

all kinds of queer reasons, one being that it might be in breach of the Constitution because at that time the performing rights to the music were held by the Presbyterian Church. That is a rather rough reason, to say the least. I do not know why the Premier has stood out against it. It will not do him any good in the public eye.

Sir Charles Court: It is the Government which made the decision, not I.

Mr JAMIESON: The playing of "God Save the Queen" has become less frequent at public performances over the years, whether or not the Premier likes it. Whether or not Australia eventually becomes a republic will be a matter for the Australian people to determine, and many constitutional barriers must be overcome before that can be achieved. However, even if Australia did become a republic it would have no lesser standing with the Crown or association with the British Commonwealth than any of the other leading nations now have. I take it they all have equal status in Jamaica, where they are meeting at present, whether they are republics or anything else. It is a shameful and presumptuous affront to the United Kingdom for us to adopt its anthem. We more or less say to the United Kingdom, "Why don't you get another anthem and we will keep this one?"

I pointed out the situation in regard to sporting functions, but we now know exactly where the Government stands in the matter and it must accept responsibility for any confusion which might exist. The matter was tested in the way our best advisers suggested it should be tested. "Advance Australia Fair" seems to have a little of the odium of party politics about it now, but should it gain in favour in the next few years, and should there be a change of Government in Canberra, I would not be at all surprised to find the Premier accepting it if it is adopted as a result of a decision of a Federal Liberal Government rather than of a Labor Government. He would then find a reason for accepting it, but it would really be the party-political reason that it was a decision of his party, not of another party. This seems to be his only reason for holding out. We will finish up with neither song being played at public functions, and the Premier will have to accept the responsibility for the resultant confusion.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes—17

Mr Barnett	Mr Harman
Mr Bateman	Mr Jamieson
Mr Bertram	Mr May
Mr Bryce	Mr McIver
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr Skidmore
Mr Carr	Mr Taylor
Mr Davies	Mr J. T. Tonkin
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Moller
Mr T. D. Evans	

(Teller)

Noes—24

Mr Blaikie	Mr Mensaros
Sir David Brand	Mr Nanovich
Mr Clarke	Mr O'Connor
Sir Charles Court	Mr Old
Mr Cowan	Mr O'Neill
Mr Coyne	Mr Ridge
Mr Crane	Mr Rushton
Mr Grayden	Mr Shalders
Mr Grewar	Mr Sibson
Mr P. V. Jones	Mr Stephens
Mr Laurance	Mr Thompson
Mr McPharlin	Mr Sodeman

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr T. H. Jones	Mr Watt
Mr A. R. Tonkin	Mrs Craig
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr Young
Mr Fletcher	Dr Dadour

Question thus negatived.

Motion defeated.

BILLS (4): RETURNED

1. Environmental Protection Act Amendment Bill.
2. Anzac Day Act Amendment Bill.
3. Education Act Amendment Bill.
4. Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act Amendment Bill.

Bills returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.43 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, the 1st May, 1975

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

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice), and read a first time.

QUESTIONS (4): ON NOTICE

1. MARIHUANA PLANTS

Display

The Hon. G. W. BERRY, to the Minister for Health representing the Minister for Police:

Will the Minister give consideration to producing marihuana plants, either natural or artificial, for display to members of Parliament?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER replied:

A small live cannabis plant is being held for destruction and could be made available for the inspection of members.

No artificial plants are available but a number of photographs could be displayed.

2.

POLICE*Offences: Mosman Park*

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth for the Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS, to the Minister for Health representing the Minister for Police:

During the latest complete State police statistical year, for the Town of Mosman Park, will the Minister advise—

- (1) The number of houses broken and entered?
- (2) The number of arrests arising from these offences?
- (3) The number of persons arrested who were convicted, and how many were—
 - (a) adults; and
 - (b) minors?
- (4) The number of reported incidents of vandalism?
- (5) The number of convictions for vandalism, and how many of those convicted were—
 - (a) adults; and
 - (b) minors?
- (6) The number of reports received relating to simple larceny?
- (7) The number of convictions for simple larceny, and how many of those convicted were—
 - (a) adults; and
 - (b) minors?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER replied:

The information sought will require several days of research and will be supplied to the honourable member as soon as completed.

3.

LAMBS*Sales to Eastern States*

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH, to the Minister for Justice representing the Minister for Agriculture:

Arising out of statements in the 1973-1974 annual report of the Western Australian Lamb Marketing Board that the substantial movement of live lambs to Eastern States' markets affected the results of the board—

- (a) what numbers are considered "substantial";
- (b) during which months did this movement take place;
- (c) what cost is involved in moving lamb to Eastern States;
- (d) what was the actual market difference between Western Australia and Eastern States at these times of movement;

(e) why did not the Western Australian Lamb Marketing Board raise the price of lamb in this State to bring the price in line with Eastern States; and

(f) has the board ever kept the price of lamb down in this State to reduce entry of Eastern States' lamb?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

I am advised as follows by the Western Australian Lamb Marketing Board—

- (a) Approximately 100,000 which were all store lambs for fattening and did not include trade lambs.
- (b) January and February, 1974.
- (c) \$3 to \$3.50 per head live.
- (d) Eastern States net prices to producers using equivalent of red grade were 33 to 38c per pound net compared to Western Australian red D's at 30 to 37c per pound net to producer. Prices in the Eastern States were apparently higher during these two months than at any other similar period of previous years.
- (e) Because it was considered a short term trend which subsequently proved to be correct. Also the board's policy is to stabilise prices and ensure a reasonable return to producers for their product thereby removing the violent fluctuations that exist on the Eastern States markets. The board did not abruptly increase its prices over this period for the same reason that it did not reduce prices to bring them into line with Eastern States prices.

(f) No.

4. NORTH COTTESLOE SCHOOL*Works*

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth for the Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS, to the Minister for Justice representing the Minister for Works:

- (1) Has the Education Department referred to his department certain works of immediate consequence which should be carried out at the North Cottesloe Primary School?
- (2) If so—
 - (a) when did his department receive the message;
 - (b) what is the list of works involved; and

- (c) when does he anticipate that the work will commence?
- (3) Will he ensure that an early inspection of the school be made in order that possible delay will be kept to a minimum?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

- (1) No, but there has been a request to carry out minor works.
- (2) (a) 21st April, 1975.
- (b) (i) Renovation of a "Wonderheat" stove in a Bristol classroom.
- (ii) Provision of an electric bell.
- (iii) Provision of new or used storage units in the staff room.
- (c) Within the next week to 10 days.
- (3) See 2 (c) above.

RESERVE (KWINANA FREEWAY) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 30th April.

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central—Minister for Health) [2.39 p.m.]: I appreciate the contribution of the speakers who have participated in the debate. I understand that most of the discussion was not centred around the actual provisions of the Bill itself, but around what might happen as a result of the proposed extension.

Mr Claughton made reference to a comment in the PERTS report which indicated that the Narrows Bridge may have to be eventually duplicated. He also referred to this matter during the debate on the motion. I wish to point out to him again that we are not planning to duplicate the Narrows Bridge; nor are we planning any further reclamation at that site.

I repeat also what I said previously; that is, that I cannot speak for future generations. The important point is that to obtain the best use of facilities such as the Narrows Bridge, the approach road system must be in balance with the bridge, and the improvements being made to the approach road system will accelerate the traffic flow on the bridge.

I have also mentioned previously that claims that the Narrows Bridge will be choked up by a certain year, do not take into account the fact that a region's growth, both in roads and traffic, is an evolving, dynamic process.

Predictions made by any method can forecast only what the demand for movement will be under a given set of assumptions, and a precise traffic figure cannot be predicted for any point in time because increasing congestion on one part of the system can lead to adjustments in travel patterns and habits to minimise

delays. We discussed this the other night, when Mr Thompson indicated he had adopted a different travel pattern from the one he used previously. The design concept is to retain a realistic balance on all parts of the system, and the freeway extension proposal is designed in accordance with this important concept.

Members should also note that I have not claimed there will be no congestion at certain times on the future Kwinana Freeway and approach road system, and, indeed, at peak periods some congestion is likely. However, I have also pointed out that no modern city in the world has been able to eliminate completely traffic congestion during peak periods. Nor can even the most affluent societies afford the prohibitive cost of traffic facilities that would be required, apart from important environmental considerations. However, the important point is that the whole system is being planned to cater for all-day traffic demands—that is, traffic throughout the day—and there is no doubt that the capacity of the whole Kwinana-Mitchell Freeway system is adequate for the forecasted daily traffic volumes in the foreseeable future.

Some members on the other side of this Chamber have also quoted the PERTS report and have claimed that the decision to extend the Kwinana Freeway should not be considered in isolation from the rest of the metropolitan region. This fact has been appreciated by all Governments for the last 20 years, and members will no doubt be aware of the parliamentary action taken during this period. I will not bore the House with full details of all these actions, but I will remind members of action taken by the Tonkin Government in regard to the corridor plan for Perth.

In 1971, when the MRPA submitted its concepts for further regional development to that Government, there was concern and controversy at the time as to whether this form of regional development was the most suitable. Most of the controversy related to the complementary transportation system recommended in the PERTS 1970 report. In order to resolve this controversy an all-party Select Committee of the Legislative Council, later to be converted to an Honorary Royal Commission, was appointed. The Chairman of that Royal Commission was my great friend and colleague the late Mr Fred White, who did a terrific job in that inquiry and in this House.

The Royal Commission invited witnesses and, after full consideration, made recommendations, one of which was that the road system and priorities of the PERTS 1970 report be adopted. In November, 1972, the Governor received this report, and in April, 1973, the Tonkin (Labor) Cabinet adopted the corridor plan as being the most suitable form of on-going regional

development. It was fully realised in accepting this plan that the highest priority in the PERTS report was the continuation of the Kwinana Freeway southwards.

The situation which existed when the present Government came to power was that regional development had just been subjected to a full and open inquiry and plans had been adopted which required the extension of the Kwinana Freeway—one of the few matters on which all Governments have agreed for so many years. It is now our task to proceed with this important job.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (the Hon. Lyla Elliott) in the Chair; the Hon. N. E. Baxter (Minister for Health) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1 put and passed.

Clause 2: Reserve No. 21288—

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: When speaking to the second reading of the Bill I took the Minister to task for the lack of satisfactory answers to the matters which were raised in connection with objections, particularly the detail in the PERTS report, and also the matters raised by the Hon. Clive Griffiths. The Minister's reply to the second reading debate indicated he had taken some notice of the remarks I made.

I think members are aware—particularly as the Minister has made reference to it—that the two members of this Chamber who sat on the committee which inquired into the Corridor Plan have been the most vocal in their objection to the extension of the freeway. The Hon. Clive Griffiths and I had the privilege of making a much deeper study of the matter than the majority of members in this Chamber have been able to make. For that reason, members are entitled to take some cognisance of the remarks we have made; at least I hope that will be the case.

The Bill now before us refers to the excision of an "A"-class reserve but it cannot be considered in isolation from the general proposal for the extension of the Kwinana Freeway. I hope the Committee will bear with me if my remarks are directed more to that particular proposal.

In reply the Minister kept his remarks in the main to the question of the Narrows Bridge itself, and did not make any reference to the other recommendations in the PERTS report which I mentioned in my speech. It may well be true, as he said, that duplication of the Narrows Bridge will not require any further resumption or filling in of the Swan River itself. Perhaps we should accept the Minister's statement about that. However, the adequacy of the Narrows Bridge and the possibility of

further reclamation of the river are not the only matters of concern or areas in which doubt has been thrown on the proposal.

Apart from the two portions of the Canning River proposed to be reclaimed in the current proposal, there is the matter of the freeway to Bassendean along the Swan River, which is a future development. You, Madam Deputy Chairman (the Hon. Lyla Elliott), asked a question about this matter only a few days ago. This is another proposal which at a future time probably will require some filling in of the river. Perhaps in that case it will be a matter of only 15 acres, or portions of five acres here and four acres there; but it is this continual nibbling away of the water areas that is of such concern to the people of Perth.

An article appeared in today's Press—I think it was a letter to the editor—claiming that the two areas proposed to be reclaimed in the Canning River are not really required for the southern extension of the freeway, and that the freeway could proceed without that reclamation.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: If you bent the route drastically it probably could, but it would not be very satisfactory.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Members have been supplied with a map, so I will not go into details in respect of this. Someone was interested enough to write to the Press suggesting this could be so. If it is possible, then I think the Minister should endeavour to see that the alternative route is accepted and thus avoid reclamation of the river.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Who wrote the letter?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I cannot recall; I simply scanned the newspaper this morning, and this is one of the items I noticed.

However, the reclamation of the river is not really the most serious objection I raised. If the Minister has missed the point I tried to make I will attempt to make it again. I am sorry if I did not make the point clearly enough; but on the other hand the Minister may have decided it was a little difficult to answer and that it would be wiser to avoid it.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: It was in the early hours of the morning when I replied to the debate.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I am aware the Minister was not in the Chamber when I spoke; I assume he had urgent business to attend to.

The point I made is that the four matters to which I referred cast doubt on the very basis of the recommendations of the PERTS report. Here were four important recommendations that are, as far as we can judge, no longer valid. If the recommendations of the people who made the study could be so wrong in those four respects, is it not just as likely that their

recommendations are just as wrong in respect of the southern extension of the Kwinana Freeway?

This is the argument I tried to get across to the Minister in support of the holding of a further inquiry. The Minister has not given sufficient reason for the determination of the Government to press ahead.

A Select Committee of this Chamber studied the Corridor Plan for Perth; but in regard to that Corridor Plan we must remember that the committee was looking not at a plan in detail to cover all the fine points of regional planning, but rather at the concept of the plan. When we considered the Mitchell Freeway and Kwinana Freeway proposals we did not direct questions to witnesses regarding this specific aspect of the regional transport spine. I know the questions I asked were not directed at that. That item was overlooked. I was most concerned about the extension of the Mitchell Freeway into the northern suburbs, and for that reason the recommendations of the committee had my support. I consider it is vital for the welfare of the people in northern suburbs that they receive the maximum benefit of ease of travel and transport along with protection of the urban environment.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: That does not line up with your objections to this freeway in the south. I cannot understand that.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I will briefly restate what I said. I represent the North Metropolitan Province; and the Mitchell and Kwinana Freeways will be extremely important elements in the planning for that part of the metropolitan region.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I agree with you.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Therefore I was most concerned to examine the matter carefully, and finally to give my support to the urgent construction of that part of the Mitchell Freeway between Wanneroo and the Narrows Bridge. I confess that in my examination of witnesses I did not go into detail in respect of the route of the freeway after it crosses the Narrows Bridge and becomes the Kwinana Freeway. I definitely did not have regard for the route along the Canning River. However, I agreed with my colleagues that just as the Mitchell Freeway is important to the northern suburbs, the extension of the Kwinana Freeway could be important for the southern suburbs.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: That was the point of my interjection.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: We were also studying the matter from the point of view of a peripheral freeway through the suburbs south of Applecross, down to Melville, and on to Kwinana.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: It is very important to the people in those areas, isn't it?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: That is right. If the Minister studies the map he will find that proposed peripheral freeway is located much closer to the coast than the present planned extension of the Kwinana Freeway along the Canning River.

The content of my argument in respect of the extension of the Kwinana Freeway is that I consider to the people in southern areas down to Rockingham the proposal for a route passing through Fremantle could be equally acceptable as a connection along the Canning River, as is presently proposed. The southern extension would proceed as far as Leach Highway, and then that highway would carry traffic to the east and the west. Beyond that point a freeway is not important. The traffic must then travel westward to the line of the Kwinana Freeway which, as I say, is some miles closer to the coast.

The point I have been making is that the degree of error demonstrated in leading the study group to recommend a duplication of the Narrows Bridge, the construction of a further bridge between the Narrows and Fremantle, the sinking of the railway, and the fact that the busways would need to be on the reserve by 1975, is more than sufficient reason for believing there could be an equally great error that has led to the recommendation for the extension of the southern leg of the freeway along the Canning River.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: I have refrained from commenting on the fact that I was a member of the honorary Royal Commission that brought down certain recommendations in respect of the Corridor Plan for Perth. I refrained from doing so because when the first comment was made in respect of what the honorary Royal Commission had recommended at the time it seemed to come from a quarter that is completely ignorant of the situation; which was certainly callous in its approach to the people who were to be affected.

Accordingly I discounted the comments completely as being ill informed and made by an individual who wanted to get into the act in the dying hours of the debate. I thought this did not require any comment from me and I refrained from pursuing it.

However, because Mr Claughton has borne the brunt of the comments on the matter before us I feel obliged to speak, if only to stand and say that I agree entirely with the statements he has made. I add that those who have not read the complete findings of the honorary Royal Commission, or the complete PERTS report, and have not had the opportunity to discuss the reasons and the background connected with these things, would find it very difficult to understand the position.

On examination it will be found that the PERTS report amongst other things was most emphatic about the duplication

of the Narrows Bridge; despite the fact that the Minister has said it would be unnecessary.

I could have spent a considerable time during the debate speaking to the report on the Corridor Plan and on the findings in the PERTS report. However, because I had taken so much time in making my speech, and because there was so much to be said on the subject, I felt it was necessary for me to keep my comments as brief as possible, otherwise I would have taken considerably longer on this matter.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You would have been still going!

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: A glance at the PERTS report will show that it contains a couple of plans with certain desire lines. The desire lines for people wishing to go to the north of Perth—other than those who wish to go to the centre of Perth—are overwhelmingly in favour of the route going up the coast through Fremantle.

Mr Claughton was correct when he referred to the extension south through Fremantle, because this was the emphasis indicated in the PERTS report; that it was the desire of the people who live in that area. The majority of them wanted the route to go north and through Fremantle; and, if the desire lines are any indication, a lesser number of people wanted to travel over that area which is involved in the excision of this particular piece of land.

It was in that atmosphere that we agreed in concept—and I underline the word concept—with the Corridor Plan. The Corridor Plan never gave any impression, nor do I believe it was intended that it should give the impression, that there was a specific route for this southern extension of the freeway: indeed, the plan had no right to point to a specific route because Parliament subsequently makes that decision.

I simply take the opportunity to say that I agree with the points made by Mr Claughton. It is a waste of time to try to explain to some people the implications of this particular aspect and I think Mr Claughton did a pretty good job.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: The provisions of this clause will take away a slice of the river foreshore which is very precious to us all. I would like to quote an opinion given by Dr Allison Baird, who is an ecologist. We have said that the members of this Chamber are taking a narrow look and the easy way out by reclaiming part of the river. We have not exhausted by any means the range of opinions of the experts.

We had an opinion from Dr Marchant, and we had a sort of overall look by Dr O'Brien—the "protector" of the environment; though I do not think he is protecting it—and the Environmental Protection Authority was saying, "If it has

to go, it has to go." I think Dr Marchant was underestimating the atrocious grabbing of this piece of natural parkland.

Dr Allison Baird has a number of years' experience in flora native to Australia. When we talk about an ecologist we are talking about a person who investigates the ways in which all organisms adapt to the environment. So we are not just talking about flora and fauna; we are talking about animals adjacent to the particular areas in which the flora and fauna are situated; we are talking about human beings who adapt to having a certain amount of natural land left for them to enjoy.

We have heard about the expense of transplanting trees on the freeway surroundings, and we have seen the horrible looking waterfall, that makes me groan every time I look at it—though I dare say one of these days it will be covered with moss and with natural flora instead of the artificial buildup that exists at the moment.

That is the whole business of the study of ecology; it is the study related to the land, the people, and all the organisms adapting to that which is around them at the time. With all transplants—in the same way as with the transplanting of people when they migrate to another country—very serious maladjustments are experienced, and a long period of time elapses before there is any recognisable adjustment.

When I talk of an ecologist I am not talking merely of a person who is interested in the flora and fauna, or in a particular facet of botany and nature. I am talking about the one who is looking at the whole picture, including the flora, the fauna, and the people adapting to the environment.

Dr Baird, after having looked at the Aquinas College vegetational survey of Point Mt. Henry and a report of the vegetation on the site of the proposed southern extension of the Kwinana Freeway by Dr Marchant, came to certain conclusions. In a report which I have the following appears—

Dr. Baird has inspected the area and and reports as follows—

As the Aquinas College survey shows, the flora on Point Mt. Henry includes a wide variety of species. It would be difficult to find a site which encompasses this range within such a small space elsewhere in the metropolitan area.

Might I remind members representing country areas of what I said the other night when I asked them to think a little about preserving the bit of natural land

and open space that is still left to the people of the city. The people in the country have the advantage of natural land and open space, even if they do not have other advantages.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: To what area does the report you are mentioning refer?

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: Point Mt. Henry and the adjoining strip of land. That is the part which Dr Marchant says there would be no harm in gobbling up. To continue with the report—

There is a strong case for preservation in its natural state for the benefit of people living in neighbouring districts. It should be specially helpful in the teaching of biology to children.

Many of us think that in these days the children are not being given the opportunity to study nature, to the extent that children were provided with such opportunities in days gone by. In many cases in the big cities the people have to travel by car for half an hour before they can find a bit of natural land and vegetation.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Some of us in the country travel three hours to get to a tertiary institution.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: We should be looking at this in the opposite direction. Is not the teaching of biology or love of nature as important as going to a tertiary institution to learn? The report states further—

The report by Dr. Marchant is made within special limits of plant species, especially with unique or rare species. The place for the pure preservation of such species is in botanical gardens and in parks with more limited access which are less susceptible to contamination with weeds. It has missed the point of preserving parkland within the metropolitan area: this wider viewpoint was obviously not within the limits of a classification and identification of plant species.

It is inevitable that metropolitan parkland areas will become "downgraded" and contaminated with weeds to some extent. Some of the species originally present will disappear, but others will continue to flourish. At the present time the Mt. Henry area is less "downgraded" than King's Park. If the view were valid that only unique species warranted conserving areas of parkland, there would be no case for the retention of King's Park, which is manifestly not true.

Some people would like to construct a large number of high-rise buildings in that area, but I do not think they would be in the majority. If it is correct that an area has to be set aside for a particular

species, then the retention of King's Park would not be warranted. To continue with the report—

A special mention is warranted about the tuart trees. This species is preserved both in King's Park and in Peppermint Grove, but specimens are dying out in both areas. Since the industrial development, the tuart has also become less common in the Kwinana and Spearwood areas. Its presence at Mt. Henry is thus of considerable importance.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Are there any tuart trees on the reserve embraced by the Bill?

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: I am not sure.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: There are none.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: There could be saplings or seedlings; there could even be seeds under the ground which are germinating. The Minister cannot say there are no tuart trees. I am contrasting this with Dr Marchant's attitude towards the area in question and King's Park.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I think you should take another area in making a contrast.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: I repeat what the report mentions—

Since the industrial development, the tuart has also become less common in the Kwinana and Spearwood areas. Its presence at Mt. Henry is thus of considerable importance.

We all know what Dr Marchant has had to say, because that is the official opinion. However, that is only one side to the controversy, and Dr Baird who is an ecologist presents the opposite side. She is looking more widely at the situation. She was one of those I mentioned the other night as having attempted to see the overall picture.

I emphasise that although we can to some extent blame the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority or the Environmental Protection Authority, we cannot blame the Main Roads Department which is doing its job and is developing what it considers to be a good idea. The Main Roads Department planners are engineers, not botanists or ecologists, and the department does not carry a crusading banner for the preservation of parks and rivers.

It is there to advise the Ministers and the Government on the best way to build roads.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: The Main Roads Department is not the only body which has looked at this proposal.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: The Main Roads Department builds the roads, and is not involved in ecology and preservation. The members of this Chamber have not risen in loud protest against the

desecration of a natural area. We should be fighting to retain these things, and we should not be afraid to use our voice in protest. Obviously the people have a small voice, as was indicated in the division in this Chamber in respect of the preservation of the river. On that occasion only one person was concerned.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Will you tell me what are the specific qualifications of the ecologist mentioned in the report?

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: She has a doctorate degree.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: In what?

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: People with a PhD degree do not put alongside their names the particular study to obtain it. I share with many members in this Chamber a healthy disregard, on occasions, for the opinions of experts. It seems to me it is convenient for people to accept the opinions of experts on some occasions, but not on others; as Mr Masters did when he had regard for the opinion of experts who were making comments about the environment in his electorate, but he would not take notice of the comments relating to the environment in the South-East Metropolitan Province. I say that we should not accept entirely all such advice. We should listen to all advice and make our decisions accordingly.

For the reasons I have given I think we should reject the Bill so that we may be given time to consider this criminal act of taking away from the people the natural pieces of land in the metropolitan area that are still left to them. I hope the Chamber will not pass the Bill, so that we may avoid being cursed by future generations for having agreed to it.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I do not know whether to address the honourable member as the Hon. Grace Vaughan or the Hon. Grace Ewers. I will content myself by addressing her as the Hon. Grace.

The honourable member has recommended that we should throw out the Bill but if we follow that course we will upset the whole plan for the proposed extension of the Kwinana Freeway. We are now discussing an area through which the extension must pass. The only alternative is for the extension to go around the area now under discussion and take in another portion of the Mt. Henry reserve.

The honourable member said this was an atrocious gobbling up of a piece of land at Point Mt. Henry. The area to be resumed is nowhere near Point Mt. Henry, and it has no relationship to Point Mt. Henry.

The Hon. R. Thompson: How far away does the Minister think it is?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Probably three-quarters of a mile, which is a considerable distance.

The Hon. R. Thompson: If the Minister examines the map he will find that the reserve adjoins Mt. Henry.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: According to the plan I have it does not appear to adjoin Mt. Henry, but is quite a long way distant. The honourable member referred to the destruction of an area which should be preserved, and she also mentioned tuart trees. However, there are no tuart trees in the area.

I remind the honourable member of what I said when I introduced the Bill. I stated—

However, the most interesting part of this reserve, which contains stands of paperbark and wattle trees on the northern and central sections of the reserve, has been avoided. The other parts of the reserve are generally sandy and flat, with some low scrub and a number of introduced weed species. There are no unique flora species within the portion of the reserve which it is proposed to excise, or for that matter, within any part of the reserve.

Those remarks speak for themselves. However, the honourable member referred to the atrocious gobbling up of a piece of parkland and that is so much waffling. It does not bear any further investigation whatever.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton did not seem to speak to the resumption of the area now under discussion but he referred particularly to the four matters he raised while debating another aspect. He also referred to the future Swan freeway from Bassen-dean to Perth, and the constant nibbling away of the river. When speaking to the motion regarding this matter previously he mentioned "gobbling" but now he is down to "nibbling".

The honourable member also said that somebody was interested enough to write a letter to the Press stating it was not necessary to resume parts of the river for the extension of the freeway. However, he did not mention the name of the person or any qualifications which that person might have. Also, an alternative route was not suggested.

I have taken the trouble to study the alternative routes on the plan which is in the corridor of this building. Irrespective of what has been said, an alternative direct route is not available. Any alternative would involve a lot more expense and would inconvenience many more people. It is obvious that the only sensible route is that now proposed for the extension of the freeway.

The proposed extension will considerably improve the river frontage. I think I have known the river for a longer period than has any other member in this Chamber. I used to swim in it, and boat and canoe on it, many years ago. It is my opinion that the river today is much better than it

was in those days. It is appreciated much more, not only by the people of Western Australia, but by visitors who come to our State. Most visitors comment on the beauty of the river and the improvements which have been made along its banks where the smelly mosquito breeding swamps have disappeared. In spite of what the professed do-gooders have to say, a certain amount of resumption does our river more good than harm.

Last evening Mr Claughton raised the matter of the duplication of the Narrows Bridge but I think I answered that objection when I replied to the motion. He also referred to the need to build an additional bridge between the Narrows Bridge and Fremantle. I fail to see what the extension of the Kwinana Freeway has to do with the construction of another bridge between the Narrows Bridge and Fremantle, unless he contends that we should forget extensions south of the freeway and carry out further development between the Narrows Bridge and Fremantle.

I would like to point out that starting in the north, at Belmont, we have the Garratt Road bridge across which traffic can travel towards the city and northern suburbs. Further to the west we have the Causeway which carries the traffic from Great Eastern Highway, Shepperton Road, Albany Highway, and Berwick Street leading into Canning Highway and then on to the Causeway. Then we have the Kwinana Freeway which takes traffic across the Narrows Bridge. The traffic for that route comes mostly from west of the Canning River and across the Canning Bridge, which is a bottleneck. Going further west, to Fremantle, there are two bridges leading into Stirling Highway. If those bridges will not prove to be sufficient, with the extension of the Kwinana Freeway south—of which the resumption of this small reserve is an integral part—then I do not know what members are looking for.

I believe that for many years the freeway will cater for the traffic requirements south of the river. This is the cheapest and the most reasonable plan for us to adopt at the present time.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Do you think it will be necessary to extend the Narrows Bridge?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I believe I dealt with this matter at some length previously. As I said, I cannot speak for future generations but I do not believe the Narrows Bridge will have to be duplicated within the next 20 years. We have a two-lane entrance to the Narrows Bridge whether we are going north or south, and the traffic can be channelled across the bridge using a four-two lane exercise.

Immediately traffic from the south is over the bridge, it can spread out in different directions. It is not our roads and bridges which cause the congestion, it is the drivers. The road system we have caters adequately for reasonably good drivers.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Why do you want to extend the freeway?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: We want to extend the freeway because it will take traffic from beyond Melville, Attadale, Applecross, and the surrounding areas, straight through to the metropolitan area rather than have all that traffic coming through different areas to join onto the Canning Highway west of the Canning Bridge. Motorists will have a clear, straight run on a 70-kilometre-per-hour highway.

The Hon. R. Thompson: No, 80 kilometres per hour.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Yes, that is so. This will clear the traffic which presently comes through the Mt. Pleasant, Applecross, and Melville areas. Motorists from these areas at the moment travel on narrow roads and they must stop at many intersections, as well as having to stop before entering the Canning Highway. The volume of traffic builds up the pollution in the area, and this is another reason for the proposal to extend the freeway.

I have shown that the Narrows Bridge will take the traffic for many years to come, and I do not intend to deal with that matter any further. I have also answered the question about a second bridge between the freeway and Fremantle.

The honourable member then referred to the sinking of the railway line, but I cannot see that the sinking of the railway line will interfere with traffic coming across the Narrows Bridge because it spans over the top of the railway line. When the Mitchell Freeway is extended, the traffic will have a clear run across; the central railway will not be a barrier at all.

If the proposal to sink the railway line had been supported, we would not now have this problem. At the time it was put forward, the estimated cost was \$8 million. I supported the proposal, but other members could not agree that the railway should be sunk on its present alignment, and so we are stuck with it. However, in my opinion, the railway will not interfere with the free flow of traffic over the Narrows Bridge.

I now come to the last question raised by Mr Claughton, and this is in relation to the replacement of suburban railway services with busways. I believe I answered this question when dealing with the sinking of the railway line. We still have to decide whether the railway line should be turned into a busway. We cannot make a decision on that at the

moment, but I do not see that it will interfere with the extension of the Kwinana Freeway or the excision of this piece of land in the particular reserve.

That covers the questions raised by Mr Claughton. I hope he is satisfied, although probably he is not.

Mr Clive Griffiths commented that the Minister—and he was referring to me—said it was absolutely unnecessary to duplicate the Narrows Bridge. I do not think they were my exact words. I did say it was believed that it would not be necessary to duplicate the Narrows Bridge at the present time, and that this problem could be left to future generations.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You said there was no provision to duplicate the Narrows Bridge.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I did not say it was absolutely unnecessary, which is a totally different thing. In spite of what members have said, except for the Hon. Grace Vaughan, they have spoken about practically everything except the excision of the reserve for the purpose of the freeway.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: It is truly trying our patience to deal with the limited intelligence of this old man, the Minister.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Oh, cut it out now.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You said that.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I have not reflected on Mr Claughton's intelligence. I could, but I did not.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The Minister himself said that he is the oldest member in this Chamber.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: At the time he was talking. There is another member in the Chamber now who is older than he is.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I thought he was wrong when he said that, too.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: He said, "at that time".

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I stand corrected.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I am not reflecting on the Minister, I am simply repeating a statement that he made. My other remark about him was made because he has completely missed the point of my remarks.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: That is not necessarily a measure of intelligence.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Not necessarily. I am not sure how Mr Pratt rates his intelligence, but I hope he has gained something from my remarks. Nothing I said implied in any way that I believe the central railway would be an impediment to the Kwinana Freeway. At no stage in the debate did I make a comment along those lines.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: It could not have meant anything else—you talk in riddles. I cannot understand a person who talks in riddles and who doesn't know the answers himself.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: That is why I am on my feet again. I hope that on this occasion the Minister will listen attentively enough to gather the import of my remarks.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: If you explain it clearly I will understand it.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: No matter how carefully and clearly things are explained to some people, they just never understand.

If the Minister will recall, I referred to the PERTS report as being the basis for the recommendation of the southern extension of the Kwinana Freeway. I went on to say there are four other recommendations in the report, on which there has been cast a great deal of doubt. He may also recall if he has studied the supporting documents accompanying the motion for a change to the region plan that the alternative of the Point Resolution bridge had been discarded because of the unwarranted social consequences. Does the Minister recall that?

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Yes.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: We seem to be reaching a situation where the Minister is understanding the importance of my remarks. To recapitulate, the proposal for the southern extension of the Kwinana Freeway, the recommendations for the duplication of the Narrows Bridge, the construction of a bridge between the Narrows and Fremantle, the complete sinking of the central railway station, and the suggestion that a busway should be placed on the existing railway by 1975 all are contained in the PERTS report.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: We are in agreement on that point; I did not say they were not contained in the report.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Then there is no difference between us at the moment.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: No, not on the fact that they are in the report.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: While the Government intends to pursue the freeway extension recommendation, the other four proposals are laughed at.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Wait a minute; who said they were laughed at?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Would the Minister seriously recommend that the Government sets about completely sinking the central railway station?

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: It is not my job to recommend it; that is not my responsibility. I am not an engineer, nor do I have control of the Treasury. That is a stupid question.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The Minister should know that there are geological reasons for not sinking the railway.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: What Bill are we on now?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I do not intend replying to Mr Withers; he gets lost even quicker than the Minister.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: All I said was: What has this to do with the southern extension of the Kwinana Freeway?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: With a great deal of patience on my part—

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: And on mine!

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: —we might eventually get the Minister to understand. First of all, the Minister said there is no intention of duplicating the Narrows Bridge.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: That is right; our advisers have made that recommendation on the information available.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: So the PERTS report is wrong.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: No it is not.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Is the Minister saying the report is right?

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: No, I am not saying that. The question of duplicating the Narrows Bridge does not come into it.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: It might help if you read the title of the report.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Madam Deputy Chairman, you will understand why I said it is truly trying our patience to attempt to get the Minister to understand.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: You are trying my patience, too, do not worry!

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.03 p.m.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Before I return to the point I was making, for the benefit of members I should relate my remarks to the Bill. If they care to look at the short title they will see that it is the Reserve (Kwinana Freeway) Act, 1975. The proposal contained in the Bill seeking to excise portion of the reserve cannot be argued outside the concept of the Kwinana Freeway extension itself. Before continuing with the line of argument I was following previously, I remind the Minister that the people of Perth are most concerned about preserving the river foreshores as much as possible. That applies not just to the area under debate, but also to any future proposals that will affect the Swan River foreshores from Perth to Bassendean and, further, any proposals that will affect the coastal roads serving the northern suburbs. There is extremely strong public feeling against the alienation of these lands.

Before the suspension I managed to get the Minister to agree that the five matters relating to the freeway extension, the Narrows duplication, a further bridge between the Narrows Bridge and Fremantle, the sinking of the railway, and the busway on railways reserve were all contained in the PERTS report which, in fact, sets out the basis of all these proposals. However, the Minister was unwilling to agree further that the duplication of the Narrows Bridge, a bridge at Point Resolution, the sinking of the railway, and the busway on the railways reserve were unrealistic and unlikely to be proceeded with.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Say that again.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: They were unrealistic and unlikely to be proceeded with.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I did not say they were unrealistic or unlikely to be proceeded with.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I wish the Minister would listen more carefully to what I am saying. I did not say that he agreed; it is unfortunate that he did not agree.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I do not agree with what you are saying.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The Minister will have to be prepared to give a different sort of answer to the one he is giving now. Whether the Minister is prepared to agree, or otherwise, it is a fact that the proposals are most unrealistic. One would have to be a fool to say that the sinking of the railway would be proceeded with.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: That is only your opinion.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: It is not my opinion; it is the opinion of engineers who have examined all those proposals. They are just not feasible. If the Minister did more than read the Sunday comics he would know that they are not feasible.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (the Hon. Lyla Elliott): Order! The honourable member will address the Chair.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I have more to do than to read the Sunday comics. I have more to do than you have.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I wish, then, the Minister would do some reading in regard to these proposals because they are most important to the future of this State.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: The reading of other than Sunday comics is not the answer to everything.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not know what the reading of Sunday comics has to do with the question before

the Chair; I therefore ask the honourable member to keep to the clause under discussion.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Everyone except the Minister will agree with my remarks, and if the Minister is not able to understand what I am saying he is at liberty to get expert advice and, having obtained it, he should return to this Chamber and give a sensible reply to a sensible question.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: The honourable member, being an expert, would have all the sensible answers.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: If we accept that these proposals are unrealistic—

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I do not accept that.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: —then we must accept that the PERTS report recommendations are wrong, and if they are wrong in regard to these four proposals then they could equally be wrong with regard to the southern extension of the Kwinana Freeway. Does the Minister understand that argument?

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Yes, I understand.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: All right; that is the first time the Minister has admitted to an understanding of the proposal. Therefore if he understands that this proposal can be wrongly based we should not proceed with the excision of these lands, and that is the stage we have reached.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: You are talking a lot of rubbish!

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The Minister would know a great deal about rubbish.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Yes, I learnt it all from you.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: To reply to my remarks the Minister has an opportunity to see his advisers and to present a case that will prove me wrong; he should not just sit on his tall and give irrational sorts of answers.

Point of Order

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I object to those remarks and I ask that they be withdrawn.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (the Hon. Lyla Elliott): Will the Minister for Health tell me the words he wants withdrawn?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Yes. The honourable member said that I sit here on my tail and do nothing, or words to that effect.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr Claughton, the Minister for Health asks that you withdraw those remarks.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Those are not the precise words, but I am prepared to withdraw.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: You have to withdraw, or else.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Well, or else. I do not mind facing the consequences. If we are to proceed along those lines I will ask for the precise words the Minister wishes to have withdrawn.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: You are defying the Chair, are you not?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I have already withdrawn.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Well, get on with the debate.

Committee Resumed

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I have attempted to keep this debate on rational lines, but we are not getting much response from the Minister.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: You are having all the say. I do not know what you expect me to do—just sit here and be silent?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I have spent a great deal of time in attempting to help the Minister to understand the argument I am presenting and I hope by now he has grasped it. I will briefly recapitulate by saying that if these proposals are so wrong, then equally the recommendations for the southern extension of the Kwinana Freeway would also be wrong. That is a strong reason, therefore, for a further inquiry to be held to ascertain whether the proposal to extend the Kwinana Freeway should proceed.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: You tell me when I said that those proposals were wrong. I never said that at any stage.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Did I ever say that the Minister said they were wrong?

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: You are implying it, are you not?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I am not implying it.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Well, why mention it?

The Hon. R. Thompson: You are not following what Mr Claughton is saying.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: This is another one of those occasions when it is a pity the Public Gallery is not crowded so that people could see the type of men who are attempting to govern this State.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: It is a pity there is not a crowd of people in the Public Gallery, because they would be unable to understand what you are saying.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I am asking the Minister, at this stage, not to defer the Bill but to give an understanding that before any construction of the southern

extension of the Kwinana Freeway proceeds an inquiry of the nature requested would be undertaken.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: That argument was concluded a long time ago; why not start a new one? That argument has nothing to do with this Bill.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The Minister is living in a fantasyland.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: You are, if you can fancy that into this clause in the Bill.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: It is no wonder the public despairs of this present Government. Would the Minister agree that those four recommendations are viable? The Minister does not answer. Apparently he now has the sulks and is not speaking.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I never sulk.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: In that case would the Minister, by interjection answer the question asked?

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (the Hon. Lyla Elliott): Order! The honourable member is aware that all interjections are disorderly.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Let us say that by his silence the Minister agrees that all the recommendations in the PERTS report are correct.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I have not said they were wrong or right.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Let us accept that he says they are correct and there will be a duplication of the Narrows Bridge.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I did not say that there would be a duplication at this stage.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Let us say that the proposal for a bridge at Point Resolution is correct.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I wish we could televise this; it would be a best seller!

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Let us say that in view of the very strong public feeling against the excision of this reserve and the establishment of the freeway across it and along the Canning River foreshore, the work should not proceed. The PERTS report says that by 1990, all things being equal, there will be a need for that bridge at Point Resolution.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Is it not 1989?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: On page 11, chapter 1 of the report it states that by the year 1990 such a bridge will probably be required.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Have you noted the word "probably"? It is not "positively", but "probably".

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The Minister cannot have it both ways. Either the recommendations are correct or they are not.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Do you mean to say that because a thing is recommended you must do it at a specific time? It is a recommendation for the future. You bug me. It does not say it has to be done.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: It does not say the freeway extension must be done, either.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I know it doesn't say we have to, but the Government has decided to do it, but not to duplicate the Narrows Bridge.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Instead of excising this piece of land we could proceed with the building of the bridge at Point Resolution.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: What you are saying is that we dice the freeway extension and use another route?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Yes.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: What has that to do with this Bill?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Surely the Minister, even with his limited understanding—

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I understand all right.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON:—would realise that if we agreed to that proposition we would not have to proceed with this Bill because it would not be warranted.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: But we are not agreeing with your proposition about a bridge at Point Resolution so what are you arguing about?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: So the PERTS report is wrong? Instead of building the bridge by 1990—

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: It might be built in the year 2000 for all I know, but I will not be here.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Let us build it today.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: What for?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Why proceed with this Bill?

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Because we need this Bill.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The purposes of the southern freeway extension could be equally served by a bridge at Point Resolution.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Can I ask you a question? Has not the PERTS report recommended the southern extension of the freeway?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The PERTS report recommends a lot of things including the sinking of the railway and the conversion of the railway reserves to busways by 1975.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Does it recommend that we do all those things at the one time? Of course it doesn't!

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: It is 1975 now.

The Hon. R. Thompson: The PERTS report did not recommend the route that is being used, did it?

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: No; it recommended the extension of the freeway south. He is not using that argument. He is going to another route altogether.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: It is pertinent.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: It is not pertinent at all.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It is to the PERTS report.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: If we can agree that the Point Resolution bridge would serve our purposes equally, we would not need this Bill.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: But we do not agree on that so I do not know what you are arguing about. It is so much nonsense.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: It would appear that the Minister and his Government have a completely closed mind to alternative arguments.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: Nonsense.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: To those sorts of stupid arguments, yes.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: He apparently accepts the argument of his experts—

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: We have accepted the argument that the southern extension should precede. We have been definite on that.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: —but he is not prepared to listen to other experts with alternative proposals.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Are you an expert?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: If the honourable member had been listening he would know I have not claimed at all that I am an expert. What I am saying is that there should be an inquiry at which people who are experts could present an alternative point of view to that of the Minister's department.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: Is there not to be an inquiry into this Bill and that is why the Bill will not be proclaimed?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I am not in the Government. Perhaps the Minister could indicate whether it is a fact that this

Bill will not be proclaimed until an ecological examination is made of the proposal.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Not to my knowledge.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: There we are! I do not believe that an examination of ecological issues is sufficient. We need a bit more than that.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Do you know something? If the Government had decided on the Point Resolution route, that would have been wrong and you would be plugging for this one!

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: There is no basis for such a statement.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Want to bet?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The Minister is making assumptions. In fact, his departmental experts have discarded the proposals because he said they would have unwelcome social consequences. If the PERTS report is correct, at some stage those consequences will have to be faced. Surely it is better to face them at this stage and preserve the river foreshore than to lose the foreshore and then at some later stage still have to cope with whatever the social problems are associated with the construction of the bridge and connecting routes through Dalketh.

The purpose of my raising this matter is to illustrate my argument. The Minister cannot have it both ways. He cannot say that that proposal is wrong and all the others are right or, conversely, that the Point Resolution route is right and the other proposals are wrong, including the railway proposal.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: That is what you are saying. You are saying this is wrong and Point Resolution is right.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: To any sort of rational person those arguments would have force.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I beg to differ. On your logic you are saying that any committee must be totally right on every finding. That is not logical.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: My argument has been that if the four proposals can be shown to be not sound, equally the southern extension proposal may be unsound. Therefore this constitutes good grounds for a further inquiry into whether or not this Bill is warranted. The purpose of my remarks is to make an appeal to the Government at this stage—when we are dealing with the last of the three measures presented to us on this matter—to agree to hold an open inquiry into these matters. I am not asking the Government not to proceed with the Bill. I have no objection to its passage if we have an assurance from the Minister that the Government will not proceed with construction until it has allowed an open, public inquiry to be held.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I will deal with the last few words first. The Government will not delay this proposition until a public inquiry has been held. We have already had this argument in the Chamber and it has been voted on; and that is the end of that.

Some of the comments of the honourable member are too silly for words. He is trying to prove a case by saying that because we are proceeding with the southern extension, the recommendations in the PERTS report are wrong. Nothing like that has been said. The recommendations in the PERTS report can be implemented at a later stage. We are not implementing them today. We are extending the Kwinana Freeway and for this purpose we want a little bit of reserve, which is dealt with in the Bill.

The honourable member referred to an ecological study and he questioned whether the Bill will be delayed until that has been completed.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: It was Mr Williams who said that, not I.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: In my speech I said—

At the present time, the department is consulting with experts in regard to numerous ecological matters to ensure that the construction procedures can be organised in such a manner to minimise any ecological effects and so that disturbed areas are encouraged to recover with all possible speed.

That deals with that particular angle. The honourable member broached another matter. All I said in relation to the Narrows Bridge was this—

I can assure members we are not planning for duplication of the Narrows Bridge.

In other words, we are not at the present time going along with the recommendation in the PERTS report for the duplication of the Narrows Bridge. Surely that will sink into the honourable member's mind. The Government does not intend to duplicate the Narrows Bridge. That is not to say the PERTS report is wrong. At some time in the future it may be necessary to duplicate the bridge. The fact that we are not going to do it now or that we are not going to put a bridge across to Point Resolution, or the fact that we are not proposing to sink the railway at the present time, does not mean the PERTS report is wrong. It is clear that we want to expand the Kwinana Freeway along this particular route without any problems. We are arguing about nothing.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The Ministers' view is that debate on this matter is a waste of time.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: You are wasting time because I will not give any further reply on this matter unless you stick to the particular issue.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Excision of this land is part of the proposal, and it is unfortunate that so little of what is said on this side of the Chamber is regarded as being important. Perhaps that statement of the Minister will hit the Press—that debate on this matter is a waste of time.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I did not say that.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The Minister's interpretation of my remark—

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Shout if you want to.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: —was that I said because the Government is going to proceed with the southern extension of the freeway the other four proposals to which I referred were wrong. That is the way the argument gets into the Minister's head. It was completely in reverse. I said because these four proposals are shown to be unrealistic there is very strong reason for doubting the basis on which this extension of the Kwinana Freeway has been recommended, and it is therefore a further reason for an inquiry. Has it sunk in at this stage?

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: It is just the same repetition all the time.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The Minister is a great waste of public money.

Point of Order

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Madam Deputy Chairman, I ask that the words that I am a great waste of public money be withdrawn. They are insulting.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (the Hon. Lyla Elliott): Order! The Minister for Health has asked that the words "The Minister is a great waste of public money" be withdrawn.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I withdraw them.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I also ask that they be excised from *Hansard*.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You cannot do that.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: There is no provision in the Standing Orders for that to be done.

Committee Resumed

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: My closing remark in this debate is that the Minister is in fact a fool.

Point of Order

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Madam Deputy Chairman, I ask that the words that I am a fool be also withdrawn.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister for Health has asked the Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON to withdraw the word "fool". I ask him to do so.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Madam Deputy Chairman, out of deference to you I must confess—

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It cannot be qualified, as you know very well.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: —I have a great reluctance to do so. I withdraw the words.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I object to that type of withdrawal. It should be unqualified, according to Standing Orders.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I ask the honourable member to withdraw the word complained of without any qualification.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I said, Madam Deputy Chairman, I withdraw the word.

Committee Resumed

Clause put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by the Hon. N. E. BAXTER (Minister for Health), and passed.

REGISTRATION OF IDENTITY OF PERSONS BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 24th April.

THE HON. LYLA ELLIOTT (North-East Metropolitan) [4.36 p.m.]: The provisions in this Bill have been introduced as a result of investigations by a committee set up by the Tonkin Government in 1973, to which I referred last night. As the Minister said when introducing the Bill, it appears that following those investigations the committee found many people were experiencing real hardship through their inability to provide proof of identity with a birth certificate or registration of birth. I understand one category of people particularly affected is the Aboriginal population.

In its investigations the three-man committee found that a survey of the applications for birth certificates where no registration could be found revealed that in the 12 months ended the 31st March, 1973, there had been a total of 120 applications, 34 of which were from Aborigines. So it seems this is a matter which seriously concerns the Aboriginal population. Although Aborigines represent something like only 2 per cent of the population, 28 per cent of the applications for registration were from Aboriginal people.

The committee found that the figure of 120 was fairly representative of the number of people seeking this kind of registration each year.

It has therefore been established that a large number of people are seriously inconvenienced through inability to provide proof of their identity. The Opposition can find nothing wrong with the provisions of the Bill. In fact, had the Labor Party been in Government, no doubt it would have introduced a very similar Bill. I therefore support the measure.

THE HON. W. R. WITHERS (North) [4.39 p.m.]: I also rise to support this Bill. I was very pleased to hear the words of Miss Elliott, and I agree that a Labor Government would probably have brought in a Bill of a similar nature.

I have had personal experience of this problem with people in the North Province, and I particularly refer to the region around the town of Kununurra. People have been extremely worried and distressed as a result of not having any proof of identity. I will cite one case which will provide a very good reason for supporting the Bill.

An old couple approached me in 1969 and informed me they had never been registered on an electoral roll because the woman had no proof of identity, and the man had never had himself enrolled because he thought if he did someone might check up and find his wife was not on the roll and they would get into trouble. However, in the later stage of their life they decided they had to face up to this matter, and they came to me, as a Justice of the Peace, to explain their case. They were so upset the woman was shaking while explaining their predicament.

The woman was illiterate and the man was semi-literate, and they asked me to assist them. I arranged for them to sign application cards for inclusion on the electoral roll, and the woman had to place her mark on the application instead of a signature. As a Justice of the Peace, I witnessed her mark and posted off the cards.

I am very pleased to see provision has been made for a statutory declaration on the application form. This is very necessary and I will explain why by reference to the case I have just quoted. In that particular instance there was no statutory declaration on the application form, so these people subsequently received a letter from the Electoral Department stating that the man had been accepted for inclusion on the roll but the woman could not be accepted as a statutory declaration was needed because there was no evidence of her birth. These people were greatly confused by this because the statutory declaration required their signatures, and they thought the woman's application had been rejected because she could not sign her name.

Fortunately, I approached the couple just after they had received the letter, and asked whether they had received advice that they were now on the roll. They were very disturbed and told me the woman had not been placed on the roll. By this time the woman was almost in fear of what the law would do to her because she thought that having declared her hand by saying she had never been on an electoral roll she would now be refused because she could not sign her name. I then wrote to the Electoral Department explaining the situation, and I filled in a statutory declaration, again witnessing the mark of an illiterate woman.

I am therefore pleased to see the statutory declaration will be a part of the application, which will remove the likelihood of a problem like this occurring again. It is a very good measure for those people, many of whom are in the outback, who have no proof of identity and who have for some years been eligible for a pension without knowing about this. The Department of Social Services has been very helpful when such people have been brought to their notice. However, there may be many people who are qualified to receive a pension and have not applied for one because they had no proof of identity. This provision will overcome their problems. I support the Bill.

THE HON. I. G. MEDCALF (Metropolitan) [4.44 p.m.]: I also support the Bill. However, I wish to make one or two comments on some aspects of it which seem to me to be worthy of comment. The first concerns the provision that information is to be supplied by any person whom the registrar asks to supply it. This is set out in clause 4. It is true clause 4 says the person is not obliged to supply the information but, following the comments made by Mr Withers, it occurs to me this information should really be given by statutory declaration.

As Mr Withers pointed out, it is necessary for an applicant for a certificate of identity to make a statutory declaration as set out in clause 7; but the registrar, in trying to obtain verification of that application, is not required to obtain a statutory declaration from any of the people from whom he seeks information. Perhaps the Bill has been worded in that fashion advisedly by the draftsman; perhaps it was the recommendation of the registrars' committee; but whatever the situation it seems to me that the registrar should seek to have verification made by statutory declaration.

After all, we are dealing with a very significant subject. I share the views of those members who have already commented on the difficulties many people face in respect of obtaining certificates of identity. I appreciate the comments made by Miss Lyla Elliott and Mr Withers in

this respect. I know it is a difficult matter because in the past I have tried to obtain birth certificates for people before we had any suggestion of certificates of identity, and I have been refused by a court on the ground that there was insufficient evidence. Some of these people faced problems in that they were not able to obtain a passport.

The Hon. R. Thompson: We changed that two years ago.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: We changed that only yesterday when we dealt with the Bill dealing with registration of births, etc.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Two years ago we introduced a Bill to make provision for birth certificates.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: Well, we have had an Act which makes provision for birth certificates for some years.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I am aware of that.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: In that case there is no need for me to make further comment in that respect.

The situation is that many people are deprived of the opportunity to obtain birth certificates. That position will continue, because many people still will not be able to convince the registrar; he will want proof. This Bill is supplying a sort of auxiliary method under which people will still not be able to obtain birth certificates, but will be able to get a certificate of identity. I think all members will welcome that.

However, I suggest it would be desirable for the registrar, when he is obtaining verification of information, to obtain it by proper means. I do not doubt he will try to obtain a statutory declaration, but nothing in the Bill requires him to do so. I feel in a matter such as this where the registrar is obtaining evidence from someone else there should be some sanction on the person supplying the evidence to ensure that he supplies correct information; because it is too easy for people to make statements for which they cannot be held accountable. On the other hand, if the statement is a statutory declaration the person making it is liable if the statement is incorrect.

I suggest this matter should be given further consideration, and that the standard of proof should be fairly strict when corroborative evidence of a person's identity is required. This is a matter of some importance to the State because it means that revenue will be used, and naturally the Government will want to know that the person is in fact genuinely and bona fide the person he or she claims to be, and is not masquerading under an assumed name or identity.

After all, the Bill is not designed to protect people who want to mask their identity, but to protect genuine people who, for some reason for which they are not responsible, are unable to obtain birth certificates and are therefore deprived of the normal benefits and advantages available to other citizens.

Therefore, for the protection of all concerned, a strict standard should be required when corroborative information is being sought. This would not debar anyone from applying.

There is one other aspect to which I wish to draw attention. When I read the Minister's second reading speech I received the impression that if somebody applied for registration of birth and it was refused, that person would have the right of appeal. However, on close inspection I observe that is not the case. The Minister's speech does not say a person has that right, but that is how I read it; and I think, Sir, on a fairly hasty reading of the speech you might assume there is a right of appeal.

An examination of the Bill reveals that the right of appeal applies only if a person asks for a copy of an entry in the register, or asks for a search to be made of the register, and is refused. In other words, if a person approaches the registrar and says, "I want to search the register", or, "I want an extract of an entry on your register", and the registrar refuses, then that person has a right of appeal to the Minister.

However, one cannot appeal if the registrar declines to enter one's identity in the register in the first place. I am not necessarily saying that is wrong; I am merely drawing attention to the matter because this is a new field and we have to impose a great deal of discretion on the registrar. From my experience with registrars I am quite certain that they are competent to handle this; most of them have had a great deal of experience and are quite able to satisfy themselves about questions such as this.

I do not necessarily believe there should be a right of appeal, but I draw attention to this fact in case anyone should think there is a right of appeal.

With those comments, I support the Bill.

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [4.52 p.m.]: In the absence on Government business of the Minister responsible for handling the Bill in this House, I acknowledge and appreciate the support the Bill has received. I have taken particular note of the point raised by Mr Medcalf in respect of statutory declarations being made by those from whom it may be necessary to obtain corroborative information. I will refer the matter to the Minister for his further consideration in the manner requested by Mr Medcalf.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice) and passed.

PARLIAMENTARY SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 30th April.

THE HON. R. THOMPSON (South Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [4.57 p.m.]: The purpose of this Bill is to make provision for the office of Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet, and to provide that the holder of that office shall receive the same remuneration as that payable to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly. The two Bills next following on the notice paper—the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Bill, and the Constitution Acts Amendment Bill—also make reference to this appointment.

Members will recall that mention was made of this Bill in the Governor's Speech. In addressing myself to the debate on the Address-in-Reply I took the Government to task in respect of this appointment. I thought then it was completely unnecessary, and I still think it is. I do not know the reason for the appointment, because if we read the Minister's second reading speech we find that great stress was placed on the fact that in 1947 the State of Victoria made a similar appointment, yet in the intervening period of 28 years no other State has seen fit to follow suit. One would think the State with the greatest population, New South Wales, would have made an appointment of this nature if it were a good idea. However, it has not.

During my speech on the Address-in-Reply I said I considered this is a move to endeavour to bring about co-ordination and liaison in an ineffective Cabinet. I still consider that to be the case, because Cabinet is proved to be ineffective if the Ministers require someone to liaise for them.

From reading the Minister's speech it would appear the Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet will be the be-all and end-all of everything; but in another place the position was described as that of a glorified office boy.

I do not know whether he should be even called that, because anybody who has attended a Cabinet meeting would readily appreciate the workings of Cabinet. Naturally there must be some form of security, and I do not deny that; but

there always has been sufficient security so far as Cabinet deliberations in Western Australia are concerned. I would challenge any Minister or any member to say that civil servants have leaked any information from Cabinet.

I think it is an insult when one reads in the Minister's speech that the appointment of the Cabinet Secretary will bring greater security to Cabinet. I consider this to be a reflection on the officers who in the past have served Governments well and faithfully.

Because Victoria has such a situation does not mean that we must necessarily fall into line. I would certainly support the appointment of an extra Cabinet Minister, because I feel there are not sufficient Ministers to carry the workload of Cabinet. The load is generally spread unevenly; some Ministers have a light workload while others have a heavy load. I always considered that I was overloaded with portfolios, and I daresay most Cabinet Ministers feel the same.

We are then told in the Minister's speech as to what the Cabinet Secretary will be required to do. He will be required to attend all meetings of Cabinet for the purpose of carrying out the necessary secretarial duties.

What happens in Cabinet is that the Ministers put forward their submissions and mention the matters they want adopted and, when a decision of Cabinet is made, the Premier makes the necessary notation on the relevant file and after the Cabinet meeting this is placed on the other files which are eventually locked up for security reasons. The Under-Secretary of the Premier's Department is then given the job of seeing that the necessary typing is done; and I am sure that nobody could point a finger at the person who does the typing in the Premier's Department. The majority of us here would know the lady concerned, and we all respect her.

Let us consider further what is likely to happen under this legislation. Will the lady in question continue to do the necessary typing or will the new Cabinet Secretary to be appointed have staff for this purpose? Will this work be done outside the Premier's Department, and will there be the same degree of security that exists at present—because there is certainly very tight security at present? I hope this will always be the case. It does not matter whether the person who will be appointed is a one-finger typer, a two-finger typer, or whether he is able to type with both hands, if he is to carry out his normal duties as a member of Parliament and at the same time has to type the decisions of Cabinet he will be taking over the role and duties of a civil servant.

We are told that the appointee will be responsible for the collation of submissions that are made by Ministers. That may sound good, but what does it really

mean? In actual fact it means that Ministers usually take along their submissions to Cabinet when they attend Cabinet meetings. Is the Minister to carry these submissions and then hand them to the Cabinet Secretary who will place them all together and make the necessary entry in the agenda? I ask this because we are told the new appointee will be responsible for the preparation of agendas, and for the recording of resolutions and decisions.

While he may be responsible for recording these resolutions and decisions I do not think this would be in any way authoritative, unless the Premier or his deputy made the necessary notation of the decision at the Cabinet meeting. It would not be authoritative to say that the decision was made and initialled by the secretary. I do not think this would be good enough; it certainly would not be good enough for our party.

Among the other duties that the new Cabinet Secretary will be expected to perform will be the distribution of papers to the responsible Ministers and sub-committees. This sounds to me to be just a lot of glossy words. The Ministers generally have their own staff, and at the moment they have very competent secretaries and, of course, sub-committees are arranged to suit the Ministers.

How the new Cabinet Secretary will expedite this aspect, or ensure that it will work any better, I do not know, because it is pretty hard to get Cabinet Ministers to join sub-committees at any time. The distribution of papers to the responsible Ministers and sub-committees has in the past been carried out under the direction of the Under-Secretary of the Premier's Department, and this has been done very efficiently.

Now, of course, we are to have an additional person sitting in at Cabinet meetings. That is what the proposal amounts to. The Cabinet Secretary will attend Cabinet meetings but he will have no vote in the proceedings. The Minister's notes also state that his attending Cabinet meetings will give the Cabinet Secretary invaluable experience.

We then come to what is possibly the most ridiculous statement I am ever likely to hear. It will be the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary to ensure the flow of Bills. No Cabinet Secretary could ensure the flow of Bills and the Minister knows this very well. The drafting of Bills is usually the greatest problem and no Cabinet Secretary could or would want to be placed in the position of having to make the necessary drafting arrangements for Bills. That is the Minister's responsibility in conjunction with the Parliamentary Draftsman. We all know that this is so. Heaven only knows how the Cabinet Secretary would be able to ensure the flow of Bills, speeches, and committee

notes, because in the main speeches and committee notes are drawn up by the various departmental heads and come directly under the Minister who is dealing with the particular legislation before the Chamber. It will be necessary to approach the departmental heads to obtain much of the information and the answers to questions. I certainly do not know how one man would be able to rush around something like 20, 30, or 50 departments in order to ensure the flow of Bills and questions.

This sort of thing is the work of the Minister's private secretary, and it will continue to be so even if we make the appointment that is suggested in the Bill.

I would like to know whether this is to be the norm for the future and, if it is, just what is the Minister's secretary going to do? I feel he would be under some sort of cloud because of another person coming in and taking over, or attempting to take over, some of his duties; or perhaps giving certain directions. This is what I read into the Bill.

When it comes to questions these must still be cleared by the Minister. The advice must come from the departmental heads who provide the background information, but the Minister has the final determination. Will the proposed appointee be expected to run around the 12 Ministerial offices at a given time each day and pick up the necessary questions, and bring them to the Premier to be vetoed which, I understand, is the case at the moment? It was certainly not the case with the Labor Government.

In his speech the Minister informed us that the Cabinet Secretary will be responsible for the more efficient operation of the legislative business of Parliament. Could we get any more efficiency than we have right now? This appears to be a reflection on the officers of Parliament, because our parliamentary officers have always arranged everything to my satisfaction during the years I have been in this Chamber; and I feel they have also arranged everything to the satisfaction of other members.

So one can be excused for asking whether these are merely words to gloss over a situation which will create another job for one of the boys. This is how it appears to me; unless of course the Ministers are totally inefficient.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You know that is not true.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: As a Government we were not confronted with these problems. We acted efficiently; we did not need a Cabinet Secretary to run around and do our work for us. We were capable of doing it ourselves.

I do not know what it means when the Minister suggests that the Cabinet Secretary will be responsible for second reading speeches, Committee notes, and the flow of Bills at the right time. Does it mean he will visit the Government Printer, pick up the Bills and deliver them here? Is not the present arrangement satisfactory?

As I have said I cannot find anything good in this idea. I oppose it and I do so for very valid reasons. I can assure the Minister that I would not oppose the appointment of another Cabinet Minister, because I think it is warranted. However, I do not think the appointment proposed in this Bill is warranted and I cannot understand the reason for it.

The appointment will mean an extra few thousand dollars will have to be found, because if my feelings are correct the appointee will not be expected to do this work on his own. He will need a staff and a car will have to be provided, together with an office before he is able to function satisfactorily. I oppose the measure.

THE HON. W. R. WITHERS (North) [5.14 p.m.]: I rise to support the Bill because I feel such a measure is necessary.

I do admit, however, that Mr Thompson has had Cabinet experience so he would have an advantage over me because of this past experience. However, I cannot agree with some of the statements he has made and others I am not sure about, because I have not been a Cabinet Minister.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You know I never tell lies.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I hope not. I feel the appointment of a Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet would provide a very good training ground for a future Minister. That is one reason I think such an office should be created. Regardless of the Government in office, when Ministers are appointed—

The Hon. R. Thompson: Our Ministers are not appointed, but elected.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Whether they be appointed or elected, we usually find that when they are first appointed Ministers do not understand fully the workings of the departments embraced by their portfolios. Quite often we find that newly-appointed Ministers have to spend many hours in searching through records to get to know their departments. At the same time they have to carry out their parliamentary duties, attend to sittings of this Parliament, and be put under pressure by the Opposition—as they should be. They have to spend many sleepless nights in learning how to become a Minister. I do not know of anyone who has a natural ability to be a Minister on the day he is first appointed.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Some people have that natural ability.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: There may be some. If we did have a training ground for a future Minister by appointing a Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet, we would make the load of future Ministers lighter. Whether a member be selected or elected to the office of Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet, he or she would have a chance to see how Cabinet operated. By doing that this member would gain experience so that he or she would be much more competent as a Minister when he or she is appointed as a Minister.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I know what he will cop—all the invitations that the other Ministers do not want to accept!

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I agree with that. What the Leader of the Opposition has said goes against what he mentioned in his contribution to the debate. The appointment of a Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet will reduce the workload of Ministers; yet the Leader of the Opposition said he could not understand the reason for such an appointment. For that reason I say he is actually supporting the Bill.

The Hon. R. Thompson: The invitations to Ministers are farmed out, but in the end this person will have to accept most of them.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The Labor Government in New South Wales appointed a special Minister for such occasions.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I am interested in what goes on in the other States, but there is no need for me to deal with the interjection from Mr Dans. I would like to deal with what goes on in Western Australia and with the Bill before us. The appointment of a Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet will do what the Leader of the Opposition wants. Such appointment would assist Ministers, and would reduce their workload.

The Hon. R. Thompson: It will hinder the Ministers.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: The Leader of the Opposition said the Ministers were overloaded with work, yet he spoke against the Bill which is designed to reduce their workload. The honourable member has said he will agree to the appointment of an extra Minister, and he referred to the cost of appointing a Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet. If he uses the argument that the cost of appointing this Parliamentary Secretary is too great and he cannot agree with it, then I should point out to him that by appointing another Minister the cost to the State will be far greater.

The Hon. R. Thompson: One is positive and the other is negative.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Not only will the appointment of an extra Minister be more costly, but it will not provide a training ground for prospective Ministers.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You might as well have 12 of these persons appointed, so that you would have a substitute Cabinet.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: If Western Australia was an extremely wealthy State without budgetary problems or Treasury deficits—as some countries in the world are—we might be able to afford 12 of these training grounds for Ministers.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Your argument can be shot to pieces, because the Minister who is appointed as Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet could be defeated at the following election.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: That is a fair enough comment.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: By the same token Ministers can also be defeated at elections.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: That is a risk that a Government must take. If a Government is inefficient and cannot get its message across to the electors it may not be returned to office. I suggest that at some stage this happens to all Governments. However, a Government that is defeated might be returned to office in three years' time. With the appointment of a Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet it will mean there will be one person who is in a position to accept a portfolio. I do not think the argument put up by the Leader of the Opposition is a strong one.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Such a person would not get one lota of ministerial experience. It merely teaches him about the way Cabinet is run.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: The honourable member admits he has a low spatial ability! Is he saying that nobody can learn about the duties of a Minister by sitting in on Cabinet meetings, by watching, and by taking part in the administration?

The Hon. R. Thompson: I did not say that. I said it would not give such a person one lota of ministerial experience.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Of course technically he will not get one lota of ministerial experience. He will not gain such experience until he is appointed a Minister. However, by observing and by being very close to the scene, he would be a very dumb person indeed if he did not make a better Minister than he would be without that training. Regardless of how good a person might be as a Minister, he would gain some benefit from holding the position of Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet. Such a person would be able to operate more efficiently for the benefit of the State.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I could not have operated more efficiently as a Minister than I did!

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: The honourable member has said something with which I agree; he said that Ministers have responsible secretaries. I agree these secretaries are responsible, and they are appointed to their positions because of that and because of their knowledge within a particular field. Both the Leader of the Opposition and I agree that the workload of these people has become too heavy, as has that of the Ministers. A Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet would reduce that workload.

As I have not had Cabinet experience I will present a picture which every member in this House has seen. Regardless of the Government in power we all know that some Ministers or their secretaries forget, on occasions, to advise the member for a particular district when they are visiting it. Sometimes this failure to advise a member makes that member very annoyed and furious. At other times the member concerned does not find out about a ministerial visit until months after the visit has taken place.

This is one field in which the Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet could assist; he could be given the responsibility of notifying members when Ministers are visiting their electorates. By doing that he would take the load off the Ministers and their secretaries. Although this is a small matter, it is nevertheless of great importance to members of this House and those in another place.

It is quite possible that when the Leader of the Opposition was a Minister he notified members when he visited their electorates, but I know that often Ministers are very busy and they are overloaded with work. For that reason sometimes they forget to advise the members concerned.

The Hon. R. Thompson: This matter is attended to in the course of administration within the Minister's department.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Regardless of the Government in office, Ministers and their secretaries have slipped up in this regard, though not deliberately. Such failure to advise members has occurred in the term of office of the previous Government and the present Government. However, I must say that on only a very few occasions have I not been advised of a ministerial visit to my province.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I can never understand this complaint. As a member I never raised objection to not being notified of a ministerial visit. Over the 12 years of office of the Brand Government, only one Minister advised me of his visit. He did that on two occasions, and I am referring to the previous Minister for Education (Mr Lewis).

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: This does amplify the point. Although it is only a small matter, it could be a very important one to members.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I think it is a pity it has been raised.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I would not agree. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition and other members of this House are aware that some ex-Cabinet members of the Labor Party would have welcomed such an appointment.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Why?

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Just to reduce the workload.

The Hon. R. Thompson: It would not reduce the workload. This person would only be taking over from the Under-Secretary of the Premier's Department.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: The honourable member has already expressed his opposition to the Bill. I am pointing out there are ex-Ministers within his party who would have welcomed such an appointment in the term of office of the previous Government.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Could you name one?

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I cannot do that. If I were to name one I would be alluding to a debate in another place which is recorded in the current *Hansard*. For that reason I cannot allude to any Minister who has made such a comment in the course of this debate.

The Leader of the Opposition is raising an objection to the Bill, as is his right, and he is questioning the necessity for such an appointment. He has had experience as a Minister, and he finds the Bill unsatisfactory. However, in my opinion it is a very good Bill. I also know that my opinion is shared by some ex-Ministers, because they realise that such an appointment will reduce the workload of Ministers.

Mr Thompson is one of two members of his party in this House who has had Cabinet experience, but other members on the front bench opposite do not have that experience. Some members opposite consider the proposal in the Bill to be a good one, but others doubt it and they are not sure. In my view it is a very good piece of legislation, because it will provide a training ground for Ministers. Furthermore, such an appointment will reduce the workload of Ministers, will assist Cabinet, and will cost less than the appointment of an extra Minister. Thus, the cost to the State will be less. The main point made by the Leader of the Opposition is that such an appointment will impose a cost on the State.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I did not say that at all. I said it would cost the State something, but I would rather see another Minister appointed. That would be something positive rather than something negative.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: The honourable member said it would cost the State something.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Yes, and for no service.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: The honourable member is prepared to support the appointment of an extra Minister. Such an appointment will cost the State more than the appointment of a Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet. It would be far better if we adopted the proposal in the Bill, because the cost to the State would be less than that for the appointment of an extra Minister. Furthermore, this would provide a field for the training of Cabinet Ministers. For the reasons presented I support the Bill.

THE HON. R. J. L. WILLIAMS (Metropolitan) [5.30 p.m.]: Members will be surprised if I do not support this Bill after the speech I made during the Address-in-Reply debate. I do not propose to take issue on the various points raised by the Leader of the Opposition because I feel that the post, which is proposed under the provisions of this Bill, is very necessary, otherwise the Government would not have introduced this measure.

I do not think this is a question of "jobs for the boys". It is a question of looking at office procedures and efficiency. The person who will take this post will have an extremely onerous responsibility. As has been mentioned, he will serve to relieve the workload on some of the Ministers. I do not disagree with the Leader of the Opposition when he says he would welcome another Minister. I do disagree with the Hon. W. R. Withers when he says we cannot afford another Minister.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I did not say that we cannot afford another Minister.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: The honourable member said he felt this was a cheaper method. Quite bluntly, I feel we need another three Ministers. I think the Government realises that the calls on Ministers are ever increasing, and it must do something to lighten that workload. I am sure that Mr Cooley, in his capacity as a union organiser, would be aghast were Ministers to belong to a union under which they would have to rationalise their workload.

It is my opinion that Ministers are grossly overworked and, as a result, certain errors occur from time to time. This applies to all Governments. One cannot walk around the corridors of this House, prior to a sitting, without observing a number of private secretaries waiting for Ministers to come to the House so that files can be handed to them.

I will not go into the detailed work which is involved, but how much better would it be for a Minister to know there was available a central office where his private secretary would not have to waste time, and where he could pick up his files?

The secretary to the Cabinet will organise such an arrangement. It is ridiculous to suggest that the secretary to the Cabinet will ride around on a bicycle and pick up documents; that is farcical. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition made that comment with his tongue in his cheek.

I welcome the addition of one person to the Cabinet staff. I believe it is a slight opening of the door to further reform within Cabinet, and within the Government, which will lead to the situation where Ministers will live to enjoy the full benefit of their superannuation.

I support the Bill.

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [5.32 p.m.]: I would like to thank the speakers who have addressed themselves to the Bill and, in particular, I express appreciation to the Hon. W. R. Withers and the Hon. R. J. L. Williams for their support of it.

While the Leader of the Opposition was speaking I heard an interjection—I am not sure that I got it correctly—to the effect that one can make a speech on just about any subject. I think the interjection was in that vein and I would concur with the sentiments it expressed because that is exactly what the Leader of the Opposition was doing. He analysed my second reading speech and made observations on the various points. In so doing, he was conveying no more than his own opinion; an opinion perhaps based on ministerial experience. However, it was in fact no more than an opinion.

The Hon. R. Thompson: What else is any speech other than an opinion?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: It was an opinion, as distinct from fact.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Where in my speech was I not factual?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am suggesting that the Leader of the Opposition was putting forward certain opinions not substantiated by fact at all. First of all, in his opening comments, he said some emphasis had been placed on the Victorian system, and the fact that Victoria instituted this system a number of years ago. I do not know that it can be said any emphasis was put on that fact. It was mentioned because it was relevant in relation to this Bill. It was said that Victoria had such a system and, therefore, there was an experience in Australian Governments of the operation of a parliamentary secretary to the Cabinet.

It was also indicated that from reports it seemed the system was working well. On one occasion I attended a Cabinet luncheon in Victoria during a Cabinet day meeting. I met the Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet and I had an opportunity, myself, to have a brief discussion with him and examine what his function was. That occurred a number of months ago.

The Leader of the Opposition also said that to need this sort of thing a Cabinet must be ineffective. I think that if the Leader of the Opposition gets an opportunity—and I think he will be denied that opportunity—to be in Cabinet again—

The Hon. R. Thompson: If he wants to be in Cabinet again, the Minister should say, because we will be in Government in two years' time.

The PRESIDENT: I am not finding this conversation related to the Bill.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: With respect, Sir, my comments are related to the debate inasmuch as Cabinet will become more effective as additional services are available to it. It is intended that the Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet will provide some of those additional services.

I was about to say when the Leader of the Opposition interjected, that if he has the opportunity to become a Cabinet Minister again he will find there has been a considerable increase in the duties and workload of the Government, and of the Ministers when compared with the period he was previously in office. I offer that simply as an observation borne out by the views expressed to me by members in the present Government who have had previous long ministerial experience. They say that the duties and functions of Ministers have grown tremendously. In those circumstances the Government is looking for an effective means to ensure that it serves the people.

The Hon. R. Thompson: That is not peculiar to Cabinet Ministers; it is peculiar to all members of Parliament because the workload of every member has increased.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: And as a result, as the Leader of the Opposition will know, arrangements were recently made for the establishment of electorate offices and for the appointment of secretaries to members of Parliament.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: That was a good move.

The Hon. R. Thompson: They were long overdue.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: So is the present appointment.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I would not go so far as to say that the secretaries to members of Parliament could undertake the duties set out in my second reading speech in respect of Cabinet Ministers. It is not envisaged that the Secretary of the Cabinet will do research for Ministers or other officers who serve Ministers. The secretaries to members of Parliament would be expected to do that sort of work.

I bear in mind the words of the Leader of the Opposition when he said that the execution of certain of the duties to be

undertaken by the Secretary of the Cabinet was a reflection upon the existing officers, either in the Premier's Department or those associated with the Government—perhaps the officers of Parliament. The same may therefore be said with regard to the existence and the recognition of secretaries to parliamentary members, but no such thought could enter my head.

The Hon. R. Thompson: The Minister cannot use that analogy. We had 69 members of Parliament, with three typists to do their work in this House and it was an impossible situation. The ministerial staff is completely different, as the Minister is aware, and as every other member of Parliament is aware. The Minister should not mislead us on that point.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am not misleading; it is not my practice to even attempt to mislead. I am simply drawing attention to the fact that because of the increasing workload and because of the demands of the offices in the electorates served by members of Parliament, Cabinet will be more effectively able to carry on by means of this appointment.

The Hon. W. R. Withers also said that this appointment could provide a training ground for future Ministers. We have to recognise that except for Victoria no other State in Australia has made such an appointment. New South Wales is the biggest State and the fact that no such appointment has been made in that State should not be regarded as a lead for us. That State might have a completely different system or have something of a different nature altogether.

The Hon. R. Thompson: The Government should have examined that, rather than the Victorian system. Did it not carry out research?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Indeed, we did.

The Hon. R. Thompson: The Minister said another State might have a different system. He did not say it did have a different system.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The system in New South Wales with regard to the operation of its ministerial departments might be different. There are all sorts of reasons for such a system not to be suitable in Western Australia. The Western Australian Government, in the interests of better government, is making provision for such an appointment. That is all I am saying.

It would be pointless for me to go over all the matters raised by the Leader of the Opposition because he selected from my second reading speech items on which he expressed a particular personal point of view. If he does not accept the words I used as being an opinion, I can assure him that in no way does this Bill reflect on any existing services or any existing officer or any Minister's secretary, or anything of that nature at all.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Why does the Minister say this appointment will lend itself to greater security? Is there not sufficient security at the moment?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am not aware that anyone has said, or implied, that there has been any security breakdown.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Why is it necessary to have greater security if there is sufficient security now?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The Leader of the Opposition will be aware that from time to time allusions have been made with regard to decisions of Cabinet. This applies to all Governments. Allusions are made to minutes which appear in governmental files.

The Hon. R. Thompson: But the files will still go back to the Ministers' offices.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Yes, no doubt.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You will not change that.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Perhaps, once again, the system of operation by the Tonkin Government in Cabinet was possibly different from the way we operate, and different from the way any other Cabinet operates. That is their prerogative. However, I am reminded there is one area in which we obviously differ. I think the Leader of the Opposition made some jocular reference to invitations, and that the Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet would get the invitations which Ministers did not want. We appreciate the number of invitations which come to Cabinet but I want to make the point that if the experience of the previous Government, with regard to invitations, was to hand them out willy-nilly, that system does not apply with the present Government.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I said that in a jocular manner, so I ask the Minister not to make an issue of something I said by way of interjection.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The Leader of the Opposition simply made an observation.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I think it is fair to say that the Minister came up with a big smile and acknowledged what I said.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: By the same token, the Leader of the Opposition, as a member of the previous Government, knows that even in the invitation field alone, a good deal of ministerial or Cabinet time is taken up. Whatever method is used to meet the wishes of the organisations and people who extend invitations, this matter could be handled more expeditiously by a person such as the Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet rather than by the Premier, the Premier's staff, or the Ministers themselves. In this area alone there is an opportunity to improve the service.

I reject the suggestion, as another speaker has done, that this is a case of another job for one of the boys—the Leader of the Opposition's own words.

The Hon. R. Thompson: That is right.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am aware of no instance—in fact I can be more positive and say there has been no instance—where this Government can be charged with having created a position, or placed a person in a position, in the context of another job for one of the boys. The position to be created by the legislation is certainly not in that category.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I did not accuse you of that either.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am fully aware of the fact that the Leader of the Opposition did not say that, but I am making the point—and the relevant point—that he did make the observation it is another job for one of the boys.

The Hon. R. Thompson: What I said was that this could be a job for one of the boys. That is what I said.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I wrote down the words used at the time, but we will leave it to the *Hansard* report for the actual words used by the Leader of the Opposition. It is particularly significant that he used those words because I was about to say that I wished the criticism had been used in a completely different area of government in Australia. It becomes the Leader of the Opposition—a member of the party in power in Canberra—to talk about jobs for the boys. I do no more than make that remark.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: You could not make a speech without referring to the Australian Government—denigrating it.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I see little point in developing the matter any further. The purpose of the Bill has been explained, and the Leader of the Opposition has indicated his opposition to it. I believe his reasons lacked real substance—

The Hon. R. Thompson: In your opinion.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am making the statement.

The Hon. R. Thompson: That is right—you have not come up with any facts.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am not going to quibble about the phrase "in my opinion". I am making the statement that the arguments of the Leader of the Opposition are without substance.

The Hon. R. Thompson: It is your usual catchery—in your opinion. It is a habit of the Minister at the present time.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: What is your catchery? You have one too.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Everything is in his opinion.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister for Justice.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am sure the content of the measure is fully understood. I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (the Hon. Lyla Elliott) in the Chair; the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1 put and passed.

Clause 2: Section 7 amended—

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Minister said that most of my arguments were invalid, but one of my valid questions was whether the person who is appointed to the position of secretary to the Cabinet will have a staff and a central office to enable him to perform the duties as set out in the Minister's second reading speech. What is the anticipated size of the staff he will have? Or will he be a messenger boy, as I indicated earlier? Where will he operate from? Has any thought been given to this question? Has this measure been put forward with the idea that the costs and details can be worked out later? Surely with the Government in the tight monetary situation it claims to be in, it should have given thought to the cost of accommodation and staff. Can the Minister answer these questions?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I cannot give the Leader of the Opposition precise answers to his queries; nor do I think it is really necessary that the answers should be given in the present circumstances. This Bill is to provide the opportunity for the appointment of a person to occupy a certain office as secretary to the Cabinet. Nothing has been stated about the necessity for staff. He is not a Minister, and he administers no department.

The Hon. R. Thompson: That is right.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The appointee will attend Cabinet meetings and it may well be that the duties he will perform can be carried out in his present situation as a member of Parliament.

I believe the secretary's association will be with the Premier's Department which would have the facilities and services to enable him to carry out his function. The Leader of the Opposition referred earlier to the creation of an office staff and perhaps the provision of a car. I am not aware of any provision for the holder of this office to have a car made available to him. However, in certain instances, a person representing a Minister or the Government may be entitled to transport for a particular purpose. I do not believe any particular distinction will be made in this case. To the best of my knowledge,

provision has been made within the Premier's Department for the actual expenditure.

Clause put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice), and passed.

BILLS (2): RECEIPT AND FIRST READING

1. Fruit-growing Reconstruction Scheme Act Amendment Bill.
2. Superannuation, Sick, Death, Insurance, Guarantee and Endowment (Local Governing Bodies' Employees) Funds Act Amendment Bill.

Bills received from the Assembly; and, on motions by the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice), read a first time.

SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES TRIBUNAL BILL (2nd)

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 30th April.

THE HON. R. THOMPSON (South Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [5.58 p.m.]: Clause 13 of this Bill provides for the repeal of the Parliamentary Salaries and Allowances Act, 1967-1975. Prior to 1967, members of Parliament set their own salaries. Some members may recall those days, and members who were not here at that time will probably have read in the Press from time to time about salary increases for members of Parliament.

This type of legislation had a certain stigma about it because one was placed in the position of having to vote for an increase in one's own salary. Such legislation was usually brought to Parliament only once in every three-year period, because no Government was game enough to introduce the question of salary increases more than once in the life of any Parliament.

In 1967 we had our first independent inquiry into salaries of members of Parliament. Salaries and emoluments were taken into account by a committee set up for that purpose. At that time the inquiry was hailed loudly by the Press as being a very just and fair arrangement, and all members of Parliament endorsed it as a desirable principle. It was said that they should not be placed in the position which had prevailed for the previous 67 years.

However, we have found that the Press still becomes vocal even when our salaries are fixed by the committee every three years as is provided for under the Act we

are repealing. Members of the Press say we are not entitled to an increase in salary, forgetting, of course, that in the previous three years we had received no increase whatever. I should like to compliment the people who acted under the legislation in the past and handed down independent decisions which were accepted with very little argument, or with no argument by members of Parliament.

This Bill will broaden considerably the scope of the legislation to include under its provisions Ministers of the Crown, officers and members of the Parliament—these people are included in the present legislation—stipendiary magistrates, officers of the Public Service holding offices included in the Special Division of the Public Service, and a person holding any other office of a full-time nature created or established under a law of the State. It also refers to the Bill which we have just dealt with, and which I opposed.

One of the best features of this Bill is that it does not deal with members of Parliament as a separate entity; its scope has been broadened so that we now have a basis for comparison. Between July and August each year a determination will be made; this should eliminate much of the screaming and ranting with which the Press has carried on over the years when salary increases have been made at three-yearly intervals. Members will gather by the tenor of my remarks that I support the Bill. The new tribunal will consist of three independent members who in no way will be covered by the provisions of this legislation. Thus, the tribunal will be completely divorced and independent.

I suggest in all seriousness that we should appoint to this tribunal somebody from West Australian Newspapers Ltd.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Do you think that would put them in a spot?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I think it would be a very good appointment. I would say that the people who have led the criticism against salary increases received by members of Parliament would be receiving a greater salary than members of Parliament. They would not realise just how much work members of Parliament and their wives must do. If anybody should be taken into consideration in this matter, it is the wife of a member of Parliament; she spends many hours a day, even since the advent of electorate offices, answering the telephone or the door, handling the calls that come to her home when her husband is at Parliament House or in the electorate, carrying out his duties.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: And putting up with abuse from time to time.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes, abuse and all sorts of people coming to the door, day and night. I believe we all accept this as part of our responsibilities; how-

ever, such responsibilities should not fall upon the shoulders of a member's wife; she is not on the payroll. I think it would do some of the critics, particularly newspaper critics, a great deal of good if they could act on this tribunal and undertake an in-depth study of the function of a member of Parliament, irrespective of which party he represents.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: We might not get any pay!

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: They who educate the public each day with their publications might become educated themselves if such an opportunity were afforded them.

Initially the Bill was going to provide that the tribunal should set the salaries of members of the judiciary. However, this has been a traditional function of Parliament, and although, as the Minister said, members of the judiciary support this legislation, they still desire Parliament to have the final determination on their salaries. Therefore although recommendations in respect of their salaries will still flow from an advisory body, Parliament will retain the right of final determination.

Probably six or seven members—I say this without being party political; the query has come from both sides of the House—have asked me whether they will still be able to make submissions to the tribunal once this legislation is promulgated. The answer is set out in clause 10 of the Bill which states, in part—

the Tribunal may inform itself in such manner as it thinks fit;

I support the Bill.

Sitting suspended from 6.08 to 7.30 p.m.

THE HON. W. R. WITHERS (North) [7.30 p.m.]: I rise to support this legislation because I think it is long overdue. To bear out that contention I would like to indicate to members how over a number of years disparities have occurred in the salaries paid to senior public servants, stipendiary magistrates, and members of Parliament.

For the purpose of making a submission to the Parliamentary Salaries Tribunal in 1974, I collated some figures of the parliamentary salaries paid in 1932 as against those paid in 1972, together with figures of the salaries that were paid to senior officers of the Public Service. On doing this I found a great disparity in the salaries paid over the years to members of Parliament and to senior public servants, and that disparity increased as the years went by. There could be many reasons for this occurring. It could be that there is actually a need to have a disparity at this time when making a comparison of the salaries paid to members of Parliament and to senior public servants.

I will now quote to the House some figures to illustrate what can happen to salaries, comparatively, over the years. In 1932 the salary of a member of Parliament was \$1 800. Before I continue I would like to point out that I will confine the figures to dollars. Forty years later, in 1972, a member of Parliament was paid a salary of \$10 000. In 1932 an under-secretary was paid \$1 608, and in 1972 his salary was \$11 888. In 1932 the salary of a stipendiary magistrate was \$1 641, and in 1972 it was \$14 404. In 1932 the Public Trustee was paid \$1 512, and in 1972 his salary was \$14 800. The Chief Electoral Officer, in 1932, was paid \$1 500, and in 1972 his salary was \$14 187.

Bearing in mind that these figures were collated to support a submission I made to the Parliamentary Salaries Tribunal, and the fact that I am comparing the salary of a member of Parliament with that paid to a senior public servant, I calculated that if the salary of a member of Parliament had increased at the same rate as the salaries of the senior public servants I have listed, a member of Parliament should have been paid \$12 602 per annum instead of \$10 000.

In saying that, I want members to bear in mind that the Parliamentary Salaries Tribunal sat late in 1971 and, as members well know, it was then that the tribunal made a determination which increased our salaries to \$10 000 per annum. So I have used the year 1972 to make my comparisons because it was at that stage that a member of Parliament had his salary increased to \$10 000.

If we compare the salary of a member of Parliament in 1972 with that of a stipendiary magistrate he should be receiving \$12 202 instead of \$10 000. If we compare the salary of a member of Parliament with the Public Trustee, he should have been paid, in 1972, \$11 745 instead of \$10 000. However, if we compare the salary of a member of Parliament with that paid to the Chief Electoral Officer, it is found that a member of Parliament should have been paid \$15 618 in 1972 instead of \$10 000.

I do not wish to place emphasis only on the salary of a member of Parliament, because we know the Bill covers not only members of Parliament but also senior public servants and others. However, I have used the salary of a member of Parliament to make my comparison to show the House the salary disparities that can occur. I had collated these figures for inclusion in the submission I made to the Parliamentary Salaries Tribunal so I thought I would read from the document I have before me to make my comparison rather than make a fresh study.

I believe the Parliamentary Salaries Tribunal has done a good job and its members have been extremely fair in their determinations. However, it must be borne in mind that all members of the tribunal, when making a decision on sal-

aries, quite often have to take notice of public opinion. I suppose one can accept that this is a kind of reasonable pressure that can be applied to them. I agree with what Mr Thompson has said. He pointed the finger at the newspapers and said they are always quick to criticise any increase in the salaries of senior public servants and members of Parliament without knowing the actual workloads on members of Parliament and their families.

I firmly believe that if the Bill is passed—and I am sure it will be judging from what the Leader of the Opposition has said, because he has offered no opposition to it—it will bring home to the public the fact that there have been disparities in the salaries paid to senior public servants, stipendiary magistrates, and members of Parliament, and if we appoint one tribunal to review these salaries and to make determinations on them at one and the same time, greater equity will be achieved for the officers I have mentioned and also for members of Parliament. With those words, I support the Bill.

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH
(South) [7.37 p.m.]: I, too, support the Bill. I think it will prove to be an advantage for parliamentary salaries and allowances to be determined together with the salaries paid to senior public servants, stipendiary magistrates, and other senior members of the Public Service. For too long the salaries paid to these people have been reviewed separately and insufficient consideration has been given to the many needs of a member of Parliament, particularly in regard to allowances and expenses.

I have already drawn the attention of the House, through the medium of questions, to the fact that a member of Parliament is not covered under the Workers' Compensation Act. It is utterly ridiculous that only one salary group in the whole country is not covered for workers' compensation. It could well be argued that when we become ill our salaries continue to be paid unless something of a major nature occurs. However, that is beside the point. So many facets are covered by workers' compensation that a member of Parliament should be included in that cover. For one thing, this would only be fair to the families of members of Parliament. Therefore I think workers' compensation is something that should be considered when the salaries of members of Parliament are reviewed by the one tribunal.

I also hope that the new tribunal will be able to have another look at the allowances that are granted to a member of Parliament. Those who have a copy of the Parliamentary Salaries and Allowances Act before them will realise that in the first schedule there is set out in a column electoral allowances for every province and every electorate. When the Parliamentary Salaries Tribunal last met to review the allowances, whilst it did upgrade them,

it did not feel that the order or the proportions set out in the Act should be changed. I believe that this could well be done by the new tribunal. Many factors set out in the schedule to the Act have now been superseded. For example, a member of Parliament who represents, say, Kalgoorlie, Albany, or Bunbury, which are only small electorates and practically suburban in extent, would incur little in the way of travelling expenses compared with another member who has to cover a vast area.

However, when we compare the allowances paid to members of Parliament there is little difference between them. I hope the tribunal will also appreciate that some members of Parliament who represent country electorates are obliged to live in the city whilst Parliament is in session. It is rather amazing to learn that in making its determinations the Parliamentary Salaries Tribunal compared the allowances of a State member of Parliament with those paid to a Federal member of Parliament, but nowhere in its findings did it mention that a Federal member of Parliament receives approximately \$32 as a living-away-from-home allowance. So how the tribunal can fairly compare the allowances paid to a State member of Parliament with those paid to a Federal member of Parliament, I fail to comprehend, but probably the tribunal did not realise that such an allowance would make a vast difference to a State member of Parliament, especially one who represents a country area, because he is obliged to live in the city while Parliament is in session. He should certainly receive a living-away-from-home allowance over and above the ordinary electoral allowance which is granted to cover such items as travelling expenses, etc.

When one considers the increase in costs today the difference in expenses of a member of Parliament representing a city electorate and the expenses of a member representing a country electorate is becoming greater. For instance, all members know that car-running expenses in the country are extremely high. Therefore I think that if the tribunal were requested to review the three points I have raised we would get a better appreciation and a better comparison of the costs and expenses of a State member of Parliament and a Federal member of Parliament.

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [7.42 p.m.]: I appreciate the support given to the Bill by those members who have spoken. I do not think there is any point that needs amplification in view of the support that has been expressed, and therefore it would be unnecessary for me to elaborate further on the measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (the Hon. Clive Griffiths) in the Chair; the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3 put and passed.

Clause 4: Interpretation—

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Members will be aware that I have circulated among them a series of amendments which, in normal circumstances, would have been placed on the notice paper.

The first is merely a machinery amendment to permit the inclusion of the second amendment to spell out who are the officers of Parliament. This is necessary because the impression could be gained that the provision referred to staff who are officers of Parliament and of course that is not the intention. I move an amendment—

Page 2, line 11—Insert after the clause number “4” the subclause designation “(1)”.

Amendment put and passed.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I move an amendment—

Page 2—Add after subclause (1) in lines 11 to 32 the following new subclause to stand as subclause (2)—

(2) For the purposes of this Act a person is an officer of Parliament if he is the holder for the time being of the office of—

- (a) President of the Legislative Council;
- (b) Speaker of the Legislative Assembly;
- (c) Chairman of Committees in either House;
- (d) Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council;
- (e) Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly;
- (f) Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly;
- (g) Government Whip in the Legislative Council;
- (h) Opposition Whip in the Legislative Council;
- (i) Government Whip in the Legislative Assembly;
- (j) Opposition Whip in the Legislative Assembly;
- (k) the person who not being a Minister of the Crown is the leader of a party in the Legislative Assembly of at least seven members other than a party whose leader is the Premier or the Leader of the Opposition;

- (1) the person who is the Whip in the Legislative Council or the Legislative Assembly of a party of at least seven members other than a party whose leader is the Premier or the Leader of the Opposition and the first mentioned party in the case of the Whip in the Legislative Council has seven members or more in that House or in the case of the Whip in the Legislative Assembly has seven or more members in that House.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 5 put and passed.

Clause 6: Inquiries and determinations by Tribunal—

The Hon. N. McNEILL: It will be noted that the Bill contains reference to the word "emolument". In the present legislation emoluments were specified. Although when this legislation was being drafted it was considered that that word conveyed a wide enough meaning, perhaps—and I use that word deliberately—the use of that word on its own could lead to confusion as to whether emoluments covered functions which members may be required to perform as part of their parliamentary duties. Therefore it was thought the position should be clarified and that's the reason for the amendment. I move an amendment—

Page 3, line 38—Insert after the word "Parliament" the passage "including additional remuneration to be paid to members of Select Committees of a House or Joint Select Committees of Houses, not being in either case Standing Committees".

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I do not oppose the intention of the amendment, but I do not like the words "including additional remuneration". We are not giving the tribunal a directive and therefore I would like the amendment in simpler terms. I do not think the intention is that those who act on Select Committees should get additional remuneration, but only expenses. I would like to hear the Minister's views on that.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I think I understand the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition. Perhaps I can best explain the position by reading from some prepared material which gives a definition of the term. It reads—

The term "remuneration" is defined, with respect to members of Parliament, Ministers, etc., to include salary and annual allowances and other allowances and fees and emoluments.

The term "emoluments" is very widely defined by the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary to mean "profit or gain from station, office or employment; dues; remuneration, salary; advantage", and the term "emolumentary" is defined as meaning "profitable or advantageous".

The term "emoluments" is wide enough to cover benefits not paid directly in money terms such as gold passes, free provision of telephone services, electoral office expenses, and so on.

In relation to additional allowances to persons serving on parliamentary committees, the view advanced is that—

... if the qualification to be on such a committee is to be a member of Parliament and the committee is a committee of either House or a Joint House Committee, then the Tribunal under the Bill as it stands has jurisdiction to award additional remuneration to members serving in those capacities.

I think that probably answers the question and confirms the opinion of the Leader of the Opposition that the intention is not to provide a remuneration.

The Hon. R. Thompson: It still gives the appearance of a direction to the tribunal to grant an additional remuneration.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: By using the word "including" we could be conveying the impression that there can also be an exclusion. I hope my meaning is clear. That is certainly not the intention. It is simply to indicate that provision is to be made for those who serve on Select Committees, bearing in mind the present legislation. In the present legislation it is spelt out and, if it is not spelt out in this Bill, it could be construed to mean that Parliament's intention was that the tribunal should not make allowances in these circumstances. I appreciate the reservation of the Leader of the Opposition, but I hope my explanation has clarified the position.

The Hon. D. K. DAns: We are laying down the guidelines for the tribunal to indicate it must give consideration to extra remuneration. When the tribunal makes a decision it would include the expenses for a Select Committee. Is that correct?

The Hon. N. McNeill: That is my understanding.

The Hon. D. K. DAns: I think this is a very good thing because Mr Ferry and I happened to be on a potato inquiry and while the Ministers' remuneration had increased because this provision had not been included, no-one thought of Select Committees. Mr Ferry and I had something like \$13 a day expenses which involved considerable amount of money when we

were touring around the country and we expected to be reimbursed for it. It is an accident of history now, but the day after we were paid the Act was changed to raise the fees of Select Committee members to that of Ministers.

Although it is humorous, I think it is very important. No-one should be disadvantaged in any way at all by carrying out a function which is wished upon him in the course of his duties. I am quite happy with the explanation. I understand a directive will be given to the tribunal that it shall specify the remuneration for members of Select Committees.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Rather than being a directive, in fact it will give the tribunal the opportunity to make provision for people in those circumstances.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 7 to 9 put and passed.

Clause 10: Method of inquiry by Tribunal—

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: Mr Deputy Chairman, I am sure you are aware that in paragraph (a) of subclause (4) of this clause there is a typographical error. I hope you will request the Clerks to correct same when the Bill is being reprinted.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (the Hon. Clive Griffiths): I am sure the Clerks can make the necessary correction.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 11 to 13 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, with amendments, and the report adopted.

CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 30th April.

THE HON. R. THOMPSON (South Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [8.04 p.m.]: The House having earlier this evening agreed to amend the Parliamentary Salaries and Allowances Act to provide for the appointment of a Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet, it is now necessary to amend the Constitution Acts Amendment Act to make another exclusion as to those persons who can hold an office of profit under the Crown without losing their seats in Parliament.

I support this very small Bill. I did not support the previous legislation, as is well known, but Parliament having decided this officer shall be appointed, I have no choice but to support the Bill now before us.

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [8.05 p.m.]: Bearing in mind his opposition to the previous

measure, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his support of this Bill in view of the fact that it is a constitutional measure.

The **PRESIDENT**: To be carried, this motion requires an absolute majority, and in accordance with Standing Order 308 a division must be taken.

Bells rung and the House divided.

The **PRESIDENT**: It is quite apparent that all members are voting with the Ayes, and I therefore declare the motion passed with the concurrence of an absolute majority.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [8.09 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

The **PRESIDENT**: The third reading of this Bill requires an absolute majority in accordance with Standing Order 308. I shall divide the House.

Bells rung and the House divided.

The **PRESIDENT**: It is again apparent that all members are voting with the Ayes. I therefore declare the motion passed with the concurrence of an absolute majority.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

PHOSPHATE CO-OPERATIVE (W.A.) LTD. ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 30th April.

THE HON. R. T. LEESON (South-East) [8.14 p.m.]: I rise to support this Bill, although I do so with some sadness. Members will recall in the spring session last year a Bill was before the House in relation to the phosphate works at Merredin, and arising from that Bill we now have the one in front of us, because certain moneys which had to be paid to the Treasury by the farmers in that area within 14 days apparently were not paid through an oversight. This Bill comes before us to rectify that position.

I understand the reason the moneys were not paid in the specified time was that the people in the district thought the Treasury would have informed them of the situation, because 14 days is not a long period when one is dealing with money and people in an area of that description. However, they were late in forwarding the money and we are now confronted with this situation.

The prospects so far as the superphosphate works are concerned are not very bright at the moment, for a variety of reasons. The main one of these is the vicious increase in the price of superphosphate. The position farmers find themselves in is such that perhaps they will not be able to take the amount of superphosphate they originally indicated they would take, and this means the works might not be a viable proposition. At the same time, money is fairly hard to find. I am somewhat at a loss to understand why the price of superphosphate has increased so greatly over the last 12 to 18 months. It is not so long ago that it was about \$32 a tonne and now it is somewhere around \$55 to \$60.

The matter has received some publicity over the last few weeks, and I understand part of the increase in price may be attributed to the importation of phosphate rock, which has increased in price. Naturally, this has meant superphosphate is more expensive to manufacture.

Having regard to the way the price is increasing, I think perhaps an inquiry of some description might be warranted. Many members in this Chamber and in another place represent country areas, and perhaps we should call for an inquiry by the Government or an independent body into the price of superphosphate. Possibly this would enable something to be done about the matter. It is a shame that the superphosphate works at Merredin have not yet got off the ground.

This Bill will alleviate the situation for the time being, in the hope that the project gets moving in the near future. Many people are beginning to have doubts about it. I hope to see the works in action, and I wish the company concerned all the very best. I support the Bill.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Did you notice the publicity on the subject about 18 months ago?

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [8.18 p.m.]: I appreciate the support Mr Leeson has given to the Bill. I feel perhaps I should make an observation in respect of a comment he made. I think the words he used were that the farmers felt they should have been notified by the Treasury.

If that was the intent of his words, I point out the difficulty arose because the Treasury is not able to pay out the money which it has received, because the provisions of the Act have not been complied with. While the farmers could be disadvantaged in that they are unable to be paid by the Treasury should they wish to get back their subscriptions, the fact of the matter is that the Treasury is simply holding the money and is unable to make any payments.

The moneys have already been subscribed and are being held completely intact by the Treasury. Having received the moneys, it was found the 14 days allowed in the Act had elapsed and, therefore, the Treasury would have been acting unlawfully had it paid out moneys to farmers who wished to have their subscriptions returned, or had it paid moneys to the directors of the company in respect of any matters for which they may have wished to draw.

As my colleague, the Minister for Health, has indicated to me, that is the reason the Bill was introduced: because the Treasury cannot do anything with the funds at the moment. However, possibly—and I use that word advisedly—it will be recalled that the Act we are now amending provides that it shall come into operation on the day of assent; so it may well be the case that the parties concerned did not realise that assent was given virtually forthwith after the passing of the Bill, and they were not geared up to make the payment within the 14-day period. Perhaps they may have been waiting for a proclamation to that effect.

However, the provision in the Act is completely clear in respect of the Act coming into operation on the day of assent, and for some reason or other the money was not paid over within the prescribed time. This Bill simply corrects that situation.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice), and transmitted to the Assembly.

STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 30th April.

THE HON. R. THOMPSON (South Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [8.23 p.m.]: This amending Bill seems to me to be an objective measure, and is worthy of support. In the short period of time available to me to peruse it—bearing in mind I have to deal with other legislation also—I have ascertained that the principal magistrate is now to be called the Chief Stipendiary Magistrate and will have powers over other magistrates similar to those powers the Chief Justice has over other justices. That is to say, he will have power, with the consent of the Minister, to allot to the other magistrates the respective areas in which they are to operate.

In cases such as Perth, Fremantle, and other large centres, where more than one stipendiary magistrate is needed, the Chief Stipendiary Magistrate may assign certain functions to the magistrates in those areas; that is, he may assign magistrates to the Police Court, the Matrimonial Court, the Children's Court, etc.

This will tend to remove from the Minister any personal responsibility in respect of the grievances of magistrates and the settling of arguments amongst them, and will provide for greater discipline. The principal magistrate will have the right to pick horses for courses. Those magistrates who are well suited to work in Summary Relief Courts, wardens' courts, etc., may be assigned such duties. At present no-one has absolute jurisdiction in respect of the assignment of duties.

Without naming the particular court, I recall an occasion in which several magistrates were assigned to a court, and a heavy workload arose in another area. The Chief Stipendiary Magistrate tried to take a magistrate out of this court to work in the court where the extra work had arisen, and he was told, "I am running my court; keep out of it." I am sure the Minister would be well aware of that case, and I think possibly this is the reason for the Bill being before us today.

The Chief Stipendiary Magistrate would know best who is the most appropriate magistrate for the various courts in different areas of the State. It would be ridiculous, for example, to send a magistrate to a warden's court if he was not thoroughly conversant with the Mining Act. Likewise it would be silly to send magistrates to the Summary Relief Court or to the Children's Court unless they were conversant with those areas of jurisdiction.

I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill. I think it is a very objective measure and that only good will come from it.

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [8.27 p.m.]: I welcome the words of support of the Leader of the Opposition. I would like to confirm the view he expressed that it is an objective measure which is not designed to lessen the control over the operations of the courts—and I use the word "courts" rather than the word "magistrates" advisedly—rather it is designed to improve the operation of the courts by giving powers of delegation to the Chief Stipendiary Magistrate or, in his absence, the Deputy Chief Stipendiary Magistrate, to arrange sittings in such a manner that the business of the courts can be appropriately effected.

I have indicated that one of the disabilities from which the courts suffer—and particularly the Court of Petty Sessions; and the court at East Perth is another

case in point—is the fact that they are spread throughout the metropolitan area. Where court lists collapse at any one time it is most inconvenient to arrange for magistrates to step into other courts and to relieve the pressure.

It is well known and recognised by the Government that the demands upon the courts are increasing. This is not necessarily due to an increase in crime—certainly that would not be the case in respect of the Local Court, which does not deal with matters of crime—but perhaps it is due to the advent of greater availability of legal aid services which enable more people to take the opportunity to defend their cases.

The people are becoming more and more aware of their rights under the law, and they are exercising those rights. This tends to extend court hearings, with a consequent drain on the existing court establishments. It is unnecessary for me to elaborate further. I repeat that I appreciate the support given to the Bill by the Leader of the Opposition.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice), and transmitted to the Assembly.

COMPANIES ACT (INTERSTATE CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMISSION) AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [8.34 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Members will be aware that the Companies Act of 1961 was produced by the Standing Committee of Commonwealth and State Attorneys-General and, for the first time, achieved substantial uniformity in company law throughout Australia. The present and previous Governments of this State have been concerned to ensure that such uniformity should continue to exist, because of its importance to the public generally and the commercial community.

One of the decisions of the standing committee in the company law field was the establishment in 1967 of the Company Law Advisory Committee, which consisted of Sir Richard Eggleston, who was a Commonwealth judge, as chairman; Mr J. M.

Rodd, a Melbourne solicitor; and Mr P. C. E. Cox, a Sydney chartered accountant. The advisory committee has been responsible for recommending extensive changes in company legislation, some of which were effectuated by the Companies Act Amendment Act passed by this Parliament in 1973.

Although very considerable uniformity in company law has been achieved, there are significant differences between the Acts of the various States and Territories. On the 18th of February, last year, the Governments of Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland entered into an agreement known as the Interstate Corporate Affairs Agreement, one of the main objects of which is to achieve greater uniformity in the law relating to companies, and in the administration of that law.

Members may be aware that the Interstate Corporate Affairs Agreement—a copy of which is set out in the first schedule to the Bill now before the House—was signed on behalf of Western Australia by myself on the 31st of March, 1975. The primary purpose of this Bill is to approve of that agreement and to give effect to certain arrangements made for the purposes of that agreement, and to make various amendments to the Companies Act, 1961-1973.

Under the agreement, an Interstate Corporate Affairs Commission has been established and, as appears from the agreement, its function is to exercise a supervisory role with respect to—

- (a) incorporation of companies;
- (b) the regulation of the securities industry and trading in securities;
- (c) registration of prospectuses;
- (d) approval of trust deeds and trustees in relation to interests;
- (e) requirements relating to accounts and audit;
- (f) proclamation of companies as investment companies;
- (g) class and individual exemption powers relating to fund raising and takeovers;

and also with respect to other matters referred to it by the ministerial council.

That commission consists of two representatives of each of the participating States, one of whom is to be the commissioner for corporate affairs in the relevant State, and the other to be a person nominated by the Minister in that State.

The present commissioners are the Commissioners for Corporate Affairs in Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland—Mr B. J. Waldron from Victoria; Mr F. J. O. Ryan from New South Wales; and Mr B. F. Kehoe of Queensland—and also Mr J. M. Rodd, C.B.E. from Victoria,

Mr P. C. E. Cox, M.B.E. from New South Wales, and Mr J. R. Nosworthy, C.B.E. from Queensland. I should point out that Messrs. Rodd and Cox were members of the Company Law Advisory Committee, also known as the "Eggleston Committee" to which I have already referred. Mr Nosworthy is a very experienced Queensland lawyer, with extensive business experience.

The Interstate Corporate Affairs Commission exercises its functions and powers subject to the direction and control of a ministerial council constituted under the agreement, and consisting of the Attorneys-General in each participating State.

The commission, at the direction of the ministerial council, already is carrying out a complete examination of the Companies Acts of the participating States with a view to reconciling all departures from uniformity in those Acts. It has also begun preparation of various information bulletins and guidelines intended to achieve common standards and uniformity of administration, as well as greater convenience for the public and increased public awareness of the requirements and standards of the law and administration in such areas as—

- (a) the approval of prospectuses;
- (b) the approval of trust deeds for unit trusts;
- (c) relief from any of the accounts and audit provisions of the Act;
- (d) financial years of companies and group accounts;
- (e) applications for licenses under the securities industry Act.

It is appropriate to mention here that the Bill seeks also to change the title of the Registrar of Companies to "Commissioner for Corporate Affairs". The other participating States use the title "Commissioner for Corporate Affairs" and it seems appropriate that Western Australia should conform. The registrar will continue in the same position, but will have a new title. This change is effected by clause 28 of the Bill.

Apart from the clause dealing with the approval of the Interstate Corporate Affairs Agreement, and the change in the title of the Registrar of Companies, the major provisions of this measure deal with the concept of "recognised companies".

While the Companies Act presently deals with locally-incorporated companies and foreign companies registered in this State, the Bill seeks to introduce a third category—namely, "recognised companies"—that is, a company incorporated under the law of one of the other participating States.

A recognised company will be able automatically to carry on business in any of the other participating States, without further registration, except that it must give

to the commissioner for corporate affairs in each participating State in which it carries on business, notice of the situation of its registered office within that State, and before commencing to carry on business in one of the other participating States it must obtain approval of its name. The obligations on such a company in the State in which it is incorporated will remain as they are at present, but it will be seen that the obligations on a recognised company in any State other than the one in which it is incorporated will be very much lower than for a foreign company at present. This will result in the elimination of the multiple form-filing and form-filing requirements with which such companies presently must comply.

However, in order to protect the interests of members and creditors of the companies concerned, and the public generally, certain of the provisions of the principal Act relating to foreign companies have been adopted in the Bill and included in the provisions applicable to recognised companies. Apart from the requirements of the Bill as to approval of the names of recognised companies, and the obligations imposed upon them as to the establishment of a registered office and notification to the commissioner for corporate affairs of the situation of that office, there are included provisions as to service of documents on recognised companies at their registered offices, and those governing branch share registers of recognised companies.

As part of the principle of reciprocal recognition of companies adopted by the Bill, it is necessary to provide that the name of a Western Australian company—or proposed company—should it in future wish to establish a place of business in any of the other participating States, shall be available for its use at that time. The Bill now before this House, and the corresponding amendments already passed in the other participating States, therefore contain provisions in respect of the reservation of company names in each participating State for an unlimited period.

Similarly, the Bill contains provisions for recognition, rather than registration, of a prospectus of a recognised company so long as it has registered in the company's State of incorporation.

The measure also exempts a recognised company, which complies with the so-called "borrowing company" provisions of the Act in its State of incorporation, from the need to comply again with the corresponding requirements of the principal Act.

The Bill includes similar provisions for reciprocal recognition of trust deeds, trustees, and prospectus-like statements relating to unit trusts and similar schemes, where the deed, trustee and statement have been approved in the State of incorporation of a management company which is, itself, a recognised company.

Corresponding amendments in relation to each of these matters have already been enacted in the other participating States, with the result that should this Bill be passed, the benefits of all of these new provisions will become available to Western Australian companies.

The changes that are envisaged by the Bill have necessitated the levying of certain new fees in relation to recognised companies. In addition, all the other participating States have agreed to increase the fees payable under the Act. In Queensland and New South Wales, these increased fees became operative on the 1st of January of this year.

It is understood that the fees payable under the Victorian legislation will be increased shortly. The present scale of fees is contained in the second schedule to the principal Act, and this Bill seeks to substitute a revised second schedule.

In commending the Bill to the House, I should add that the response from the business community to Western Australia joining the Interstate Corporate Affairs Commission generally has been favourable, and I believe that it is a positive step towards improving the law in this area.

I would also like to add this is a measure with which I have been very closely associated during my entire period in the ministry, and one which has been of considerable interest to me. It is a matter of considerable personal satisfaction that this Bill is now before the House. I am sure it will also be of great interest to the President, himself, in view of his long association with the Standing Committee of the Attorneys-General during all the years the committee has been operating with a view to achieving uniformity in the law and, as I have indicated, uniformity in administration of company law.

The Bill also illustrates something further of considerable significance in that at least four States have taken advantage of the opportunity to join together after long and close consultation, and have agreed to uniform legislation in a completely Federal system. In other words, the administration has been decentralised to the greatest extent possible but at the same time there will be a considerable increase in the convenience to the needs of commercial industry which are so closely tied to this legislation.

We, in this House, understand the complicated nature of the Companies Act and I think we should make the observation, first of all, for those members who are particularly interested in the Companies Act that they face, have faced, and will face, considerable difficulty in reconciling the Bill to the Act and integrating it with the existing Act as we know it, bearing in mind that it is a sizeable Statute and it was made very much larger by the amendments passed by this Parliament in 1973.

I recognise the great need for a consolidated Companies Act in order that the greatest possible convenience to industry can be available for quick reference purposes. I am very conscious of that need and recognise there is need for a reprint in order to achieve that consolidation. I am sure the need will be recognised and having worked towards this point, to achieve uniformity, for the last 12 months, and knowing there would be a consequential considerable amendment to the Act, the cash outlay for a consolidated reprint was not justified earlier. I make that point because I wish to emphasise my awareness of the difficulty people will have in endeavouring to understand the Companies Act.

A considerable number of amendments have been incorporated in the Act by way of the 1973 Bill, and if the House agrees to the provisions now before us these too will be added. I repeat: it is a matter of great personal satisfaction to me. It is also one of the very significant and important achievements of this Government during the last 12 months that we have been able to get to this point.

Members may be aware that the first meeting of the Interstate Corporate Affairs Ministerial Council will be held in Perth next week. That is not without significance. I have attended two meetings in an observer capacity and at the last meeting I was able to indicate that the Government had made the decision to join, having achieved a high degree of uniformity in relation to so many matters with which the commission was concerned.

I know from representations made to me in the commercial field that people are anxious to have the measure put into effect. It should be well understood that although I signed the agreement on the 31st March the benefits will become available only when the Bill becomes law. We hope it will be proclaimed very soon.

This is a Bill which we have sought to deal with during the current session so that its benefits will be available to the general public from the commencement of the next financial year.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. R. Thompson (Leader of the Opposition).

WESPLY (DARDANUP) AGREEMENT AUTHORIZATION BILL

Debate resumed from the 30th April.

THE HON. D. W. COOLEY (North-East Metropolitan) [8.51 p.m.]: The Opposition has examined this Bill rather closely. It is a Bill to execute an agreement which will establish a particle board industry in Western Australia, to be located at Dardanup in the south-west. Of course, the Opposition supports the principle of such an agreement which will bring about a new industry for Western Australia.

According to the Minister's remarks it is an industry which will be one of the best of its type in the world. It will provide substantial employment for a large number of people during its initial stages—I understand some 100 people—and that figure will eventually increase to 300 people including those who will be employed in back-up industries such as forestry workers, and others associated with the factory. More importantly, and another reason we support the Bill, is that it provides for a decentralised industry. It will be located some 100 miles from Perth and that concept is in conformity with the policy and platform of the Australian Labor Party.

The industry will bring a great deal of financial benefit to the State, because I understand a large quantity of the product will be exported from Western Australia to the Eastern States and, perhaps, to other parts of the world.

Having said that it would be foolish or naive to say that we oppose such a concept for the State of Western Australia. However, there are some aspects of the Bill which worry me, and I know that these aspects worried my colleagues in another place. I believe that concern was expressed rather forcibly in another place.

My principal concern with the agreement is the fact that once again the Government is almost fawning to a company for the purpose of establishing an industry.

In my experience in this Parliament, and from my knowledge of agreements which have been before this House previously, the Liberal Government—or the conservative Government, or the coalition—seems to think that industry will not be attracted to this State unless the associated agreement is one-sided and loaded in favour of those who are to establish a particular industry. The actual fact of the matter is that a company the size of Wesply—I think it may be associated with Cullity Timber which has a fair amount of capital—would establish an industry in any part of the world if sufficient profit motive was available to it.

I do not think we have to literally bend over backwards in order to bring these agreements to fruition. A worrying aspect of the agreement now before us is that it will create a monopoly in Western Australia. Those who have examined the Bill, and the schedule to the Bill which we are called upon to authorise, will realise that the company will be given a monopoly in respect of this particular industry which is to be established.

The monopoly will be created in a manner which will circumvent the provisions of the Australian Government trade practices legislation. We have not been able to obtain a complete answer to this question. I do not think any member in this House, or anyone else, understands why the present course has to be followed.

It has been said that the agreement has been presented to us in a different form. Instead of our having to ratify the agreement we will authorise it. It is usual for the agreement to be signed, and for Parliament to ratify it but according to what the Minister had to say we have the reverse situation on this occasion which I do not understand at all.

If we are to set up a monopoly contrary to the laws of Australia we should not do anything to encourage people to break the laws of Australia, and we should not be a party to the agreement.

The Hon. N. McNeill: I do not think there is any breaking of the law.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I am sorry; perhaps I put it wrongly. Perhaps it is a case of avoiding the laws of Australia rather than evading them.

Another aspect of the Bill is the effect its provisions will have on our railways system. To say the very least, the transport provisions of the agreement are very generous to the company, indeed.

I am also concerned with regard to the control over royalties which will be paid by the company. They will be controlled by a form of indexation and while this control applies the Government has taken no steps to control the price of the product to the consumers, particularly the people of Western Australia.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: The Government cannot do that unless it has control of wages.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: An examination of the Bill shows there is some form of indexation related to wage movements and price movements. There is control on the price of chiplogs, or the royalty which is paid for the chiplogs, in the form known as "stumpage".

The Hon. W. R. Withers: There is no control on the actual wages for production.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: None at all, although I would take issue on that aspect with regard to control of wages. Wages are the only commodity controlled in Australia. There is no control of prices or profits but our arbitration system does control the price workers receive for their labour.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: There is no control on losses either.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Have you done any work to find out what proportion the chiplogs represent of the cost of the finished product?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: If the honourable member listens for a while, perhaps I will have time to go into that matter. I am merely pointing out some of the worries that I have in regard to the measure.

I am concerned at the rather generous attitude taken by the State in guaranteeing the large sum of money that is necessary to get the industry off the ground. I have not had an opportunity to look at the Industry (Advances) Act, but my quick estimate of the situation is that the Government is guaranteeing something like \$6.5 million-plus of the \$11.5 million capital cost referred to by the Minister. That is a little worrying, and it is another example of the way the Government is bending over backwards for this company, and in some respects, putting the funds of the State of Western Australia in jeopardy, because there is no guarantee of success. If the industry fails, the responsibility rests with the Government to a very great degree. In making these comments, I will be greatly misjudged if my attitude is interpreted as being in opposition to the agreement before us.

I have expressed my concern about the Trade Practices Act. Clause 4 of the schedule sets out the amount of chiplogs the State will be required to provide for the company each year. By agreement between the company and the State, the State will provide the chiplogs year by year in the amounts determined by agreement with the company. I understand that in the event of a dispute, an arbitrator may be brought into the matter. Subclause (5) (a) requires the Government to deliver the goods after that amount has been set.

Paragraph (b) of subclause (5) limits the amount that the Government is required to supply to the company to 330 cubic metres.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: That is 330 000 cubic metres.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Yes, 330 000 cubic metres. I did not convert this, but I am told by people who know timber that it represents something like 80 000 tons. Any residue between the amount the company has agreed to take and the 330 000 cubic metres is frozen for that 12-month period. Under the agreement the State is not allowed to provide any of these chiplogs to any other company for the manufacture of plywood—

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: Particle board.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: —particle board. The agreement seems to be setting up a monopoly. I do not know whether anyone else would interpret the provision in that way, but that is my interpretation of it. It is bad enough that such an arrangement has been set up, but the fact that it was set up by a so-called free enterprise Government which believes in the great spirit of competition, is, to say the very least, an example of bending over backwards to satisfy the company which is party to the agreement.

The schedule to the agreement provides for a progression of royalty costs. Perhaps if Mr Wordsworth looks at the agreement he may be able to see what I mean by that. Clause 2 provides that from the date of the agreement until the 30th April, 1977, pine from a forest north of State forest 16 will be supplied at a stumpage rate of \$3 per cubic metre. This will be reduced to \$1.50 per cubic metre from the date of the agreement to the commencement of the Dardanup factory for timber drawn from south of the State forest.

Clause 4 of the schedule provides for another progression based on indexation, and it sets out three successive periods commencing from the 1st May, 1977, with respect to chiplogs supplied to the Kewdale factory. Paragraph (b) then continues—

(b) the 1st January 1984—with respect to chiplogs supplied to the Dardanup factory

unless agreed upon by the State and the Company (pursuant to sub-paragraph (4) of this paragraph) within the 14 days next following the relevant publication by the Australian Bureau of Statistics of the figures referred to in (I) and (II) of this paragraph

Items (I) and (II) refer to the average weekly earnings per employed male unit in Western Australia, and the wholesale price index of material used in building other than home building in Perth; that is, timber, board, and joinery. So we see that the progression of the costs is related to wages, and also, in some respects, to price indexation.

I submit that if there is control in respect of the amount the company will pay to the Government for royalties, it would not be out of character—although it may be out of character for the present Government which does not believe in price control—on a firm principle basis, to say to this company, "These prices will be controlled in respect of the indexation, so it is not unreasonable that there should be some control over the price of the goods you supply to consumers of particle board, and particularly in Western Australia."

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Would you guarantee that the workers' wages would also be controlled?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I again say that the honourable member does not understand the situation properly when he says workers' wages are not controlled in Australia.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I did not say that—I asked would you control them under the agreement?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: They are controlled by yesterday's decision of the Commonwealth Arbitration Commission.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Are you not happy about it?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I did not say I was not happy about it. I asked Mr Withers whether he thought that wages are not controlled now. About 10 per cent of the wages paid to workers in Western Australia, and in Australia for that matter, may not be under control, and I refer to over-award wages negotiated between companies and unions. However, in respect of 90 per cent of the wages, there is strict control under industrial arbitration.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: If the Government did everything you asked it to do, could you guarantee that the workers would not go on strike during the period of the agreement?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: While I have a breath in my body, I could not guarantee that workers will not strike. It is their God-given right to go on strike if they are not paid a fair price for their labour, in the same way that the people who send the honourable member to this House have the right to withdraw their goods if they do not get a fair price.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: You have answered my question exactly.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I will never advocate that workers should not go on strike if they believe they are not getting a fair deal.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: If you take away the right to strike—

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I have not said that.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: —you have started democracy on the road to ruin. They are the words of an American President.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: That is a threat.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: If that is a threat, the honourable member should talk to the late John Kennedy who made that statement.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: A little hard to get in touch with him!

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I repeat again that if there is so much control over the price of resources provided to the company to make its product, there should be some control over the price of the goods, particularly in Western Australia.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: All things considered.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: What proportion of the total product do the chips represent? If it is only to be 2 per cent, you could hardly do it, but if it is more, you may have an argument. Can you tell us what proportion of the end product is represented by chips?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I cannot tell members that but I do say that the chiplogs are being sold to the company at a very generous price.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Well, they are not given away.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: They are just about given away.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: This point is covered on page 29, subclause (4).

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You just did not research it.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: You get up and tell us about it.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Did I say I was opposing the Bill? I have been elected to express my views about matters that come before the House. Even if I do support a measure, I have a right to express my view about parts of it.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: My word you have!

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Clause 18 refers to transport conditions. The Minister described this as the most significant part of the agreement. However, we find that again we are virtually giving something away. We are giving away the revenue that should otherwise be paid to our excellent Railways Department by allowing the company to transport nearly all its goods by road rather than by rail. Many of the products are transported by road. All the chiplogs are carried by road between the pine plantation known as State forest 16 and the sawmills at the factory. All the chiplogs from the second pine plantation are transported by road to the Kewdale factory. I think this is fair enough because the logs are loaded onto trucks in the forest and are then transported to the factory. Paragraph (c) reads as follows—

all adhesives for use in or incidental to the manufacture of particle board at the factory or the Kewdale factory

They are all transported by means other than the railways. Paragraph (d) states—

70 per centum of such particle board and allied products (collectively called "products" in this clause) wholly or partly manufactured by the Company at the factory as are for transport to the metropolitan area

The route is between the factory and any place or places within the metropolitan area.

So the company can load the goods onto its trucks, or someone else's trucks, and take them from Dardanup to a consumer's front door if it so desires; that is, 70 per cent of the goods that are manufactured at the factory. In fact, under some circumstances the company can transport all the goods by road. This factory, which is described as the largest of its type in the world, will bypass our rail system in this way. That must be of tremendous cost to our State railways.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: Not entirely.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Well, 70 per cent; if the honourable member will bear with me for just a little while, I will explain the situation. The remaining 30 per cent will also go by road if the rail costs exceed by 15 per cent the road costs. Nobody can say that is not generous.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: That is protecting the railways.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Why?

The Hon. W. R. Withers: They are not allowed to take 30 per cent by road if the cost of rail transport is only 15 per cent higher than the cost of road transport.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Mr Withers has misunderstood me. If the cost of transporting the goods from the factory to, say, Perth or any other part of the metropolitan area by rail is 15 per cent higher than the company is paying by road, the entire, 100 per cent of the product can be transported from the factory to its destination by road. But even if it is within 15 per cent, the company must use rail transport for only 30 per cent of its product.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: What about the State railways? Are they going to remain the State railways? I thought they were going to become the Federal railways.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The Australian railways, if you do not mind.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: We do mind.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: If the quality of the rail service is such that it would be more advantageous to use road transport, the company may transport the remaining 30 per cent by road. The agreement contains some determination as to what is meant by "quality"; however, I think from the excellent standard of our railways, there would be no question of that situation arising. So, members can see that the company is given the right to transport virtually all of its goods by road—perhaps with the exception of 30 per cent.

In addition, only 50 per cent of any exports to the Eastern States are required to be transported by rail. As the Minister correctly pointed out, there is no provision whereby the State could instruct the company what transport it shall use to export its goods to the Eastern States.

I draw attention also to the generous conditions granted to the company in respect of guarantees. As I stated previously, under clause 3(1) (a), (c) and (d) loans totalling \$6.5 million, representing about 50 per cent of the entire capital cost of the industry, are to be advanced to the company, in addition to which paragraph (b) provides the following—

loans from the Australian and New Zealand Banking Group Limited of

such sum or sums as shall be required to provide bridging finance to the Company pending advances being made as mentioned in paragraph (a) of this clause.

This bridging finance is also guaranteed by the State, I suppose at some risk to the revenue of the State.

They are my observations on the legislation. I know it is an agreement which has been sent to us for authorisation rather than ratification. As stated previously, it is an agreement which will provide substantial benefit to the State and will promote some form of decentralisation and, overall, will provide work for a large number of Western Australians. While we have objections to some clauses, which I have stated to the House, in principle the Opposition supports the passage of this Bill.

THE HON. V. J. FERRY (South-West) (9.20 p.m.): I have a great deal of pleasure in supporting this Bill. I was very pleased to hear that members of the Opposition also support the measure, although they have raised a number of issues contained in the Bill and the agreement. Although I might contest some of the points raised by the Hon. D. W. Cooley on behalf of the Opposition, nevertheless they are valid and should be raised during the course of debate. I do not mind that at all, because it gives me and, I am sure, the Minister, if he so wishes, the opportunity to comment on them in reply at a later stage.

This Bill gives us the opportunity to authorise the State, together with the company, to establish this industry. The agreement has been presented to Parliament for authorisation prior to execution by way of signing, to ensure that the State's interests are protected. Mention has been made of the Commonwealth Trade Practices Act; whereas that Act undoubtedly has much merit in many areas, I believe we in Western Australia and as a Parliament, have the right to exercise our privilege in establishing industries we believe to be in the best interests of this State.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I have news for you.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: This is a decentralised industry based on a natural resource, which is capable of growing and multiplying and of expanding rather than diminishing. Therefore, natural resources of this kind are indeed valuable to the State or, for that matter, to any country. The natural resource that will be used by the industry is one of the exotic species of softwoods. In the main, the species will be *pinus radiata*; however, *pinus pinaster* also will be used.

In considering this agreement, I believe it gives Parliament a monumental opportunity to authorise the commencement of

a new era in the use of timber in this State. Hitherto, the emphasis in our timber industry has been on indigenous hardwoods. Under the provisions of this Bill, the State will authorise the first large-scale softwood utilisation programme, as distinct from our hardwoods which we have used principally in the past.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It would be pretty heavy particle board if we used hardwood; we would not be able to lift it.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: Before proceeding with my comments on the industry in general, I should like to make some points in relation to what is contained in the proposed agreement. Firstly, I am delighted that this industry is to be situated near Dardanup, in the south-west. Of course, we realise that it will provide employment opportunities not only at the mill site but also in the associated industries which accompany this type of industry. One can quickly recall such instances as the railway system, the road transport system, the forestry workers, the fallers and everyone associated with the physical work of bringing timber from the plantations to the mill itself. Beyond that, of course, the products must leave the factory to travel to their ultimate destinations.

The associated community benefits will create a great stimulus to the Bunbury township and the regions surrounding Bunbury itself. I think perhaps one of the most beneficial effects of this new legislation will be the degree of confidence which will be engendered in the Bunbury region. Confidence, of course, is something which I believe the Australian community at large today is sorely in need of; therefore, I welcome, as I am sure do all members, the establishment of this new innovation, utilising softwoods on such a large scale in a decentralised situation.

Further, when one considers the Bunbury area, it is quite easy to imagine the number of relatively small industries in the area. The stimulus which will be provided by the establishment of this new industry will not only help the small industries maintain their place in the community but will also permit them to expand and perhaps create encouragement and confidence for new industries and commercial enterprises to take their place in the community. In addition, individuals, no matter what their vocation, will have the opportunity to play their part in a decentralised situation. All this adds up to a very happy situation in this area.

Mention has been made of the provisions contained in the legislation relating to rail and road transport. I am particularly conscious of the part that has been played and which is still being played by our very good Western Australian railway system. I believe we have a very efficient railway system whose employees are dedicated to their work and who take pride in

what they do to service the community. As I see the agreement, whereas a relatively small percentage of goods will be transported by rail, the very nature of the industry makes it desirable that, in the main, road haulage will do most of the work. Most of the haulage to be carried out will be of a relatively short nature. Accordingly, rail transport is not well suited to this type of exercise.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Is 100 miles a short haul?

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: Yes, relatively. But apart from that, the supplying of the mill itself with the raw resources of softwood timber will be an even shorter haul, and rail would not be suitable.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Nobody would argue with you on that point.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I believe there is a place for both transport systems; I suggest that each system complements the other. Under the terms of the transport provisions, there will be an obligation on each to perform well. As I see it, if the road transport operators do not operate efficiently and their costs rise beyond what the railways can offer, the railways will benefit; similarly, the railways must adopt methods to prove their efficiency and performance to ensure the service they offer is competitive with road transport. So, in fact, one will temper the other; this is not a bad thing.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: You do not give this concession to other people. For example, the Road Transport Act requires the principal amount of goods to be carried by rail, where the railway line runs parallel with the road.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I believe every industry should be treated on its merits to make sure it is viable. We are breaking fresh ground here; I will enlarge on that point a little later because as I pointed out we are establishing a new industry which will use softwood timbers.

Mention has been made of loans and guarantees to the company to assist it to establish this enterprise and to carry on operations. I do not hold the view that the Government is placing public money entirely at risk in this situation. I think it is a compliment to the Government that it has seen fit to back such an enterprise. After all, we are using Western Australian raw materials and in fact will be encouraging a decentralised industry and providing employment.

To engage in this sort of thing is a right and proper function of any Government. If there is to be any risk I believe it is a calculated risk and in the ultimate, as I view the position at this stage, I do not believe there will be any financial loss. Of course I could be proved wrong, because I cannot foresee what the economic conditions will be in the years to come. I can only pass judgment on the project as I

see it at the present time, but I consider it is only fair that the Government should back this enterprise.

Surely if a Government is worth its salt it must provide stimulus and financial backing for an almost copybook decentralised industry based at Dardanup. The rate of interest described in the agreement which I thought may have been commented on earlier is in respect of the loans being obtained from the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd. The interest on those loans shall not exceed 1½ per cent above the prime overdraft rate charged by the said bank. The actual percentage is not relevant at this time. What is relevant is that this company is being protected in that the bank cannot charge an interest rate more than 1½ per cent above the prime overdraft rate at any particular time. My understanding of the term "prime overdraft rate" is that a bank charges a prime overdraft rate which comprises a rate of interest offered to the most favoured industry or undertaking at any one particular time, bearing in mind the guidelines of the provisions of the Central Bank and the economic and trading position of the bank at that time.

So the company has this protection inasmuch as the interest rate it will be charged will not be extremely high. The company itself has been associated with much enterprise in the milling industry over a long period in this State. It is not a new company coming to this State to try a new venture. It is a company that has been proven. It has a background of knowledge of Australian conditions. I wish it well and I believe it will bring success not only unto itself, but also it will bring benefit to many people in this State.

The source of the company's raw materials is the softwood I have referred to, and the Conservator of Forests has the right and the obligation under the Forests Act to advise on forest management. There are many aspects of forest management. For example, the Forests Department is charged with the responsibility of ensuring adequate thinning, and in some cases protective burning around the perimeters, of softwood plantations. The thinning of softwood plantations is just as vital a silvicultural tool as is the protective burning in our indigenous hardwood forests. Both operations are vitally necessary. Therefore the thinnings from the softwood plantations will, in the main, be used under the provisions of this agreement, in the manufacture of particle board. In normal circumstances, the bulk of the thinnings would go to waste.

The interesting point about this industry is that approximately 50 per cent of our softwood plantations will be processed in the form of particle board and the like and the remaining half will be used in conventional log uses. When one considers the value of this agreement it will

be realised that we are, in fact, catering for half of the softwood industry. To feed the particle board operation, to ensure that there are sufficient natural resources in the way of exotic species of softwoods, the Forests Department of this State for many years now has undertaken to establish softwood plantations. A number of private plantations augment this supply in a more limited way.

This industry will allow further development of these softwood plantations by both the Government—through the Forests Department—and private individuals, and therefore will bring about an integrated forest industry. We will also have a variety of forest products. We will have the use of the wood resources that are available, including forest and mill residues. I have mentioned thinnings and waste, but we will have residues from the ordinary milling operations which can be turned into dollars and cents.

From the forest resources we can produce a range of products such as sawn timber. We do have that now in both the soft and hardwoods, but I am speaking particularly of softwoods. We should see an increase in the production of plywood, veneers, and particle board, along with hardwood charcoal and extractives. These are the sorts of products which are capable of being put to use by us as a community. Therefore unlike mining, forestry is a reproductive industry, not only in this State but also throughout Australia and in other parts of the world. As time passes we will need more and more wood fibres made available for our needs as a people. Therefore it is most important that this industry be allowed to continue in Western Australia and indeed be expanded.

In the agreement contained in this legislation there is provision for expansion in the industry which can only be done through more and more raw material resources. For a number of years our State Forests Department has been planting softwoods and, in keeping with other States, it has had the benefits of funds being made available from the Commonwealth Government under the Softwood Forestry Agreement Act. This Act first came into being in 1966 and it has been in operation for two terms. The current term is about to expire. Under the Softwood Forestry Agreement Act, Western Australia, in recent years has availed itself of Commonwealth funds to the order of \$500 000 a year towards the development of softwood pine plantations, which means a total, in the last three years, of \$1.5 million. As I have said, the current term of the Softwood Forestry Agreement Act will expire shortly.

We who take a keen interest in forestry matters are very concerned that the source of funds under this agreement will not in fact be renewed so that we can avail ourselves of them in the future. If that is

to be so it will mean that the rate of pine plantings and maintenance of pine plantations will be curtailed or, alternatively, the Forests Department will be obliged to find additional money to make up the shortfall as a result of funds not being available under the Softwood Forestry Agreement Act. To do this the Forests Department would, in the main, have to increase its royalties obtained from timber, or the department would have to be directly subsidised from the Treasury.

Naturally, if the royalties were increased this would mean an additional burden on the timber industry right across the board, not only on the softwoods timber industry, but also on the hardwoods timber industry. This would affect the whole of the south-west and, in referring to the south-west in a forestry context, I am including the area north of Wanneroo and extending in a rough triangle down to Augusta and east of Albany. Therefore this is a most serious situation to contemplate.

I understand that a standing committee of the Commonwealth Parliament will shortly be making recommendations and presenting a report to the Commonwealth Government. I am apprehensive that the amount of money that will be forthcoming to this State in the future for softwood plantations will be reduced quite drastically.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: A prophet of doom!

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I am not being a prophet of doom; I am being a realist as I have made a study of the investigations of this committee and have some knowledge of the type of evidence that has been tendered to it. I also have in mind the timber interests in the Eastern States and the tremendous pressures that are placed on the Commonwealth Government perhaps to treat Western Australia less favourably because of what has happened in a number of forestry areas in the Eastern States. One of the difficulties is the environmental question. It is well known that there are forestry areas in the Eastern States where plantations have been developed and some people have referred to them as environmental deserts.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That is normal with conifers.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: It may be normal in some places, but it is not desirable. The point I wish to make is that in the main, within my experience of existing plantations and the amount of money available for new plantations, this sort of situation is unlikely to occur.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Why?

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: Because our plantations are smaller in area than those in the Eastern States. We engage in more of a patchwork development and when the areas are being harvested it is done by

means of a patchwork method with the use of coupes in different areas. Our Western Australian timber men, both in the Forests Department and in the private timber industry, are very much aware that it is not in the interests of anyone to create environmental deserts with forest plantations.

In making a quick comment on the woodchip industry, as members well know, one of the principal features in that agreement, as compared with Eastern States, agreements and woodchip industries, is a provision to protect our forests by this patchwork harvesting of the forests rather than harvesting the timber completely on a face.

Far from being a prophet of doom, I believe I am being very realistic in this matter and I have a keen concern for the well-being and future of our particle board industry in particular. The establishment of this industry will also bring about ancillary industries which will employ people not only in the country but also in the metropolitan area. To ensure that we have timber in the long term I also believe that the national Government, irrespective of its political colour, must continue to support those industries relying on natural resources.

Speaking of plantations, established both through the Forests Department and by private individuals, I consider it is in the national interests that those in private industry should be encouraged and given incentives to establish softwood plantations.

These incentives could take a number of forms, bearing in mind that forestry is a long-term project. No financial returns are gained until a number of years have passed, and in the intervening period enormous costs are involved. Taxation allowances should be made, and, indeed, I would favour grants under special terms and conditions—straightout grants in the national interest, the same as grants have been made under softwoods legislation to the State Forests Department.

My understanding is that the Forests Department would welcome private plantations being established provided—and I go along with this—the private plantations are established on sound economic grounds, and integrated in the general scheme for softwood resources in this State. It is no good growing a resource if it cannot be harvested. Therefore the importance of this agreement is that we are for the first time establishing a major undertaking to take advantage of softwood materials which hitherto have, in the main, been lost to us.

Therefore there is a place for the private operator along with the State-owned plantations. I believe we can create a happy relationship between the private plantations and the Forests Department. Of course, a number of details would have to

be spelt out and one of the difficulties would be in connection with the adequate provision for fire protection. We all know our State Forests Department is well equipped to deal with almost any contingency in our forests, but with the advent of private plantations considerable thought would have to be given to this matter to ensure that the new areas were serviced without an undue burden being placed on the existing firefighting services of the Forests Department and the local authorities in which the plantations might be established.

During the Committee stage I may comment further upon other aspects of the Bill but at the moment I would like to answer one or two comments made by Mr Cooley who said the Government appeared to be giving generous assistance to this particular industry. I think I have probably pointed out already that the need for this industry and its value to the State warrants any consideration the Government may see fit to give it.

With regard to his comment that this is a monopoly industry, I hope from the remarks I have already made it will be seen it is necessary to protect this type of undertaking to make it commercially viable in the long term.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: But you are a free enterprise Government. You believe in the great spirit of competition. You have always said that. How do you reconcile that with your support for a monopoly industry?

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I believe this undertaking is a very good example of co-operation between Government enterprise and private enterprise. Indeed, we are getting the best of two worlds. We are marrying the two together the same as we have done with the transport system—one under the Government and the other under private enterprise.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: You are virtually admitting something is wrong, with your reference to the Trade Practices Act.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I am saying that we did not want industry jeopardised by pressures from the Eastern States. Let us face it: we are Western Australian with Western Australian resources and no law whatever is being broken under the terms of the legislation.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Once you send one piece of particle board across the border you will be in trouble.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: Despite what has been said by members of the Opposition, no law is being broken, because this Parliament has full privilege to determine what laws it shall pass for Western Australia.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Not altogether. You are subject to some Commonwealth laws.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I overlooked one point in my previous remarks. Our indigenous hardwood forests are reaching a very delicate stage. In fact, I would say that our usage of hardwood timbers, in comparison with the usage in previous years, is on the decline and this is because of a number of reasons, not the least of which is the very special problem we have in Western Australia with jarrah dieback known also as jarrah root rot, but more particularly known as *phytophthora cinnamomi*. This of course has meant that large areas of our jarrah forest country are becoming noncommercial and accordingly it is becoming apparent that if we are to suffer losses in our jarrah forests because of this particular blight we will have to replace our timbers with exotic species. Therefore, again, it is important that under this agreement we provide for the reforestation of the affected areas particularly to provide for the natural resource.

I have a great deal of pleasure in supporting the Bill.

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South) [9.51 p.m.]: I think we must admire Westralian Plywoods for being bold enough to venture forth on such a large developmental scheme in such serious economic times and also for establishing the industry in Western Australia.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Not much risk involved, surely, with the guarantees given.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: We are led to believe that this is one of the biggest particle board factories of its kind not only in Australia, but also in the world. Therefore it is rather amazing that we should have managed to have it established in Western Australia, particularly when we realise how insignificant our softwood industry is. New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and South Australia all have between 200 000 and 250 000 acres of timber while Western Australia has about only 80 000 acres. In other words, we have about one-third the acreage but we have managed to get the largest particle board factory in Australia. This is commendable, based on the point of view of the company which is expanding, and the State Government should also be commended for being able to bring the agreement to fruition. Very few new companies would be willing to commit themselves in this time of great inflation and economic downturn.

I was rather interested to read in the agreement how we were to tie a company down in a year when we expected inflation to reach 30 per cent. Normally, of course, we would say that the industry must build a \$1.2 million plant which, indeed, is stated in the Bill; but that honestly would not be enough because if the cost of building a school has increased 60 per cent in

18 months we could hardly tie a factory down to spend \$12 million only. It would not work out.

It was rather interesting to see the way the company is tied down. Not only was the amount quoted, but the company must build a plant which will produce 17 cubic metres an hour. That does not mean very much to anyone so I did a little arithmetic, unlike Mr Cooley with his calculation, and found that in a week, working a 24-hour day, the company would probably fill this Chamber with particle board. Whether that would mean a big factory or a small one, I cannot tell; but that is what it will produce.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: How thick will it be?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: It will be 19 mm.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That is a good size.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: It is our duty in this House to examine the conditions under which this agreement is made and I guess that each one of us looked at the various aspects which interest us. The loans have been dealt with well and truly, but I would like to deal with timber rights.

I do not need to tell members that when forests are planted the trees are planted very close together so that they will grow upwards quickly, and then the trees are thinned out as time goes on so that the remaining trees grow bigger. One of the problems is that it is not easy to sell the thinnings. The first thinning which is done when the trees are about six years old would probably not be usable in this industry, but certainly the second thinning in 11 years is usable.

The size which qualifies for use in the industry is 4 inches wide at the top of the tree and no more than 14 inches at the bottom. As soon as I worked out that size I realised it was the same size as my fence posts. Therefore I realised I should consult those who already use these offcuts. We are told that these offcuts have not been used a great deal, but it is remarkable that when one goes to buy these treated timber posts for the farm—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: How dear they are!

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: —one finds firstly how sometimes they break easily because of their poor quality, and, secondly, how difficult it is to get them. I have often sorted through the works at Picton to get the size I need for my property. We are told that the Government has been up to 150 000 posts behind in its orders. Therefore I was quite worried when I heard the Minister say—

... in later years during the life of this agreement, the maximum allocation to which the company is entitled

will commit fully the presently estimated available resource.

I thought that did not sound too good because obviously as we consume the last of our alternative timbers for fencing—paperbark, titree, and so on—we will have to go back to a greater use of the treated softwoods.

So I did a few calculations and found that at present we are using about 180 000 treated posts a year, which is some 4 500 cubic metres of timber. This is not a large amount when we consider the agreement. The conservator has told me that this is only some 4 per cent. Nevertheless one wonders why there are shortages and I was led to believe that those who treat the fence posts were not willing to make extensive stockpiles, but expected the Forests Department to come forth with the posts at regular intervals.

Of course the getting of the timber out of the forests is seasonal. It can get too wet, and there are only certain times that those involved like to do this work. However, I am surprised that the Forests Department has not done more to supply regularly a uniform number of posts for the trade.

I see from the Bill itself that there is protection for the fence post industry in clause 6, where the conservator is not only responsible for running the forests but also for the extraction and classification of the produce into chiplogs, fencing materials, and saw logs of various size and quality classes. He assures me he has the right to classify and will classify into particle board.

One has only to look at the royalties for the various grades to realise the Forests Department will get much more out of fence posts than out of particle board. The agreement is for an initial royalty of \$1.50 for chipboard, and I am told the royalty on an ordinary fence post is something like \$3.80, while that on strainers for fences is \$6 per cubic metre. It is rather interesting to see that chipboard is getting an initial discount, but when one looks at the schedule one finds the royalty very rapidly rises above \$1.50 and does not take long to reach \$2.50, which is fairly appropriate to the royalties farmers are being charged for their posts.

It is also interesting to see how the Government once again has tried to overcome this great inflation we have in the country. Goodness only knows how anyone can estimate the price of something in 20 years' time. It is hard enough to estimate it a week ahead. As Mr Cooley mentioned, the royalty goes from \$1.50 to \$2, and to \$2.50 in 1983. That seems to be fairly cheap, and perhaps the rate of inflation will be even higher than it is today.

The agreement attempted to tie in the royalty after 1983 with the average weekly earnings of an employed male and the wholesale price index of timbers and other materials. While I have a certain amount of sympathy with Mr Cooley's idea of trying to tie in also the price at which the commodity will be sold, I made a calculation on the percentage cost of chips in chipboard. Using his figure of the weight of 30 000 cubic metres, I worked it out that the cost of the raw material is between 2 per cent and 3 per cent of the final sale price of the chipboard product.

One cannot tie down these insignificant amounts to price. If it were something like 50 per cent or 60 per cent of the sale price of particle board, one could think in the terms Mr Cooley was suggesting; but not when it is only 2 per cent or 3 per cent.

One hopes that with the fairly large percentage of our present timber committed to this industry the Australian Government will see fit to increase the grants to the States for forestry. At present we are planting about 2 500 hectares and, as the Minister said, the agreement will utilise most of what we have been planting up to now. So it is very necessary that we step up our plantings. We should now be planting some 4 000 hectares a year. That is the only way we can create some leeway so that another industry could come in. We would like to see competition, but it is hard to provide competition when the company will be using such a high percentage of the little timber we have in Western Australia. I hope when the Federal Government reviews the Commonwealth Timber Agreement next month it will make a greater allocation to Western Australia.

I hope we can increase the amount of private forestry development. Unfortunately, by changing the tax laws the Australian Government has removed much of the incentive for private forestry. This will mean of course that the Government itself will have to increase production. I suppose to people with a socialist philosophy that is a good thing, but from our point of view, with a private enterprise philosophy, we consider more encouragement should be given to private enterprise to take up some of the burden of catering for our timber needs, as a result of which perhaps we could spend more money on hospitals, etc.

I have a great deal of sympathy with the private forester. How does he ever compete with the Government? And let us face it, the private forester is competing with the Government. We have here an agreement made by a Government which has given this company not only rights over timber but also concessions on transport, and has provided for electricity, underground water, and natural gas, and has given a guarantee of Government usage

of the end product. They are terrific incentives a Government can give which private enterprise has no hope of giving.

When private enterprise comes to sell its product, one wonders how it can compete with the Government. The only way it can compete is for us to give private enterprise more incentives through taxation. It was a very retrograde step when in its last Budget the Commonwealth Government changed what are commonly known as tax deductions.

I would like the Minister, before signing this agreement, to investigate the needs of the agricultural industry for fencing during the next 20 years. I was staggered when the Conservator of Forests told me that when this agreement was made no calculations whatsoever had been made of the needs for farm fencing. He went away at 2 o'clock this afternoon to make some calculations on it. I think 2 o'clock today was a bit late. I hope that before this agreement is signed the Government will at least know what is required for fencing in the next 20 years. As I have explained, we have gone into the matter, and I think there will be enough; but it is interesting to try to work out what the timber needs for fencing will be over the next 20 years. They could be very high indeed.

I issue that one word of warning, but I congratulate Australian Plywoods on being bold enough to proceed with this project, and I congratulate the State Government on having negotiated it.

THE HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan) [10.11 p.m.]: I support the Bill. I took note of what Mr Wordsworth said, and he made some very good points which confirmed some of the worries I have had when debating other Bills.

It is common knowledge that this Bill was signed by the Labor Government some 10 days before it went out of office. That does not mean this Government somehow just followed on. This is the natural progression of Government under our system. I am not able to say whether or not the agreement signed by the Labor Government was in the present form, but it was signed as a matter of course in order to provide some decentralised industry. This plywood company, which is a progressive company, has been operating in Victoria Park for a number of years, and it was thought it would be a far better proposition to offer some incentives to get it into the country. Full marks to the present Government for going on with the agreement and getting the business established.

I was interested to hear some of the comments that were made; first of all the question of Government involvement. We must understand that in the years ahead, whatever our philosophy or imagined philosophy may be—and much

of it is imagined—Governments must play an increasing part in the promotion and expansion of industry. From time to time we hear from Government members about their dedication to private industry. I am not arguing about that; they are entitled to be dedicated to it because that is our system. But the other night I heard one Government member say, "Milton Friedman is the greatest economist who ever lived."

The Hon. N. McNeill: He did not say that. He said he was the best one. It was not I who said it.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I know that. However, Milton Friedman also said when he reached Tokyo that as far as he could see, both types of Government in Australia were extremely socialist. From the comments which have been made here tonight, I agree with him, because that is the reality of the situation today. Let me say cynically that perhaps Government members are selective socialists.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: And you are not selective?

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: Are you a selective "free enterpriser"?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Perhaps I am. Let me turn to that great Wall Street financier, J. P. Morgan. Songs have been written about him. He said many years ago, "I believe in socialism. The only difference is that we people on Wall Street want to socialise everything for ourselves. It is a very fine system."

The fact is this business could not have got off the ground without Government encouragement and a Government guarantee. We in this Chamber know that Government guarantees normally mean one can borrow money at a lower interest rate. I make no secret of the fact that I, like other members, have helped certain business enterprises in my district to endeavour to obtain Government backing so that they could borrow at a lower interest rate. I do not blush when I say that. It seems to me when we get up here and advocate that in the interests of this country we should resist Government spending—we do not say "State Government spending"—we mean the Commonwealth Government, the Federal Government, or the Australian Government, whichever term one chooses to use.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: It is not spending. It is a guarantee.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I thought Mr Tozer would say that. We also say we should resist Government involvement. If this business folds up, it will be the Government which will foot the bill. As far as I am concerned, that is why Governments exist.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: It will foot some of the bill.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: It will foot the majority of it.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: If it is reasonable for industry to take a risk, it is reasonable for the Government to take a risk.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: That is a different thing. Let us imagine what would happen if Governments practised the theories advanced by Milton Friedman; that is, that Governments should go their own way—which is often advanced by members of the Government—and private industry should go its own way while Governments did nothing in the private sector. Where would we be? We would be back in the days before Professor Keynes, and we all know what that era produced for the country. It produced massive unemployment—what we imagine inflation will do, and may do in due course. Once we promote unemployment by lack of Government support we do not know where to stop it, and it goes on and on and on.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: I disagree.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Of course Mr Wordsworth would disagree. Economics is not an exact science for the experts, and it is much less exact for Mr Wordsworth and me.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: There is every chance the industry would have got off the ground in three years without a Government loan. The loan allowed it to get off the ground more quickly.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: That is one theory; but it is only a theory. This is a high risk industry in a world which is fast being denuded of its natural wood fibres. It could well be that the cost of even chip board may become so great that some synthetic materials will be desired to the exclusion of particle board.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Synthetics have to be made from something.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: That is true, but does the honourable member know what synthetics are made from? Mr Wordsworth sometimes makes the most amazing statements.

The Shah of Iran, who controls a large section of the known oil reserves of the world, has laid down a policy that we had better get on with the job of finding some other sources of fuel and energy instead of wasting oil—in his words—on motorcars, speedboats, and other toys that people play with, because petroleum is more beneficially used in the production of synthetics. That is a very sobering thought.

However, the experts tell us—and I was talking to an expert recently and this matter finally came out in a magazine the other day—that there will be an energy glut in the future because more and more countries are turning to other sources of energy. Recently I read of a new source of energy which may be produced at a low cost using nuclear power which does not produce plutonium.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: They used to use trees to produce electricity.

The Hon. N. McNeill: That illustrates the truism that necessity is the mother of invention.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: That is so; but I am being sidetracked. In yesterday's newspaper the very point Mr Wordsworth made about the use of trees was illustrated. It was stated that timber will be a source of energy for some time to come. Do not forget that this country got along very nicely for many years with wood-fired boilers on the goldfields, and wood-fired power stations, stoves, railway engines, and even mother's copper.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: It was also used for boiling the billy.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: That is what I would expect from Mr Ferry, because when I heard his speech I thought, "He is one speaker who cannot see the forest for the trees." Before enthusiasm is fired about Government intervention and what the Australian Government is or is not doing, what the past State Labor Government did or did not do, and what the present Liberal Government may or may not do, let us be a little realistic. Mr Wordsworth says the industry could have got off the ground in three years. On the other hand, members opposite are constantly telling us that in three years' time the present Australian Government will have the country on its knees and there will be no industries at all. So I am happy to find there is one member of this Chamber who does not believe that; because he says that in three years' time this industry could get off the ground by itself.

The fact is that in a modern industrial society in an advanced nation such as ours, private enterprise—and this is Labor Party philosophy—must go hand in hand with Government enterprise; and we all know that in many areas private enterprise cannot get established unless it receives assistance by way of Government guarantees—as is its right—and in this case the industry could not get off the ground without a source of raw material provided by the Government.

The point of private forests was raised. In my view, I do not see a great deal of future for private forests in this country. I am speaking in terms of softwoods, and although I do not know much about hardwoods I think they would be in the same category.

The questions of finance, the rate of inflation, and all other kinds of matters make long-term investment in this industry very dicey indeed. We all know the question of private forestry has an odium attaching to it in Australia. Many years ago—and not so many years ago—certain people were going around promising others all kinds of very quick returns for investment in forestry, and, of course, they were found to be frauds.

There are great dangers in investing in private forests. I do not deny private foresters their industry, but I am saying it is a dicey business.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: I am saying there is a need to encourage them.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: There could be a need—and there could be greed—but I doubt it. What I am saying is that, with the present economic climate, the question of synthetics, and other matters, it would be extremely difficult to attract finance to this area. I am not saying we should not have private forests.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Is that why you maintain it is dicey?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Yes; it takes a long time for a tree to grow.

The Hon. N. McNeill: I am glad you clarified in my mind the point you were making.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: The Australian people are not good investors; they want quick return for their money. In many other parts of the world investors are prepared to invest money in the long term rather than the short term. I am not against private forests, but I am pointing out it is difficult to get people to establish softwood forests. For one thing, Western Australia is not the ideal place in which to grow softwoods. *Pinus radiata* and *pinus pinaster* are very good timbers; but those members who live in areas in the south will know that while some trees have grown quite well, others have not done well at all.

The Hon. N. McNeill: The *pinasters*.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I have looked at the dates at the base of some of the trees, and seen that for myself.

I am not knocking private forestry; I am simply saying there are all kinds of difficulties involved, and one would have to be an extremely brave and patient investor to wait for a return. For those reasons I do not see great areas of private forests being developed in this State.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: This amendment should give them more encouragement.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Yes, by using the Government or socialist sector.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Not at all.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I think there are some Government sectors which could be considered, such as the evening up of taxation, and things like that.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: We could go on for hours discussing methods of evening up taxation. Perhaps there are some areas in respect of which I would agree with Mr Lewis, and some in respect of which I would disagree. Governments have only one source of finance, and that

is the people. If they do not obtain finance from the people they would have no money, and the enterprise we are discussing would not be able to get off the ground.

It has been suggested that where conifers are grown there is a deleterious effect on the soil. I do not know whether that has anything to do with our local conditions. However, I was very pleased to hear Mr Ferry say that in the south-west—and I hope he is right—this problem has been overcome. If one looks at the base of a pine tree one rarely finds any other vegetation growing there. It seems that somehow or other conifers poison the soil. I have heard it said, but I have never confirmed it, that for many years nothing will grow where conifers have grown.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Certainly pine trees will.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Mr Wordsworth is jumping the gun. I was about to say that. Probably the best thing is to grow other pine trees there.

So we get to the situation in which areas which have been turned over to pine plantations will be pine plantations for evermore.

I commend the Bill to the House. I hold the same reservations expressed by Mr Cooley; but the fact is that this industry would not get off the ground without Government assistance. Members opposite have been crowing that in some mysterious way they have overcome the provision of the Trade Practices Act. I do not think there is any need to do that. I am reliably informed that this could be overcome by a stroke of the pen by the Australian Attorney-General, and it would take only as long to give effect to it as it takes to have the amendment printed.

I made the point when speaking about shipping particle board interstate that the Australian Government cannot restrict commerce between the States. We are all aware of that—or we should be.

I do not think the Trade Practices Act would act as a deterrent to an industry such as this, so it is not necessary to demonstrate to the world how smart we are—and I stress the word “we”. If members opposite want to draw crabs and cruel the industry by baiting people, then I suggest to them they are going about it in the right manner.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Mr Cooley used the word “avoiding”. Would it not have been better to say, “in order to comply with the requirements of the Act”?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I heard Mr Cooley's remarks, and I think “avoidance” is a far better term. Avoidance of taxation is quite legal, but evasion of taxation is quite illegal.

The Hon. N. McNeill: This in fact is complying with the Act.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: That is true, but I do not think we should be making an issue of this, because relations between the State Government and the Federal Government are already extremely fragile, and we should not try to bring about a reaction from the Government which controls the economy of the country. Therefore perhaps it would have been better not to have gone to the lengths that we have gone to in respect of this Bill.

The State Government seems to have a double standard. On one hand it condemns Australian Government interference, and yet when the occasion demands it will ask for assistance. Governments must play an increasing role in providing the wherewithal for goods, services, employment, and all other matters, even to the extent of bolstering private enterprise in some cases and—as in this case—providing the necessary encouragement and guarantees, and making definite cash grants, whether it be by the State or Australian Government.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. W. R. Withers.

METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE, AND DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice) read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [10.30 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to amend the maximum rates which the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Board can charge for water, sewerage and drainage services as provided under section 94 of the principal Act.

The Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Board was established as a body corporate by the then Liberal-Country Party Government on the 1st July, 1964.

The constitution of the board of seven is made up as follows—

a chairman nominated by the Governor for a time not exceeding seven years;

the general manager for the time being of the board;

an engineer;

the Under-Treasurer or his nominee;

a person nominated by the Minister from a panel of names of six eligible persons submitted by the Perth City Council to represent the ratepayers; and

two persons nominated by the Minister from a panel of names of six eligible persons submitted by the Local Government Association, each of whom shall represent the ratepayers and at the time of appointment or reappointment be a mayor, president, or councillor of a local authority whose municipal district or part thereof is within the board area.

Each member other than the chairman is appointed for a term not exceeding three years and is eligible for reappointment at the end of such term.

Under sections 90, 91 and 92 of the Act, the board is required to make and to levy water, sewerage, and drainage rates respectively for all ratable land within the board area which normally is dissected into several districts. Water and sewerage districts relate to the same defined areas, while drainage districts are separately defined areas. Separate rates are made for each to provide funds to defray expenses of the general administration of the Act, and expenses incurred in the maintenance and management of the water works, sewerage works and drainage works, and to pay the prescribed interest and sinking fund on the capital cost of such works; as well as to construct, extend and improve such works as may be provided, constructed, extended or improved out of revenue.

Section 94 provides that the rates in any one year shall not exceed—

Water and Sewerage

10c in the dollar on the annual ratable value of the land; or

1½c in the dollar on the capital unimproved value of the land; and for

Drainage

2½c in the dollar on the annual ratable value; or

5/12c in the dollar on capital unimproved values.

It is proposed in this Bill that the maximum rates which may be levied for water and sewerage be increased from 10c in the dollar to 20c in the dollar on the annual ratable value and from 1½c in the dollar to 3c in the dollar where rates are assessed on the capital unimproved value, and that the maximum drainage rate be increased from 2½c in the dollar to 5c in the dollar on the annual ratable value and from 5/12c in the dollar to 1c in the dollar where rates are assessed on the capital unimproved value.

The rates currently being levied on annual ratable values are—

for water, 4c in the dollar for residences, and 7c in the dollar for all other services;

for sewerage, 8.3c in the dollar for all services; and

for drainage, 1.5c in the dollar for all services.

The only properties rated by the board under a capital unimproved value are five large industrial complexes in the Kwinana area. The agreements under which these complexes were established decree they shall be rated under such a valuation. Currently a water rate of 1c in the dollar is levied.

The board, like other organisations, both private and governmental, is faced with the problem of continually rising costs.

Interest rates on borrowing for capital works have risen substantially and the majority of private borrowings during the current year attract an interest rate of 10.3 per cent, whereas in 1973-74 the average rate was approximately 7 per cent.

Salaries and wages have increased since July, 1974, by approximately 40 per cent and material costs during the same period in the vicinity of 50 per cent.

The State's participation in the Commonwealth Government national sewerage programme, and the consequent high annual capital expenditure on sewerage, is also seriously affecting the board's operating financial position in that the 70 per cent repayable proportion of the financial assistance attracts interests at 9.5 per cent and it is becoming extremely difficult to finance the heavy debt charges on the high cost of sewerage reticulation in built-up areas and associated headworks.

The advances from the Commonwealth, 70 per cent of which is by way of loans, are for backlog sewerage programmes and therefore apply to work done in heavily built-up areas.

Members may be interested in the enormous increases in expenditure on sewerage capital works over the last few years. In 1967-68 expenditure was \$2 268 646; in 1968-69 \$4 275 252; in 1969-70 \$6 156 514; in 1970-71 \$7 227 660; in 1971-72 \$7 599 382. In 1972-73 the amount of \$15 955 000 included a special Commonwealth nonrepayable grant of \$3.5 million.

In 1973-74 expenditure was \$17.5 million including \$6.8 million as a first allocation under the national sewerage programme. This money was fully repayable with interest.

Expenditure this financial year amounts to \$23 400 000. Of this sum \$11.9 million is made available under the national sewerage programme on the basis that 70 per cent is a repayable loan and 30 per cent is a grant.

Thus, over a period of eight years, the annual expenditure on metropolitan sewerage work has increased tenfold which is, in effect, 1 000 per cent.

Preliminary estimates, prepared on the basis of the current rating structure, and allowing only 15 per cent for inflation, indicate a very large deficit for 1975-76, and although rates were increased by an average of 34 per cent at the 1st July, 1974, a further increase for 1975-76 is inevitable

if the board is to continue to meet its cost of operation and maintain the service expected of it.

I hasten to assure members that we have no intention of increasing the rates to the maximum now being sought, but it is reasonable to allow the board some margin of rating capacity for future years. Any adjustment to the rating for 1975-76 will, of course, be the subject of a thorough investigation before being passed on to the consumers. The constitution of the board to which I referred earlier provides an assurance that ratepayers' interests are adequately represented.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. R. F. Cloughton.

FRUIT-GROWING RECONSTRUCTION SCHEME ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [10.38 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The object of the Fruit-growing Reconstruction Scheme Act, 1972-1973, is to provide relief from over-production in the apple and pear industries and the peach, pear and apricot canning industry, by paying compensation to owners for complete and partial removal of orchards.

The scheme is in two parts—

- (a) clear-fell, and,
- (b) part-pull.

Clear-fell assistance provides for those growers in severe financial difficulties who are obliged to leave farming. They receive full tree-pull compensation in the event of their assets, on final settlement, not exceeding \$10 000, with compensation diminishing to zero at a net asset valuation of \$15 000.

Part-pull assistance is limited to growers who continue farming, but not necessarily as fruit-growers, and who are short of funds for reconstruction and can demonstrate long term viability.

The compensation is assessed by the horticultural division of the Department of Agriculture on a scale agreed to between the State and the Commonwealth Governments. Overall average compensation for apples may not exceed \$625 per hectare, and maximum compensation, for an individual, \$875 per hectare. The level of compensation varies with age and condition of trees. In the first instance compensation is provided as a loan. This becomes a grant after five years if the fruit tree replanting conditions of the scheme are met.

The tree-pull scheme in Western Australia has accounted for the removal of 123 hectares of apples. To date, a total amount of \$68 000 has been approved for 31 growers at an average rate of \$540 per

hectare. The minimal effect of the scheme in this State is related to farmers' need for assistance to pull trees on mixed farms which, until recently, have been operating at a satisfactory profit level. This was partly due to the special Commonwealth and State assistance for apple exports.

In Tasmania, where individuals were more heavily dependent on apples than in Western Australia, over 2 000 hectares of trees have been, or are being removed.

The amendments to the principal Act provide for approval of a second supplemental agreement entered into on the 2nd December, 1974, the purpose of which is to extend the tree-pull scheme for a further term, to the 31st December, 1975, as the closing date for applications for assistance, and to the 30th June, 1976, as the date by which trees must be removed to qualify for payment of compensation. An earlier amendment, whereby farmers who had not removed trees approved for compensation were precluded from applying again, is to be deleted under the provisions of paragraph 6 (1) (b) of the December, 1974, agreement.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. R. T. Leeson.

SUPERANNUATION, SICK, DEATH, INSURANCE, GUARANTEE AND ENDOWMENT (LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES' EMPLOYEES) FUNDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [10.41 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill proposes to amend the Act covering local government superannuation, to allow certain local government traffic officers who transfer their employment from a municipal council to the Road Traffic Authority, or to the Police Force for service with the traffic patrol, to retain the superannuation rights which they held in their municipal employment.

Generally, persons who do transfer will be entitled to join the State superannuation scheme. However, under the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act, 1938—that is, the legislation covering the State scheme—a person is not eligible for superannuation benefits unless he is capable of attaining 10 years' service. This could therefore prevent older council officers from obtaining benefits under the State scheme on their transfer. A council officer could also be precluded from joining the State scheme on medical grounds.

Under the provisions of this Bill, a person who is so prevented from participating in the State superannuation scheme, but who was a member of a local government

superannuation scheme, will be entitled to continue in that scheme. These employees may therefore be covered by either scheme, but not by both.

The new section 3A provides that a person may be regarded as an employee of the Road Traffic Authority—a corporation for the purposes of the local government superannuation scheme—if he has been appointed as aforesaid; elects to participate in the scheme within three months of his appointment and was previously employed by a municipal council on traffic control or vehicle licensing duties; was a subscriber to a local government superannuation scheme during that employment; and is not eligible on medical grounds to join the State superannuation scheme or will be unable to attain the requisite length of service for the purposes of that scheme.

I commend the Bill to the House.

THE HON. S. J. DELLAR (Lower North) [10.44 p.m.]: This Bill is worthy of support, and it has come about as a result of the setting up of the Road Traffic Authority. Under that scheme certain officers employed by the local authorities will be transferred to the new authority under conditions of employment provided for by certain regulations.

It has been pointed out by the Minister that some of these officers may be at an age where they are reaching the end of their careers in local government, and will not be able to serve in the Government long enough to become eligible under the State superannuation scheme.

I refer to those who are not able to contribute to the fund for a period of 10 years. On the other hand, there may be medical grounds on which a person who transfers is not eligible to join the State scheme. The Bill provides certain guidelines so that those officers who are affected may continue to contribute to the traffic authority superannuation scheme.

There are certain other requirements, as stated by the Minister. I do not see any reason why the legislation should not be supported.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice), and passed.

House adjourned at 10.49 p.m.