

Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 1st September, 1970

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION ON NOTICE

WATER SUPPLIES

Millstream Dam

The Hon. V. J. FERRY, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) What is the capacity of Millstream Dam near Bridgetown?
- (2) In respect to servicing the Bridgetown area—
 - (a) what is the average yearly draw of water from the dam?
 - (b) what has been the highest draw in any one year; and
 - (c) in which year did this occur?
- (3) In respect to servicing the Boyup Brook area—
 - (a) what is the likely yearly average amount of water to be drawn from this source; and
 - (b) what is the estimated peak draw for any one year in the foreseeable future?
- (4) Is the holding capacity of the Millstream Dam capable of being increased?
- (5) If so—
 - (a) is it planned to increase the holding capacity; and
 - (b) what is the estimated cost of the proposed work?
- (6) Has the Bridgetown area been investigated for additional water storage dam sites?
- (7) If so, what are the results?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) Storage capacity of 108 million gallons. Safe draw in excess of 140 million gallons per annum.
- (2) (a) 80-90 million gallons.
(b) 91 million gallons.
(c) 1969-70.
- (3) (a) 4 to 8 million gallons per year.
(b) 30 million gallons if an industry is established at Boyup Brook.
- (4) The holding capacity of the Millstream Dam is not capable of being increased economically.
- (5) (a) No.
(b) Answered by (5) (a).
- (6) No.
- (7) Answered by (6).

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: ELEVENTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed, from the 27th August, on the following motion by The Hon. S. T. J. Thompson:—

That the following Address be presented to His Excellency:—

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. G. E. D. BRAND (Lower North) [4.43 p.m.]: In supporting the Address-in-Reply to His Excellency the Governor's Speech on opening day, I wish to say a few things about my own province. In a province as extensive as the one I endeavour to control there are many and varied problems which come before me.

First of all, may I thank the Ministers and others who do support our applications for some assistance from time to time. Sometimes we do not have much luck, but on those occasions when we do receive assistance we are very grateful. May I also thank those responsible for our recent tour of the north-west of the State. Having visited that area in 1966, I found it most interesting and instructive to see the progress that had taken place. We are certainly the State on the move.

During the cyclones in February there were many people connected with the civil emergency service, and other organisations, who had a lot to do during and after the cyclones. The cyclones are given ladies' names; perhaps when they are given masculine names they will not be so wild and vicious. Many people worked long hours to ensure the safety of residents and property in the various districts—particularly in Carnarvon and Exmouth.

Although I do not like mentioning names, in case someone might be missed, for the benefit of the House I would like to mention the name of Mr. Brian Pollitt, who is the officer in charge of the power station at Exmouth. I have been advised of his remarkable performance on the night of one of the cyclones, when the winds were around 90 or 100 miles an hour. During this time Mr. Pollitt kept the whole town supplied with electricity, except for perhaps one hour. The only person he could get to help him was one of his greasers. The two men put a ladder up against an electricity pole in order to climb up and join wires which had been broken by the force of the wind. Mr. Pollitt's assistant said to me, "You wouldn't have got me up there for quids." However, Mr. Pollitt was brave enough—some say mad enough—to go up there, at the risk of his life, and connect

the wires, which were thrashing around in the wind, in order to ensure that hospitals and other institutions had power for refrigeration of foodstuffs and so on.

Eventually, Mr. Pollitt had to call a halt to his efforts because when he descended from the ladder he stepped into a pool in which lay the broken end of a live wire. Despite the fact that he was wearing rubber boots, when he stood on the wire the shock threw him sideways, and he was unfortunate enough to fall into another pool of water into which another broken wire had fallen, and he burnt his hand very severely. I wish to place on record Mr. Pollitt's wonderful devotion to duty. Assistance was rendered by many other people both during and after the cyclone, and it was not long before the town was back to normal. I hope Mr. Pollitt's actions will be recognised.

I am somewhat concerned about the new regulations for the control of kangaroos. Perhaps the regulations are good, and perhaps they are not—I do not know—but there are so many people who are experts on this subject that I am overwhelmed with information. When this matter first arose I happened to be in the Eastern States and I noticed in the *Sunday Telegraph* of the 5th July an article on this subject from which I would like to quote. The article reads—

UPROAR ON ROOS AHEAD

A wildlife expert warned last night that an uproar of public protest was threatening over commercial exploitation of kangaroos, for the booming fur and petfood markets.

The speaker, Mr. A. Dempster, of the Victorian Department of Fisheries, was addressing an invited audience of 130 in Sydney.

He said conservationists were divided themselves into laymen, scientific experts and politicians—and warned that they were plunging into “a disaster.”

“I feel in my bones,” he said, “that lay organisations are becoming distressed at what little they can learn—and they have decided to ‘go it alone’ in their campaign.

“They have not appreciated that they are not equipped to do so.”

He warned that lay conservationists, scientists and politicians had to work together to achieve a practical solution to kangaroo conservation.

Otherwise, he said, there was “a real danger” that the public would “panic” and force politicians into the wrong kind of action.

I hope the move to control kangaroos will be for the betterment of the industry. At the present time about 400-odd kangaroo shooters are operating and it is possible that this number will be reduced to about 40 or 50. I cannot ascertain how many of

these shooters rely on kangaroo shooting for their livelihood, but I am of the opinion that those who have been shooting kangaroos as a full-time occupation should have priority in the granting of licenses.

I have received a few letters from various people—mostly from pastoralists, of course—on the subject and, strangely enough, although they object to the watering points they have put down for their sheep being adversely affected by kangaroos, they are still conservationists at heart. They want to see kangaroos controlled, but they do not want them wiped out altogether.

I thank the Minister for showing sufficient interest in this matter by visiting the business owned by Mr. Bruce Teede of Carnarvon to witness the mechanics of the industry. Mr. Teede has been operating freezers around the Gascoyne area for the storing of kangaroo meat and he is now very concerned about the future of his business. His only bright prospect is that he may be granted a license to shoot. He was employing some men, but he does not know what he will do if registration restricts the number of shooters.

Some pastoralists are engaged in kangaroo shooting themselves. One man who is situated well north of Wiluna has written to me stating that he is engaged in kangaroo shooting part time to earn some extra money to pay for his daughter's schooling. I do not know what he will do if he is unable to obtain registration, because he has not been shooting full time over a period of 12 months, so I suppose it is quite possible that he will not be registered.

All the letters I have received are fairly lengthy and they have come from various parts of the State ranging from Mullewa to Dalgety Downs Station and north to Mangaroon. Most of the people in those parts are rather unhappy, because they have the idea that kangaroos will be so controlled that it may mean thousands will be encroaching on their properties. The news of kangaroo shooters being registered, together with the effect of the recent drought and the low price of wool, has not tended to make the pastoralists very happy.

I do not know whether the figure is correct, but I understand that it has been estimated there are 1,250,000 kangaroos in Western Australia. I have far too many letters here to quote extracts from them, but I think the Minister has a fairly good idea of my feelings on the matter. I wish to see fair play and every shooter who was engaged in this industry full time given a reasonable chance to continue shooting kangaroos. I therefore hope the Minister will ensure this aspect will be taken into consideration.

Another problem already referred to by members both in this House and in another place is one which I think is regarded as a hardy annual. I refer to the Aboriginal

problem. Whilst journeying through my province I have listened to many people debating the problem, both at meetings and in private conversations. I have made a note of a few of the points mentioned by various people which I think may be of interest to members. I discovered that all people agreed there is a problem. One opinion held was that the Department of Native Welfare be phased out and a social services department for all be instituted. The opinion seems to be that it is just unfortunate that the Department of Native Welfare has been set up, because it has now been found that instead of the Aboriginal population being taught to think and fend for themselves, they are becoming solely dependent on the officers of the department. This could be correct.

As I have said, many people are of the opinion that there should be one social services department for the welfare of all people and that the coloured people, from birth, should be integrated with the white population. All members know, of course, the problems that would create. In my opinion young Aboriginal babies and children get a bad start in life because of their home environment. By the time they are ready to commence school they are well behind any white child. They are unaccustomed to studying, and there is no place in an Aboriginal home where a child can keep his books. The result is that the preschool members of the Aboriginal family play with the books, and I have been told by several school teachers that they are often called upon to issue a new set of books to Aboriginal children because the books have either been lost or destroyed.

As the Aboriginal children progress through school it is found that they are always behind scholastically; that is, compared with the progress of white children. At one time it was envisaged that by integrating Aboriginal children with white children at school, the white children would upgrade the Aboriginal children and give them an incentive to keep up. However, from the observations I have made, I am sorry to say that the opposite has occurred. One school teacher in my province told me that he was almost reduced to tears because the white children in his school were, scholastically, two years behind white children of the same age in Perth. This had been brought about because the white children had to be kept back so that the Aboriginal children would have an opportunity to catch up.

One person suggested that we should establish a white welfare department. This suggestion was made because, to give an example, a white patient has to pay his fare to Perth on the plane operated by the Royal Flying Doctor Service, but an Aboriginal patient does not; his fare being paid by the Department of Native Welfare. The practice has now been established of waiting until an Aboriginal patient has to

go to Perth and then sending a white patient to accompany him free of charge. Whilst mentioning this matter I would like to pay tribute to the wonderful work that has been performed by the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Another unfortunate trait of the Aborigines is that they do not appreciate the responsibility of paying for goods or services. For example, I believe it is quite a problem trying to get them to pay the rental for their homes. I understand that at one school the white children went on strike because they found the Aboriginal children were not paying their 5c regularly for the provision of sporting facilities. I did not check the veracity of that story, but I believe such an incident could happen.

Some members may like to know that a week or so ago the Premier opened the sealed road from Perth to Meekatharra and a little beyond. School children were invited to write an essay on the occasion, and it is interesting to know that an Aboriginal girl at Cue won the prize for her school. It appears that the boy who won the outright prize wrote his essay as if he were the road that was being built through that area. It was a most interesting essay. In her essay, the Aboriginal girl outlined her views, as an Aboriginal, of the sealed road. I have met this Aboriginal girl, who seemed to be a fairly good type. One wonders what is in life for her. She is rising 12 to 13 years of age. Where does she go from here?

As far as the Aboriginal children are concerned I must make reference to a nasty word which is used; the word is "segregation." I have a terrible feeling that if we are to succeed in bringing the children up to a reasonable standard they might have to be segregated from other children, and be provided with special teachers. If we are to do the best for these children, and if the children want to do the best they can, then we will have to provide dedicated teachers to take on this job of, more or less, specialising in the teaching of Aboriginal children to bring out the best in them.

I do not think we will have any academics among these children, but they are good with their hands, and most of them can draw. The other evening I was pleased to see a feature on television showing what is being done at the Gnowangerup Agricultural School. I was very impressed with this. There is a similar school at Tardun which looks after the Aboriginal children in the Murchison area, and this school is doing a fine job also. One asks: Where do the children go after they have passed through this farm school? If they were to remain around the stations after they had been taught at the school it would be all right. As very few of these children will become academics, it is perhaps in the lap of the gods as to what will happen to them.

I wish to bring forward another small complaint which I have received from a teacher. Once an Aboriginal child shows any promise he or she is immediately given a bursary or a scholarship, and is sent to Geraldton to obtain specialised education. However, the weaker children are left at the school, and they are the ones who are dragging the class back.

I read with interest what Mr. Wise had to say in his contribution to this debate, and I entirely agree with his remarks. He spoke on the effect of alcohol on the Aboriginal population. One of the greatest curses in this State has been the granting of liquor rights to Aborigines. Very often liquor turns these normal and very charming people into animals. I have seen them do terrible things while they were under the influence of alcohol; at ordinary times I have spoken to these self same people, and I found them to be natural and charming. It is shocking to see the effect that demon drink has on them.

I sincerely hope that something can be done, and that fairness will prevail in respect of kangaroo shooters and the industry in general. I leave it to the Minister to bring this about, because I know he is a very fair man.

In respect of the education of Aboriginal children, this appears to be in the lap of the gods. Perhaps we might be given some vision on how to work out a satisfactory system for the treatment of the Aboriginal population, and for the education of the children in particular.

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (Lower West—Minister for Fisheries and Fauna) [5.03 p.m.]: As a result of the matter that has been raised by Mr. Brand in respect of kangaroos, I thought I should take this opportunity to say a few words on the subject. I am aware that a number of people seem to be a little confused with regard to what is proposed, and what are the plans.

I was interested to hear Mr. Brand say that when he was in the east he heard some people comment on the possibility of panic action and wrong decisions being taken in regard to the conservation and control of any particular species of animal. In particular, the concern has been expressed in respect of kangaroos. I can well understand this, because some people have got hold of a tremendous amount of wrong information.

One can have no complaint about the Government's proposals in respect of the control of kangaroos. This has been the subject of some discussion lately, because *The West Australian* and other newspapers have dealt with the matter. The subject has also been covered quite adequately by a couple of television programmes. Despite all this, it is obvious—as illustrated by a number of letters that

have appeared in the Press and by the utterances of some people on this matter—that the people have been misled.

I think about seven petitions have been presented to the Federal Parliament, all praying that the Federal authorities will prevent the export of kangaroos or kangaroo products, and will issue forthwith an immediate ban on the shooting of all kangaroos throughout the length and breadth of Australia. This is the sort of panic action to which the honourable member has referred, and it is quite ridiculous.

Kangaroos are a common property resource stock which roam over a considerable area of Australia. They constitute a viable economic industry. What the Government is proposing is to establish the right to crop kangaroos; that is, to handle any build-up of kangaroos in a proper and rational manner. Regarding the numbers of kangaroos, we are not too sure how many there are. The technique for estimating the numbers of kangaroos is effective especially when we take into account the type of parameters that are required for conservation purposes. If a person were running a property he would want to know the number of sheep he had, to within a few of the actual number. When we estimate the population of natural beasts then the number, accurate to within 500,000, is near enough. So, with regard to the red kangaroo population—these are the animals which are of concern to Mr. Brand—there are about 1,500,000, give or take 400,000. That is near enough for our purposes.

I notice that Mr. Perry is looking at me with some interest. I cannot tell him how many grey kangaroos there are, because I have not checked up on it.

The Hon. T. O. Perry: I have over 100 on my property!

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: The techniques for the counting of animals in the wild have been developed. These techniques have been adopted in the Kruger National Park and in other national parks of the world, as well as in other parts of Australia. The numbers can be checked, and checked very accurately, indeed. This can be done by the scientists who study population dynamics of numbers of various species.

In this connection I would point out that over the last five years the estimates of the crayfish population, undertaken prior to the crayfishing season commencing, have been within 400,000 lb. of the actual crays taken. This is not a very wide margin of error when we take into account the annual take of 18,000,000 to 23,000,000 lb. A skilful person using the known techniques can get that close to the actual figure.

What the Government is trying to do is to establish the number of shooters to be employed full time in actually cropping a

common property resource stock in a given area in a proper fashion. The area happens to be about 300,000 square miles. We want to crop these kangaroos in a proper and a legitimate fashion; and we want to market them to the full advantage of the product.

This meat will bring a reasonable price. I think last year the lowest price received was 2½c per lb. on the property for kangaroos with the head off and the gut removed. That is a better price than the price many farmers are currently receiving for their sheep. So, the cropping of kangaroos is a good proposition.

Some people have talked about a reduction in the number of licensed shooters. That is not correct. We have never had any licensed shooters in this sense, so the Government is establishing something new. Members will recall what took place two years ago when reference was made to the yellow tags, a sample of which was tabled in this House. What we are aiming to do is to obtain full-time operators in this field to keep the numbers of kangaroos at a reasonable level, so that they are not permitted to increase to pest proportions. At present there is nothing to stop a property holder preventing the number from increasing to pest proportions, because he is permitted to use poison; but this is not the best or an economic method of handling the kangaroos. We want to handle and crop the kangaroos so that their skins and meat can be sold.

Today kangaroo meat is sold as pet packs. I can foresee the time when kangaroo meat will be sold for human consumption. Mr. Brand has referred to the operations of the shooters, and I have had the opportunity to look at them in the field. What I saw was very interesting. They operated in a very clean, efficient, and humane manner; and I was very impressed.

Many people have accepted all sorts of information on this subject as gospel. For instance, the figure of about 200,000 kangaroos has been quoted as being the number to be cropped each year. This is probably a little in excess of the number taken regularly over the years, and this applies predominantly to the red kangaroos in this State. There seems to be some confusion, because in Queensland the kangaroos are predominantly the grey species. In Western Australia the grey kangaroo has not constituted a big component of the kangaroo industry.

Last year, probably 400,000 kangaroos were taken. This was brought about as a result of the bunching of kangaroos owing to adverse conditions. In some areas the shooting was so intense that the current consignments for this year are down. Sometimes the counts are as high as 60 to 75 kangaroos to a ton. If one works this

out one will find that the shooters are taking kangaroos of a live weight of something under 30 lb.—and this weight represents a fairly small doe. It is undesirable that kangaroos of this size be shot.

We want to be able to control the number of kangaroos, and there are one or two ways in which this can be done. We often hear conflicting views when we hear people talk about a large number of kangaroos in a given area. Certainly when the pasture in a locality is good the kangaroos will move into it. The shooters will follow them in and thin the numbers down. Then they will move on. We should look at the cropping of the kangaroos as it affects the whole kangaroo population. We do not believe there is any danger of the kangaroos being shot out of existence, and thus becoming extinct. Strange as it may seem, shooting of animals in large numbers is seldom the factor which leads to the extinction of the species. Normally extinction occurs by changing the habitat; that is, by ploughing the locale. Kangaroos are able to live in the back country and to survive. We believe that the numbers should be kept at a level at which this industry, worth about \$1,000,000 per annum, can be maintained.

The honourable member who spoke on this matter said that station owners would still like to see the odd kangaroo, but they wanted to keep the numbers below the pest level. It is reasonable that the numbers should be kept at such a level that it would not require many months to find the kangaroos. This is a situation we hope to be able to bring about.

Let us say that the cropping of 200,000 is wrong. We anticipate there will be 60—and not 45 or 50—kangaroo shooters. A kangaroo shooter can operate on a take of 4,000 animals a year. Some shooters take up to 8,000 a year, and I know one who last year took up to 12,000 kangaroos. Probably this person made more money from this pursuit than did the station owner on whose property he was operating. However, that is beside the point. If it is decided to permit a shooter to take 4,000 a year, there would be no trouble at all. All that is required to ensure that this number is taken is to issue the requisite number of tags; and if a smaller number is desired to be taken, then fewer tags would be issued.

How do we know that 200,000 is the number that should be cropped each year? We do not know. As is the case with many other matters, when we deal with the control and the management of a natural product—in this case the kangaroo—we have to work on educated guesses, based on the best scientific information we can obtain. We do have the qualified scientific men working in the field, so this area is quite flexible. I think all members will agree that it is desirable to retain the number of shooters at a reasonable level, to

enable them to make a living from this industry. That is preferable to having too many shooters for the number of kangaroos to be taken, because the shooters in those circumstances would not be able to earn a living. I would prefer to keep the number of shooters on a reasonable basis, although I am aware that occasionally in good years they will be able to make a lot more money than they are usually.

It is difficult because we have to sort out people for the first time and say that this group shall have a living from this work, but the other people will be denied it. This is a most difficult thing to do and no doubt licenses of the type to which I have referred will become worth money.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: Can you give us an estimate of how many people are shooting without licenses as compared with the 60 to whom you have referred? Would it be 500 as against 60?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: It is extremely difficult to say. I think it is probable that there were no more than, say, probably 30 or 40 full-time operators in the field prior to the licensing regulations being gazetted—these are fellows who shoot for a minimum of 40 weeks a year and who, for the rest of the time, do not earn any money. There were probably 350 others in the State who shot either at the weekends, for a month during their holidays, or perhaps on a Sunday but all of whom, in fact, sold the product.

I know there are some people who used to go away over the weekend to shoot kangaroos. They would leave Perth on a Friday night towing a trailer, spend the weekend shooting, load their trailer with carcasses, and sell the carcasses when they returned to Perth. I think up to date we have had 371 applications for shooting licenses, but a tremendous number were completely unable to supply any history of shooting.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: I am a bit concerned about the continuity of supply if you restrict shooting.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: It is a matter of arithmetic. If we have 60 shooters and we issue them with tags for, say, 4,000 kangaroos each—it would not work out quite like that—this would mean 240,000 kangaroos. Then, let us say we wanted to take another 50,000 kangaroos—perhaps some pastoralists were complaining that the kangaroo numbers on their properties had built up to pest proportions and they wanted them thinned out. In that case we would issue another 50,000 tags.

If we want the animals shot on a particular property we issue the tags to that property and the kangaroo shooters move to the area where they pick up their tags from the owner of the property. The pastoralist would have the right to say which shooters shall operate on his property.

A kangaroo shooter can take up to 8,000 carcasses a year with reasonable ease. Therefore, this system provides for flexibility and a continuity of supply. It will keep the industry a viable and continuing one, and, as I said, provide for flexibility to keep the kangaroo stock at something below pest level and yet something above what is considered to be a viable point for a continuing population. There is a point below which the position becomes difficult from a recovery angle, because the males just do not meet the females. The numbers are spread out too thinly over the area. Does that answer the honourable member?

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: Yes, it is a help. I was a bit worried about the seasonal problems.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Many of these problems are tackled by the authorities as they go along. I was pleased to hear Mr. Brand say that he was impressed by the fellow who said that these problems must be worked out on a scientific basis. We believe that the various problems which confront us from time to time will be resolved. I have no doubt we will face some difficult periods in the initial stages and it has caused me a tremendous amount of concern, particularly when one has the responsibility of saying that so-and-so cannot have a license when perhaps one feels he ought to have a license.

However, I think the few words I have had to say may have allayed some members' perturbation because of the letters they have received. Any suggestions that can be put forward most certainly will be considered in the hope that we will be able to establish—and I am firmly convinced we will be able to do this—a cropping programme which will ensure, (a), that the kangaroos are kept within reasonable numbers; and, (b)—and this is most important—that for the future generations we will be able to keep the kangaroo a natural free animal which it will be possible for people to see without having to take an exploratory safari.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines) [5.20 p.m.]: May I commence my remarks this afternoon by expressing to my old friend, Frank Willmott, my sincere sympathy in his recent sad loss.

I am glad to see that Mr. Strickland is back in the House. Although he is not here this afternoon he has this session become a regular attender. He has recovered very well from his recent illness and I feel sure it will not be long before all the fight is back in him. As a matter of fact, I have seen obvious signs of it even in the speech he made this session.

It has been customary for the Leader of this House to reply to the comments made by members who address themselves

to the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply. After having done this now for the twelfth time, I do not know really whether it is a good idea. However, I have been prepared over the years to live with the traditions that have been in existence for such a long time—long before I came into this Chamber—but on this occasion I have had some difficulty. Parliament commenced its sittings on the 6th August and, although I cannot vouch for the accuracy of my figures, I think in the first three weeks we had 13 speeches and in the last two days last week we had 12 speeches. Therefore, it has been difficult for me to gather all the information required. In fact, in respect of 10 of the speeches made last week I just have not had sufficient time to gather the replies required.

As you may be aware, Mr. President, in the Legislative Assembly the Government does not reply to the speeches made by members, and I am inclined to the view that unless there is any particular subject matter that needs to be replied to, either by the person sitting in the seat I now occupy, or the seats of the other two Ministers in this Chamber, it may not be a bad idea if the custom is changed next year.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I agree with you.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Remarks made by members during the debate on the Address-in-Reply can, if thought fit, after making a study of the speeches made, be forwarded to the Ministers concerned for attention.

In introducing my remarks in support of members who have addressed the House during the course of this debate, I think I can say without fear of contradiction that the most important topic touched on by members was the present plight of primary producers in this State. May I remark at this point that problems associated with production and marketing are not singular to Western Australia but are having their impact on the other States of the Commonwealth. It is purely a matter of degree. This unhappy state of affairs throughout primary industry in Australia has been reflected in some aspects of the recently announced Federal Budget, which aspects are directed at relieving some of the most serious disabilities of farmers—at least in the wool industry.

However, we in this State are particularly hard put to overcome our rural problems after last year's drought. These problems are accentuated this season in spite of good seasonal rains around the south-west coast, for there are other parts of the State wherein seasonal conditions are poor.

On a national basis, our disabilities are substantial with primary production acreage second only to New South Wales, but

again greatly accentuated by the increasing number of new farmers endeavouring to become established on the vast acreages which have been made available for selection, progressively each year, for some several years past. This is the group which I imagine has been hardest hit not only by the drought conditions of last year, but also by the national wheat surplus necessitating the introduction of the wheat quota system. The refusal by the Commonwealth Government to assist Western Australia's claim for drought relief is very much regretted, to say the least.

As Mr. Heltman and other members have commented, the State Government, within the scope of available financial resources, has done its best to alleviate financial hardship occasioned by loss of crops and stock.

The vastly expanded services of the Department of Agriculture are available to assist in the development of keen farming economy, soil and water conservation, and disease prevention, and at all times the Government is open to suggestion as to what further improvements and encouragements might be considered. Several such suggestions emanated from this debate on the Address-in-Reply motion and these have been brought to the notice of the appropriate Ministers concerned.

Several of the primary production proposals put forward have since been examined and I propose shortly to convey to the members who made these proposals the comment on them which has been made available to me for the information of the House. Within the limits of the several aspects which have been put before members, I intend, as far as the information presently to hand will permit, to deal with these rural problems in a general and rather impersonal manner befitting the seriousness of the subject.

But initially I wish to thank the members who have spoken in support of Mr. Syd Thompson who addressed the House in reply to the Governor's opening speech.

The honourable member referred to the prevailing wheat surplus and the introduction of quotas; and, in his survey of the agricultural position, naturally made reference to the decreased wool prices. We were reminded of the hardship and uncertainty which has been coupled with the aftermath of the drought conditions and the fact that property values have been seriously affected.

Mr Syd Thompson felt that serious problems were facing new farmers because present productivity bore no relation to their earlier commitments; he added that inflation was the biggest problem farmers had to contend with and that it should be halted.

The honourable member reviewed briefly the present seasonal conditions and referred to an upsurge in rural policies. I

believe that sums up the general position fairly well. He also referred to grain alcohol and the responsibility of the Federal Government to meet the cost of proving the economics of producing grain alcohol as a supplement to mineral petroleum. Some recent statements which have been made do not indicate a favourable response in that direction.

The Hon. S. T. J. Thompson: I did not make any suggestions to this effect. The Federal Government has the responsibility of giving answers to the questions which are being asked. I never suggested at any time that it should provide the money.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: In that case, I beg the honourable member's pardon. However, somebody has to provide the money, which is quite substantial, if we can believe the publicity that has appeared in the Press—and we have no reason to disbelieve it. If this is accurate, the economics of such an industry appear, to me at least, to be beyond the resources of the State Government. It should be a matter for the Commonwealth if it is an economic proposition to assist.

I noted the honourable member's comments on the expansion of mineral development being timely during this period of primary industry depression. As Minister for Mines, I have said before—and I say again now—that it is fortunate for us in Western Australia that we have been able to achieve this balance of economy and have been able to inject into Western Australia industries based on minerals. Without that, I am afraid our situation would not be as bright and rosy as it is.

The honourable member spoke favourably of the administration of the State education system and supported his views with figures of expenditure under major headings. He referred, in particular, to the good job done by the Government in expanding apprentice education, but he was somewhat critical of the position of junior high schools and the financial disabilities of parents dissatisfied with local educational standards, yet deprived of living-away-from-home allowances when children are sent to, and board in, another town.

In the matter of lowering the voting age, Mr. Syd Thompson put forward the proposition that voluntary enrolment for the 18 to 21-year group would provide an interesting experiment, if adopted. All I can say is that I see practical difficulties in the way of such a suggestion.

I was interested in his passing reference to the lawless element when he deplored that ministers of religion, educationalists, and members of Parliament were "all prepared to ask young people to break the law and not only break it, but to do so with violence."

If I might say so, whether he intended to do so or not, the honourable member laid the blame for youthful violence on present-day advanced education. I fear that Mr. Syd Thompson left us all a bit in the air by generalising on this matter. Had he developed the theme a little more deeply, perhaps the rather bad impression given as to the influence which members of Parliament, in particular, were having in the encouragement of lawlessness in young people, might have been avoided.

The matter of town planning, the main subject to which the Leader of the Opposition's speech was devoted, is a matter concerning my colleague, The Hon. L. A. Logan. Mr. Willesee was supported in his remarks by Mrs. Hutchison. Mr. Logan has spoken to the debate and I do not propose adding anything further in this respect.

In expressing the disappointment which existed throughout the Gascoyne at the result of the feasibility study concluded on the major dam project for the Gascoyne River, Mr. Berry indicated that he was aware the Government was pursuing a feasibility study of the lower reaches of the Gascoyne in the Rocky Pool area, with the intention of developing further river-bed supplies. Mr. Berry referred to the providential flow of water in the river each year since 1959 and looks for some expedition in the present study to avert the disabilities which would accompany a non-flow year.

I noted that the honourable member was disposed, at this point, to rest assured in the knowledge that the necessary work is proceeding with the object of achieving a satisfactory solution to the irrigationists' problems on the Gascoyne River.

Reference was made to the effect of cyclone *Ingrid* wiping out the plantations earlier this year and that this destruction placed great strain on the growers' compensation fund and the Government which came to their aid by underwriting the deficiency. Mr. Berry pointed out that the consequent upsurge in winter production after the cyclone had been offset by the downward trend in prices—prices which have remained static for the past 20 years in spite of increasing costs of production.

The honourable member sought a Government subsidy towards meeting the cost in isolated centres of providing new engines or equipment and house rewiring necessitated by the replacement of worn-out electricity plant with plant producing AC current and installed at considerable cost. He said the financial burden on decreasing populations in remote towns was substantial.

The Government, which is aware of the financial problems associated with changing electricity supply systems in country towns from DC to AC, assists financially.

Most of the undertakings affected were owned by the local shire councils and, in these cases, the State paid two-thirds of the cost of the changeover.

When the towns are being changed over to alternating current it has been necessary—as the honourable member says—to rewire some of the premises, either wholly or partly. This rewiring was not due directly, however, to the change to AC, but to the obsolescence and deterioration of wiring in houses which were wired many years ago. All premises must now be wired in accordance with the *Wiring Code* published by the Standards Association of Australia. This code does not discriminate in any way between premises wired for direct current and those wired for alternating current.

Fortunately, problems involved in changing from DC have almost entirely been resolved. Free technical advice has been given by the State Electricity Commission and, with the financial help given by the State, very few consumers are now supplied with direct current. The changeover currently in force in Cue will be completed—I am advised—within a week or so. The only consumers then remaining on direct current will be a small number located in Boulder.

The Government, realising the high prices being paid for electricity in remote areas, has the State Electricity Commission at present investigating the problem with a view to ascertaining whether it is possible to reduce the cost of electricity to those consumers.

I have referred to the Treasurer the honourable member's query on stabilising the 26th parallel as the boundary for assessment of financial assistance. Other areas of the State, he pointed out, could be even more remote than some centres north of that parallel.

In this matter I am reminded that it was decided in 1965 to extend the concessional allowances that then applied only to residents north of the 26th parallel. A new sub-northern zone was defined covering mainly the Murchison and the far eastern goldfields. The area includes such towns as Meekatharra, Wiluna, Cue, Mt. Magnet, Sandstone, Leonora, Laverton, Menzies, and Yalgoo.

The concessions that were extended to residents in these areas were—

Free air fares to scholars.

Rental concessions on Commonwealth-State housing homes.

Air freight subsidy on perishables.

Increase in the Christmas exemption for mines allowed to protect leases from forfeiture for non-compliance with labour requirements.

An increase in assistance to prospectors.

At the same time, an approach was made to the Commonwealth Government asking that Commonwealth income tax concessions that apply to residents north of the 26th parallel be extended to the new sub-northern zone that had been adopted by the State Government. The Prime Minister advised that consideration would be given to the matter. However, although further approaches have been made to the Commonwealth and the income tax concessions for zone A residents increased, the zone A boundaries for income tax purposes have not yet been altered to coincide with the enlarged State area.

While applauding the sealing of the road from Perth to Meekatharra and 50 miles northwards, Mr. Berry pressed for the sealing of the 80-mile strip of road between Minilya turn-off and Exmouth. I have referred this matter to the Minister for Works and I am now in a position to advise that on completion of the priming of the seven-mile section of the Learmonth road from Minilya northwards—which is currently in progress at a cost of \$160,000—a further 16 miles will be primed at a cost of \$250,000 with funds provided in the Main Roads Department's 1970-71 programme. It has been estimated that the cost of priming and sealing the remaining 63 miles would be \$1,400,000 but the department would continue to make annual allocations available to seal additional lengths. The position would be reviewed each year in the light of major works and commitments in northern areas.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: The worst stretch to do is the area just north of Minilya.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I assume the honourable member had a trip there recently.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: A nightmare journey!

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Amongst these works are the needs of fast-growing towns in the Ashburton and Pilbara regions related to extensive developments, such as iron-ore projects. Despite these demands on departmental funds, it may be expected with confidence that we will be able to carry out progressive sealing work on the Exmouth-Minilya Road each year.

As members will recall, Dr. Hislop imparted to the House material sent to him by a number of branches of the Teachers' Union.

Mr. White made the theme of his address to the House the incidence of land tax, and in doing so, covered in detail several classes of anomaly. In a very well prepared speech, Mr. White made comparisons as between taxation and shire rates and pointed out disabilities of landholders in rural and near metropolitan hills areas. The honourable member's remarks have been referred to the Treasurer for comment.

This afternoon I listened to the honourable member read out a question which I shall have to answer tomorrow. At the time I was not clear in my mind to whom the statement he referred should be credited. It struck me that perhaps the honourable member was asking me to answer a question to fortify his own opinion on a certain matter. I can see from looking at him that this is so, and I am glad I did not miss the point. His main arguments were—

The basis of valuation used by the State Taxation Department was unjust, because departmental valuers were using incorrect principles.

The basis of raising vermin and noxious weeds rates should be changed.

Relief should be given to taxpayers, particularly those suffering hardship.

Land taxes and rates imposed by the State should not exceed in total 50 per cent. of the amounts of shire rates.

I shall deal with each of these in turn.

One of the reasons for the steep increases in values is the rather lengthy period which elapses between revaluations. In the metropolitan area this is generally at least four years and in some cases even longer. In country areas it is currently very much longer.

This situation has developed over a long period and is brought about by a shortage of qualified persons in the department. There is a general shortage of valuers throughout Australia.

On taking over the valuation work, the State immediately attempted to fill the vacancies but, because of the shortage I have mentioned, received little response. Therefore, at the beginning of this year, it instituted a valuer-in-training course and 21 recruits have been appointed.

The valuations are made by professionally trained people and reflect the movement in values determined by land prices and other factors affecting the value of land. There is no doubt that the values placed on properties by the department are conservative, as the commissioner's valuations are by law subject to objections and appeals.

It may be of interest to members to know the procedure which is followed with objections and appeals. A taxpayer, on payment of one-quarter of the tax assessed, may object to an assessment on the ground that the valuation is too high. He is required to set out his reasons for his objection. On receipt of the objection the valuer, whenever practicable, arranges an appointment and fully discusses the ground of the objection with the taxpayer and explains the basis of the department's valuation. If, during these discussions, additional facts are brought to the attention of the valuer and they are

sufficient to convince him that an amendment is warranted, he may so recommend. If, on the other hand, the valuer is satisfied that his valuation is fair and reasonable, after taking all factors into account, the objection may be disallowed.

If the taxpayer is still dissatisfied, he may then require the commissioner to treat the objection as an appeal and the commissioner is required by law to justify his valuation before an independent court. There are no costs to the taxpayer associated with making an objection.

In these circumstances I suggest to Mr. White that if he is satisfied that valuations and the basis of making valuations are wrong, he follows a remedy which is clearly provided for in the law. It seems to me that, if action is to be taken to reduce the amounts of taxes and rates payable, the remedy is not to tinker with the valuations system because placing arbitrary figures on certain land will create far worse inequities than it is supposed to cure.

This leads me to the other points made by Mr. White. The problem of the basis to be used for assessing vermin and noxious weeds rates has been under consideration for some considerable time. I understand that the use of the acreage basis is not completely acceptable to all of the rural community and further investigation is currently proceeding.

In regard to the question of relief from land taxes, raised by Mr. White, as announced by the Premier, the Treasury and the State Taxation Department have been examining the problems of the incidence of land rates and taxes with a view to making recommendations for changes to the present law where experience with concessions introduced last year shows this to be necessary.

I am afraid that I cannot see the logic in the last point made by Mr. White. Local authority rates and State land rates and taxes are raised for totally different purposes—

The Hon. F. R. White: Yes, local authority rates are raised for services.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: —and the needs of the one are not necessarily 50 per cent. of the other. I think if we endeavoured to follow this as a general rule we might get one person out of trouble and another into trouble.

The Hon. F. R. White: But you wouldn't feel it was justified to charge a landowner four times as much land tax as shire rates?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I merely said that to adopt this as a general rule might do some good in one case and not so much good in another.

The Hon. F. R. White: This anomaly is occurring only in the areas where revaluations are taking place.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: As I already explained, the processes of the law are available for the purpose of appeals against valuations and revaluations.

Mr. Heitman raised the question of abattoirs. It now seems that with the additional men obtained from New Zealand by the assistant general manager (Mr. R. Bosward) there will be a reasonable labour force at the Midland Junction Abattoir and it appears likely that it will be possible to slaughter up to 40,000 sheep and lambs per week in the immediate future.

I feel I should add that this will be possible provided the people employed in the industry stay at work, because the fact that they go out on strike lends all sorts of difficulties to the primary producer who expects his stock to go to the abattoir to be slaughtered and sold. A state of industrial unrest such as we have had at Midland—and, I regret to say, in many other parts of the State—does the industry no good at all.

In addition, the new general manager (Mr. B. Wilson) has plans for the future which, if they come to fruition, could considerably increase the number of sheep and lambs slaughtered. In view of these circumstances, together with the planned new works at Katanning and the possibility of at least one and possibly two new export works in the metropolitan area, it would seem that there could be adequate capacity for the processing of sheep and lambs even during the peak period of September–October. I have heard it said that the peak period is with us now and, of course, I must agree with that.

Considerable expenditure is still required for the completion of the planned capital works programme as well as for general maintenance at both Midland and Robb Jetty. Unfortunately the limiting factor at the present time, particularly in respect of the slaughtering of sheep and lambs, is likely to be a severe shortage of Commonwealth inspectors. There is a deficiency of Commonwealth inspectors in the metropolitan area now and every effort is being made to have additional inspectors sent from the Eastern States, and several have been promised; nevertheless there will be a shortage. It is difficult to say just what effect this will have on limiting the throughput of sheep and lambs but there is little doubt there will be a limitation—in fact this has already occurred.

The Midland Junction Abattoir is, of course, a service abattoir under the control of a board, whilst Robb Jetty is a trading concern operating under the State Trading Concerns Act. I was advised today that the average kill by a slaughterman at Robb Jetty last year was 102, and this year the figure is down to 72. I think those figures relate to sheep and they indicate a 25 per cent. to 35 per cent. decrease in the kill rate.

The Hon. J. Dolan: Is that per day?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes, per day. This is a considerable depletion in the kill rate and while this is happening we must expect trouble.

The Hon. R. Thompson: What is the main cause?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I do not know. I would ask the honourable member what causes the men to slow down.

The Hon. R. Thompson: It is not all ways the men who slow down. The slow down could be due to the non-arrival of stock or a breakdown of machinery.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am not suggesting that the immediate cause is the slaughtermen themselves. As the honourable member said, the slow down could be attributed to other reasons. However, the fact remains that the rate of kill has been considerably decreased this year compared with what it was last year, and this must have a detrimental effect.

As to wheat quotas, Mr. Heitman indicated that he favoured a system covering three out of five years in preference to the five out of seven years calculation as the shorter period would cover more farmers with a history of wheatgrowing. Also, he recommended an increase from 8,000 acres to 14,000 acres before the top cut applied.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Do you mean acres or bushels?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I should have said "bushels"; I thank the honourable member for correcting me. The best five out of seven averaging system does take account of variation in climatic conditions throughout the State.

It was agreed early in 1969 by the Australian Wheat Growers' Federation and the Commonwealth and State Governments that wheat production should be reduced. In Western Australia the revised system for determining quotas—specifically the top-cut reduction imposed on some growers—enables most producers to obtain reasonable quotas within the overall framework of curtailing wheat production while, at the same time, ensuring that excessive cropping practices are avoided. The need for quotas will be reviewed by the industry each year and the Wheat Industry Committee can, with the Minister's discretion, introduce changes in the system if considered necessary.

The aim of the quota system is to bring about a reduction in annual wheat output while world markets for wheat are limited. It would be inappropriate to append to the quota system some arrangement for allocating assistance to the farming community. Under such a scheme there would be no assurance that assistance would be directed to the areas of greatest need. Furthermore, using the quota system "to give a better economic return to a large

number of growers" is incompatible with the reason for its introduction. Measures to improve the economic position of wheatgrowers should be divorced from the individual grower's level of wheat production.

Producers with large quotas frequently would be more heavily capitalised for wheat production than small producers. Low quotas for such growers would lead to serious debt repayment difficulties in many cases. Also, some of the high quotas apply to farms operated by more than one family unit. The independent committee looked at the question of indebtedness in relation to quotas and concluded that the two should be considered separately.

In the matter of encouraging a dairy industry in the Geraldton area, I have a fairly lengthy report which I shall make available to any member who is interested.

Mr. Heitman favoured one selling authority for wool as lending itself to superior sorting and blending processes which ensured better presentation for which higher prices would be obtained. It is agreed that there has not been much change in the auction system for 150 years. However, there have been some changes in the method of selling wool, such as the growth in private selling, especially in Western Australia, and pooling arrangements for wool sold within the auction system.

When the \$30,000,000 emergency relief scheme for woolgrowers was announced, the Minister for Primary Industry said that the Commonwealth Government would investigate the wool industry's longer term needs of debt reconstruction and farm adjustment and would make a preliminary report as soon as possible. He also said the marketing issue was being examined as a matter of urgency.

On the information available, there is little evidence to support the view that textile manufacturers overseas would welcome the introduction of a single marketing authority for wool. The view that there is not a great variation between the prices for good wools and other wools is dubious, as is the view that the "price of the raw product is not of such great importance in the overall picture." Although the price of the raw product may be a small component of the total cost of the finished product, there is some evidence to suggest that textile manufacturers are quite responsive to relatively small changes in the relative prices of wool and synthetics.

While supporting the Main Roads Department's activities generally, Mr. Heitman suggested the department should assist local authorities by hiring out plant to them for subcontract work, thus enabling maintenance gangs to be fully employed.

The advice delivered to me is that the additional funds of \$690,000 granted to local authorities refers only to the increase in the statutory grants under the new road grants scheme. In addition to this, they will share substantially in the spending of the \$8,000,000 allocation for developmental roads. In fact, it is expected that the local authorities will spend almost \$4,500,000. In addition, they will be expected to expend \$175,000 of departmental funds on the maintenance of the more important secondary roads. These figures could be taken as the minimum amounts local authorities will expend on the department's behalf since it may eventuate that other works on the department's programme could be carried out by those local authorities which have the necessary equipment.

The hiring of plant from local authorities has some problems inasmuch as difficulties arise in co-ordinating works with the availability of plant from local authorities. However, where circumstances make it practicable the department does hire plant from local authorities for use on departmental works.

In suggesting that the proposed ministry of conservation should direct its attention initially to the conservation of soil and water as a basic need, the honourable member suggested the setting up of a conservation commission.

I think I should point out that the Soil Conservation Act was passed in 1945 and this provided for the appointment of a Commissioner of Soil Conservation and forming of the soil conservation service as a branch of the Department of Agriculture.

After the very wet winters of 1963 and 1964 which caused extensive erosion and flooding damage, some farmers organisations and groups made representations that the soil conservation service should be taken out of the hands of the Department of Agriculture. It was generally not made clear by the groups what they expected would be achieved by such a move, that could not be achieved under the existing organisation. The main soil erosion problems are related to agricultural and pastoral use of the land. The Government has always believed that specialist soil conservation officers should be working alongside and in close co-operation with the other agricultural scientists concerned with the many and varied aspects of agricultural and pastoral land use which have a bearing on the risks of erosion damage. Hence the Government has maintained its policy that the soil conservation service should continue as a branch of the Department of Agriculture in accordance with the Soil Conservation Act.

The farming community has been made more aware of the soil erosion hazard, through the extension activities of the soil conservation service and by lessons of experience on their own farms. The Government has provided more conservation

officers to meet the increased demands for advice and technical assistance. The present field staff of the soil conservation service consists of 13 professional officers and 17 technical officers. Much advice related to soil conservation is also given by field officers of the three industry divisions—wheat and sheep, dairying, and horticulture—and of the irrigation and drainage branch of the soils division, and by pastoral advisers of the north-west division.

The soil conservation service and the irrigation and drainage branch both promote and give advice and technical assistance regarding water conservation in farm storages. Many farmers have become aware of the inadequate provisions they had made for farm water supplies, and increasing numbers are taking advantage of the loans provided through the Government's key dam scheme and of the assistance available from departmental officers for planning farm dams and associated catchment improvements such as roaded catchments and contour collecting drains.

The main requirement for achieving soil and water conservation on farmlands is that the farming community should give these topics an adequate priority when making the many decisions necessary in the development, management, and practical aspects of farming.

The likely relationship between the proposed ministry of conservation, the Commissioner of Soil Conservation, and the soil conservation service branch of the Department of Agriculture, will surely develop in a co-ordination of interests.

Sitting suspended from 6.06 to 7.30 p.m.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I now turn my attention to some of the remarks made by Mr. Dolan. I think there is probably a likelihood of truth in his remarks concerning the smoking-driver hazard, and I doubt if any person who smokes, or who has smoked, has not at some time or other been dismayed to find a smouldering butt in his lap, or that a butt has slipped down the back of the seat of the car.

Mr. Dolan had something to say on overseas teacher recruit promotion and gave members an interesting discourse on the pending introduction of the metric system of weights and measures. Indeed, it was itself quite an educational address and his reference to accommodating the metric system in our projected legislation has been noted.

Members will recall that Mr. Abbey prefaced his remarks by commending the Governor's Speech, which dwelt on the State's progress; but he considered that too little was being said, generally, about the rate of progress being maintained by the Government. Of course, I cannot help but think that this is probably so.

Commenting that review in many areas was necessary from time to time, the honourable member mentioned having

brought to the notice of the Government the impact of land tax in certain areas of valuation. He had confidence that the examination of the position being made by the Premier would produce constructive results, and he could see saving features also in the present system. Other members referred to land tax matters and I have endeavoured to co-ordinate my remarks in reply.

Mr. Abbey supported egg production control as a means of reducing export at present being done at a very great loss. On the expected egg prices for 1970-71, he considered that the small producer would have difficulty in surviving.

I am advised by the Minister for Agriculture that a referendum of eligible poultry egg producers on the proposal that a licensing authority should be established to regulate the production of eggs in Western Australia will be held, and the ballot at this referendum will close on Friday, the 4th September, 1970.

The Poultry Farmers Association has submitted a plan for the control of egg production. A number of meetings to discuss the referendum and controlled production have been organised by the association of egg producers.

At present Western Australia is the only State where approval has been given for a referendum. During the past four years surplus production in this State expressed as a percentage of recorded production has been: 14.03, 4.29, 11.6, and 8.4. Surplus production in the Eastern States, particularly New South Wales, has been higher with resulting lower returns in the other States. A stable market in this State will attract the attention of large producers in other States where no production control exists and egg prices are lower. It is not clear at this stage what legal steps, if any, can be taken to prevent dumping of eggs into Western Australia.

The statement in Mr. Abbey's speech concerning the future of thousands of small producers must refer to Australia as a whole. In Western Australia the total number of producers entitled to vote in the referendum as a result of having 250 birds or more is 358 according to figures for 1969 provided by the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics. The number of holdings with 3,000 birds or more is 120. A 3,000-bird farm could be considered as the smallest economic unit for a family.

A more realistic economic unit under present conditions would be a minimum of 6,000 birds. Holdings with 6,000 or more birds total 43. This represents 8.9 per cent. of the total number of holdings, but makes up 46.16 per cent. of the total number of birds in the State.

Mr. Abbey supported Mr. Heitman in his proposals for the establishment of an additional abattoir—another matter coming under the heading of primary production

—but Mr. Abbey called for a more realistic attitude towards disease control on the farm. He considered this was one of the major factors adversely affecting the industry. "Too many diseased animals," he said, "went to the market."

In referring to a proposed referendum for control of lamb marketing, the honourable member pointed out that greater outlets for mutton sales were required.

I have already provided some information on abattoirs, but in response to the honourable member's concern about the marketing of lambs, I would add that after an investigation the Government decided in favour of increasing the capacity at existing abattoirs. Work is under way at present at both Midland Junction and Robb Jetty to increase slaughtering capacity. Also, a private company is to increase its scale of operations at Albany.

The Government is aware of the need to control diseases in sheep, particularly with respect to the export trade in mutton. A programme to inform producers of the measures necessary to control the diseases has been implemented through the department's advisory services.

While it is true that in recent years only a small number of lambs have been exported from Western Australia, the growth in the State's sheep population will ensure that a higher proportion of lamb production will be exported. Lamb will then become, like many other agricultural products, more dependent on export markets. The lamb marketing scheme proposed by the Farmers' Union does not envisage control of production.

It has been announced by the Minister for Agriculture that a referendum of lamb producers would be held as soon as possible to obtain their views on the proposal.

Mr. House mentioned that one of the most pressing problems confronting us in the agricultural areas is the declining price of wool coupled with a general recession in the farming districts. While not agreeing with Mr. Heltman's suggestions for reviewing the period basis for calculating wheat quotas, he felt the retention of the present system would restrict the ability of farmers to grow wheat. A greater degree of elasticity would have enabled greater help being given to the smaller growers which larger, well-established producers should not have needed. Climatic variations posed problems too.

The honourable member considered that the wool auctioning system was outdated. There were not sufficient countries participating these days to provide a really competitive auction. There were other disabilities, too, in the system, and Mr. House advocated a single wool marketing authority. He was concerned at the pressure being brought to bear to prevent the establishment of such an authority.

Mr. House considered handling costs could be reduced to the benefit of the grower, and both growers and manufacturers would appreciate price stability which a single marketing authority would ensure. An appraisal scheme based on the quality of wool appealed to him. I considered there was a good deal of undesirable wool in the wool industry.

Speaking on the economics of meat production, the honourable member considered it quite ridiculous to stress the fact that the farmer should become more efficient if there was to be no efficiency beyond the farm itself, particularly related to transport, and the marketing and sales organisation. He thought the farmer was being let down in some respects.

Mr. House predicted serious drought conditions this season in several sectors of the State and said the water boring programme should be organised for search. He said that the overstocking that was necessary led to insufficient water reserves.

The honourable member criticised the financial construction of the drought relief system and said that if it was now phased out, it might be possible to improve the terms and conditions of relief in the future. He pointed out that transport assistance based on rail freight charges fell short of the actual transport charges in the agistment of stock. The local system should be based on local conditions. Mr. House would like to see some elasticity in the matter of insistence on first mortgage security for assistance.

The honourable member advocated free choice of means of transport for farmers. He wished some of the recommendations of the Director-General of Transport (Mr. Knox) could be earlier implemented, and produced figures to substantiate benefits to primary industries which would flow from free choice; but, of course, he did not deal with other attendant matters. He pointed out that, in the matter of wool, the Albany district was disadvantaged by containerisation through the Port of Fremantle. The wool industry could not carry for long the high freight cost of the container system.

The member for the South Province referred to the work the Director-General of Transport is doing in trying to devise a less costly system in the southern part of the State, and the fact that there are changes which might be made which would result in some cargo flowing through Albany. He also queried why some of the Director-General of Transport's recommendations had not been accepted.

It is extremely difficult in some areas of the State to make changes in the pattern of transport without seriously affecting the revenue of the W.A.G.R., and through it, of course, the State. In much of the work the director-general has done so far the

problem confronts us. We can see a way of clearly benefitting the farming community but a substantial disadvantage results to the State, and for this reason his proposals in the south have not so far been acceptable.

The honourable member refers to overseas freight rates. These are not within the jurisdiction, but he may assume that the Minister for Transport is active in promoting the Government's point of view, which will be identical with that of all other members, to the Federal Minister for Shipping and Transport.

In relation to the effect which containerisation has had on the Port of Albany, our energies have been directed towards securing a full contribution towards the cost of centralisation and continuation of regular calls by noncontainer ships. In concert with many others we have been successful in the first endeavour, and I have good reason to suspect we have been successful in the second. The honourable member may like to know that a ship has already been scheduled to call at Albany to load wool after the first sale in the 1970-71 series.

Speaking on mining, Mr. House favoured the mining of the valuable montan wax as it could be done without detriment to the Fitzgerald reserve situated in his electorate. There would be an influx of population to the benefit of the adjacent farming areas, he contended.

I only want to say that the deposits of brown coal in the Fitzgerald River area have been known to the Mines Department for many years. On several occasions mining tenements have been pegged over them and investigations made as to whether they could be developed as a commercial venture. As a fuel, it was not a viable proposition and so, for some years, it has been of no interest to mining companies.

Recently, some tests were made on peat deposits in the south-west division to discover whether montan wax could be obtained from them. Following these tests, the Fitzgerald River brown coal was considered and a number of prospecting areas for coal were applied for over the deposits so that investigations could be carried out on the brown coal for the making of montan wax.

When the company concerned decided to make this investigation, it was aware that the coal lay in a large flora and fauna reserve of some 600,000 acres and so conservation consultants were employed to see whether any serious damage would be done to the reserve should mining take place. Their report indicated that mining would not do serious harm.

At the present time a warden's court hearing regarding four of these prospecting areas stands part heard and submissions from interested parties from both sides will be received.

As Mr. House has pointed out, montan wax is imported into Western Australia. I agree that these applications must be given careful consideration and that conservation and the possible advantages of mining the coal for the production of montan wax be decided in an objective atmosphere when all information on both aspects is available.

The only other comment I would make is that after listening to some members who expressed their points of view regarding the flora and fauna reserve, and the recovery of montan wax, I asked my department to let me have the file on the matter. I want to say, in the kindest way, that in my opinion there is no bandwagon upon which to jump in this case; no bandwagon at all. If the Government of the day had had its way the coal—not the montan wax—would have been mined many years ago. As a matter of fact, a shaft was sunk in the area and the file reveals information to the effect that the Minister for Mines was very anxious indeed that the coal should be recovered from the area.

The Hon. R. Thompson: How many years ago was that?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: About 40 or 50 years ago.

The Hon. R. Thompson: We did not have conservation in mind at that time.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: No; we did not have conservation in mind at that time. What is the point?

The Hon. R. Thompson: That is the point.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: What point is the honourable member making?

The Hon. R. Thompson: The point is, conserving the area.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: What gives the honourable member the idea that the area will not be conserved?

The Hon. R. Thompson: I am not saying it will not be conserved.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The honourable member chipped in with conservation as if he knew all about it.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I did not chip in at all; I asked, "How many years ago was that?"

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: All I am saying is that a great many people—as indicated by my colleague, the Minister for Fisheries and Fauna—are inclined to become apprehensive about this sort of thing. I want to assure members that if mining is to take place on that area it will be done in the light of considering the welfare of the State. In that consideration there will be conflicts of opinion and conflicts of interest between mining and conservation. Somebody has to decide which should be done in the interests of the State. I am not prepared to say, at this

point of time, that mining will take place in the area but if it does then I will make it my duty to ensure that all the protective conditions possible are imposed. I am able to impose these conditions, not only to ensure that the minimum amount of damage is done to the country, but also in the interests of restoration of the land.

I would like to thank Mr. Medcalf for his very useful comments on probate duty. It is apparent that he has given a great deal of thought to this matter and has taken considerable care in framing his proposals. The honourable member has had long experience in this field and his views warrant very careful attention by the Government.

As was indicated in the Governor's Speech, a very full study has been made of the whole question of probate duty with a view to determining where concessions are warranted, and to what extent they may be given. The honourable member may be assured that the points he has put forward will be very carefully considered and I hope we will be in a position to meet some of them.

In fact, a number of the points he has made have, I know, been the subject of study by Treasury and Taxation Department officers and I have no doubt that proposals will be put to the Government to alleviate a number of the problems he has mentioned. Nevertheless, I know that contributions of the type made by the honourable member are appreciated when derived, as they are, from direct experience with people vitally concerned, and are always valuable to the Government when undertaking a review of this nature.

Mention was made by Mr. Lavery of the transport co-ordination problem faced by the Minister for Transport and the staff who report to him, one of whom is the Director-General of Transport. The Minister is very conscious of this problem, and the thinking on organisation which the Director-General of Transport has been doing has as its objective the production of recommendations of ways and means by which these problems can be overcome. The nature of two possible recommendations are discussed on page 6 of the director-general's report. When the director-general feels able to make soundly based recommendations they will naturally be considered by the Minister for Transport.

The honourable member raised a question concerning the relationship between the Director-General of Transport and Dr. Nielsen, the Director of the Perth Regional Transportation Study. Aided by the Main Roads Department and the Town Planning Department the Director-General of Transport recommended that the Government should set up the study as a co-operative effort amongst those agencies closely concerned with urban transport planning. It is a good example of the sort of co-ordination that can be achieved under the present

arrangements. Dr. Nielsen reports to a steering committee chaired by the Minister for Transport. The committee includes the Director-General of Transport. I would point out that Dr. Nielsen will not be bringing forward another report. Instead he has been directed to answer a number of questions that are vital to our future planning and a summary of these questions appears on pages 17 and 18 of the director-general's report.

Mr. Lavery also referred to mining in the Fitzgerald River area. I have already made some comment in that regard and do not propose to say anything else. Mr. Lavery also touched on the subjects of abattoirs and the disabilities of epileptics in the matter of employment. Mr. Court as the acting Minister, has taken the matter up and has supplied some answers relating to this matter.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: The assurance given on the abattoirs has not been fulfilled.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: My colleague is referring to the assurance given by Mr. Lavery?

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Yes.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: I thought he was referring to Mr. Court.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I think he was referring to the peaceful industrial relations applying when Mr. Lavery made his speech.

The Hon. R. Thompson: That is a different sort of situation.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Is it not strange that Mr. Ron Thompson always bites when anyone mentions industrial relations.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Because I know I am right.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Mr. Deputy President, I can usually bet—

The Hon. R. Thompson: Careful!

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: —that the honourable member will come in with an interjection.

The Hon. R. Thompson: When I read the *Daily News* on the following day I could possibly have agreed with the Minister after looking at the headlines. However, when I read the paper I found it was a different situation.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Different from what?

The Hon. R. Thompson: Different from that about which Mr. Lavery spoke, and what you said fell apart the next day.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I said that Mr. Lavery referred to the good industrial relationship existing, and which fell apart the next day.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: Let us get on with the business.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Fortunately, the slaughtermen are back at work at the Midland abattoir and I am sure everyone is pleased about that.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: They are hopping in for their chop.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: The honourable member would not know.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Mr. Ron Thompson, who is sometimes prone to interject, made some suggestions for overcoming a pollution problem in Cockburn Sound and these have been referred to the Minister in charge of the metropolitan sewerage works.

Other matters referred to by the honourable member included the raising of the status of shires and land taxation increases which followed. I have already covered the question of land tax when replying to Mr. White on behalf of the Treasurer. The points raised concerning the State Housing Commission homes in the Willagee area have been referred to the appropriate authority for consideration with the request that the Minister might reply direct to the honourable member, as it may take some time to look into the several complaints made.

Mr. Ron Thompson also raised some aspects affecting married persons' protection. In the limited time available, I have brought the honourable member's comments to the notice of appropriate officers. There is a report on this matter which I shall be glad to make available to him. I will not endeavour to go through it now.

I think a great deal has already been said about farming disabilities and I shall not labour the matter in further reply to particular aspects raised by the honourable member.

I can only agree with Mr. Perry when he states that the farming "problem is real and that the problem is serious." As I hope the honourable member is aware, the Government has full knowledge of the problems involved and is taking positive action to assist financially and by such other means as are at its disposal within the scope of State powers.

Mr. Ferry dwelt on another aspect of primary production; namely, the timber industry—a mutual interest which the honourable member shares with Mr. Willmott. Referring to the tremendous help which the standard gauge railway and northern development had brought the timber industry, particularly the hardwood section of the industry, the honourable member drew attention to a challenge from overseas suppliers, who were advantaged by our heavy freight rates and lack of tariff protection for our hardwood industry. Mr. Ferry referred in general to the extreme competition to the industry from secondary industries producing substitute materials—such as aluminium—which are being used a great deal these

days in the building industry. The field of transport costs was one in which the Government might be able to help the industry, he thought.

I am not absolutely certain of the figures I am about to quote, but I believe that if one takes an acre of timber and cuts it over a 30-year period of time the amount of four by two timber which can be produced is four miles in length. If one takes the amount of bauxite which can be produced in the same area and relates it to the same period of time then the extruded aluminium on the basis of a four by two hollow tube is 110 miles.

I am not going into the question of costs because I do not know the answer to that, but obviously there is a great deal of benefit to be achieved from this sort of industry provided the Forests Department moves in and gets the first cut of the timber. When the bauxite is mined proper reafforestation can take place with the planting of *pinus pinaster* and *pinus radiata*. Reafforestation is achieved quite apart from the terrific increase in the amount of extruded aluminium which is available which, of course, is considerably stronger than four by two timber.

Mr. Ferry spoke favourably on the continuing work being done at the Denmark Research Station, and he paid tribute to those concerned.

Mr. Deputy President, I wish to express my appreciation to the several members who contributed to the debate in its closing hours. Between last Wednesday and today there have been some 10 or 12 speakers. Time has not permitted me to obtain information on the various matters raised by members who spoke on the motion on Wednesday and Thursday of last week, and by Mr. George Brand this evening. Ministers, whose portfolios cover the various matters raised, have been, or will be, notified of members' views. I support the motion.

Question put and passed; the Address-in-Reply thus adopted.

Presentation to Governor

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines) [8.01 p.m.]: I move—

That the Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor by the President and such members as may desire to accompany him.

Question put and passed.

COAL MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS) ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines) [8.02 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is a short measure under which it is proposed to liberalise provisions relating to a retired mineworker who is permanently blind and to extend these provisions to any dependant who may be similarly afflicted.

Under the existing provisions of section 7 of the principal Act, any amount of coal-miner's pension paid to an invalidity pensioner shall, until he attains the age of 60, be reduced by the amount of Commonwealth pension benefit, except where he qualified for such Commonwealth pension because of permanent blindness. Where either a pensioner's wife or his child is permanently blind, no such provision is made in respect of their Commonwealth blind pensioner benefits.

Also, section 13 provides that any amount a mineworker or his dependants receive from the Department of Social Services shall be deducted from his coal-miner's pension.

Under the proposal now submitted it is intended that where a retired mineworker or his dependants are granted a Commonwealth Social Services pension due to permanent blindness, irrespective of age, then no reduction will be made to the miner's pension.

I commend the Bill to members.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. W. F. Willesee (Leader of the Opposition).

CHILD WELFARE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. L. A. LOGAN (Upper West—Minister for Child Welfare) [8.04 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

As Minister for Child Welfare, I have always been mindful of the necessity to ensure that the Child Welfare Act is appropriate to changing needs and circumstances. I believe that it must at all times reflect the wishes of the people of this State; that it should incorporate modern thought and allow for the changing economy in which we live. It must spell out clearly the administrative and judicial functions involved. As a result, we have an Act which is not only comparable to others anywhere in the world but is also appropriate to the particular circumstances existing in Western Australia. To maintain this standard frequent review is essential, followed by appropriate amendments.

This year the main amendments I am proposing to deal with are, firstly, the machinery for referral of cases to the Supreme Court or the District Court by the Children's Court, and the widening of the powers of the Supreme Court or District Court; secondly, the use of summons

in lieu of a warrant under certain circumstances; and, finally, a small but important point regarding the licensing of foster mothers.

The Bill refers to the jurisdiction of the Children's Court in regard to children over 14 years of age, and clarifies and widens powers of the Supreme Court or the District Court. It allows the Children's Court to commit a child over 14 years for trial on an indictable offence or, after finding a child over 14 years of age guilty of an indictable offence or accepting a plea of guilty, to commit the child for sentence to the Supreme Court or the District Court.

It permits the Supreme Court or District Court to deal with the child as if it were committed under the provisions of the Justices Act and to impose any penalty consistent with those made by a Children's Court or those imposed on a person over 18 years of age who has been convicted on an indictable offence. This will allow, amongst other penalties and provisions, the application of the Offenders Probation and Parole Act, where appropriate, should the necessary amendment to that Act be passed.

Unfortunately it sometimes becomes necessary for the Children's Court to commit a child to the Supreme Court where the offence is of such a serious nature that it cannot be adequately dealt with in terms of the powers conferred on the Children's Court.

Existing legislation permits committal to the Supreme Court for trial or sentence in the case of a child over the age of 14 years on an indictable offence. However, this amendment clarifies the powers of the Supreme Court, which at present are uncertain and have some limitations, and confers similar powers on the District Court. In addition, the machinery and procedural aspects are facilitated.

I should like to draw to members' notice the next amendment relating to the non-payment of fines. Currently the Children's Court has the authority to call a person over the age of 18 years before the court when a fine imposed after he had reached 17 years of age, but before he attained 18 years of age, has not been paid. It is laid down that in those circumstances a warrant ordering the apprehension of the person may be issued by the court.

It is apparent that the situation is not sufficiently serious to require an arrest in the first instance; rather, the person should be given the opportunity first to appear in response to a summons. Most would, I feel, comply and it would then only be necessary to issue a warrant ordering the apprehension of the minority who failed to appear in response to a summons. The proposed amendment seeks to introduce this course of action.

Finally, I would like to refer to the proposed amendment relating to the licensing of foster mothers. Currently this section

of the Act states, "No person other than a near relative shall be or act as foster mother for gain or reward, to any child under the age of six years without being licensed by the department for that purpose." It is the intention of this section to protect the life and welfare of the more vulnerable younger child.

Unfortunately, in administering this section, it has often been difficult to prove whether or not a private foster mother is being paid anything for the child or children in her care. If the person fears that she might be refused a license by the department—due to overcrowded or unhygienic conditions, her own background, or the absence of some important requirement—she only needs to deny that she receives money from the parents of the child and the department cannot intervene or act at an early stage to protect the welfare of the child.

There have been several cases of unsuitable persons fostering children where further action by officers of my department was prevented because of the inability to establish that the person acted for gain or reward.

I feel sure that members will agree that foster children cared for without charge by private foster parents are just as entitled to the protective provisions which result from licensing as are foster children who are cared for at "gain or reward" to the private foster mother. This amendment proposes to delete the "for gain or reward" proviso.

The only other proposal in the Bill is a consequential one revising the list of subsidised institutions. If necessary, during the Committee stage I can add further comments.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. J. Dolan.

OFFENDERS PROBATION AND PAROLE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Minister for Justice) [8.11 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

As background which will indicate the necessity for the introduction of this small amendment to the Offenders Probation and Parole Act, I would refer to a proposal to amend the Child Welfare Act in a certain direction—the Bill which has just been introduced by my colleague.

Section 20 of the Child Welfare Act refers to the jurisdiction of the Children's Court as regards children and provides authority to refer cases to the Supreme Court. In a recent appeal to the Supreme Court in the case of *The Queen versus K. W. Gill*, certain limitations to the existing section were pointed out by the

Chief Justice and the Chief Crown Prosecutor. As a consequence, certain amendments were put in process of preparation to cover those deficiencies.

One of those amendments will permit a superior court to utilise the provisions of the Offenders Probation and Parole Act when dealing with a child. However, if members will refer to section 5 of the Offenders Probation and Parole Act, it will become evident that that Act does not apply to or with respect to a child as defined in the Child Welfare Act, 1947, who is convicted of an offence by a children's court established under that Act.

It will therefore be apparent that there is a need to amend this section of the Offenders Probation and Parole Act to accommodate the change now being made in the Child Welfare Act, and, as a consequence, the amendment contained in this Bill is consequential to the particular amendment in the Child Welfare Act Amendment Bill.

On reference to the Bill now before members it will be seen that it is intended to add to section 5 the following passage:—

unless the sentence for the offence is passed by the Supreme Court or the District Court of Western Australia pursuant to subsection (3), (3a) or (3b) of section twenty of that Act.

I commend the Bill to members.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. J. Dolan.

AUCTIONEERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Minister for Justice) [8.14 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The main purpose of this Bill is to introduce under the provisions of the Auctioneers Act a new class of certificate which may be issued to enable a trainee auctioneer to obtain some practical experience.

At present there exists in section 14 of the Act a provision enabling the granting of a "temporary license." These licenses were intended to assist auctioneers who, through sickness or for some other good and sufficient cause, were unable to carry out the duties of their position.

In the course of time it has become a practice for stock companies and others to procure temporary licenses to enable them to test or train potential auctioneers. It has been suggested that this procedure has a tendency to conflict with the original intention of those provisions of the Act, yet there is no good reason why personnel selected for training as auctioneers should not be allowed to conduct auctions under the supervision of a licensed auctioneer.

As a consequence, it is now proposed that a new class of operator be permitted under the Auctioneers Act, and these persons are to be issued with a "provisional certificate." If members will refer to clause 9 of the Bill, it will be seen that a new section numbered 15A is to be inserted into the Act. This section describes what a provisional certificate is, the duration of its effect, and that no more than three provisional auctioneers' certificates may be issued in any calendar year to a licensed auctioneer. I would point out that the licensed auctioneer in question becomes personally liable and responsible for any act or default of the person acting under his direct supervision and instructions under the certificate in the same manner and to the same extent as he would be liable had he carried out the act himself.

The next clause inserts another new section 15B and this section sets out the requirements in respect of lodging an application for a provisional certificate. In this connection, I might mention that any magistrate on the written application of any licensed auctioneer and on the payment of a fee of \$15—or such other fee as may be from time to time prescribed—may grant to the applicant a provisional certificate to enable the training of other personnel as an auctioneer. Since this Bill was drafted, I have had several inquiries concerning the initial fee to be charged and, as a result, it is my intention, when in Committee, to move to reduce this fee to \$5.

Again, I would mention that the trainee shall be required to be under the direct supervision of the applicant while under training.

Subsection (5) enables the Minister, on application of the licensed auctioneer nominated in a provisional auctioneer's certificate, to cancel or suspend the certificate for such period and on such conditions as, in the circumstances of any particular case, he thinks fit.

Another amendment in the Bill will overcome a difficulty existing in the principal Act, section 4 of which defines the limits of the metropolitan area by reference to electoral provinces which no longer exist. This amendment will enable the Governor to define the limits from time to time. This amendment is contained in clause 3.

Clause 11 introduces an amendment designed to encompass the establishment of the District Court of Western Australia. This is in the nature of a formal amendment, as also are those several amendments introduced to accommodate the changed title of liquor legislation.

This Bill contains several other amendments which might be called nominal amendments or formal amendments and, apart from these, the remainder of the clauses introduce minor amendments which can be justified as a measure of Statute law revision, as a result of which

the principal Act has been brought up to date for printing. I commend the Bill to members.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. R. Thompson.

ROMAN CATHOLIC VICARIATE OF THE KIMBERLEYS PROPERTY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Minister for Justice) [8.20 p.m.] I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The principal Act, as amended by this Bill, vested in the Roman Catholic Vicar Apostolic of the Kimberleys and his successors certain lands owned by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Perth, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Geraldton, the Pious Society of Missions Incorporated of Broome, and all other properties belonging to the Roman Catholic Church that were situated within the Kimberley area.

The church authorities in 1966 altered the bishop's title to the Roman Catholic Bishop of Broome, and the name of the bishopric to the Diocese of Broome. The purpose of this amending Bill is merely to accommodate these changes in titles so that, after the passing of this measure, a reference in the principal Act, as amended, or in any other Act or law of the State or document in force to the earlier used titles, shall be read and construed and applied as a reference to the new titles.

As a result of these amendments, it is desirable also to amend the title of the principal Act as proposed in subclause (3) of clause 1 of the Bill.

Members will recall that, from time to time, the Government has produced, at the request of various religious bodies, amendments to appropriate Acts. You will recollect, Mr. President, that I have introduced a considerable number of these. This Act, for instance, is not of general application and affects possibly only the Roman Catholic Church in Western Australia, the Office of Titles, and persons concerned in dealing with the churchlands mentioned in the schedules to the principal Act. I commend the Bill to members.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. F. J. S. Wise.

PETROLEUM PIPELINES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines) [8.23 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to prevent a delay in the construction of pipelines

which may be caused by difficulty in the registration of easements granted by landowners to pipeline licensees.

Under existing provisions in the Act, construction of a pipeline is prohibited until the necessary easements with the landowners or lessees of the land concerned have not only been acquired but also registered in the Titles Office.

Once the construction of a pipeline is commenced, it is desirable that the construction be uninterrupted and proceed with a minimum of delay to avoid a situation where men and machinery have to be moved away from sections of the route of the pipeline, due to the non-registration of an easement that has been obtained from the landowner or the lessee involved.

By way of illustration, such a situation could arise from a lost certificate of title or the delay in the issue of a title. Therefore, the concern of a company that such a situation could come about is understandable and representations have been made to me by Wapet—Western Australian Petroleum Proprietary Limited—to introduce some appropriate amendment of the Act to prevent delays in the construction of a pipeline.

The amendment now before members proposes that the Minister be enabled to make exceptions to the conditions of the registration of an easement as at present contained in section 12 of the Act. A new provision is to be added to section 12 and this provides that—

Where the Minister is satisfied that the licensee has acquired any such easement and is unable to register it, through circumstances beyond his control, the licensee, with the prior consent in writing of the Minister, may, pending the registration of the easement, commence or cause to be commenced the construction of the proposed pipeline over the land to which the easement relates, on such terms and conditions relating to the registration of the easement as the Minister thinks fit and specifies in the instrument of consent.

The conditions of consent under this section are, of course, restricted to matters related to the registration of an easement only. No further explanation is necessary, and I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. W. F. Willesee (Leader of the Opposition).

FAUNA CONSERVATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (Lower West—Minister for Fisheries and Fauna) [8.27 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Two of the amendments to the Fauna Conservation Act which are now proposed are, although not of a complex nature, significant in their impact on the protection of rare species of fauna which may be threatened with extinction, and on difficulties associated with prosecution of persons found in possession of protected fauna. The remaining amendment is of an administrative nature only.

The amendments included in the Bill will—

- (1) Separate the function of Chief Warden of Fauna from that of Chief Executive Officer of The Western Australian Wildlife Authority (section 10 of the principal Act);
- (2) Provide power for the Minister for Fisheries and Fauna to declare a particular species of fauna rare and threatened with extinction (section 14 of the principal Act);
- (3) Make it an offence for any person to have in his possession the skin or carcase of any protected fauna illegally taken (section 16 of the principal Act).

Under the Fauna Conservation Act the Chief Warden of Fauna is at present also designated as Chief Executive Officer of The Western Australian Wildlife Authority. Due to expansion and growth in responsibilities for fauna it is better administratively for the authority held by the Chief Warden of Fauna to be discharged by a more highly classified officer in the person of the administrative officer of the Department of Fisheries and Fauna who is next in line of command to the director.

The director remains Chairman of The Western Australian Wildlife Authority and the administrative officer will automatically become deputy chairman. The duties of chief executive officer will be carried out at assistant administrative officer level.

We are all aware of the gathering concern throughout the world that the survival of rare species of fauna should be supported by both community and Government action. Indeed, we in Western Australia have received great commendation from conservationists everywhere for our action in setting aside an area, already surveyed as a townsite, as a reserve for a species of bird thought to be extinct but rediscovered. I refer to the Two People Bay reserve and the noisy scrub bird. Another rare animal which readily comes to mind is the short-necked tortoise which holds precariously to survival as a species on two small reserves in the Bullsbrook area.

The amendment included in the Bill will empower the Minister responsible for fauna conservation to declare such species rare and threatened by extinction. Such threat

may arise through normal biological processes, hunting, introduced predators, or habitat disturbance and destruction. Of course, it is also fair to say that at various times during the history of the world species have disappeared, and I suppose all of us, from our general education and reading, can call such species to mind. The disappearance of all the species from the face of the earth has not been caused solely by the intrusion of man. A number of the species have disappeared for perfectly normal and biological reasons.

The effect of such a declaration will be to afford the species nominated a special and exclusive type of protection. They would already be protected, of course, under the general provisions of the Fauna Conservation Act. Under the additional protection open seasons or any other partial lifting of conservation measures would not be permitted.

To emphasise the importance and seriousness attached to providing rare and threatened species with additional protection, a maximum penalty of \$1,000 is proposed for any breaches. Undoubtedly from time to time biologists will be recommending that additional protection should be granted to further species. Such recommendations will, of course, be considered on their merits and the appropriate action taken by the Minister in charge of the fauna conservation portfolio.

Possession of protected fauna is not an offence in itself under the Fauna Conservation Act as it stands at the present time, whether it be live fauna or the skins and carcasses of fauna. Enforcement officers have to rely on apprehending persons in the act of taking protected fauna if they wish to prove that an offence has occurred.

With the need to regulate the kangaroo industry, it will be necessary for it to be an offence to be found in possession of the skins and carcasses of these animals, unless they have been taken under license and have the tag, prescribed by the regulations, attached. Members will recall that earlier this evening I made reference to their agreement of a tagging system being used for the control of this industry. At the present time an unauthorised shooter may take kangaroos and if he is not apprehended in the act of taking them he could sell the carcasses or skins to a licensed processor who would not necessarily be committing an offence by being in possession of them. By adding this provision it will remove any temptation to deal in the skins and carcasses of kangaroos which may have been taken by an unlicensed operator.

Prevention of smuggling of fauna interstate and overseas will also be more effective if possession of the skins and carcasses of protected fauna is in itself an offence. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. R. Thompson.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines) [8.32 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, the 8th September.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.33 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 1st September, 1970

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

QUESTIONS (30): ON NOTICE

1. TRANSPORT

Qualeup-Rocky Gully Area

Mr. COOK, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has he received a proposal or given consideration to altering the transport pattern in the Qualeup-Kojonup-Frankland River-Rocky Gully area?
- (2) If so, would he detail any proposed changes and/or dates on which these changes have taken place or will take place?

Mr. COURT (for Mr. O'Connor) replied:

- (1) and (2) Representations have been made by members of Parliament representing these areas and by people in the area to ascertain the possibilities of permission to employ road transport directly to and from Albany primarily for grain, wool and superphosphate. Having in mind that agreement to this would result in a major change in the whole transport pattern in the area and in particular could endanger the stability of the operations of the W.A.G.R., the Director-General of Transport was instructed to try and devise a total operating pattern for rail and road in respect of all commodities to and from all destinations which would achieve the objectives of the representations without radically threatening the stability of the W.A.G.R. operations in the area. The Director-General of Transport produced a proposal but it did not meet the foregoing conditions. Thus no change is intended at this juncture.