. If they do not gobble up, they are gobbled up.

This is the reason for the stoppage. Here is a union of men from many country areas who are usually tranquil and do not require much. They have been peaceful for 50 years with no industrial disputation, but now they are being pilloried by the threat of a takeover of the flour mills. That is what this legislation provides.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: It does not say that at all.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: If the Minister reads the Bill extremely carefully he will find that is the position. I do not know what other kind of machinery is needed. What will happen when the flour runs out? We can determine how much flour is used each week, and assesses how long it will last. The Minister thinks there will be a short sharp battle and that would be the end of the matter.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: What is your calculation?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I am not here to make calculations.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: I think you should.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: What the Minister thinks I ought to do and what I think I should do are matters of conjecture. What will the Minister do after the stock of flour runs out? The next logical step is either to acquire the wheat and break it up into flour, or acquire the mills.

The members of this union have operated for 50 years without raising a finger industrially, and they have done all they have been told to do. They have been told, "If you are good you will be looked after, and nothing will happen to you."

Speaking in terms of the intention of the Bill, it contains no principle although it sets out some details which are allied to its intentions. I have mentioned that. The people who are on the job know very well that one President of the Commonwealth Arbitration Commission said some years ago, "You will only get from arbitration what you are prepared to fight for outside the court." If we read the comments of Mr Justice Joske, who was a President of the Commonwealth Arbitration Commission, and a Liberal member of Parliament and now a judge of the A.C.T., we will find he made the same point. His comments are there for us to read.

People have been encouraged to struggle as hard as they can to wrest their entitlement through the arbitral system. It is of no use for the Minister to come here with flag waving and trumpet blaring to say, "This is what we will do to protect the public, because the available supplies of flour will run out."

Maybe my interpretation of the Bill is incorrect, but it seems to indicate that we would get into the situation of the Government providing the flour. If that is not the intention of the Bill, I shall be very pleased to hear the Minister in his reply to the second reading, or in the Committee stage, telling us what will happen when the available flour supplies run out. Let the Minister tell us in his reply to the second reading or in the Committee stage: Is it the intention of the Government to supply flour to all the major bakeries in Western Australia, or is it the intention—as I heard this morning—to encourage the hot bread shops to go along in their motor vehicles to pick up the flour, to the disadvantage of the people who normally operate the large baking establishments? Does the Minister really think that the Government has considered the involvement of other parties to the dispute? Does the Government think that by delivering flour to the baking complexes, the bakeries will automatically turn it into bread, or does the Government consider bringing forward penal legislation in this House outside the normal arbitral system?

If the Government hops into the ring with a referee to fight an industrial dispute, and not go into a neutral corner, the unions will have to consider the complete abandonment of the arbitral processes, because such a procedure is finished and is as dead as a dodo. No sensible Government has taken action like this before.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: And prolonged strikes like this as part of the arbitral system?

The Hon. D. K. DANCs: Perhaps the Minister did not hear me. I would like him to tell us whether the Government will hop into the ring with a referee every time there is an industrial dispute—and that referee is the Commonwealth Arbitration Commission on this occasion—or will it allow the arbitral processes to prevail?

Certainly in the past there have been disputes, and in future there will be more. All over the world there have been disputes in the past. In the first strike I read about in the United Kingdom concerning professional cricketers, I think there were five or six players involved. So strikes are not something new; they can be long, or short; but if anyone thinks we will have long strikes in Australia he will need to do some reading.

The first action of the Government is one of provocation. It is designed to lengthen the strike, and to bring more unions and people into the dispute, so as to provide a forum to fight the next Federal election. The Government has a duty to let us know where it stands; and to let the trade unions and particularly the TLC know where they stand. The Government has a duty to let us know where the arbitral processes, the judges and commissioners of the Commonwealth Arbitration Commission, and the commissioners of the State Industrial Commission stand.

We cannot have two people refereeing the one fight. If that is the intention I am quite concerned. Despite all its ups and downs the arbitral system has served this country very well, and I for one under normal circumstances—I repeat under normal circumstances—would not advocate to people that they should depart from the arbitral system.

History illustrates that a late Prime Minister of Australia advocated that the Commonwealth Government should get out of the field of arbitration; but subsequently not only did he lose the election, but also his seat.

The unions will have to look at this matter most seriously, and to decide whether it is of any further use going on with the arbitral system, because where they formerly encountered one referee they now encounter two referees. That is not good enough.

The second reading speech of the Minister does not tell us a great deal; the Minister merely waffled on. The intention of the Bill is quite clear. It is designed to bring about provocation. Its intention is to widen the dispute, and in the final analysis to bring as many people as possible into confrontation with the commission, the employers, and the arbitral system, so as to provide a forum for the Federal Government which stands discredited in the eyes of the Australian people, because of the promises it made in 1975 but which it is not able to fulfil.

The sum total of the causes of this dispute is the destruction of the promise of the Government to retain full wage indexation. If we need any further proof of that, we should look at the wages which the people are receiving; they can hardly live on their wages. If that is the intention of the Government it stands condemned. It should be backing up the system which has been established for the prevention and settlement of industrial disputes. We have heard all about disputes, but the number of settlements of disputes as they occur every week and month of the year,

far outweigh the number of industrial stoppages that have taken place.

We oppose the Bill.

THE HON. D. W. COOLEY (North-East Metropolitan) [3.18 p.m.]: The Leader of the Opposition has outlined the attitude of the Labor Party to this Bill. I think he has covered fully the reasons as to why the Bill has been brought forward by this conservative Government.

I have been around the industrial scene for 20 years or more. Both inside and outside this Parliament I have resisted legislation that was introduced by conservative Governments, by lobbying the conservative members to persuade them to take another course of action in respect of the legislation proposed.

I have stood outside this building and demonstrated with a large number of people, in order to persuade the members here to change their view. In all the Bills that have been introduced and in all the actions that have been taken by the conservatives over that period of time, I have not come across a Bill or an action by a Government which is as cowardly as the intention of the Bill before us, or as the action of the Government on this occasion.

It is a cowardly action because it is directed against a group of low-income workers. They earn something like \$130 a week and number only 120. In all the 20 years that I have been lobbying against and resisting Bills of this nature, at least the conservatives have had the courage to direct such measures against the work force as a whole. But on this occasion that is not the case; the action is directed against 120 innocent people who are trying to better their lot by way of industrial action, and there is no great sin in that.

This Bill is designed to smash the efforts of those people who are endeavouring to get their just reward. I do not think whether those people are right or wrong really matters a great deal when it comes to our attitude in this place today. The principal thing is that this Bill endeavours to smash the dispute. I do not think it will succeed because the strength of the trade union movement will be brought to bear if any provision of the Bill is put into effect. But the principle of the Bill is cowardly. Everyone would agree that this Government is a strong Government, and it is directing its entire force against 120 innocent people. I think this is a disgrace.

What will the Government do to implement the provisions of the Bill? Will it bring in strong-arm men to disperse the pickets? Will it use the police or the troops to move the flour, or will it use

the special riot squad to batter down the 120 men who have the temerity to stand up and say they have had a rough deal for 50 years? Those men have played the game in respect of industrial relations for 50 years and have not once been out on strike in that time. They have had the rough end of the stick in respect of wages, and now they want something better. They want something better only because they have been disadvantaged by the actions of conservative Governments, and in particular the present Government, which has agreed with the policies of the Fraser Government in respect of indexation.

Had these workers received their full entitlement as was envisaged under the indexation scheme, they would be something like \$6 a week better off than they are at present, and maybe that is all they want. I am aware they are asking for \$20 a week, but maybe \$6 is the amount they want for all we know; and that is the amount that has been denied to them by the actions of conservative Governments by going before the Industrial Commissions and arguing that low-paid workers should not receive the full benefit of indexation.

That is the reason we believe these workers are disenchanted and, after 50 long years of trouble-free work are saying, "We have had enough. We want a better way of life." Surely to goodness there is nothing wrong with that.

However, this Government has brought in a Bill to smash down the workers, and its action is nothing short of disgraceful. Recently we had an airline strike in this State. Was it suggested then that the Government should marshal the pilots of this State and put them on the planes? Would the Government be game to go to the Collie coalfields if a strike occurred there and take over the coalmines with scab labour? Of course it would not; it would not enter into any situation like that.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: If your memory serves you correctly you will recall that we went close to that in 1964.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: But here we have 120 low-income earners standing out for a decent way of life. They want only to be able to give their wives and families a decent life, and yet we have the Government with all its expertise, strength, and power coming down on those people with the full force of legislation such as this. This is an utter disgrace and something that should not be countenanced by any responsible community.

I long ago ceased to believe that comments in local newspapers, and particularly things stated in leading articles, were the gospel truth; and I

have tried to avoid quoting them because they represent the opinion of only one man. However, when a conservative newspaper such as *The West Australian*, which is a strong ally of the conservatives and the employers in this State comes out and says the Government is being provocative, there must be some substance in the statement.

Not only *The West Australian* newspaper is saying the Government should not interfere in this dispute; the WA Flour Mill Owners' Association is saying that it did not request the Government to intervene in the dispute. Perhaps that association does not want Government intervention. I do not think any responsible employer would want the Government to intervene in a dispute; at least not in the way in which it has entered into this dispute.

I know the die has been cast, and that no matter what we say or how impassioned our speeches may be, the members opposite will regiment their vote and steamroll this Bill through in the same way as it was steamrolled through the lower House. Members opposite want this Bill passed tonight, and they want to be able to implement it as soon as possible.

However, I warn those who vote for this Bill that it will not succeed because if they implement the provisions of this infamous legislation they will come up against the strength of the trade union movement. When that happens they will run into very serious trouble.

I think this Bill is possibly only a gesture on the part of the Government; as my leader has said, it continually huffs and puffs against the trade union movement and says it will do something but does nothing. On this occasion, though, the Government has seen the opportunity to throw its weight against 120 workers. Good Lord, one would think the Government would have more to do than that!

The Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry in this Chamber spoke in his second reading speech about the Government's interest in people on low incomes and how they are suffering because they are not getting bread into their homes. Good Lord, when in the history of Australia have conservatives ever considered the interests of low-income workers? They have never considered the interests of those people. The actions of the present Government over the past three years have often been directed against the interests of low-income workers; in particular the Government has acted against the interests of pensioners. It has removed travel concessions which were previously available to pensioners.

Therefore, this Government has no interest in low-income workers; its only interest is in trying to create a situation from which it can gain political advantage.

The Government can be sure that if this Bill is implemented it will come up against not only the 120 millers who are on strike because of a dispute, but it will come up against the full force of the trade union movement of this State which will stand between those 120 men and the Government.

On reflection, I do not think this Chamber, which is purported to be a House of Review, should entertain a Bill of this nature. When we consider the details of the Bill we find that a so-called free enterprise Government is going to enter into the business of the purchase, sale, supply, transport, storage, marketing, and distribution of flour.

Let us consider clause 4 of this Bill which says in part—

... the Minister may—

(d) by a direction given in writing—

(i) authorise the taking of possession or control and the disposal or use of any flour and the packaging of any flour and require any person to place any such flour and packaging in his possession at the disposal of the Minister;

That does not say anything about buying or selling flour. The Government can enter a flour mill and if the people there say, "We do not want you to interfere", the Government can take over their flour and use it in whichever way it intends to use it. This attitude comes from a so-called free enterprise Government which is opposed to the nationalisation of goods. Yet it will go into a factory, take over a person's assets and utilise them in this way with the intention of smashing a strike.

I should like to know where the Government will get the people to do this. Will it go in under the protection of all the anti-riot measures at its disposal in this State? Is it going to try the Bjelke-Petersen attitude of smashing down the people and putting them in gaol if they resist? I fear it would if it knew it could get away with it; but it will not get away with it because greater forces than the flourmillers will be standing against them. In principle this is the most cowardly piece of legislation that has ever been presented to a Parliament in Western Australia.

THE HON. R. F. CLAUGHTON (North Metropolitan) [3.32 p.m.]: Mr President, I paused

a moment before getting to my feet in the hope that some members on the Government side would rise to defend this most unseemly piece of legislation.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I thought the Minister had done that quite adequately.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The Minister has already interjected after I had spoken one sentence. Perhaps he is the one who will get on his feet and assist the Minister in putting forward a case.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I do not think the Minister needs any assistance.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: That is a fair summation of the attitude of the Government towards this House; one speech by a Minister is deemed to be sufficient to bring into law the most draconian measures conceivable. We are becoming perhaps too accustomed to this Parliament being used and abused for petty party political purposes and the measure we are now debating is a very bad example of the worst sort of legislation.

I wonder to what extent when introducing this Bill the Minister had his tongue in his cheek when he said that it is untenable for a Government to stand idly by whilst the earning capacity of families is eroded, and so on. If the Government were sincere in that sort of belief we would not see this measure at all. We would have seen this Government assisting these employees to obtain wage justice because they are the people whose wages have been eroded over some years now to the point where ordinarily docile and amenable workers have gone on strike, have picketed and, if necessary, will resort to violence if they are provoked enough by the powers contained in this Bill.

We are dealing with a very serious measure which members of this House, if they sincerely believe in the principles they claim to believe in, would reject outright; and, as I opened by saying, we have not as yet heard one of them on his feet in defence of it. I can well understand the reluctance of members opposite to do so; it is a measure which would be very difficult to defend.

I suspect that not only the Minister had his tongue very firmly pushed into his cheek. I wonder with how much sincerity the Premier made these remarks which are contained on page 4 of the Financial Statement of 1974-75—

The Government accepts that wage earners have a right to expect that the real value of their wages will be maintained and that

they will share in the gains accruing from increased productivity.

I shall read a little further because it is all important. To continue—

Yet it would be a mistake to assume that indexation of wages and salaries is a cure for inflation. On the contrary, it will ensure continued inflation of prices and wages at the same time to come, although at a decreasing rate if unions and wage tribunals accept the need to restrict wage increases in excess of the level indicated by indexation, to the few cases where anomalies need to be corrected.

In the case of maintaining real wages and in the case of correcting anomalies this union has a just case, and one could perhaps call it a criminal action on the part of this Government to be taking the action it is taking by this sort of legislation instead of going out of its way to see that the unions gain the necessary benefit for their workers and the means to sustain their families.

One of the other matters that is often a cause of confusion in the public mind is the fact that unions must at times make an ambient claim, which I think is the term used by Mr Cooley, whereby they ask for more than they expect to receive because it is necessary for unions to serve a log of claims on all the employers involved. Once it has been served it is not necessary to reserve it when a further claim is made within the ambit of the original claim.

Therefore, \$20 is not necessarily the amount that the union will expect to gain. Nonetheless, it is roughly the amount in over-award payments that has already been received by workers employed in the mills. I understand that amounts of \$3, \$7, and \$19 in over-award payments have already been received by some of the employees.

What the men desire is for the employers to negotiate with them on this aspect, and I think it needs to be said that they are in line with the unions in other States in accepting the log of claims except that they desire to achieve greater justice with respect to wages and over-award payments, as is contained in the log of claims. That requires that the employers agree to negotiate with them, and it is because the employers have refused to do so that we have a strike on our hands.

This sort of measure by the Government will not resolve that aspect of the dispute. Bringing this measure forward in such a public way with all the attendant publicity will not make the

employers talk to the unions. It may in fact encourage the employers to hold out longer and prolong the strike.

I had occasion to talk with some of these mill employees in a small country town in July at which time there was no question of a strike occurring in the near future. The unions were negotiating on the log of claims. I visited the mill in Narrogin in company with Mr Skidmore. Mr Skidmore and I had been asked to pay attention to the labourers' quarters in that town. Because we were visiting the town, we went to the mill and Mr Skidmore delivered a copy of the log of claims to the workers. We talked about a number of matters in respect of the claims.

The log of claims was left for the men to examine; but at that time, in July, it was quite obvious the men were upset about the level of wages they were receiving. This small group of people lives in what might be termed a "red neck belt" where there is very strong anti-union feeling amongst the farming community. I have talked with some of the civic leaders on other occasions and I was aghast at some of the attitudes which were expressed by them. They were quite unsympathetic to the problems of these workers.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That is the under-statement of the year.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: These people showed a complete lack of understanding of the position of the ordinary worker. By going on strike, the employees of the mill have placed themselves in a most invidious position in the town. It would have taken a great deal of courage for them to go out on strike. These men and their families would be subjected to very intense reaction from the local community. As Mr Cooley has said, overall it is a very small group of people which is affected, and because it is a small group I believe that is why it is being discriminated against.

We know the rates being received by the men are quite low. However, I wonder whether in fact the parties introducing this measure understand just how low they are. A storehand receives approximately \$140 per week. I am informed that approximately 60 to 65 per cent of the mill workers are storehands. From the gross sum of \$140, approximately \$20 is deducted in tax. The Medibank deduction must also be made and there may be some other small deductions. As a result, those men are left with a take-home pay of less than \$110. They then have to pay rent and if we take the rental for a State house as a guide, that

would amount to approximately \$30 per week. That leaves the men with an amount of about \$80 per week on which to keep their families.

It can be understood, from looking at those figures, why these men have been driven into this corner. I am sure no member of this Chamber can imagine what it would be like to live on such a small weekly wage. The payments I have given are only the basic deductions. There are a number of other day-to-day and week-to-week commitments which must be met. I was most surprised when I received my sewerage rates last night. They amounted to \$107; that certainly made me wince.

These people have to pay a variety of bills. They have to pay their electricity bill every quarter, and their excess water rates, if they are living in a State house; there are all sorts of other commitments. A man with a family, particularly if he has children attending school, barely exists from week to week on this amount of money. There is no way in which these men can live at what is an acceptable level in our type of community. We must remember that our community is geared to live at a fairly high standard, judged by world standards. If one does not own a refrigerator, a car, a radio, or a television set, then one is very much on the outer as far as being part of the community of today is concerned.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.01 p.m.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Before the afternoon tea suspension I was stressing the difficult economic situation facing the millworkers, and that is the essential cause of the strike. When any of us are faced with a difficult economic situation, from which we feel there is no escape, we take whatever action is available to us. If one is placed in a vice, and the lives and well-being of one's family is threatened, then there is very little alternative to taking some action.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: They are not being threatened.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I do not think the Minister listened carefully.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: The families of the men are not being threatened.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The lives and well-being of their families are threatened because of the very difficult economic situation facing them due to the low wages they receive. Any person placed in that situation, who is a caring parent, is forced to take strong action to bring succour to the people he is responsible for.

The Government, while expressing views in sympathy with the ordinary working people, is acting in contradiction by its actions. The Premier was quoted as saying the Government accepted that the men had a right to believe their real wages should be protected, and that under the system of negotiation anomalies should be corrected. Why then are we dealing with this particular piece of legislation?

The Minister said the legislation was to ensure bread supplies to the ordinary people. However, I am informed there is a line of prepared frozen bread packs readily available in the general stores, and that line is receiving light sales. Any family which feels that bread is necessary for its existence can purchase one of those very easily prepared and tasty bread packs. The reason offered by the Government for the introduction of the legislation is simply an excuse.

The various institutions in our community, such as the hospitals, are able to obtain supplies. They are not being denied, so the measure is not justified for that sort of reason. Other people to whom I have spoken have told me that they have previously purchased up to half a dozen loaves of bread and stored them in their refrigerators. That is probably one of the reasons bread is in short supply. People resorted to panic buying and they have stocks in their homes.

Of course, many families find that they can exist quite well without bread. There are other substitutes, such as breakfast cereal biscuits, which can be used if necessary. I believe if we examine the ways people can make do during this period we will find there are many avenues whereby they can satisfy their needs. Bread is not the staple diet it used to be. There is now a greater range of foodstuffs than there was in the past.

Dealing with what has happened in the area of negotiation, the Minister told us that the arbitrator, Mr Coleman, read a telegram to a meeting urging the men to return to work. However, the Government has overlooked the fact that that was just one stage in the progress of this dispute, and that since then other events have overtaken the advice which came to the union from the Federal secretary.

It is interesting to note that after a meeting with the mill owners in the Eastern States, on the 13th October, the Federal secretary made a note in the minutes to the following effect—

It would seem that the only avenue left is for private negotiations for over-award payments to be made between the members and the managements at the individual mills.

So even on the 13th October it was suggested that other courses of action outside the log of claims would have to be taken. That is the way events have progressed.

The alternative course of action is not necessarily the desire of the union; no worker wants to be forced into a strike situation. It is a loss to him, and the situation becomes difficult for his family. His situation would be very difficult within the community where there is a strong reaction against unions, in general, at all times. That reaction is even stronger during a strike, especially in country areas where the farmers see the strike affecting their interests.

It can hardly be said that any man would be anxious to enter into a strike situation, or in any way provoke it. It is a question of the unions and all parties coming to an agreement, and getting around the table to discuss the issue. There can be no doubt that anyone with a sense of justice and fair play would agree that these men are in a very disadvantaged position in relation to the rest of the community. We know, for example, that the average weekly wage has just gone over the \$200 mark. The average weekly wage is \$60 a week above what the storehand receives under the union award. The storehands are not asking for an increase of \$60 to bring them up to the average wage; their level is significantly below that figure. The storehand wants justice.

Mr Cooley dealt with the matter of the application of indexation, and how representations by the Liberal Governments to the Arbitration Courts had actually reduced award payments below indexation. In this State, in particular, the level of increase in the CPI has been greater than that applying in the other States, so the workers here are even more seriously disadvantaged.

I hope members of the Government see the pointlessness of this piece of legislation and take a wider view of their duties to the community. This Bill can only further divide the community where divisions have been created over the last few years, but I do not intend to speak about that at this stage.

This Bill will only exacerbate the position, and that is not in the interests of the community. It can be seen as political point scoring for members of the Liberal Party and the National Country Party. I think it is about time those members decided to act in a more responsible manner to try to do something to bring the community together and help Australia to get out of the sloth that it has dropped into. As was said recently,

the country is bumping along at the bottom of an economic trough. I urge members to vote against the Bill.

THE HON. R. T. LEESON (South-East) [4.13 p.m.]: I want to say a few words in opposition to the Bill. Much has been said in this Chamber, and in another place, relating to the wages paid to the millworkers, and the reason for the strike. I fully support the stand taken by the workers.

I have looked around this Chamber and I do not think there are many people here who would know what it is like to work for the basic rate of pay. It is only seven years since I was on the basic rate. I can assure members in this Chamber that to try to live on the basic rate at the present time is very difficult. In my opinion it is a complete laugh that we should be debating a Bill such as this under the present circumstances. Members in this place just would not know what it is like to try to live on a take-home pay of something like \$107 a week. That would not cover beer and cigarettes for most people in this place, and those who are prepared to be honest with themselves know that is the position.

I want to make a couple of points in relation to the Bill itself. It seems the purpose of this Bill is to give the Government power to do certain things which I consider it already has power to do. The Bill refers to the sale, supply, transport, and storage of flour, but it seems to me that at the present time this Government could buy, supply, transport, and store flour without the need for the introduction of this Bill.

The real guts of this Bill is possibly contained in clause 4. As was mentioned by Mr Don Cooley a short time ago, the Bill will authorise the Minister to go into a flour mill and actually confiscate any flour which might be there.

It goes further than that, because the Minister will be empowered to confiscate flour from any private dwelling; for instance, confiscate a small bag of flour in a household cupboard.

This Bill reminds me of the wartime measures that were taken in some countries. In this day and age I do not think there is any necessity for such a Bill. It is ridiculous that in 1977 we should be debating a Bill of this nature, when only 120 workers are involved in this dispute.

I am sure members opposite do not understand how difficult it is for these workers to exist on the pittance that they are paid. I draw attention to clause 8 of the Bill which provides—

A prosecution for a contravention of this Act shall not be commenced without the consent of the Attorney-General.

I am wondering at whom this provision is aimed. Does it mean that a person on a picket line could be prosecuted for an offence under this legislation? Perhaps the manager of Allied Mills would be given some consideration. This provision seems strange to me.

If we are honest with ourselves we must admit that we know what this Bill is all about. By supporting it we would be making a farce of the present situation. I oppose the Bill.

THE HON. F. E. MCKENZIE (East Metropolitan) [4.17 p.m.]: Much has been said in opposition to the Bill. I want to add my thoughts on the measure, and I support some of the remarks that have been made earlier. It is not long since I held a position in a trade union, so I am aware of the problems which confront the unions, and particularly the officials of the unions.

I believe the Bill before us is a cowardly attack on a union. To me it seems significant that the Government has picked on a small union. When one looks at the history of this union one wonders why, with a good record of 50 years without strikes, at this point of time a move is being made in such a fashion.

We know that the leader writer of *The West Australian* has described the action of the Government as provocative; I also believe that to be so. It worries me as to where we are heading. If the Government is seeking confrontation—and that appears to be the case—the community will be polarised into two opposing groups. There is no question about that. It is horrifying to think what will be the result of that type of confrontation. It appears to me as though the Government might be aiming at hastening the end of this dispute, by forcing the people to go back to work. If that is the Government's intention, I think it will be disappointed.

As Mr Cooley has said, the trade union movement will not stand by idly and see a union with 120 members persecuted in this fashion. Much has been said about the wage rates of these workers. I do not believe that members opposite realise the difficulty that these workers experience in trying to exist on such low rates of pay. The Government, both Federal and State, by its intervention in wage indexation hearings before the Industrial Commission has lowered the real wages of workers.

The Government has made it difficult for people on low incomes to exist. In the flour industry there are no workers earning more than

the average weekly earnings. Anyone who has worked in an industry in which the wages are low, or any official of a union of such workers, will appreciate the position which the workers in the flour mills are facing.

The workers see in the newspapers the profits made by the flour mills. I refer to *The West Australian* of the 1st November which contains a report indicating a record profit made by Allied Mills Ltd. If one mill can make such a profit, no doubt the others can also, because there are not many flour mills in this State.

In that issue of the newspaper the huge profit made by Allied Mills Ltd. is shown. This is a company which is operating in Western Australia. If a record profit has been made by Allied Mills, then surely the workers in the industry are entitled to a share of the profit, particularly when we take into account the type of industry in which they are engaged. I regard it as a lousy industry. I am sure members opposite would not like to put in a day at a flour mill; it is not a pleasant job; and the remuneration should be better than it is. If the flour mills are making record profits, as announced in the Press, surely the workers are entitled to some of that profit.

The report to which I have referred states—

The directors made no comment on the year's operations, but the result indicated a 40 per cent jump in net profit in the second half from \$2.8 million to \$3.9 million, because earnings in the opening six months were virtually static at \$2.4 million.

Nevertheless there was a jump of 40 per cent in the second half of the year. If that is the kind of profit being made by the flour mills, then the workers ought to receive some of it.

I see this Bill as a cowardly attack on those workers. The millowners have said that they do not want Government intervention. That being the case, I wonder why the Government has moved in. The situation is not drastic as yet. Over the years there have been strikes in industry, but there has not been this type of legislation introduced. If this Bill is to be the pattern for the future then I can only repeat what I said earlier that we will be in for a rough time, and we will polarise the people. We cannot prevent that; the people will support one side or the other. That is something I do not want to see, but it will happen under this legislation. There will be confrontation and bloodshed in the streets. There is no way out, because people will not be nailed down and prevented from receiving their just entitlement.

It might be true that the workers in this industry are aiming at \$20 per week in overaward payments. Let me remind the House that the railway workers in Victoria made a claim for \$30 a week and eventually received \$6 a week. However, in Western Australia railway workers have not as yet received this type of payment. I hope that the Government will see wisdom in passing on the increases which have been granted to the railway workers of New South Wales and Victoria. They were in the same situation as workers in this State are in, and their wages were depressed and their standard of living reduced.

The only thing keeping the people apart is that they can see only the problems in their own industry, and they cannot see the problems of others.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: They also know that they do not have their claims in.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Who?

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: The workers to whom you are referring.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The railway workers of Western Australia?

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Yes.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Their claims are in now. I hope the Minister will pass on to the railway workers in Western Australia the increases that have been granted in Victoria, otherwise he will have a problem on his hand. What will happen then? Will we have another Bill like this one before us?

In that case there will be a difference because the Government would be moving into the transport field. It would be taking on a large number of workers, and not just 120 in the flour milling industry.

I am opposed to the Bill. I see it as a cowardly attack on a small union. I can assure the Government that the trade union movement will not stand by idly and see this union hammered into the ground.

Often we hear that union officials are responsible for strikes. In this case the workers themselves decided on that course of action at mass meetings; not the officials of the union. The workers have made the decision, because they are fed up with the present situation.

Time is fast running out for the Government, because the people will wake up eventually and realise that their problem of today will be the problem of somebody else tomorrow. When that takes place the Government will face a serious situation.

At the moment the Government is moving in this direction to gain some political capital. I suggest that in six or 12 months' time the position will be entirely different.

I oppose the Bill.

THE HON. R. HETHERINGTON (East Metropolitan) [4.27 p.m.]: I want to oppose this most undesirable Bill. When I first spoke in this Chamber I suggested that we should stop playing the politics of fear and confrontation, and try to return to politics of consultation.

Now we find under this Bill the Minister has given spurious reasons for its introduction. We have an example of something which looks to me like cynical electioneering in order to gain a short-term political advantage for this Government, and for the Fraser Government which is coming up for election on the 10th December.

This Bill is a case of the Government placing the unions into a position of "heads I win, tails you lose". By bringing down the Bill the Government could say that through its measures it has brought the dispute to an end, or it could exacerbate the situation and claim that despite the measures it took things have got worse; thus it could blame the unions. This time the Government is trying to make sure that the whole atmosphere in this place is centred in the belief that unemployment—which has been brought about by the policies of the Fraser and Court Governments—is, in fact, the responsibility of the unions.

This Bill is likely to make matters worse, because if action is taken under its provisions it is quite likely that the Government will find itself in collision with some of the bigger unions—such as the Transport Workers' Union. Is this what the Government wants? Is the Government trying to get into the situation where everything it touches is declared black just before an election? It looks as though that is the case.

Last night I was in the gallery in another place when the Minister for Labour and Industry launched a most unreasonable attack on the president of this union (Mr Skidmore) who is also the member for Swan.

THE PRESIDENT: I would ask the honourable member to refrain from making those comments.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am sorry, Mr President. I had forgotten the Standing Orders. The president of this union who has been accused by some people of not advising his members to go back to work has stated publicly that on three occasions he did advise his members to return to work, but they refused to do so. I find it very interesting that we have a situation

where the president of a union gave certain advice to its members, but the rank and file refused to accept advice, and therefore continued the strike.

Many times members opposite have suggested that the rank and file should ignore their leadership. This is a case where that has happened; the rank and file members have decided, in their wisdom, that they are in a position where they have to fight for their standard of living, and so the Government brings out its big guns.

I suggest this legislation is for short-term political gain. I can see no good coming from this legislation whatever. I do not think it is likely to bring the dispute to an end. The threat of it has so far only exacerbated the dispute; further, it is likely to extend the dispute. It is likely to have the opposite effect to that which the Government claimed. I wonder very seriously whether the Government's intention is to bring the dispute to an end or whether it wants to make the dispute worse.

When we look at this Bill we wonder what might happen in the future. Already we have had the Government threatening to deregister unions if it does not approve of their behaviour. Apparently the Government wants a series of tame-cat unions whose rules and behaviour meet the requirements of the Government.

In this Bill the Government is to have the power to buy, to sell, to set up business, to confiscate, and to appropriate. Is the Government conditioning us to this legislation so that in any future dispute it can do these things simultaneously? If that happens we will finish up looking like the royal soviet of Western Australia! I find this attitude rather ironical coming from a Government that talks so much about authoritarian and autocratic measures when it is taking a leaf out of the book of the people it condemns.

This is a very poor Bill indeed. It does the Government no credit whatever. It will have the effect of making the present position worse; it will have the effect of expanding it. The Bill will set up a precedent for future such legislation, and if this goes on, then heaven help this country and this State because we are moving on towards an authoritarian and autocratic regime.

I know that statement sounds very odd when I look across the Chamber to the Minister for Transport because nobody could look less autocratic and authoritarian than he. However, he is not the Minister ultimately responsible for the Bill. The Bill was introduced in another place and it seems to me that the actions of the Government are producing a situation that is very dangerous to the liberties of this country.

One of the things I find very sad is that many people in this Chamber talk about the liberty of the individual, and the liberty of the subject when in fact of course the liberty of the subject was quite often protected by the action of bodies within the body politic; in other words, the activities of voluntary organisations like trade unions. We cannot possibly protect the liberty of the subject by taking away the liberty of the organisation that represents the subject.

This Bill seems to me to be a direct attack on our freedom. It is a very dangerous piece of legislation; it is a very undesirable piece of legislation, and it is a piece of legislation which I suggest that independent members opposite should oppose.

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South—Minister for Transport) [4.34 p.m.]: It should be quite obvious to the public that the Government stands by the whole arbitration system. Not only do we stand by it but we also foster and encourage it. Surely the whole arbitration system seems to be at risk when the unions do not wish to abide by rulings with which they disagree.

The main part of our arbitration system is undoubtedly arbitration and conciliation, but, Mr President, how much arbitration has there been in this particular strike? At a conference the Federal commissioner (Mr Coleman) recommended that the men return to work. The Federal executive of the union concerned has recommended that the men return to work. The mill owners have stated publicly and to the arbitrator that they are willing to negotiate. Surely everything is there for a suitable settlement. If the mill owners had indicated that they did not intend to talk, there may have been some reason for the employees to strike. However, there is simply no reason at all for their action. Here we have a case where we could arbitrate but the men are just not interested to know what the result of arbitration could be.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: On the other hand the employers are not interested in arbitrating while the men are on strike, either.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: The system is that arbitration and conciliation should take place in a quiet atmosphere after the men have returned to work, and not in the steam of a strike.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: That is not in the Industrial Arbitration Act.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Here we have 120 men who are endeavouring to hold a whole system to ransom. They are seeking a

rise of \$20, and Mr Cooley says they may be satisfied with \$6. As a Government it is not our intention to interfere at all with the union's application for an increase; we are merely legislating to ensure that supplies get through to the public. The men could have a very justifiable case for wanting more money, but that has nothing to do with the Bill before us.

This happens to be an illegal strike, and for some unknown reason the union does not want to know what the outcome of conciliation will be.

A member: You are going to break the strike with this Bill?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I have not said that we are going to break it. I said we will get the supplies through to the public.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: And quite right too.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: A couple of bakers in the State are not too sure of that.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: These men are holding the whole State to ransom. It has been argued that because in the past this union has seldom taken this action, it is a very docile one. I am not arguing against that statement. Perhaps in the past this union might have been a very responsible one, but the fact that there has been no trouble in the past indicates also that the employers are very responsible.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley interjected.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: That has nothing to do with me. I am saying that as there have not been strikes in the past, it indicates there has been a reasonable amount of sense displayed on both sides. I admit that probably these workers are at the lower end of the wage scale, and they have my sympathy because of that. This Bill is not designed to change that in any way at all.

It seems to me that most speakers to this debate have got off the subject of the Bill which is designed entirely to ensure that some flour gets through at least to bread manufacturers and to the trade.

The Opposition has always claimed that it looks after a certain section of the community that is not as well off as others, but one wonders about the Opposition's actions in this particular case. There is nothing in this Bill to the effect that we intend to manufacture flour, as the Leader of the Opposition indicated. The measure has nothing to do with that at all.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I can't see a place in the Bill where you are to give everyone a bag of wheat and two grinding stones.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: It is amazing what country women can do.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Don't you think city women can do it too? My wife can make bread out of frozen lumps of dough.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: We must admit that the public is well and truly sick of what is happening as illegal strikes seem to be occurring continually.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You said "illegal strikes". Are some strikes legal?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Our intention is to protect the man in the street.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: You are going about it in the wrong way.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: We are protecting the man in the street against the irresponsible unions—not all the unions, but those which do not wish to go to conciliation and arbitration.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I noticed you have not referred to left-wing unions on this occasion.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: No I have not.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You must know the Federal leadership.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: The Bill provides that flour already manufactured can get through to those who can utilise it so that the public suffers the least effect possible because of an illegal strike. A group in the public is disadvantaged financially, and although those in opposition claim to represent these people, I really wonder when we see Opposition members objecting to the Government's intention of getting cheap food products through to the public.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The intention is to widen the dispute.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: We are not intending to widen the dispute. We are sincere in our endeavour to get bread and flour products through to the public. Bread may not be quite the same staple element that it was in the past, but flour products—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The population would be better off if they couldn't obtain pies.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: It is not our intention to try to cause industrial confrontation. It is not our intention to interfere with the industrial arbitration system. However, we are endeavouring to lessen the effect of the strike on the public.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 17

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. W. M. Piesse
Hon. V. J. Ferry	Hon. R. G. Pike
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. J. C. Tozer
Hon. M. McAleer	Hon. R. J. L. Williams
Hon. T. McNeil	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. I. G. Medcalf	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. N. F. Moore	Hon. G. E. Masters
Hon. O. N. B. Oliver	(Teller)

Noes 8

Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. T. Leeson
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. F. E. McKenzie
Hon. Lyla Elliott	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. R. Hetherington	Hon. R. F. Claughton
	(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes

Hon. N. McNeill
Hon. G. W. Berry

Noes

Hon. Grace Vaughan
Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (the Hon. V. J. Ferry) in the Chair; the Hon. D. J. Wordsworth (Minister for Transport) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3 put and passed.

Clause 4: Powers—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Clause 4 (2) provides that the Government may buy, sell, supply, transport, store, market and distribute flour. This seems to bear out what I said previously. I can understand the way the Government is going to buy flour although perhaps the word should be "acquire" because if one looks further into the Bill one will see it gives the Government extraordinary power to actually seize flour. I can understand how the Government is going to sell flour. If the Government is going to sell it, I presume it would have to supply it.

Then we come to the next provision, which is that the Government may transport the flour. It seems to me that this Bill has more in it than was first thought. Is the Government seriously considering marshalling its own transport fleet, to be driven by volunteers?

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Perhaps it will call in the army.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That is up to the Australian Government.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Are you talking about the Federal Government?

The Hon. D. K. DAns: It is up to the Federal Government or the Commonwealth Government—use what term one will—and I do not think it would be so stupid as to enter this kind of dispute. Surely the Government is not going to be so provocative that it is actually going to transport the flour. If the Government has that power it must use its own transport facilities, and I would like to hear from the Minister on that point.

Clause 4 goes on to say that the Government will have power to store, market and distribute flour. If the flour is to be distributed, it must be transported from somewhere else. To my way of thinking, this is a glaring indication that the Government intends to supply its own transport from somewhere, and man it either with union or nonunion labour.

As I said earlier, this Bill has no principle; it may have some details; but it has a great deal of intention, and the intention is to provoke and provide a forum for the coming Federal election. I should like the Minister to explain what is meant by the word "transport" and how he intends to implement it.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: It is clearly laid out in the Bill. It states that the Government may buy flour, which means it shall purchase the flour; it does not mean it shall acquire it. It can also sell, supply, and transport the flour. "Transport" obviously is a matter of moving; one must be able to move things. How is it to be done? There are forms of public transport available.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Perhaps it will be transported on MTT buses.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: It might even come to that; or, I might have to put it in the back of my car. We will have to move it somehow. I think this is very explicit and can hardly be explained further.

The Hon. D. K. DAns: It is far from explicit; it is very confusing. If the Government intends to acquire some transport and to interest volunteers in manning the transport in order that its confrontation tactics may be carried out, let it get up and say so. On the question of acquiring flour, we will be up to that point shortly.

The clause states that the Minister may do certain things. That is a Minister of the Crown; it is not dealing with engaging Brambles-Manfords. I am not happy with this provision because, quite clearly, the Government intends that if all

else fails it will enter into a massive confrontation with the trade union movement by acquiring or engaging transport from somewhere, and using scab labour or volunteers.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: It will be black flour.

The Hon. D. K. DAns: That is a very appropriate comment; perhaps we will be eating black bread, and then we will get that horrible word thrown at us, because many people in Eastern countries eat black bread. It is clear that the Government intends by force, coercion, or some other means to transport the flour. By what means, the Minister appears not to be prepared to say.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: It seems to me that if the Government is going to transport flour, it has one of two choices, and the Minister does not seem to be prepared to say which will be used. Either the Government must use drivers in its employment and bring other services into disruption, or it intends to transport flour with voluntary labour, which will certainly bring about the very thing I have been predicting; namely, a massive strike and a massive confrontation.

It seems to me that this intention of the Government to transport flour is the very nub of its intention to go into confrontation with the unions of this State. The Minister for Transport does not seem to have thought about it, but I would think perhaps the Minister who drew up the Bill may have given it rather more serious thought, and the intent of the clause is sinister.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I think when one reads the newspaper, one will find there are people who are indicating they will be able to transport the flour.

The Hon. D. K. DAns: Yes, but they are not the Minister.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I think members and the general public can be assured the Government will use its good sense when it has to transport the flour.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I have very grave doubts about the good sense of the Government. The Minister has stated there is no intention to manufacture flour. However, clause 4 provides all the scope necessary for the Government to take that action. If it does not intend to manufacture flour, what will be the situation if the strike continues, and the existing supplies of flour run out? How is the Government going to ensure continuity of supplies to the public?

Clause 4 states—

4. (1) During the operation of this Act, where it appears to the Minister that the supply or provision of flour is or is likely to be interrupted or dislocated or become less than is sufficient for the reasonable requirements of the community the Minister may from time to time exercise all or any of the powers conferred on him by or under this Act and do and perform all such acts, matters and things as are necessary or expedient for carrying into effect the purposes of this Act.

Amongst the powers conferred on the Minister are that the Minister may—

(c) establish and maintain premises, machinery, plant or other equipment for the purposes of this Act;

What sort of machinery is being referred to here?

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: For the transportation of the flour.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I can understand why the Government needs to establish premises to store the flour, but what is the machinery to be used for?

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: For transporting the flour. Do not read what is not there. You are drawing red herrings across the trail, scaring the public. Direct confrontation—that is what you boys are up to.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: In the general usage of these terms, one could not accept that "machinery, plant or other equipment" is for the transport of the flour.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: Machinery is transport.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I have very little faith in the credibility of the assurances given by the Government. We saw how little credibility could be given to the Premier's assurance that this Government accepted the need to maintain real wages and remove anomalies. This Bill certainly does not seek to do that.

Despite the interjections by the Hon. R. J. L. Williams—in fact, I think we should disregard his interjections—the wording of clause 4 more than covers the power the Government would require to go into the manufacturing of flour. If it is not the intention of the Government to do that, the clause could be amended to make it quite clear that it in fact does not intend to do those things.

We could do without a number of these words, which would not affect the ability of the Government to establish premises in which to store

the flour, or to have trucks or other means of transport to move it about.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Your colleague thinks we should not be transporting it, so that makes it a bit difficult.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I am not dealing with the transporting of the flour; I am dealing with the Minister's statement that the Government does not intend to manufacture flour. If the Government is sincere in that respect, it could reassure the Opposition by amending this clause accordingly.

I share the misgivings which have already been expressed by my colleagues. The provisions of the Bill will not resolve the strike. The exercise of the provisions of the legislation will result only in the dispute spreading to other areas. If the Government genuinely does not wish to manufacture the flour, we would accept it is directing its actions to the particular section involved in the strike.

However, clause 4 covers a much wider section of the community than merely those people involved in the dispute. I am not sure what the Minister's reply will be, but I think while these words remain in the Bill he will find it very hard to reiterate the assurance he gave that the Government has no intention to manufacture flour.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I was very interested to hear an interjection by the Hon. R. J. L. Williams a few moments ago, because it appears to me this Bill has not been very widely studied by members opposite—as indeed they do not need to study it very much, because they have the numbers.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: We know what it is about.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Yes, the honourable member knows what it is about, but it is like a lynch mob knowing what it is about when they throw a rope with a noose on the end of it over the branch of a tree, with some poor, unsuspecting fellow waiting on the ground below.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: That is your interpretation of it.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Mr Dans talks like the prophet of doom.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I am far from being a prophet of doom. As I said during the second reading debate, all these devices have been tried right back through history, without success. I thought we were moving into an enlightened period where perhaps we would be looking towards solutions.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: Mr Hetherington suggested change.

The Hon. D. K. DAns: Quite frankly, the Bill is not what it seems.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It is a straightforward piece of legislation.

The Hon. D. K. DAns: I know how the Liberal Party operates: Members opposite do not pull their socks on; they screw them on! Apart from that Mr Williams said that machinery meant transport.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: It could mean transport.

The Hon. D. K. DAns: It could but it does not mean transport. There is an Inspection of Machinery Act which clearly defines machinery, and that is what this Bill means.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: Show me where it defines "machinery".

The Hon. D. K. DAns: I shall not go through these Acts now but I could explain the relevant Act to Mr Williams at another time.

The Bill clearly says "establish and maintain premises". Regardless of the numbers in this Chamber we must consider the Bill, and the Bill gives the Government power to buy, sell, supply, transport, store, market and distribute flour. It gives the Government power to enter into a contract and undertake and carry out business transactions. It gives the Government further power to establish and maintain premises. Just what is the Government going to do with the premises? I go along with Mr Williams and say that plant could include a truck or two; I will not say machinery or other equipment includes that for the purposes of this Act. The Bill gives the power to the Government if it wants to coerce and act in concert with the milling companies, perhaps to take over the mills. That is exactly what the Bill means and the Government cannot have it both ways.

Mr Wordsworth was at pains to tell us without a shadow of doubt that this Bill does not give the Government the right to produce flour. I say that subclause (2) (c) shows the intention of the Government. In any case, none of the Minister's answers have been satisfactory to date and I do not imagine there will be a satisfactory answer to this question. I am sure the parliamentary draftsman knew what the Government had in mind when he drew up this Bill.

The powers given to this Government in this clause are quite clear. I suppose one could draw a very long bow and say that "other equipment" for the purposes of this legislation could include

an arsenal or a couple of battalions of riot troops. However, I do not think even this Government would go that far.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Do Opposition members think yellow cake is some sort of flour?

The Hon. D. K. DAns: As a person who knows a little about atomic explosions I am prepared to debate that matter with the Minister at any public forum. If we are going to pass a Bill such as this it is incumbent on the Government to explain exactly what the Bill means. The Government will be embarrassed when in the fullness of time the questions we have asked and the explanations we have been given prove that what we said would happen does happen. What will be the Government's reaction then?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I think members will find that in subclause (2) (d) (i) the Bill refers to the packaging of flour and every one of the points commented on by the Leader of the Opposition would be necessary if we are to accomplish that end.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I do not believe the Minister has answered the question. If I said I was going to buy, sell, and supply flour and establish and maintain premises, machinery, and plant I would expect people not to be surprised if I set up a factory to do so. There is no doubt the Bill gives the Government that power. We are talking about whether the intention is there or not. I am not sure what the Government's intention is, but the Bill certainly gives the Government that power. If the Government is forced into a difficult situation I cannot see how anyone could say the power does not reside with the Government to do this.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 16

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. O. N. B. Oliver
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. W. M. Piesse
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. R. G. Pike
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. M. McAleer	Hon. R. J. L. Williams
Hon. T. McNeil	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. I. G. Medcalf	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. N. F. Moore	Hon. G. E. Masters
	(Teller)

Noes 7

Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. T. Leeson
Hon. D. K. DAns	Hon. F. E. McKenzie
Hon. Lyla Elliott	Hon. R. F. Cloughton
Hon. R. Hetherington	(Teller)

Pairs	
Ayes	Noes
Hon. Neil McNeill	Hon. Grace Vaughan
Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbis

Clause thus passed.

Clause 5: Delegation—

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: We have just passed a clause which authorises the taking possession of and control of flour and this power is to be put into the hands of any person for the time being so authorised by the Minister. The Minister can choose anyone, even a flour miller, to carry out all the powers under this Bill. In other words, the Minister could set up a person to exercise all the arbitrary and dictatorial powers under the legislation. We will have a commissariat with wide powers. This is undesirable and I would like to have a more specific indication of what the Government's intention is and who will control the legislation. Under this clause the Government can use anyone at all and I think it widens the powers of the Bill even further. It sets up a person with sweeping and arbitrary powers at the discretion of the Minister. This clause should be thrown out even if the rest are left in.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I would have hoped that the Minister would make some comments in reply to the question raised by Mr Hetherington.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Do you want the Minister to say, "Put this here" and "Take that there"? This sort of thing is in most Bills.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: We are not dealing with an ordinary Bill and this is why we need answers to these questions. These are clauses requiring explanations. We want to know who are to be the persons who will have this authority. The powers of these people can lead to individuals being placed in prison for periods of up to six months or facing a fine of \$200, which is not a light penalty. It is a fairly serious fine for a person caught in the mesh of this legislation. People attempting to protect themselves and their families and not wishing to give any information in order to look after their own welfare are going to suffer the penalties provided for in this legislation. This measure reminds me of another piece of legislation we debated in this Chamber some years ago which was a cause of very great concern to the community.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You had quite a lot to say.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Yes, and I was justified. This is another assault on the basic freedoms of the people in our community. If we take our freedoms for granted we are in very great danger of losing them, such as the right to strike and to associate as workers must do. The Opposition does not want to see undesirable characters given the power this Bill will give, and we want assurances from the Minister as to the types of people likely to be delegated these powers. This is necessary as the Bill will become law.

The community is entitled to know who will exercise these powers. It is not good enough for the Minister to sit and say nothing or for the Leader of the House to merely interject.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: The Opposition seems determined to instil fear into the public—

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: We are not talking to the general public.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: —by referring to "taking possession" and so on. The term is "buy", and to buy one pays money.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I made no reference to that particular power at all, but I made a general reference to all the powers and in particular to those related to the gaining of information. The Minister has sidestepped the issue and has not given a reasonable answer to what I believe is a reasonable request.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: I replied to this point during my reply to the second reading debate.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I made particular reference to the power of seeking information. This need not necessarily act against the work force. If a business is to be taken over by the Government, then all the information relating to that business will be available to some person if that person takes it into his mind to seek it. I would have thought the commercial interests themselves would like some assurance from the Minister as to the sort of person likely to be delegated the power under the clause.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: As stated by interjection, these are the usual delegation provisions which are contained in many pieces of legislation including the marine legislation with which we dealt recently. There is nothing sinister about it. Obviously the Minister cannot be physically responsible for everything himself and must have the power of delegation.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 16	
Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. O. N. B. Oliver
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. W. M. Piesse
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. R. G. Pike
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. M. McAleer	Hon. R. J. L. Williams
Hon. T. McNeil	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. I. G. Medcalf	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. N. F. Moore	Hon. G. E. Masters
<i>(Teller)</i>	

Noes 7	
Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. T. Leeson
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. F. E. McKenzie
Hon. Lyla Elliott	Hon. R. F. Claughton
Hon. R. Hetherington	<i>(Teller)</i>

Ayes	Pairs	Noes
Hon. N. McNeill		Hon. Grace Vaughan
Hon. G. Berry		Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Clause thus passed.		

Clause 6: Compensation—

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: This provision gives the Minister power to provide for compensation to be paid to people who suffer loss or damage. If the person concerned is not satisfied, then he can appeal to a single arbitrator. I do not believe that it should be a single arbitrator. I believe a person should have the opportunity to appeal to a tribunal, similar to the tribunal under the Workers' Compensation Act. As happens on many occasions on an appeal, when more than one person is involved a different result is obtained. I do not understand why the decision should be the problem of a single person in the first place, the Minister; and, secondly, another single person, an arbitrator.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 16	
Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. O. N. B. Oliver
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. W. M. Piesse
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. R. G. Pike
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. M. McAleer	Hon. R. J. L. Williams
Hon. T. McNeil	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. I. G. Medcalf	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. N. F. Moore	Hon. G. E. Masters
<i>(Teller)</i>	

Noes 7	
Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. T. Leeson
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. F. E. McKenzie
Hon. Lyla Elliott	Hon. R. F. Claughton
Hon. R. Hetherington	<i>(Teller)</i>

Ayes	Pairs	Noes
Hon. N. McNeill		Hon. Grace Vaughan
Hon. G. Berry		Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs

Clause thus passed.

Clause 7: Offences and Penalties—

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 16	
Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. O. N. B. Oliver
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. W. M. Piesse
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. R. G. Pike
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. M. McAleer	Hon. R. J. L. Williams
Hon. T. McNeil	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. I. G. Medcalf	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. N. F. Moore	Hon. G. E. Masters
<i>(Teller)</i>	

Noes 7	
Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. T. Leeson
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. F. E. McKenzie
Hon. Lyla Elliott	Hon. R. F. Claughton
Hon. R. Hetherington	<i>(Teller)</i>

Ayes	Pairs	Noes
Hon. N. McNeill		Hon. Grace Vaughan
Hon. G. Berry		Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Clause thus passed.		

Clause 8: Consent to prosecutions—

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: In his reply to the debate the Minister did not respond to the comments made by the Hon. R. T. Leeson about the Attorney-General having the power to decide whether or not prosecutions will be made. I did not understand this provision either. What is good for one is good for all. Will no prosecutions be made against the flour millers, but only against the small fry—the workers, for instance? The Minister should explain why a prosecution will not be commenced without the consent of the Attorney-General.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: One can say it is another safety provision which will make the situation more ideal. There is yet another person within the chain and he can say—

The Hon. R. Hetherington: It is a long way from ideal.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: We could not have anything more ideal. Does the honourable member want a few more people involved as well?

The Hon. R. Hetherington: We do not want the Bill.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: That is another matter. Advocates of civil rights will find this provision ideal.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I feel much the same as the Hon. F. E. McKenzie. I consider there is likely to be selective usage of this provision. It will be the poor impecunious worker trying to defend his rights who will be the main one to be penalised under the Bill. Also I can envisage the situation where a business, which has a good relationship with its staff and does not wish these measures to be used to provoke disturbances or argument within the work force, would be reluctant to give information when requested because of the repercussions on the work force.

Knowing the intent behind this Bill, I can see these people are likely to be suffering from the powers contained in it. I previously mentioned other cases, such as where a business wishes to protect the information it has which may be of value to its rivals and would be reluctant to give information.

Obviously there must be some kind of check on people who are overenthusiastic in their use of authority. The petty dictator is well known. He is the humble person who suddenly finds himself with powers which are not normally granted to him and who becomes over-zealous in their execution. It is desirable to have some way of ensuring those powers are not abused. At the same time, it is the very nature of this legislation which makes the provision necessary and we have these precepts thrown up before us.

If the Minister says I am using scare tactics, I remind him it is quite unlikely that anything I say in this Chamber will be printed, particularly what I say in the Committee stage. I have never known anything said in the Committee stage to be reported; it has never occurred in the time I have been in this Chamber. That is drawing a red herring across the trail.

There is a real worry about the likely outcome of the exercise of this power, even though we concede there will always be times when it is necessary to have it. On past history, the evidence is quite clear that it is the poor person of few means who suffers from the powers contained in such legislation as this, while those who are affluent and well off escape without any penalty.

It is the individual who is thrown into prison for up to six months, with a penalty of \$200. A corporation is subject to a small fine of \$500. When one goes to a corporation one does not talk to an abstract body. Individuals are involved. So when a prosecution is brought against the

principals of a corporation it will not be against individuals but against the corporation itself, and none of the principals are ever likely to find themselves in prison as a consequence of this particular measure.

I can only say I oppose it as I oppose the whole of the legislation.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 16

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. O. N. B. Oliver
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. W. M. Piesse
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. R. G. Pike
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. M. McAleer	Hon. R. J. L. Williams
Hon. T. McNeil	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. I. G. Medcalf	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. N. F. Moore	Hon. G. E. Masters
	<i>(Teller)</i>

Noes 7

Hon. R. F. Cloughton	Hon. R. Hetherington
Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. T. Leeson
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. F. E. McKenzie
Hon. Lyla Elliott	<i>(Teller)</i>

Pairs

Ayes

Hon. N. McNeill
Hon. G. W. Berry

Noes

Hon. Grace Vaughan
Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs

Clause thus passed.

Clauses 9 and 10 put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 16

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. N. F. Moore
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. O. N. B. Oliver
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. W. M. Piesse
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. G. E. Masters	Hon. R. J. L. Williams
Hon. M. McAleer	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. T. McNeil	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. I. G. Medcalf	Hon. R. G. Pike
	<i>(Teller)</i>

Noes 7

Hon. R. F. Cloughton	Hon. R. Hetherington
Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. T. Leeson
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. F. E. McKenzie
Hon. Lyla Elliott	<i>(Teller)</i>

Pairs

Ayes

Hon. N. McNeill
Hon. G. W. Berry

Noes

Hon. Grace Vaughan
Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs

Clauses thus passed.

Title put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 16

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. N. F. Moore
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. O. N. B. Oliver
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. W. M. Piesse
Hon. G. E. Masters	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. R. J. L. Williams
Hon. M. McAleer	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. T. McNeil	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. I. G. Medcalf	Hon. R. G. Pike

(Teller)

Noes 7

Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. T. Leeson
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. F. E. McKenzie
Hon. Lyla Elliott	Hon. R. F. Claughton
Hon. R. Hetherington	

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes

Hon. N. McNeill
Hon. G. W. Berry

Noes

Hon. Grace Vaughan
Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs

Title thus passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South—Minister for Transport) [5.44 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 16

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. O. N. B. Oliver
Hon. V. J. Ferry	Hon. W. M. Piesse
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. R. G. Pike
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. R. J. L. Williams
Hon. M. McAleer	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. T. McNeil	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. N. F. Moore	Hon. G. E. Masters

(Teller)

Noes 7

Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. T. Leeson
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. F. E. McKenzie
Hon. Lyla Elliott	Hon. R. F. Claughton
Hon. R. Hetherington	

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes

Hon. N. McNeill
Hon. G. W. Berry

Noes

Hon. Grace Vaughan
Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILLS (4): ASSENT

Message from the Deputy Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills—

1. Mine Workers' Relief Act Amendment Bill.
2. Clothes and Fabrics (Labelling) Act Amendment Bill.
3. Rural Reconstruction Scheme Act Amendment Bill.
4. Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Board (Validation) Bill.

MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. D. J. Wordsworth (Minister for Transport), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South—Minister for Transport) [5.48 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time. The purpose of this Bill is to continue the system of annual road grants made by the State Government to Western Australian local authorities. The previous statutory grants scheme expired on the 30th June of this year.

As a considerable proportion of the funds used for these grants to local authorities is derived from Commonwealth sources, the time span and expenditure provisions of this Bill generally are complementary to the provisions of the recently enacted States Grants (Roads) Act, 1977 of the Parliament of the Commonwealth which covers the three year term from 1977-78 to 1979-80.

The annual Commonwealth road grant to be made available to Western Australia for the current financial year and the next two years is \$60.2 million which represents an increase of only 3.26 per cent on our 1976-77 grant of \$58.3 million. While the amount of the grants for 1978-79 and 1979-80 has been fixed in the Commonwealth legislation at \$60.2 million, the Commonwealth Minister for Transport has stated that the grants for these two years will be adjusted for cost inflation to retain their value in real terms.

Although the State has made strong representations to the Commonwealth authorities for an increase in our grant, these were not successful. The Commonwealth Government has stated that it is following an overall policy of restriction in Government spending as part of its anti-inflation policy.

A further serious difficulty with which we have had to contend in the Commonwealth grants for the next three years is the considerable imbalance contained in the grants within road categories. This imbalance is shown by the fact that while the total annual Commonwealth grant for Western Australian roads has been increased by only \$1.9 million, within this grant the Commonwealth Government has increased the allocation for the national highways and commerce roads category by \$6.7 million, which means that the total Federal funds available for all other categories have been actually depleted by about \$5 million.

The Commonwealth allocations for these other categories have shown a small increase of \$2.3 million for rural local roads and \$1.4 million for rural arterial roads. For urban arterial roads the allocation has been severely cut back by about \$9.7 million and there has been a small increase of \$1 million in the Federal allocation for the urban local road category and an increase of \$200 000 for the MITOKS category. A large proportion of the funds allocated to metropolitan local authorities is for urban arterial roads under their control.

By way of explanation I would like to mention that as road grants made by the State Government to Western Australian local authorities consist of a mixture of both Commonwealth and State funds, it is not possible to take the increase in the Commonwealth funds allocated to a particular road category by the Federal Government as an indicator of the total increase which can be made in local authority road grants. This is because the State Government is committed to maintaining a reasonably balanced programme of road improvements for all categories in all parts of the State and this is regarded as a responsible policy on a statewide basis.

For the foregoing reasons, it is the overall growth factor of only 3.26 per cent in the total Commonwealth allocation which should be taken as an indicator of our ability to increase the total grant to a particular road category rather than the fluctuating percentage increases and decreases in the allocations between road categories made by successive Commonwealth Governments.

The constraint of an increase of only 3.26 per cent in our Commonwealth grant and the serious imbalance between road categories has made the present financial year most difficult for the State road authority in drawing up a balanced road programme. Despite this overall constraint, it was possible to provide an increase this year of 5.1 per cent in the total funds, as provided in

this Bill, for the new system of grants to country local authorities. However, because of the severe cut back of \$9.7 million in Commonwealth funds for urban arterial roads, it was not possible to provide any increase in the total funds available to metropolitan local authorities.

The total funds provided in this Bill for annual grants to country local authorities amount in rounded figures to \$9.685 million representing an increase of 5.1 per cent on the sum of \$9.213 million in the last financial year. However, in the proposed distribution of this sum between individual local authorities, it was appreciated that because of anomalies in the previous statutory grants scheme, the annual roads grants previously received by country local authorities did not reflect the road needs of individual councils and therefore it was necessary to evolve a new system which more realistically reflected the relative road needs of councils and changes in development occurring throughout the State.

In the metropolitan area, a formula has been used successfully for the past four years to distribute statutory road grants to urban local authorities and much research work has been undertaken by a committee consisting of representatives of the Country Shire and Town Councils' Associations and Main Roads Department to arrive at distribution formulas to provide a more realistic indication of the road needs of country councils within clearly identifiable groupings or zones within the State.

It was found that the most suitable formula components which were easily measurable and reflected road needs were total population and weighted road length of local authority roads with a sealed road, because of its higher traffic volume and high cost of resealing, having a greater weighting than an unsealed road. However, because of the great diversity between regions of the State, it was necessary in selecting the formula for a particular zone or group to vary the proportions of the population and road length components with population having a higher weighting in the more densely settled or urbanised councils and road length receiving greater recognition in the less densely settled areas. The formula components ranged from two thirds population—one third road length for the more densely settled councils, one half population—one-half road length for the agricultural shires and one-third population—two-thirds road length for the less densely settled shires.

Following discussions between myself, the Commissioner of Main Roads, and representatives of the executive of the Country Shire and Town

Councils' Associations, agreement was reached on the new system of road grants as contained in this Bill. From my foregoing remarks, members will appreciate that the representatives of country councils have been closely involved in formulating the principles of this proposed new system of grants to country local authorities.

Members will also appreciate that the application of road needs formulas to determine grants will result in some councils being better off and some worse off when compared with the previous scheme. The proposed new system, as contained in this Bill, provides for a supplementary grant fund which is an aggregate of all the shortfall amounts by which individual local authorities receive less under the new system compared to the old.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: All the shortfalls?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Yes. Such local authorities can make an application, based on their road needs, to a committee which includes local authority representation, for a supplementary grant. The maximum supplementary grant a council can receive under these provisions is the shortfall amount.

The proposed grants to individual councils, as shown in the second schedule to the Bill, also incorporate a minimum grant principle applied on a per head of population and per kilometre of road basis. This principle will benefit some of the low population density outback councils.

While under the previous legislation, the statutory grants were fixed for the three years 1974-75 to 1976-77, the Commonwealth Government subsequently made special grants for roads available to the States for each year as an allowance towards meeting cost inflation. When these special grants became available as a percentage increase in our Commonwealth grant for each year, the Western Australian Government by administrative action increased the statutory grant funds to local authorities by a similar percentage increase.

I have already explained to members that it is the intention of the Commonwealth Government to follow a similar practice in relation to the Commonwealth grants for the next two years and when these additional federal funds are determined and become available, a similar percentage increase will be made by administrative action to the grant funds contained in this legislation.

As these additional Commonwealth funds become available and are applied under the formula basis to individual councils, the supplementary grant shortfall provision will decrease as the formula allocations increase.

With regard to the proposed grants for metropolitan local authorities, I have already informed members that while there is an increase of \$1 million in the annual federal allocation for the urban local road category, there has been a drastic cut back of \$9.7 million for urban arterial roads. Because of these severe funding difficulties, the maximum amount which can be provided in this Bill for metropolitan local authority grants is at the same level as for the 1976-77 year. However, similar to the proposals for country local authorities, as additional federal funds become available as an allowance for cost inflation in the 1978-79 and 1979-80 years, a percentage increase will be made by administrative action in the total metropolitan grant funds.

The total statutory grant road funds, including the 9 per cent special grant, available to metropolitan local authorities including the Serpentine-Jarrahdale Shire in the 1976-77 financial year were \$7 035 316 and similar amounts comprising a base grant of \$2 345 105 and the urban roads fund pool of \$4 690 211 are provided in this Bill. The statistics of population and weighted road area used in the formula for distribution of the base grant between metropolitan local authorities have been updated.

As it will be necessary to utilise State funds which are in short supply, to make good the severe shortfall in Commonwealth allocations for urban arterial roads, it will be necessary for the base grant to metropolitan local authorities to be allocated from Commonwealth urban local road funds. While these funds are to be used for construction purposes and not for maintenance, provision has been made in the Bill for some easing of this requirement where a local authority can show that special circumstances exist. The proposals have been fully discussed with representatives of metropolitan local authorities.

The provisions in this Bill for the submission of programmes by all local authorities, for approval of the Minister for Transport, for the expenditure of these funds, are generally similar to the previous legislation. Also, the previous legislation contained matching provisions whereby country and metropolitan local authorities with the lowest expenditure record from their own resources on roads were required to improve their effort in order to receive the full amount of the base grants. As the matching scheme has been successful in providing an incentive to these particular local authorities without being onerous on most councils, similar principles are contained in this Bill which require only those local authorities with the lowest expenditure record to

improve their effort. The previous provision that councils in out-back areas are exempt from matching has been retained. Provision has also been made for the Minister to set a lower matching quota if a council can demonstrate that there are special circumstances for setting a lower quota.

This is an important Bill to assist local authorities to maintain road construction and employment as an important service provided by them to meet road needs. While the total funds allocated in this Bill have been constrained by the low growth in Federal funds, nevertheless the grants as provided in this Bill will make a significant contribution for improving local authority roads throughout the State.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. D. K. Dans (Leader of the Opposition).

BILLS (2): RETURNED

1. Police Act Amendment Bill.
2. Adoption of Children Act Amendment Bill.

Bills returned from the Assembly without amendment.

SOLAR ENERGY RESEARCH BILL

Assembly's Message

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendment made by the Council.

CHICKEN MEAT INDUSTRY BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. D. J. Wordsworth (Minister for Transport), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South—Minister for Transport) [6.04 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.
This Bill repeals the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Act, 1975, and provides for a new Act to improve stability in the chicken meat industry and for the continuation of the committee established under the 1975 legislation.

The provisions of the 1975 Act, which are virtually identical to similar legislation in Victoria, were designed to ensure that a balance is maintained between the legitimate interests of growers and processors so that the interests of one group are not disadvantaged by the activities of the other. The committee in effect provides a forum for negotiations between growers and processors.

Unfortunately, the committee has not functioned as effectively as was envisaged when the legislation was enacted and disputes have arisen particularly in relation to the form of the contract, the growing fee, and the format for growers to share in the processors expansion.

The difficulties have been such as to require issues to become the subject of arbitration and in turn experience has shown that the present format for arbitration has been ineffective in resolving disputes within the committee. Somewhat similar problems have also occurred in Victoria and have resulted in the introduction of amending legislation in that State.

It is for these reasons that the amending legislation has become necessary, and the series of amendments have been sufficiently extensive as to warrant the drafting of a Bill for a new Act, the Chicken Meat Industry Act, rather than an amendment to the existing legislation.

Although the concept of the proposed legislation is the same as in the present legislation—that is, to continue to provide for a forum for negotiation between the two parties in the industry—several important changes are envisaged.

One of these involves the contract, the proposal being to prescribe by regulation its precise form. This will mean that the committee is no longer required to formally ratify each agreement, and provided a copy of the agreement duly signed by both parties is lodged with the committee no offence will be committed. However, where a dispute arises between the parties as to their respective rights, benefits or obligations under the agreement, the matter may be placed before the committee for determination. Further, in the event of the committee being unable to resolve the matter, there is provision for the appointment of a single arbitrator to determine the matter, and this determination is final under the Act and binding on both parties.

One of the functions of the committee is to make a determination in relation to the standard price for growing broiler chickens; but, again, in the event that the committee is unable to reach agreement on this matter, there is provision for the appointment of a single arbitrator to make the determination. It is relevant to comment that in making such a determination, either by the committee or by the arbitrator, the standard price to be paid by processors to growers is computed, using cost of production figures supplied by the Department of Agriculture.

Any determination made in respect of the standard price is final and is able to be notified in the *Government Gazette*. It is also proposed that the

establishment of new processing plants will require the prior approval of the Minister.

Other amendments include the payment of a sitting fee to members of the committee; the establishment of the committee as a body corporate; provision for the appointment of inspectors; provision for the Minister to exempt specified broiler chickens from sections of the Act; and the ability to record in respect of each farm its effective capacity to grow broiler chickens.

It is believed all aspects of the amending legislation are necessary if the committee is to function effectively.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. D. K. Dans (Leader of the Opposition).

MARKETING OF LAMB ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. D. J. Wordsworth (Minister for Transport), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South—Minister for Transport) [6.08 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Marketing of Lamb Act came into existence in 1971 as the result of a referendum held and involving the producers of lamb. This Bill is now presented to amend that Act and is designed to improve the Lamb Marketing Board's effectiveness in administering the Act.

During its early years, the board was the subject of a great deal of criticism from persons opposing the principles of the legislation, and it is to the credit of the board and to management that new markets in the Middle East area are being pioneered so successfully. The board's success in marketing has been recognised by two major awards, the most recent being the international Hoover Marketing Award.

The future of marketing of lamb in the Middle East countries is very sound and the board's ability to increase this market penetration is only likely to be constrained by the turn off of lambs from the State's flock which, no doubt this will be appreciated by members, has been substantially eroded by the drought conditions experienced over the past two years.

An amendment is proposed to enable the board to determine whether a person is or is not a producer. This is related to the difficulties which bona fide producers have at certain times of the

year in booking lambs for slaughter. The amendment is not intended to disadvantage dealers and operators whose legitimate role in the industry is recognised by the board.

The Act currently provides for a pooling arrangement in relation to payments to producers. This is not possible to carry out in practice, and an amendment is therefore proposed in relation to section 22 to enable payments to be made in accordance with a contract between producers and the board or on the basis of a price schedule published by the board. Such payments may take into account any incentives, seasonal trends or other factors which, in the opinion of the board, are in the interests of producers generally or are necessary to meet specific marketing requirements.

It is proposed also to penalise a person who does not deliver the number of lambs arranged. As members will appreciate, the failure to deliver lambs results in a significant loss to abattoir operators who have been allocated space as a result of a prior booking arrangement with a producer, an operator, or a dealer. The amendment will enable the board to impose a penalty in such circumstances.

A further amendment will permit the board to distribute, on a ratable basis, any surplus moneys which the board has derived from its operations during the immediate preceding financial year. In remitting such surplus moneys, the board is required to take into regard its need to meet prior deficits and to maintain proper reserves.

It is believed that these amendments will enable the board to function more efficiently and I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. D. K. Dans (Leader of the Opposition).

House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

LAND

Herdsmen Lake Area

228. The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Attorney-General, representing the Minister for Lands:

- (1) On what date were Crown lands located on the northern end of Herdsmen Lake transferred to Herdsmen Nominees?
- (2) What was the price paid by Herdsmen Nominees for these lands?
- (3) What provision is being made for the relocation of the Pony Club which has occupied portion of these lands?

- (4) In view of the extensive industrial zone which already exists in Osborne Park, will the Minister urge the retention of these lands for regional open space?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (for the Hon. I. G. MEDCALF) replied:

- (1) and (2) No Crown land has been sold to Herdsman Nominees but Herdsman Lake Lot 419 was dedicated under section 11 of the Industrial Development (Resumption of Land Act) for the purposes of that Act on 22nd January, 1974. On the 9th December, 1974, a Crown Grant in the name of the Industrial Lands Development Authority was issued for a consideration of \$395 000.
- (3) Lands Department records indicate that Reserve 28763 "Recreation" comprising Herdsman Lake Lots 13, 14, 15 and 16 was set apart on the 13th September, 1967 (*Government Gazette* 22/9/67) and vested in the City of Stirling in trust with power, subject to the approval in writing of the Minister for Lands being first obtained, to lease the whole or any portion thereof for any term not exceeding 21 years from the date of the lease. This was done following representations from the Local Authority that it desired to relocate the Perth Pony Club which in July, 1966, was said to be operating on Lot 39 Pearson Street, owned by the Local Authority.
- (4) The area concerned is subject to the City of Stirling Town Planning Scheme No. 30, a copy of which was received by the Department on 2/11/77. The proposal has not yet been studied.
- (2) As the licensing of a dangerous or vicious dog is contrary to the power and authority of local councils, why does the Western Australian Police Department intend to permit security agents' licences to include the use of dogs?
- (3) As the keeping and training of guard dogs and tracking dogs (narcotics detection) is the responsibility of the Crown in the United Kingdom and the Eastern States of Australia, why does the Police Department not accept the responsibility in Western Australia?
- (4) If the power and authority is recognised when dogs are used by the Crown, will the Police Department therefore be permitting security agents to share this power with the Crown?
- (5) If the answer to (4) is "No", then why is the Western Australian Police Department prepared to grant power and authority to security agents contrary to Sections 5(3), 11 and 26, enabling them to use dangerous or vicious dogs?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon replied:

- (1) The agent.
- (2) All dogs are required to be licensed by local councils.
- (3) It would not be practicable.
- (4) No.
- (5) No such power or authority is granted.

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

Motor Vehicle Repairs

229. *This question was postponed.*

SECURITY AGENTS

Guard Dogs

230. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Leader of the House, representing the Minister for Police and Traffic:

With respect to the Security Agents Act, 1976, Part III—Security Agents and Guards—

- (1) If security agents will be permitted to hire out dogs for guard duties, who is the agent's licence being issued to—the agent or the dog?

231. The Hon. N. E. BAXTER, to the Leader of the House, representing the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) On what date and year was the traffic regulation promulgated wherein a driver of a vehicle who has an accident does not need to report the accident unless there is reasonable cause for believing that the aggregate damage does not exceed \$100, and the owner of the damaged property is present or represented?
- (2) Would the Minister advise what he believes would be the percentage increased cost of vehicle damage repairs since the date of the regulation?

- (3) Would he agree that vehicle drivers who have minor accidents are being inconvenienced now as against several years ago by having to report damage that previously would have cost less than \$100 and would now cost almost double that amount?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) 19th May, 1969, by the Traffic Act Amendment Act, 1969.
 (2) No, but I would not disagree with any reasonable assessment in this regard if related to the general inflationary trend.
 (3) Yes, but the inconvenience is small individually compared with the collective value of providing data for the Main Roads Department for identification of hazard locations and by the Road Traffic Authority for deployment of patrols.

HEALTH

Family Planning

232. The Hon. V. J. Ferry, for the Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Minister for Transport, representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has the special committee on family planning as yet made a report?
 (2) (a) If so, when will it be tabled; and
 (b) if not, when does it expect to report?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) No.
 (2) (a) Not applicable;
 (b) the draft report is in the process of being written. The Committee will need to discuss the draft report which will then be taken into consideration by the Committee before a final report is presented.

ABATTOIR

Midland

233. The Hon. N. E. BAXTER, to the Minister for Transport, representing the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Did the Minister read the Press statement by Mr B. M. F. Wilson, Chief Executive Officer of the W.A. Meat Commission, stating that time for receiving cattle, sheep and lambs at Midland abattoir will be slashed by more than half from the 7th November?

- (2) As the reason given for the cutting of delivery times was lack of support by transport operators and producers for the extended hours, would he please advise the numbers of stock delivered each week during extended hours period as against the estimated numbers for the early morning hours proposed, 2 a.m. to 8 a.m.?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes.
 (2) The Press statement also indicated the escalating costs of providing this service which necessitates a double shift at penalty rates.

Receipts of stock for the period May 4 to September 30 were as follows:—

	10 p.m.- 2 a.m.	2 a.m.- 6 a.m.	6 a.m.- 8 a.m.
Sheep	512 154 (53.79%)	119 310 (12.53%)	320 720 (33.68%)
Cattle	41 833 (39.96%)	12 812 (12.23%)	50 047 (47.81%)

No precise estimate can be made of future receipts but it is hoped that transport operators will co-operate in the implementation of the new receipt time. The matter is being kept under continuing review.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Charges

234. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Attorney-General, representing the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

Further to the answer to part (3) of question 222 on the 1st November, 1977, relating to electricity charges, by what method were tariff increases announced to customers involved?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon, for the Hon. I. G. MEDCALF, replied:

The increases in Contributory Extension Scheme charges referred to have been conveyed to the consumers involved by letter from the State Energy Commission as the various groups have reached the stage of requiring cost estimates to be provided.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES*Country Areas*

235. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Attorney-General, representing the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

Who were the members who made representations regarding SEC extensions in rural areas and/or who were present at a meeting last week with senior SEC officers?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon, for the Hon. I. G. MEDCALF, replied:

A number of Members have requested information on SEC extensions in rural areas including the Members for Merredin-Yilgarn, Moore, Roe, Mt. Marshall, Murray, Pilbara and Albany in the Assembly and the Members for Upper West and North Province in the Council.

