

to raise finance or supplement its income by attempting to catch people on the roads. Its duty should be to see that the roads are kept safe; and this can be done if drivers see the policemen on the roads. I hope the Minister will take particular notice of this because I believe it is one way we can help to slow down the traffic on our roads.

Amendment put and negatived.

Debate (on motion) adjourned, on motion by Mr. Curran.

House adjourned at 11.34 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, the 9th August, 1962

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The **PRESIDENT** (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 4.0 p.m., and read prayers.

TOWN PLANNING

Report on Metropolitan Region Scheme

THE HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland—Minister for Town Planning) [4.2 p.m.]: Today being a very important day in the history of the City of Perth I would like to read to members a report I have received from the Metropolitan Region Authority on a scheme which that authority had assigned to it for consideration by Parliament. I thought it would be as well to read this report on the scheme before laying the papers on the Table of the House; because this would enable members to know what to look for in the report. The report reads as follows:—

The Metropolitan Region Planning Authority has now submitted to me the Metropolitan Region Scheme and

associated report. I have today notified the authority of my preliminary approval in pursuance of section 31 of the scheme Act.

This preliminary approval enables the authority to deposit copies of the scheme for public inspection in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Act. The authority's intention is to publish notices in the *Government Gazette* on the 17th August, and immediately thereafter in newspapers circulating in the region, explaining shortly the purpose of the scheme, notifying that copies are available for public inspection for three months, and that objections to the scheme may be lodged on the prescribed form.

The scheme, including the scheme map, will be available at the Town Planning Department and at the council offices of the City of Perth, the City of Fremantle, the Town of Midland and the Shires of Perth, Cannington and Rockingham. In addition, copies of the text of the scheme and a simplified form of the scheme map will be issued to all other metropolitan local authorities.

The authority is required to examine all objections duly lodged and give objectors an opportunity to be heard. When that has been done, the authority will resubmit the scheme to me, modified if necessary in the light of objections, together with copies of all objections and a report thereon. The scheme is then capable of being given approval by the Governor. Before the Governor's approval is effective, however, the scheme, together with the authority's report on objections, must be laid before each House of Parliament during twenty-one sitting days. Either House may, by resolution of which notice was given, disallow the scheme. If no such resolution is passed, then the scheme comes into effect and has the force of law.

The text of the scheme is contained in an appendix to the scheme report, copies of which have been furnished to all members. This report is an important document which I suggest should be carefully studied. I do not propose at this stage to attempt to epitomise it, but attention might be drawn to one or two important points which are made in it.

Section 4 of the report entitled "Interim Action" brings out the marked extent to which the 1955 Stephenson-Hepburn report and recommendations have been followed and given effect to by many major decisions both of public authorities and of commerce and industry. Section 5

entitled "Review of the Stephenson-Hepburn Report" discusses at some length the provisions in the scheme in relation to the 1955 recommendations. These two sections together underline the fact that following a careful review in which all the metropolitan local authorities participated through the district planning committees, and after a testing period of operation of the Interim Development Order, the validity of the 1955 recommendations is firmly confirmed. The essential structure and features of the regional plan recommended in 1955 are in no way disrupted in the scheme now submitted.

A further matter which warrants some brief comment is the form of the region scheme and the manner in which the authority intends that it should operate. This is dealt with in section 6 of the scheme report and in the scheme text.

It was one of the purposes of the authority that metropolitan planning should proceed without faltering when control of development under the Interim Development Order was translated into control under a statutory planning scheme. It was also an objective that complementary measures of planning under local authority planning schemes and by subdivisional control by the Town Planning Board should be effectively integrated with the region scheme. Section 6 of the report explains how the authority proposes to achieve those objectives.

The region scheme makes a distinction between reservations for regional purposes and zoning, and applies rather different administrative techniques to the two facets of the scheme. The reservations are primarily for recreational reserves on a regional scale and for the regional road system. A major feature of the scheme is the protection of property so reserved against adverse development and provision for its progressive acquisition. The authority will administer this aspect of the scheme. Administration of zoning is intended to be delegated to local authorities. They are required under the Act to make local planning schemes consonant with the region scheme so that in due time there will be, so to speak, a pattern of local planning schemes superimposed on the region scheme and dealing with matters in more detail than has been attempted or is indeed necessary on a regional scale.

Finally, attention is drawn to section 7 of the report on the metropolitan improvement fund. In this the financial implications of the scheme are closely examined, the scale of the

acquisition commitment is indicated, and comment made on some of the complexities of fulfilling that commitment. The report finishes on the note that whilst the authority appreciates that keeping acquisitions in step with the financial resources available is likely always to be a difficult problem, it feels that it will be able to implement the scheme and operate the metropolitan improvement fund in the manner proposed.

This report will be made available to members of Parliament, and I trust they will give it urgent consideration, because it is the culmination of a great deal of work done by the town planning and regional authorities.

The report was tabled.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

1. *This question was postponed.*

ROCK PHOSPHATE AT ESPERANCE

Utilisation

2. The Hon. F. J. S. WISE (for the Hon. G. Bennetts), asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that a large deposit of high-grade rock phosphate of approximately one million tons exists at an island near Esperance?
- (2) Has any arrangement yet been made with the leaseholders for its utilisation?
- (3) If no arrangement has been made, will it be necessary for the lessees to make an application to the Mines Department?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) Without knowing the island to which the honourable member is referring it is difficult to furnish a reply. If it is one of the Recherche Archipelago, it is on record that, in February and March, 1943, J. C. Dulfer, representing the British Phosphate Commissioners—accompanied by a State Government geologist from Western Australia—investigated the islands comprising the Recherche Archipelago. Their conclusions were that apart from a small occurrence of 1,000 tons on Daw Island—one of the eastern group to the east of Israelite Bay—there was nothing of economic value on these islands.
- (2) The islands in question form part of a "flora and fauna" reserve. A mining lease was issued by the Mines Department in respect of Daw Island in 1956, subject to the Fauna Protection Act, 1950, and regulations thereunder.

- (3) Any further application should be addressed to the Mines Department.

SUPERPHOSPHATE WORKS

Erection and Commencement of Production at Esperance

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

- (1) When is it anticipated that work will commence on the erection of the superphosphate works at Esperance?
- (2) When is it expected that production will commence at the works?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) and (2) The final details of an agreement are under negotiation with the Albany Superphosphate Company Proprietary Limited, and the date of building and operation of the works cannot be determined until the agreement is fully negotiated.

The Government and the company are both anxious to make superphosphate deliveries ex Esperance works site as soon as possible. The negotiations were delayed by local objections earlier this year and this has rendered the original target date very difficult of achievement. Both parties are examining the practicability of supplies being available ex Esperance works site for at least part of the 1964-1965 season.

SILICOSIS CASES: COMPENSATION

Liability for Taxation

4. The Hon. J. D. TEAHAN asked the Minister for Mines:

When a miner is "turned down" as a result of having contracted silicosis in the gold mines and receives compensation payable weekly or fortnightly, is the whole of this money taxable?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

This is a Commonwealth taxation matter, and I have been informed by the Taxation Department that it would require any inquiry to be made in writing.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: SIXTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed, from the 8th August, on the following motion by The Hon. H. R. Robinson:—

That the following Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver:—

May it please Your Excellency: We, the members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of

Western Australia, in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [4.14 p.m.]: In speaking to this motion I would like to deal with the Electoral Act and matters connected therewith. I hope members will not find my speech too tedious—the Minister for Mines did indicate recently that he found the speeches made a little tedious. First of all I would like—

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: No, I didn't.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Only some.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: —to deal with the redistribution which was made last year of Legislative Assembly electorates and Legislative Council provinces. In looking at the Electoral Districts Act one finds that as far as the redistribution of the provinces is concerned, the commissioners have what could be termed a formula under which to operate. However, in my opinion, this formula is a poor one; and I think a large number of members in this House would agree with me in that respect.

Under section 9 of the Act the commissioners are empowered as follows in regard to the redistribution of the electoral provinces:—

- (1) The Commissioners shall adjust the boundaries of the ten Electoral Provinces as existing at the commencement of this Act, having regard to their proposed allotment of and alterations in boundaries of Electoral Districts.

The year of commencement was 1947. Continuing—

Provided that—

- (a) each Province shall consist of a number of complete and contiguous Electoral Districts as nearly as possible comprising the same area as at the date of the passing of this Act each Province contains; subject, however, to the boundaries of the Metropolitan Province and the Metropolitan-Suburban Province as existing at the commencement of this Act being readjusted so as to include in each Province such Electoral Districts as will cause the number of electors on the roll of each Province to be approximately the same, and
- (b) there shall be no alteration to the existing boundaries of the North Province.

It is now some 15 years since this provision of the Act first came into force, and during the intervening years there has been quite a big change in the State, both

in the metropolitan area and in the country in regard to the number of electors on the various province rolls. I know that when I first came into this House representing the Central Province there were some 6,000 electors on the roll, but today there are over 13,000. A similar position applies in regard to the South Province and the South-West Province. The number of electors in those two provinces has increased more than twofold. In addition, there has been a big rise in the number of electors on the rolls of the Metropolitan Province, Suburban Province, and West Province.

I wish to put a proposal before this House today and I ask members to give it some consideration. We have heard quite a bit, particularly over the past few years, in regard to the franchise of this House. However, I believe that before we give any consideration to an extension of the franchise we must do something about a redistribution that will be more equitable. With this in view I have spent quite a lot of time in examining the position; and, as a result, I believe we will have to reduce the area of quite a number of the provinces, particularly some of the large ones in the country, and thus decrease the number of electors on those rolls in proportion to the square-mileage areas of the provinces.

The suggestion I put forward is that the State be divided into 15 provinces instead of the existing 10, with half of the members coming up for election every three years. This would reduce the size of the provinces and the number of electors so that they would be more on a *pro rata* basis than they are now.

To give members an idea of the situation as it exists at the present time, the Suburban Province has 43,949 electors in an area of approximately 93 square miles. The Metropolitan Province has 40,512 electors in approximately 75 square miles. The West Province, which is to a certain degree on a par, although it comprises a greater area, has 25,596 electors in an area between 176 and 200 square miles.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: There is really no fundamental difference between the three.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I do not know how the Minister is able to say that. Admittedly, the proportions and the areas are not as wide as the proportions and areas in the country districts, but after all is said and done, to try to represent 43,000 electors in a province like the Suburban Province would be quite a task. It would be difficult to get to know even a small percentage of those people.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I think you may have misunderstood me. I meant there is no fundamental difference between Suburban, Metropolitan, and West; and there should not be.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I agree there should not be, with the exception of the square mileage area. However, when one considers the square-mileage areas they are not so vastly out of proportion. But then again one has to take the other view. For instance, the West Province contains the Assembly electorates of Fremantle, Melville, East Melville, Canning, and Cockburn. We find that portions of the electorates of Cockburn and Canning are scattered, while the rest is concentrated. Members representing the scattered areas must be faced with more problems than those members who represent concentrated areas like the Metropolitan and Suburban provinces, because when one looks at the plan one sees that Cockburn goes nearly down to Rockingham..

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Suburban goes right up to Greenmount.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: After all is said and done, Greenmount is not that far away when compared with Rockingham.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The distances from Perth to Greenmount, and Fremantle to Cockburn are equal.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Although the Minister is right in that respect, there is a difference of 18,000 in the number of electors. Anyway, I believe that all members would agree with me that the present province areas are cumbersome to handle and work in; and the suggestion I put forward to the House, as I said before, is that we divide the State into 15 provinces, each represented by two members.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: It would still be cumbersome.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I do not agree. I put it up on this basis and will first take the agricultural and mining areas. I have worked out what could be considered the basis of a formula.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: Work out something for the North-East Province.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Take the north and the mining areas as defined in the Act today. The North Province comprises the electorates of Gascoyne, Kimberley and Pilbara; and in that province we have 1,930 electors on the roll in an area of 424,959 square miles. That is a considerable piece of country. However, with regard to that particular province I do not think we can alter the position very much in relation to the number of electors in the area. All we can do is leave the position as it is at the present time.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: And give those 1,930 electors the same representation as the 40,000 in my province.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I think that is fair because those people are faced with long distances when travelling, and they lack the amenities that are enjoyed by

people in the metropolitan area. Therefore, I think they are entitled to just as big a representation as 20,000 electors in this part of the State.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You are pleasing the Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I was just musing that the fan mail of members of the North Province would be at least as large as that of a province with 20,000 electors.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I think it would probably be greater. I do not think we can do much about altering the North Province, but I believe we can make a slight alteration in the North-East Province, which extends into Kalgoorlie, by making the Murchison electorate a province. I say this because the Murchison electorate comprises 332,000-odd square miles. The remainder of the North-East Province could then be left as laid down in the Act.

In regard to the South-East Province, one could include the Kalgoorlie electorate with 2,173 electors, and the shires of Boulder, Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, and Dundas with 4,112 electors, making a total of 6,285 in an area comprising 97,357 square miles. This I believe would give a fairer representation and be a fairer set-up having regard to the number of electors to the square mileage of the area.

Passing on from those areas, I think we have to consider what is going to happen to the section which takes in part of the Merredin-Yilgarn electorate and the shires of Merredin, Westonia, Yilgarn, Ravensthorpe, Esperance, and Bruce Rock. Most of these districts, with the exception of Ravensthorpe, are in the South-East Province; but their interests are actually not in line with those of the Kalgoorlie and mining areas. These particular shires are in predominantly agricultural areas, and I believe they should have representation in a block as an agricultural area.

For the present, it is proposed under this plan to set up another province there containing the particular shire areas I have mentioned. It is very hard to try to plan a province that would consist of contiguous electoral districts in the area; but if we had 3,300 electors in an area of 27,867 square miles, I think it would be a more reasonable basis than exists at the present time.

The formula I have prepared for the agricultural areas is as follows: There shall be in the agricultural areas six provinces represented by two members for each. The provinces shall, as near as possible, consist of contiguous electoral districts. No province shall include: (1) less than 5,000, nor more than 10,500, electors; (2) less than 6,500, nor more than 28,000, square miles; (3) less than three, nor more than four, contiguous electoral districts.

I think on that basis we would get a fair and equitable redistribution in relation to the number of electors to the square mile. When I say fair, I mean as fair as it can possibly be worked out, considering the total area of the agricultural parts of the State and the number of electors enrolled throughout that area.

I believe if members were to have a look at this formula, and if they would take the time to work it out, they would find it to be on a pretty reasonable basis.

I now turn to the metropolitan area. As I said before, I believe there are too many electors in a concentrated area for members to represent. In some electorates there are some 40,000-odd electors, and their representatives are unable to provide them with the service they could expect. My thoughts in this regard are directed to increasing the number of representatives in the metropolitan area by one. That is, perhaps, rather a strange suggestion to come from a Country Party member, but I think we would all agree that we must be fair in this issue.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: By one member, or by one province?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: By one member; and on the proportion of population. Seeing that this whole thing has got right out of perspective, we should give the metropolitan area one more representative in this House. I therefore propose that there shall be five provinces in the metropolitan area, represented by two members each. The formula I propose is that no province shall: (1) include less than four, nor more than five, contiguous electoral districts; (2) include less than 17,500, nor more than 26,500, electors. This is just a rough figure, which may have to be altered. It is simply a basis on which to operate, so that we do not get the position where things get out of perspective.

In addition to that, I have included the following: That when the commissioners are considering province boundaries, consideration shall be given to the number of electors and square miles in the area; that large areas shall contain only four contiguous Assembly seats. That, I believe, would bring us back to a basis where the whole thing would be more equitable all round.

To see how this would take effect in the metropolitan area, I prepared a rough draft of the number of electors that would be in a province under such a formula. With contiguous electorates, one containing four contiguous electoral districts would contain some 20,500 electors; one with five—

The Hon. H. K. Watson: Electors or enrolled electors?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Electors enrolled on the Legislative Council rolls. The second one, with five, would contain

some 24,600 electors; the third, with five, some 23,000 electors; the fourth, with four, some 19,000 electors; and the fifth, with four, approximately 21,000 electors. That makes a fairly equitable redistribution of the number of electors on the rolls, whilst at the same time it gives consideration to area—even the metropolitan area—which, after all is said and done should be taken into consideration. I think all members will agree with me on that point.

I put forward this proposition because, as I said before, the old formula of 1947, under which we are now working, is outdated. Let us consider what happened in my own province, where we had 13,100 electors on the roll for an area of 22,000 square miles before the redistribution. At the conclusion of the redistribution we had a similar number of electors, but there was an increase of another 1,400 square miles; whereas other areas were reduced, and, naturally, the numbers of their electors were reduced.

I raise the point that section 9 of the Electoral Districts Act is outmoded. It is as follows:—

(1) The Commissioners shall adjust the boundaries of the ten Electoral Provinces as existing at the commencement of this Act, having regard to their proposed allotment of and alterations in boundaries of Electoral Districts. Provided that—

(a) each Province shall consist of a number of complete and contiguous Electoral Districts as nearly as possible comprising the same area as at the date of the passing of this Act . . .

It means that as these provinces build up and the number of electors increases, there is no adjusting section in this formula whereby any redistribution can pass some of the surplus—or what can be considered a surplus—of electors on to another province. It means that as a province is built up, there is a greater number of electors on the roll.

I think all members will agree that the situation is reaching the stage when we should give grave consideration to this matter and approach it, not from the point of view of party politics but from the point of view of making adjustments in the best interests of the State to see that those people in the provinces have fair and equitable representation.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What machinery would you envisage in the change-over from ten provinces of three members to 15 provinces of two members?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The machinery I envisage would be simplified before the next Legislative Council election by the fact that in the areas which will be most affected, notice has been given by various members that they do

not intend to nominate again for this House. That rather simplifies the position in connection with the change-over from three representatives to two.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: I think that is a rather unusual foundation.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That was not planned by me. It happens to fall that way. I think it simplifies the working-out of the machinery for this changeover from biennial elections to elections every three years, because it simplifies the basis. Were we in the position where there were no retiring members, we might have a problem; but it simplifies the matter in that respect.

The Hon. A. L. Loton: Let's have a ballot!

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I have worked out a plan, but I will not tell the House what it is, as some members might not like it!

The Hon. H. K. Watson: I would suggest it ought to be "last in, last out".

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I do not think it will be an insurmountable problem during the next two years to work out the machinery whereby we could put this into operation and have members retiring triennially instead of biennially.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: We will all have a bit of time to think it over.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Yes, there is time to think it over. I am not proposing a Bill to do this; I am putting it forward as a suggestion for members to consider, because I think it is high-time consideration was given to this matter by all members of this House with a view to getting together, as I have said, not—

The Hon. H. K. Watson: On this question of the formula and members retiring, have you consulted The Hon. George Bennetts as to his views?

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver): Order!

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: No; I have not consulted any of the retiring members for their views. I have considered this matter and merely based a formula—

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: Are we to hold the Council elections on the same day as the Legislative Assembly elections?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I think we had better leave that decision to the Government. I am not going to lay down whether that should be, or should not be. It may suit a member such as myself to have the Council elections on the same day as the Assembly elections, but it might not suit other members. I think it is the prerogative of the Government to decide that particular aspect of the matter. I do say that with the redistribution which I propose, it is possible there could be an extension of the franchise in some respects;

and that would satisfy some members of this House who believe that the franchise should be extended. But that is another matter, and I do not intend to touch on it today.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You are having a pretty lucky break with your speech this afternoon.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That is all I wish to say with regard to the redistribution of the Legislative Council provinces. I now wish to touch on a more serious matter affecting the State itself. I refer to what happened recently in the by-election for Darling Range. Something happened which I deplore; and I believe nearly every member of this House deplores what happened in the Darling Range by-election. A statement was made by a Minister of the Crown—and we should be able to look up to Ministers of the Crown as being responsible people—at a political campaign meeting.

A promise was made to a section of the public on a matter which one might colloquially term "a hot potato." I refer to the issue of a water supply for Forrestfield and Wattle Grove. I believe, like all members of the House, that it is the prerogative of members, their party, their Ministers, and their party's supporters to make promises that their party will do certain things in accordance with its policy on a broad principle. It is done as a matter of State, and not as a matter of one particular district, particularly when it involves the expenditure of a large sum of loan funds spread over a period of a few years.

I raise this matter because I believe the public should not be allowed to forget—and members of Parliament should not be allowed to forget—that such actions do not raise members of Parliament in the estimation of the public, but tend to lower the public's estimation of them when they speak on what I call dishonest political practices. I say this because I believe the announcement, and the promise, of a water supply for Forrestfield and Wattle Grove—for which the late member for Darling Range (Mr. Owen) worked for many years; and in connection with which I played a part—created a position where not only was the estimation of Ministers lowered, but also that of members of Parliament in general.

I cannot understand why a Minister of the Crown should think of doing such a thing—I just cannot understand it! Moreover, Sir, I cannot understand a Minister committing his loan funds, not only for the current year, but for the two years following—loan funds which have not been allocated and will not be allocated, firstly, until July next year, and, secondly, until July or August of the following year; and, as is the usual practice when preparing the estimates for a department, no scheme is placed on the estimates until February

of the year concerned; and it remains on those estimates until loan and other moneys have been allocated for it, which, as I said before, is not until July or August.

In spite of the fact that I was told by the Under Secretary for Works, and the Chief Engineer, that there would be no money available for this scheme during the year 1962-1963—and, as far as the under secretary was concerned, nothing would be placed on the provisional estimates until February next year—the Minister went to Forrestfield and committed his department, and the State, to an expenditure of £30,000, for what I call the foundation section of this scheme along William Street, and a further £150,000 over the coming two financial years, 1963-1964 and 1964-1965. This was long before those figures could have been placed on the estimates.

I think every member in this Chamber will agree with me that it was an absolute breach of ministerial ethics, and a breach of faith with the officers of the department concerned; because I am sure that the officers knew nothing about this matter before it was announced, and they were placed in a very invidious position.

I do not want to linger for too long on this matter, but I do want to make it quite clear that I do not blame the Government itself for this; I do not blame the departmental officers; but I blame one man who stooped to go outside of decent political ethics in doing a thing like this. I have spoken on this matter because I hope and trust that future Governments, whether they be Governments of the same political colour as this one, or Labor Governments, will take notice of it. I am not accusing anybody other than the Minister concerned, and I hope and trust that all future Governments will ensure that a thing like this will not occur in the future history of Western Australia. I am sure that had it happened in the Federal sphere, as we saw in an instance recently where a Minister was asked to relinquish his portfolio because of a breach of faith with the Government, the Minister concerned would have been asked to resign. In my view the same sort of thing should apply in this instance; and particularly in the future if any Minister of the Crown steps out of line in this way.

I know it will never be, but if I happened to be Premier of this State I would regard it as a dishonest action, and I would insist that any Minister who committed such a breach of faith should resign and relinquish his portfolio. In my view we should at least be honest in these matters when we are fighting elections, and we should fight them as cleanly as possible and not stoop to practices whereby we attempt to influence the electors by buying their votes. With those few words I support the motion.

THE HON. R. THOMPSON (West) [4.50 p.m.]: May I offer you my congratulations, Sir, as many others have done previously, on being re-elected as President of this Chamber. It is good to see that you were elected unanimously, because it shows that you have the confidence of all members in this House. I should also like to congratulate the new members who have come into our midst. I feel sure they will enjoy the debates which take place and the friendliness that exists in the Chamber amongst all members.

I do not intend to linger for long on the Address-in-Reply debate, but there are a few matters that I think I should bring to the notice of the House. The first point I wish to raise deals with speed limits which are applicable in Western Australia at present. I think our speed limits are relics of the dim, dark ages. Today, with a modern motorcar, it is practically impossible to keep it running freely, or to cruise, at a speed of 35 miles an hour on a highway.

The Hon. A. L. Loton: You must be using boosted petrol.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: And I am paying dearly for it. Several years ago Queensland took the initiative and increased the speed limit in that State to 45 miles an hour, and I do not think the accident rate there has increased as a result.

I would like to see the responsible Minister in this State give due consideration to the raising of speed limits on our highways. I know it would be impossible on suburban streets, where there are short cross-streets, to increase the limit to 45 miles an hour; and, perhaps, many people think it is illogical to raise the speed limit anywhere. But this is not so, for the simple reason that the Traffic Department always has a counter, inasmuch as it can prosecute people for dangerous driving. Even if a person is travelling at only 35 miles an hour on any highway or street he can be prosecuted if the police consider he is driving in a dangerous manner.

At the moment, with the speed limit of 35 miles an hour, the public have no chance of defending themselves, because where any traffic charge is brought before the courts the constable's word, in 99 cases out of a 100, is accepted as gospel truth, and the person who has allegedly committed an offence has virtually no chance of escaping without a fine or a suspension of his license.

In one particular case which was reported to me, a police patrolman sat behind a car in Stirling Highway for some considerable distance. It was about 7.30 in the evening and there was virtually no traffic on the road. The driver of the car maintained a speed of 35 miles an hour until he arrived at the

North Fremantle bridge—he was proceeding towards Fremantle. While he was travelling over the bridge his car developed a carburettor blockage, and he had to pull out his choke and push the accelerator right to the floor of the car so that he would clear the bridge and not be held up in the middle of it.

As soon as he got over the bridge the traffic officer booked him for speeding, although the constable admitted, and accepted the fact at the time, that the car was kangarooing or jumping about on the bridge. When the case came before the court the driver concerned was in the country, and he wrote a letter to the magistrate, which I saw, pleading guilty to the charge and saying that he was in the country and that it was impossible for him to come to the metropolitan area. But he was still fined £5 with 18s. costs.

At some time or other every person who drives a motorcar has to speed, but it is frequently to avoid people who are driving cars out of side streets. A driver may be maintaining a speed of 35 miles an hour, but when someone dashes out of a side street he may have to speed to avoid a collision; and I would say that 99 per cent. of the driving public could be charged for speeding at some time or other. Because of these facts I think we should take a realistic view of the position; and I say that where possible the speed limit should be increased to a maximum of 45 miles an hour.

There is one other matter in respect of traffic policemen about which I take a dim view. I refer to the fact that policemen secrete themselves, either around a corner near a "stop" sign, between motorcars, or underneath trees, for the purpose of catching anyone who drives past a "stop" sign without stopping. One corner I have in mind is the corner of Victoria Street and some other street, the name of which I do not know but which is adjacent to the Mosman Park school. There is a crosswalk about 20 or 30 yards further on and there is a "stop" sign at the corner which is virtually hidden by a line of peppermint trees. On three or four days of the week one can see a traffic constable hidden around the corner waiting for someone to break the regulations and drive past the "stop" sign without stopping. I do not know how many people he catches, but the number must be considerable.

I believe that this sort of thing is wrong, and traffic policemen should be used to prevent people doing the wrong thing and should not be allowed to secrete themselves around some corner for the purpose of allowing people to commit a breach and then intercepting them. I have my own views on the question, but I am gradually reaching the stage where I believe that traffic policemen apparently have to justify

their existence by getting enough prosecutions to pay for their employment. They seem to be used as a taxing machine, which is quite wrong. Traffic patrolmen should be on the roads to prevent accidents, or breaches of the Traffic Act, and not simply to prosecute people.

There is one other matter I would like to discuss. Before I came to this House, legislation in respect of S.P. betting was introduced, and I had read quite a lot in the Press about the matter. Criticism was levelled by the then Opposition at the Government on the ground that betting shops were permitted to be established close to hotels. In fact, there was a lot of criticism both from the public and Opposition members at that time. But to my amazement I now find that this Government, which when in Opposition was hostile about the fact that betting shops were established close to hotels, is permitting a portion of the Riverton Hotel premises to be delicensed for the purpose of erecting a T.A.B. shop. If that is not hypocrisy, then I do not know what is. I am given to understand that this instance is not an isolated one, but that north of Perth a similar thing has happened. I am also informed that much the same thing will happen at Armadale in the future, if it has not already occurred.

I do not bet, and I will not have a bar of T.A.B. premises or betting shops. The Government should not encourage betting; no doubt the action it is taking to establish a T.A.B. agency at Riverton arose from a desire to increase revenue from this source. Press reports have indicated that this revenue fell considerably last year. The Government might be concerned and might have delicensed part of the hotel premises to set up a T.A.B. agency with a view to increasing the revenue.

If steps are not taken to prevent the establishment of that agency, then in future it will only be possible to do so through Parliament. I ask the Minister to inform the House what proportion of the Riverton Hotel premises are to be delicensed. If it is greater than the floor space of a shop, what would be the position if a vehicle drew up close to the betting agency and the driver brought out a bottle of beer to drink? Would he be prosecuted for drinking on other than licensed premises?

I had a discussion with Dr. Hislop about the need for the establishment of a reserve in the East Hamilton Hill housing area, for the purpose of preserving our native Christmas trees. He agreed with the proposal. Around this district I suppose we would find a larger number of native Christmas trees than can be found anywhere else in Western Australia. An example of the beauty created by these trees can be seen at the Hilton Park

school where these native Christmas trees are growing on the verges of the school grounds.

I ask the Minister for Housing whether steps can be taken to reserve a tract of land, maybe not much more than an acre, in the East Hamilton Hill area, so that these trees can be preserved. In several spots a whole acre of these trees can be found, but if steps are not taken to reserve the land the trees will disappear because the area is developing very rapidly.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Have you had this matter under notice for some time?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I have always admired the Christmas tree reserve in the grounds of the Hilton Park School. When I spoke to Dr. Hislop about this matter he said he would like me, during the Address-in-Reply debate, to bring it before the Minister.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I shall look into the matter.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Another matter which I have raised in this House previously concerns transport—transport of schoolchildren and public transport generally in the South Coogee and Jandakot areas. Before the Metropolitan Transport Trust took over the services in that area a private bus operator provided the service for 46 school children who attended the South Coogee School and the Jandakot School. When the trust took over just before Christmas, it discontinued the service through Russell Street to Jandakot. There has been much agitation by the people since the trust discontinued it.

As a result of a protest made through the shire council of the district, the vice president and I interviewed a member of the trust. Much to my disgust he virtually told us to get out of his office. He said he was not interested in transporting 46 children to school; he was not interested in supplying a bus to serve the needs of the people unless a full busload of passengers was available; he would not divert a bus from Medina to Fremantle; he was only concerned with a full load.

All the land in this locality has virtually been subdivided. The land adjacent is owned by the University, but I believe in the very near future it will be classified as industrial land and factories will be established thereon. There are altogether 46 children and their parents, who work in industry in the locality, affected. Unfortunately only five of the children live at a distance of over three miles from the school.

The people there are not pressing for a half-hourly bus service. The service could be every two or three hours. If one is provided the people will be encouraged to remain there, and that is preferable to them applying for State Housing Commission homes elsewhere where they can

obtain transport. The area is serviced by water and electricity, yet not by a bus. These people are only two or three miles from the main highway but they are being denied transport, a service to which they are entitled.

The Minister for Education was very vague when he wrote a long letter on this matter. He pointed out all the disabilities and explained why such a transport service could not be provided, and he said that if we could find someone who was prepared to run a school bus, the Government would look into the matter. It is not profitable for any private person to run such a service; and people should not have to do that when there is a Government-owned transport system. I hope that the Minister for Local Government and the Metropolitan Transport Trust can come together and provide some form of transport for that area.

I am quite concerned with the subdivision of land in the Russell Road-South Coogee area. Several applications for pocket subdivisions have been made, but the town planning authority is opposed to them. I would like the Minister to indicate to the House at some stage why pocket subdivisions have been refused in this portion of the Cockburn district, and to inform the House whether there is any intention on the part of the Town Planning Department to allow pocket subdivisions in the future; and, if so, how long before such subdivisions will be allowed?

Not everyone desires to live in the metropolitan area. Those who desire to live outside the city do not always want blocks of five acres; therefore pocket subdivisions should be permitted if they are spaced some distance apart.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: How do you define pocket subdivisions?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: They are not new; they have existed for years. There is one such area around Jandakot airport, and there is another near Naval Base. Pocket subdivisions have been defined for many years. These are not huge housing areas; they consist of 15 to 20 blocks of $\frac{1}{4}$ -acre each set in the midst of rural lands.

In the last few weeks I have received many inquiries from people concerning the lack of technical training in the welding trade, other than at the Leederville Technical School. I have not checked up on this matter, but I believe that at the present time no such training is available at Fremantle. Some youths have to travel from as far as Medina to the Leederville Technical School to obtain instruction. We have noticed from Press reports in the very recent past that Western Australia lacks boilermakers and welders. It is not fair to expect a youth, after working at some calling all day, to journey a long distance to receive training and education.

All the facilities exist in the technical school at Fremantle and they should be made use of by the Government to instruct youths in welding. The Government should appoint instructors there so that in the near future this important trade can be taught in Fremantle, and brought up to a high standard.

Finally, I bring this matter to the notice of the Minister for Local Government: I have heard that an area of land at Point Peron which has been used by the National Fitness Council as a youth camp is being handed back to the State Government. If that is so, will the same conditions which applied to the National Fitness Council also apply to organisations which are establishing holiday camps in that area?

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. E. M. Davies.

House adjourned at 5.15 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 9th August, 1962

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