

The CHAIRMAN: Before the honourable member moves his next amendment, I would point out that he has made a mistake. The page should be page 4.

Mr. MENSAROS: Thank you. I move an amendment—

Page 4—Add after subsection (4) the following new subsection to stand as subsection (5):—

- (5) The amount payable from the Fund to any one appellant pursuant to a costs certificate shall not in any case exceed the sum of one thousand dollars or such other amount as may from time to time be prescribed.

The Treasurer has already explained that this amendment merely seeks a safety valve for the newly-created certificate.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 6 to 9 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 10.46 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 22nd September, 1971

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

TIMBER RIGHTS QUESTION

Discrepancy in Answer: Ministerial Statement

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [4.40 p.m.]: I seek the leave of the House to make a statement.

The PRESIDENT: The Leader of the House seeks leave of the House to make a statement. There being no dissentient voice, permission is granted.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: If I may, I would like to read to the House two documents which, I believe, are essential to the understanding of the situation which arose through the statement of The Hon. F. D. Willmott yesterday. The first is dated the 7th September of this year and is addressed to the Minister for Forests from the Conservator of Forests. It is headed, "Timber Reservation on Private Property" and reads as follows:—

In confirmation of my discussion with you yesterday you will remember that my initial proposal in relation to the lifting of timber reservation rights on private property recommended a date of 30th June, 1972. This was to enable the Department to

make a final check and to clear up as much timber as possible before the major change in policy. In this the Under Treasurer concurred.

Subsequently, the Minister for Lands approached you with a request that the date be moved forward to the 31st January, 1972, and with this I signified agreement supported by the Under Treasurer.

It was subsequently brought to my notice that two private property blocks in the south, one in the Manjimup district and one in the Scott River Area, still carried substantial volumes of timber of the order of over 2,000 loads each. The Manjimup block had been intermittently worked for timber by agreement with the owner that we would remove logs in conformity with his rate of clearing.

The Scott River area carried poorer timber and because of distance from mill and quality of timber, we have not been able to dispose of any of this volume to date.

I pointed out to you that it would be difficult to remove this volume of timber by the 31st January and suggested that perhaps the closing date could be moved back slightly to the end of February or March. You suggested that perhaps a division of the area, with the northern sector closing by 31st January and the southern sector at a somewhat later date, could perhaps solve our problem.

As suggested, I am arranging for a senior officer to look further into this and will advise you.

In a memo under the same heading dated the 21st September addressed to the Minister for Forests, the Conservator of Forests said—

Further to our discussion on 6th September, Inspector Quain (Manjimup) has looked further into the question of the Manjimup property involved and he reports that the owner was advised in writing in May this year that all timber would be cleared from his block during the 1971-72 summer. Weather permitting, it would be possible by an intensive effort to clear this timber by the end of January, 1972, but an extension to the end of February, 1972, would be greatly appreciated if this is possible.

The block in the Scott River area is still proving a problem and I feel that we will have to abandon our efforts to do anything about this in view of the current market situation.

I consider these two documents imperative to the situation that has arisen. The Minister for Lands, therefore, did not prepare the answer given to Mr. Willmott on the 15th September. The officers of his department were also unaware of the question and they were not called upon to

answer it. Mr. H. D. Evans was in a position to indicate that a decision on timber rights on the 20th August—the date of the letter of his constituents—had been made. The Conservator of Forests drew attention to a situation in the Scott River area on the 7th September and, in that respect, he drew it to the attention of Mr. T. D. Evans. A senior officer was sent to investigate on the spot—as I have already read—and a change of policy could have resulted. The officer was still in the south-west when the question asked by Mr. Willmott was dealt with on the 15th September. The Minister for Forests was notified of the report of the investigation on the 21st September. The Minister was, I submit, right and correct in the reply he gave having regard for the situation that existed at the time.

Personal Explanation

THE HON. F. D. WILLMOTT (South-West) [4.45 p.m.]: I rise to seek the indulgence of the House, under Standing Order No. 74, to make a brief personal explanation.

The **PRESIDENT**: There being no dissentient voice to the question that permission be granted to The Hon. F. D. Willmott to make a personal explanation, the honourable member may proceed.

The Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: I thank you, Mr. President. I realise you will not allow me to make any comment upon the statement The Hon. W. F. Willesee has just made to the House.

I rise to thank the Minister for his trouble in this matter and to assure him that I will examine the statement that he has made and, when I have done so, I will seek the means by which I can carry the matter further, if I think desirable.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: Thank you.

QUESTIONS (10): ON NOTICE

1. TRAFFIC

Legislation for Seat Belts

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH, to the Minister for Police:

- (1) Was the Minister correctly reported in the *Weekend News* dated the 18th September, 1971, in respect to an article on proposed legislation on seat belts?
- (2) If he was not correctly reported in every respect, will he indicate the extent to which the report was inaccurate?
- (3) Can it be taken that the article reflected the considered opinion of the Government?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) Yes. The article referred to followed replies I gave to the journalist's specific questions on aspects of the proposed seat belt legislation.

The article deals specifically with cars although my replies also included other vehicles.

(2) Answered by (1).

- (3) The Government has given approval for me to introduce legislation to make the use of seat belts compulsory.

The proposed regulations will be submitted to Cabinet for approval at the appropriate time.

2. FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE

Lombardina Mission Air Strip

The Hon. J. L. HUNT, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Has an authorised landing strip, suitable for Flying Doctor aircraft been established adjacent to Lombardina Mission?
- (2) If not, when is it anticipated that the landing strip will be capable of handling light aircraft?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) It is not known when the selected site will be capable of handling light aircraft.

3. TRAFFIC

Motor Vehicle Registrations

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH, to the Minister for Police:

- (1) How many motor vehicles (motor cars) are registered in this State at the present time?
- (2) Of these registrations, how many vehicles were manufactured and registered—
 - (a) pre-1969; and
 - (b) post-1969?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) 347,000 approximately.
- (2) (a) 246,000 approximately.
(b) 101,000 approximately.

4. RURAL RECONSTRUCTION SCHEME

Applications by Pastoralists

The Hon. G. W. BERRY, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) How many pastoralists in the wool section of the industry have applied for assistance under the Rural Reconstruction Scheme?
- (2) How many—
 - (a) have been approved;
 - (b) have to be processed;
 - (c) have been refused?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (1) 14.
- (2) (a) 4.
(b) 4.
(c) 6.

5. EDUCATION

Karratha State School

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS, to the Leader of the House:

In view of the recent student increase at Karratha which shows an expansion rate of 154% in the past seven months at the Primary School, and 41% for the same period at the Secondary School, plus the new enrolment rate of 30 to 40 students per month, which increased to 30 per week as at 13th September, 1971, will he advise of the immediate planning with staffing and construction dates that will prevent classes from being held in dusty open air classrooms at above century temperatures in the very near future?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

Staffing for both the Karratha primary and high schools for the beginning of the 1972 school year has not been finally determined but both schools will be staffed to meet enrolment needs.

Planning is being undertaken by the Public Works Department for extension to both the Karratha primary and high schools but no definite commencement date for construction can be given at this stage. Pending the completion of permanent buildings enrolment increases will be met by the provision of demountable classrooms which will be transported to Karratha in the near future.

6. DROUGHT RELIEF

Government Assistance to Pastoralists

The Hon. G. W. BERRY, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Has any Government assistance or concession been granted to pastoralists in the drought-affected areas of the Lower North Province?
- (2) If so—
 - (a) what is the nature of the assistance or concessions; and
 - (b) which are the Shires concerned?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (1) and (2) In addition to the rental concessions and freight concessions already available to pastoralists, the Government will shortly introduce legislation to permit deferment or remission, wholly or in part, of pastoral lease rents where economic conditions warrant and where proven hardship exists. It is proposed that this legislation will be retrospective to July, 1970.

It is further proposed, as a measure of assistance both to pastoralists and to shire councils in the pastoral areas, to give consideration to the payment, on behalf of eligible pastoralists, of Shire Council and Vermin Board rates, in the Lower North Province Shires of Boulder, Dundas, Laver-ton, Leonora and Sandstone, and in the Shire of Coolgardie.

7.

EDUCATION

Northern Territory Children

The Hon. J. L. HUNT, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Because, during the last few years, the Native Welfare Department has denied responsibility for Northern Territory children attending mission schools in Western Australia, will the Minister give an assurance that tuition fee subsidies will be paid for children whose parents live just across the border in the Northern Territory?
- (2) As the living-away-from-home allowance is much higher in the Northern Territory under Federal control, will the Minister give consideration to increasing the allowance to children living in the north of Western Australia?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (1) No tuition fee subsidies are paid by the Native Welfare Department to children attending mission schools in Western Australia irrespective of the place of residence of their parents.
- (2) Living-away-from-home allowances for children living north of the 26th parallel are to be increased from 1st January, 1972, by \$51 per annum.

8.

EDUCATION

School of Air

The Hon. G. W. BERRY, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) How many children are at present enrolled on the School of Air network?
- (2) How many children are presently studying purely on correspondence without the aid of School of Air?
- (3) How many people are presently receiving the Supervision Allowance?
- (4) How many of these persons in (3)—
 - (a) employ governesses; and
 - (b) receive the allowance for domestic help?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (1) 189.
- (2) 286.
- (3) 128.
- (4) (a) 73.
- (b) 55.

9. and 10. *These questions were postponed.*

TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by The Hon. J. Dolan (Minister for Police), and read a first time.

PAY-ROLL TAX BILLS

Standing Orders Suspension

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [4.54 p.m.]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Pay-roll Tax Assessment Bill and the Pay-roll Tax Bill to pass through the remaining stages at any one sitting.

In moving the motion standing in my name, I desire to make an explanation to the House of the reason for asking for a suspension of Standing Orders. Possibly the basic reason is well known, as it was brought out in debate last night.

It is essential, and part and parcel of the mutual agreement with the Commonwealth, that all of the States in Australia pass these particular pieces of legislation—that is the Pay-roll Tax Assessment Bill and its consequent Bill—by the 30th September. I am advised that the failure of any one State to do this would encourage the Commonwealth to continue to collect the tax at the figure of 2½ per cent. Therefore, the States throughout Australia would be deprived of that additional revenue during the period that a particular State failed to pass the legislation. Therefore, if a State fails to pass this legislation by the 30th September, it will be penalising all the other States because I understand the Commonwealth will only hand over this tax to all the States at the one time.

I also have in mind the fact that on Thursday night the House will rise until Tuesday week, so it is essential that we pass the legislation today in order that members in another place may look at it. I commend the motion to the House.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [4.55 p.m.]: Last night when this Bill was debated I foreshadowed my support for the motion. Therefore, I think it is unnecessary for me to say anything further in that regard. However, I would just like to comment that I understood one of the prime reasons for the motion is the last

reason mentioned by the Leader of the House; that is, if any amendment is made to the Bill in this Chamber we may run out of time if we are not able to deal expeditiously with the Bill when it comes back. But, alas, because of the unrelenting attitude of the Government over a long period, and having regard to the discussions which took place last night, we are put in the position where it appears there is no chance of that happening. However, I still support the motion.

Question put and passed.

LAND TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by The Hon. W. F. Willesee (Leader of the House), and passed.

PAY-ROLL TAX ASSESSMENT BILL

Recommittal

Bill recommitted, on motion by the Hon. W. F. Willesee (Leader of the House), for the further consideration of clause 10, which was deleted by a previous Committee.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (The Hon. N. E. Baxter) in the Chair; The Hon. W. F. Willesee (Leader of the House) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 10: Exemption from pay-roll tax—

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: The purpose of the recommittal is to re-establish clause 10 in the Bill. I think it would be fair to say this was taken out inadvertently last night. The amendment was debated for some time prior to the deleting of the clause and we ultimately took out the clause in a period of some confusion.

I do not propose to speak at great length on the proposal. However, I may be able to take this opportunity to speak on the important area of the Government's proposal on decentralisation. I know this will be of great interest to all members of the House.

Serious consideration has been given to the announced policy of the Government on decentralisation. We propose to introduce incentives to encourage decentralisation, but at this stage we do not want to be tied to one particular method of assistance which might not be appropriate in all the circumstances. I readily understand the comments made about using pay-roll tax as an incentive. However, under the provisions of the amendment it is to be solely within the discretion of the Minister whether or not the concession is granted. I cannot agree this would be at no cost to revenue unless all applications

are refused. If this is to be the case there would seem to be little point in submitting a clause which it is never intended to use.

As I have previously indicated, the committee has been studying the best ways to provide incentives to implement the Government's policy of decentralisation, and I am advised that this committee's report and recommendations will be completed in the near future. As I have already stated, the possible use of pay-roll tax concessions formed part of the studies of this committee in accordance with the undertaking to do so already given by the Treasurer.

If an amendment of this kind is inserted in the law and is used as must obviously be indicated, it may well reduce the amounts available to produce other incentives which are better suited to provide the encouragement necessary for the particular applicant. In summing up I would request that the Committee does not take premature action by agreeing to the amendment thus prejudicing the implementation of other concessions which, subject to pay-roll tax concessions, are under close examination.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: First let me say I have no objection to the reinsertion of clause 10; in fact, it is essential that it be reinserted. To the extent that the mistake occurred last night as a result of any action of mine I am sorry, because it was not intended, I am sure, by any member of the Committee to vote against a clause that was important to the Bill.

Mr. Medcalf, however, offered amendments to the Government in relation to clauses 9, 10, 11, and 18. The amendment to clause 9 and the amendment to clause 11 were not acceptable to the Government. The amendment to clause 10 fell in the same way, but I am inclined to think that perhaps what we were endeavouring to do last night in relation to the exemption in clause 9, I think—

Point of Order

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: On a point of order, how can we deal with an amendment to a clause which is not in the Bill?

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the honourable member that we are discussing the reinsertion of clause 10 in the Bill.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: With which amendment does Mr. Logan imagine we are dealing?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: We are dealing with an amendment that appears in Mr. Medcalf's name on the notice paper.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The honourable member is so impatient that he will not listen to the rest of my story. All I want to say is that, to my mind, the exemptions we dealt with last night could better be dealt with in this clause. Because

I may be offending, it may be better if I sit down at this moment, but I would remind the Committee that the Minister tried to give us some information in relation to clause 9 which I appreciate. What will happen now is that clause 10 will be reinserted into the Bill and when that is done I will move to recommit the Bill to consider a further amendment to clause 10. By so doing I will not upset Mr. Logan.

Committee Resumed

The CHAIRMAN: The question before the Chair is that clause 10 be reinserted and when that is done the Leader of the Opposition can move an amendment to clause 10.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Very well.

Clause reinserted.

Clause 10: Exemption from pay-roll tax—

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I move an amendment—

Page 13, line 1—Insert after the section designation 10 the subsection designation (1).

This was the amendment that stood in the name of Mr. Medcalf on the notice paper last night. I am moving the amendment at his request. I understand from the Clerks the amendment has been re-circulated in an abbreviated form and all members should have it before them. As the matter was fully argued last night it would be a waste of time for me to again enumerate the reasons for the amendment. In reply to the point that Mr. Logan rightly raised; that I could not talk on an amendment to a clause that was not in the Bill, I merely wished to gather up the point in my remarks in relation to clause 10, because I think what we were seeking last night by way of increasing the amount of exemption from \$20,800 to some other figure, in view of the way the debate developed, perhaps could have been dealt with in clause 10 by way of an exemption.

I think that, today, the Minister may be able to give us some comment from the Government as he was encouraged to do last night. The word "encouraged" is, I think, an understatement, because I almost pleaded with the Leader of the House to give some attention to the matter. The explanation we were seeking last night was that there were many members who appreciated the fact that by doubling the exemption to a figure of \$41,600 we would probably deprive the Government of revenue amounting to a figure between \$2,000,000 and \$3,000,000. We were anxious to give some relief to the small businessman. What I tried to convey to the Government was that perhaps there was some other way to achieve this. In the short time available I had hoped to hear something on this matter from the Minister, but in the comments he has made I have heard nothing I can recognise.

Instead of that he addressed himself to the amendment I have now moved and dealt with decentralisation. So at this stage I would like him to disregard what he had to say about decentralisation and I invite him to say something on the other subjects. I cannot understand the Government's attitude in respect of the amendment I have now moved. We are asking the Government, under this Bill, to take upon itself a power by which the Minister may be able to issue a certificate in certain circumstances. We are not saying to the Government, "You will lose, as a result of this, any particular amount of money in relation to the tax. It is arbitrary or obligatory that you will lose not all the payroll tax in any one year." Rather, we are saying, "If the Minister thinks fit he can issue a certificate or a number of certificates; or, if he so thinks fit, he will not issue any at all."

This is purely and simply to give the Minister an opportunity to do just that in the interests of decentralisation. All I hear about decentralisation is much the same as that which Mr. Medcalf said last night; that it is such an easy word to use but it is something that is more difficult to put into effect. I am afraid we hear airy-fairy statements about decentralisation, but when we are given the opportunity to demonstrate in some practical way a desire to effect decentralisation by moving an amendment to help those people who want to establish industries and obtain some relief from pay-roll tax, we find that we are almost up against a blank wall and hear statements that investigations are being made and the Government does not want to give relief in this direct form, but is trying to find a way that is more effective in implementing decentralisation.

In other words, it is continuing to be airy-fairy and not making any practical approach to the problem. Mr. Medcalf's move last night and my move this afternoon in asking the Committee to reconsider the matter is not airy-fairy, but a practical suggestion to the effect that if the Government does not want this to cost any money it need not cost any money. I fail to understand why, in the few hours that have elapsed between last night and today, there was not an opportunity taken to talk to the Treasurer or to the Premier to obtain something besides what is, to my mind, a nebulous promise that something might be done.

I venture to suggest that unless we can get something more concrete we will move along nice and easily until 12 months have elapsed and then say, "We are sorry, we could not do anything about that." That is not good enough. We have assisted the Government with a Bill to apply a tax to a certain section of the community in Western Australia. It is a tax which all of us consider undesirable to say the least, and I am sure the Government shares the view

that I and other members of this Committee hold. We are asking for some demonstration of goodwill; what has been done is certainly not good enough to satisfy me.

Surely we can get some word of encouragement on this matter. When I say that I mean to take into consideration in clause 10 what was intended when we tried to amend clause 9 last night; that is, to give some encouragement to the small businessman. If the Government were to say to him, "Until your pay-roll reaches a figure above \$20,800 the tax will not apply to you", such a situation would not make it obligatory upon the Government to grant relief right across the board. It would not have to do that which we said last night; that is, give relief to everybody where the pay-roll is between \$20,800 and \$41,600.

It should just be a form of encouragement from the Government to the effect that it will look at the situation within six months, bearing in mind that within six months we will return to another parliamentary session. If that genuine comment is made it will satisfy me. I would know that in the meantime something is being done. My final word is that I am not prepared to make pleas in this Chamber and put forward valid suggestions and help my colleagues with the valid suggestions that they put forward if we are to be met with a blank wall and not get any encouragement to which we will gladly listen. I have no desire at present to amend this legislation further with the exception of the amendment now before the Chair which, I repeat, is reasonable. It will not cost the Government anything and I fail to understand why it is so dogmatic in not being prepared to accept it.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: As this amendment relates to decentralisation I would like to say in answer to the comment made by the Leader of the House that it is really no justification for refusing the amendment to say it would cost no money. The reason that the early amendments were refused was on the ground that they would cost money.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That is right.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: To say this is being refused because it will not cost money, so why should we consider it is. I think, superfluous comment. It appears we are saying, "This need not cost the Government any money immediately if the Government does not wish to implement it and because it is not known what it will cost it should not embarrass the Government in any way."

The earlier amendment on the notice paper—which was defeated—was to the effect that the general exemption be raised; but we were told that these would have cost the Government \$2,000,000 or \$3,000,000 and members felt that since it was going to cost the Government so much we had

better think again; that we must adopt a responsible attitude; and because it would cost the Government money we dropped the amendment.

It is no justification to say "this will not cost any money so we will refuse it." It will not cost any money in the immediate future. It will not embarrass the Government or the Government's Budget arrangements because it need not spend any money on this immediately. But we will have it there for future use and it would be a practical way for the Government to demonstrate its desire to give a tax concession to certain rural industries by exempting them from pay-roll tax.

This is an opportunity the Government has not had before; it is something it could use to foster decentralisation. Accordingly I cannot see the Government's objection to the amendment. I am not aware that the Government has objected specifically to any part of this, other than to suggest it is not the right place to foster decentralisation.

The Commonwealth Government felt that the Pay-roll Tax Assessment Bill was the right place to foster export trade. Likewise I believe it is a good occasion for the State Government to say, "Here is one way in which we can assist rural industries and foster decentralisation."

If an amendment is good it does not really matter from where it comes. The fact that it comes from the Opposition need not and should not weigh with the Government at all. I may be taken to task for saying this but I have a distinct impression that some members of the Government seem to resent amendments coming from the Opposition. There is no need or cause for that and I hope I am wrong in my assumption.

I must confess I do not look at the matter that way myself. As a member of this House I feel I am trying to make a useful contribution to the legislation and because I am in the Opposition is no reason for my amendment being debarred from succeeding.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: I think you have done fairly well up to date.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: I thank the honourable member; it is nice to have that encouragement. I certainly would feel I was wasting my time if my amendments were rejected because I happen to be a member of the Opposition. Nor would I want my amendments to be accepted merely because I was a member of a party which had the numbers.

There have been a number of occasions on which the Government has reframed amendments because they considered them good enough. I see no reason for the Government to object to accepting amendment on the matter of pay-roll tax and decentralisation.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: The Leader of the Opposition was quite right when he asked me to further a report which I promised last evening. It is possible I should have quoted this when I first spoke, but I felt the time was rather inopportune. I was reinserting a clause and I think I went a bit ahead of myself at that time. I have now received the reply which I would like to submit to the Committee. It reads—

I undertook to refer to the Treasurer a proposal by members that an examination be made to see if there is some way of relieving or reducing the burden of pay-roll tax on persons described as small businessmen.

I also indicated that it seemed unlikely in the short space of time left, that any satisfactory solution could be devised in time to add amendments to the Bill now before us.

The matter has been given as much consideration as the brief space of time allows and I am advised that it is simply not practicable to attempt to provide the proposed concession by an amendment to this Bill.

I am not denying that the proposal has no merit, but at the present time we do not have the means to accurately measure the extent of any relief needed or indeed to be able to determine the number which could be affected, or to ascertain accurately the cost on the basis of the restricted relief suggested. This is because, until this Bill and the Commonwealth legislation which allows exchange of pay-roll tax details become law, we do not have access to the returns. Therefore, we are not in a position to determine accurately the cost or effect of the suggestions made for limited relief.

In addition, we would need to ensure that in amending the Bill, we did not produce any contradictory sections in the proposed Act or obtain a result which would become unworkable with other States or the Commonwealth, bearing in mind this is a uniform measure.

In the circumstances we believe it would be best for the State to operate the tax on the basis set out in this Bill for at least six months, so that an accurate analysis of returns can be made. We will then be in a position to ascertain if the situation of small businessmen will be as has been described and if some relief within the limits of financial prudence can be given.

At this stage I am not able to produce an answer to the problem but after hearing from the Treasurer I am prepared to give an undertaking that the analysis to which I have referred will be made and that I will advise

this House of the outcome together with any proposals, some time during the March sitting.

I trust the foregoing will demonstrate that the Government is prepared to give serious consideration to the representations made during the debate and it will be appreciated that, at the moment, we are not in a position, through circumstances beyond our control, to make the essential detailed examinations before taking a proper decision on the proposals.

I hope that clears the points raised by Mr. Griffith and Mr. Medcalf. I can assure Mr. Medcalf that from where I sit at the moment at no time have I taken lightly what he has said in this Chamber. I treat his utterances with the utmost respect and I scrutinise his speeches in detail. I have even gone so far as to place amendments on the notice paper as a result of his speech on the Adoption of Children Act Amendment Bill.

I support these amendments and I will endeavour to get them through Committee because I believe they will make for better legislation. In this case my morning was spent in company with the Treasurer and Mr. Ewing and as a result of the discussion I have presented a report that was written for me—I have presented it verbatim and in detail.

Unfortunately I can go no further and I ask that the proposed amendment be not proceeded with in view of what I have said and in view of the fact that the statements made in support of decentralisation have been heeded and that in so far as it has been possible we have been given an assurance in the circumstances that exist at the moment.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I thank the Minister for his comments and I apologise if, perhaps, I used somewhat strong words to draw those comments. I thought the Minister had finished and had nothing further to say. However, I now understand the position.

I simply remind the Government that in the terms of his second reading speech the Minister said the States are free to adopt such rates, exemptions, and assessing provisions as they deem desirable, subject to the conditions I have just outlined.

I do not know who prepared the wise words but I take great heed of them. That is possibly all I need say. I would repeat however that I would like the Government to look at the possibility of giving some further exemption to the smaller businessman—I do not suggest that it should be given across the board so that the general exemption will necessarily be raised to a figure in excess of \$20,800. I suggest a form of exemption which could be dealt with in clause 10. This is the type of exemption I feel should

be given to the smaller businessman who has a wages bill. It should be given to a certain limit and provision should be made for him not to pay this tax on wages with a limit of, say, \$X,000. He should not pay tax until he reaches that figure in the same way that tax is paid now beyond \$20,800. Perhaps I will not proceed with my amendment because we have protested enough, though I still cannot understand why the Government cannot accept it. Like Mr. Medcalf, I cannot accept the argument used by the Minister—that it is not worth including it in the Bill because it means nothing and the Government will not lose anything.

That is the basis of the argument and I just cannot see the reason for it. If we persist, however, the passage of the Bill might be delayed and it is not my desire for that to happen. An amendment has been moved to reinsert clause 10 of the Bill and the measure must now go back to the Legislative Assembly for its concurrence.

I will not withdraw my amendment for fear that there might be some misunderstanding. If I am able to convey my wish to the people who call to you, Mr. Chairman, in the way you listen I feel the result will be as the Minister desires.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Report

Bill again reported with a further amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by The Hon. W. F. Willesee (Leader of the House), and returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

PAY-ROLL TAX BILL

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by The Hon. W. F. Willesee (Leader of the House), and passed.

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 16th September.

THE HON. L. D. ELLIOTT (North-East Metropolitan) [5.35 p.m.]: I wish to support the Bill. I know it is not possible for Parliaments to legislate for all the problems in a society which are brought about by

human frailties or inadequacies, but it is certainly incumbent upon us to be continually looking at the laws of the State, and at the administration of those laws, for the purpose of rectifying any weaknesses or anomalies which may exist. This is particularly so when it concerns the welfare of children who, firstly, have no say as to whether they shall be brought into this world and who, secondly, are powerless to protect themselves.

The Bill now before us is fairly comprehensive in that it contains some 30 clauses. It is interesting to note that the present measure follows closely the coming into operation last year of the extensive amendments to the Act adopted in 1964. In many respects that Act introduced a number of desirable features, but it was subsequently found that its application produced some administrative problems which this Bill seeks to overcome. The present Bill also contains further amendments to the principal Act, which are in the interests of all parties concerned. On examination, they are obviously commendable.

The most important person to consider is the child. Clause 4 seeks to add a new section, and it sets out that the welfare and interest of the child shall be regarded as the paramount consideration. This is extremely important. I once heard it said that of all the creatures born on this earth the human baby is the most helpless, and I think there is a lot of truth in that statement. It is, therefore, up to society to ensure that everything possible is done to protect the small child, and to allow such child to develop in a healthy wholesome way both physically and mentally. Not only should a child's rights be safeguarded by law, but if it is to be deprived of its natural parents everything humanly possible must be done to ensure its adoptive or substitute parents are suitable persons to provide the care and love which is so necessary.

I was pleased to see in clause 11 that it is intended to add a new subsection which includes in the requirements to be considered by the judge and the director when considering the suitability of prospective parents, an adopting parent's "ability to give love and care to a child." Nowhere in the principal Act could I find the word, "love." I suppose the inference is contained in qualifications such as, "fit and proper person" etc., but I think it is interesting to note that it has now been seen desirable to spell it out.

Although love is not the only requirement for a suitable or successful parent, I believe it is the most important one. A child can be provided with all the material comforts, but if it is deprived of a warm and loving relationship, particularly with its mother, serious psychological problems can develop, which may even result in mental illness.

Another desirable feature—contained in clause 14—will allow the right of inheritance from the adoptive parents instead of from the natural parents. This provision will remove the one remaining legal barrier to equal status between a natural child and an adoptive child. If a child is to be taken into a family permanently it should be looked upon as a natural child of that family and there should be no legal or other discrimination.

A new provision contained in clause 10 will enable the director to provide financial support for a child in the intervening period between the time when the consent is signed and when the child is placed with the new parents. This will be helpful in cases where, for some reason or other, there is an unusually long period involved. The delay could be, perhaps, because of the physical condition of the child.

The most outstanding complaint one hears about present adoption procedures is the length of time the adopting parents must wait for the final court order to go through. At the moment there are 650 applicants wanting to adopt babies waiting for the legal process to be completed. Although the new parents no longer have the worry and uncertainty associated with the natural mother being able to reclaim the baby, they still go through a worrying and anxious period until the baby is finally and legally theirs. I know of one couple whose baby is 16 months old and the final adoption order is still not through. Until the adoption is finalised the adopting couples are always haunted by the fear that something could go wrong somewhere along the line. Provisions in the Bill now before us are designed to shorten this period, and I hope it can be reduced considerably to save a lot of unnecessary worry on the part of new parents.

Another feature which will be in the interests of adopting parents is found in clause 11. This will provide that the opinion of the director as to the suitability of adoptive parents shall not be final, if that opinion is adverse. In other words, a judge may grant an adoption irrespective of whether or not the director advises against it. Although one may find it difficult to understand a judge rejecting evidence which is supplied by qualified people, it is desirable and just that an avenue of appeal is available against a departmental opinion or decision. There would obviously need to be strong reasons for a judge finding in favour of the adoptive parents against the director's advice.

Finally, I would like to draw attention to the necessity for more trained social workers in this State. Practically every organisation or department involved in welfare work requires more social workers. For example, at the present time the Child Welfare Department has 64 welfare workers, half of whom are trained social workers. The case load in that department is 120 per person, whereas according to

accepted standards the maximum should be only 60 to 80 per person. That department alone could do with at least another 20 social workers. When those people are overloaded they are only able to handle cases where a crisis is involved instead of being able to concentrate on preventive work.

I have always strongly believed that many of society's ills would not exist if more attention were given to preventive measures rather than corrective or remedial ones. I do not believe juvenile delinquents are born; they are created by the physical and emotional environment in which they grow up.

I know this subject is not specifically related to the adoption of children, but a greater availability of social workers would be in the interests of all children with problems, whether they be adopted or otherwise. I support the Bill.

THE HON. R. F. CLAUGHTON (North Metropolitan) [5.43 p.m.]: I support this Bill to amend the Adoption of Children Act. During the last few days I have spent a considerable amount of time thinking about this matter, and I have also read a considerable quantity of literature on the subject. As a result of my study it is plain to me that children who suffer emotional deprivation, or who undergo extended absence from their mothers—or their mother substitutes—up to the age of 2½ years are very likely to become maladjusted persons in later life.

This maladjustment is usually displayed in acts of stealing, and in the inability to form reasonable attachments with other persons. Such children cannot become emotionally attached in a reasonable manner.

In about 1944, John Bowlby, an English child care specialist, undertook a study of a group of children which revealed that a large proportion of the children whom he termed "affectionless depressives" had, in the first 2½ years of their lives, suffered a period of absence from their natural or substitute mothers. The father is not so important to a child at that time in its life and does not seem to be as important as the mother in the upbringing of the child right through childhood.

I make those observations in relation to the Adoption of Children Act because in this State there is a great number of illegitimate or ex-nuptial births and such children form a considerable proportion of the adoptions arranged by the Child Welfare Department. It has been stressed that there is an urgent need for the children to be adopted as soon as possible after birth.

This amending Bill provides that a child can be taken into the guardianship of the Director of Child Welfare. That is probably desirable as a general rule. It is not good for the natural mother to know who the

adopting parents are, and it is therefore necessary that the child should be taken away from her as soon as possible. However, if the child is taken into an institution it is unlikely to attain the emotional security which is necessary for it to avoid maladjustment in later years.

It appears from my reading that, by and large, children who are reared by adopting parents are no better or worse than the average children in the community. I think we should be aware of that fact. I would say the officers of the Child Welfare Department are even more aware of it than I am. However I think it does no harm to be reminded of it. It may be that the children who are taken into the care of the Child Welfare Department are the fortunate children.

Three parties are involved in an adoption; the mother, the child, and the adopting parents. I wonder how much concern is shown for the mother who has consented to have a child adopted—whether there is any follow-up to see whether she has adjusted to the change. I also wonder whether, in the case of an ex-nuptial birth, an examination is made of the situation of the mother, and whether an effort is made to persuade her to have her child adopted, for the child's sake, when it is found that the circumstances to which she would return with the baby after she left the hospital would be unsatisfactory.

On page 98 of a World Health Organization publication published in 1952 entitled *Maternal Care and Mental Health*, written by John Bowlby, the author referred to mothers who had retained their children and had not looked at their situation realistically, with the result that the children had not been looked after in a desirable manner but had been left with other people or foster parents for a time and had had very unsettled existences. Reference is made to a child who had had 20 different foster parents.

In his book John Bowlby sets out five conditions, of which four should be fulfilled before a mother takes her child into her own care. The first condition is that she should have a stable personality. In this regard, the chances are as much one way as the other. Not all unmarried mothers are unstable. The second condition is that the mother must have a realistic attitude towards her problem. If she is a single person, it is necessary for her to know how she can look after the child and support herself while the child is young. She might have relatives who can assist her, and so on. These are the sorts of questions she must be made to face.

The third condition is that the mother must love and accept the child and not blame it for her difficulty. The fourth condition is that she should have a positive relationship with the alleged father.

In quite a few cases unmarried, widowed, divorced, and separated mothers who have difficulty in coping with their situation have had temporary relationships with men, and very often they have children and do not know who is the father of the children. The fifth condition is that the mother's family should not insist that she give up the child. In many cases the parents of the mother blame her and accuse her of bringing shame to the family, or they do not wish neighbours or relatives to know about it and they do not want to have anything to do with her.

It would be very difficult for many unmarried mothers to fulfil those conditions, yet it is only when four of them have been fulfilled that an unmarried mother is able to maintain her child alone.

When we are dealing with the adoption of children and considering what legislation is necessary, do we need to look at this area also and give some power to the Child Welfare Department to enable it to have liaison with hospitals and institutions where these mothers go to give birth to their children so that it can ensure this aspect is being taken care of? Whilst the children who are taken into the care of the department may be well placed and may grow up to live normal, happy lives, there are other children who may not be so well placed. As Miss Elliott said, more social workers would probably be needed to examine this problem. I think that, given sufficient staff, the Child Welfare Department would perform its task extremely well.

I have not seen this year's figures but the department's report for 1970 shows that the number of adoptions through the Child Welfare Department is roughly the same as the number of adoptions through private institutions. I was a little surprised at the figures.

One of the papers I read on the subject was an article entitled "Private Adoption Agencies in New South Wales" in the *Australian Journal of Social Issues* of February, 1971. On page 59 of that journal concern is expressed at the role played by private adoption agencies. I do not know whether the experience in Western Australia is similar to the experience in New South Wales. We have no way of knowing because very little research into this subject seems to have been done in this State. I have not been able to lay my hands on any reports of research that has been undertaken in this State.

The research in New South Wales revealed that different types of people went to private institutions and State adoptive agencies. Those who approached private institutions were usually younger and came from families that were economically better off. Perhaps those people had a greater desire to conceal the birth and the

fact that they were pregnant while unmarried, or perhaps their parents were keen to have the matter concealed. That is only an opinion, not a fact.

It was found that there is often a close and positive relationship between the mothers and the institution, and the mothers often return to the institution. This may be something of benefit.

In that State it was also found that a number of natural mothers knew who were the adopting parents. From what I have been able to learn—and I think it is the intention of the amending legislation—the adopting parents and the natural parents should not know each other. Does this sort of thing occur in our own State with regard to the private agencies? Do the natural parents get to know who are the adopting parents?

Another point mentioned in this booklet relates to making a check on the adopting parents. The conditions laid down by the department are of a fairly high standard and, obviously, the private agencies have their own welfare workers who check on the parents. A check is also made by the New South Wales department, so there is a duplication of services in order to ensure that the adopting parents selected by the private agencies conform to the standards laid down by the department.

As I mentioned, I do not know whether that situation prevails here and there seems to be little we can do to find out. A number of private institutions are used by the State, and I am sorry I do not have a report at hand so that I could advise members of the position. The private institutions in this State obviously fulfil a most important role in the care of foster children and other children who are in some sort of trouble. I would not like the House to feel that I am criticising these people; I feel they are performing an extremely good job and, very likely, the children are better off for it. This, then, is the second of my points: the child who is in the process of being adopted.

Thirdly, I refer to the adopting parents. There is some evidence to suggest that one of the reasons people seek to adopt a child is to fulfil their own emotional needs, or for other motives. Here again, I think the officers of the department very likely would be aware of this and would check out very carefully those seeking to make adoptions to ensure they are acceptable as adopting parents.

I have a query in relation to the Bill and perhaps if I mention it now the Minister will have a chance to consider it before we go into Committee. Proposed new section 5 (5) states—

(5) Where the opinion of the Director, furnished to the Judge under this section, is to the effect that an applicant is not a proper person to be

an adopting parent, that opinion is not, for any purpose, conclusive evidence to that effect.

The Hon. J. Dolan: You said, "is not . . . conclusive evidence" but it states in the Bill that it is conclusive evidence.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: No, proposed new section 5 (5) states that "that opinion is not . . . conclusive evidence to that effect."

The Hon. J. Dolan: I am sorry, I was looking at proposed new subsection (4).

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: My query is: If the opinion of the director is not conclusive evidence, whose opinion would be conclusive?

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: The opinion of a judge. There is a right of appeal.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I will not waste the time of the House by checking up on that. However, I would like to point out that section 5A(3) of the principal Act states—

(3) The jurisdiction of a Judge to make an order of adoption is not dependent on any fact or circumstance not expressly specified in this Act.

To my lay mind there seems to be some sort of conflict here, but I will not pursue it any further. I conclude my remarks by saying I support the Bill.

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

Sitting suspended from 6.08 to 7.30 p.m.

BILLS (3): RECEIPT AND FIRST READING

1. Abattoirs Act Amendment Bill.

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by The Hon. J. Dolan (Minister for Police), read a first time.

2. Parliamentary Superannuation Act Amendment Bill.

3. Government Railways Act Amendment Bill.

Bills received from the Assembly; and, on motions by The Hon. W. F. Willesee (Leader of the House), read a first time.

FIREARMS AND GUNS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Returned

Bill returned from the Assembly without amendment.

CENSORSHIP OF FILMS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 14th September.

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (Lower West) (7.33 p.m.): This Bill is a further step in the long road towards the easing of censorship. As members are aware, some countries of the world have taken the plunge in one large step, and we hear from time to time of the effects of their action. No doubt, from time to time we see the effects of that step in magazines and the like that are published in those countries.

In Australia we have elected to traverse this road one step at a time, and we seem to be arriving probably at the same end by much slower means. Frankly I am in favour of the slower method.

I am aware of the many arguments that have been put forward for the easing of censorship. I suppose like most people I have had arguments with others on this question. Strangely enough, a number of people who say they are opposed to censorship and would like to see censorship abandoned, alter their view when the opportunity arises. Getting down to tin-tacks, I have yet to meet anyone who thinks we should abandon all forms of censorship.

Most people who have served overseas, either in the Middle East or in the Asian theatres of war, have no doubt seen a variety of entertainments in those countries. One hopes that such entertainments do not become the normal types of entertainment provided in the theatres of this country. When one recounts this type of entertainment, and asks whether the public would like it to be provided in the theatres of Australia, generally the people say they would not. In effect, they admit that whilst they talk about the abolition of censorship, what they really mean is that the limits of censorship should be extended.

In my experience the average person does require some sort of control, or some form of censorship. I have found that those who talk a great deal about the need for easing censorship very quickly retract from the completely open slather they advocate, when they are confronted with the situation.

I know that all sorts of arguments can be put up; and it has been said that what one can see one does not require. Applied to the normal type of person this is probably true; but it tends to be forgotten that an ever-increasing percentage of the population at large is not normal, in the sense that it is able to cope with the everyday situations of the modern world. For this type of person I do not believe that complete freedom from all forms of censorship is desirable. So we come to the stage where, step by step, the position is being relaxed. All of us know of films, television shows, and books which people can see or read, and which would have shocked many people to an immeasurable degree a few years ago. However, today these are fairly commonplace.

Like most people I have read a fair amount of the writings by the author, Philip Roth. I like him as an author but lately I read a couple of books which leave Philip Roth a little behind, yet these books can be bought at a number of book stalls in the city. The fact that no-one has made a fuss about them means that they have not been placed on the banned list, and they have therefore not become best sellers.

I believe the introduction of the "R" certificate is a reasonable provision. What the Bill proposes is to open up a new film classification—the "R" certificate films. The idea of this certificate is to euphemistically refer to this classification as adult films which will now be permitted to be shown. We have heard these being referred to as art films. In the main it means they can portray the complete sexual act in some form or other. That is my opinion. This is done quite openly, and is claimed to be done artistically. Thus automatically such films become artistic or adult films. Under the Bill these films can now be shown without the "interesting" parts finishing up on the cutting-room floor or without the films being cut so that the continuity is lost.

The Bill has been a fairly long time in the making. I attended one of the early conferences at which Mr. Chipp told us all about this. To the best of my knowledge it is virtually a standard piece of legislation throughout Australia. It has been well received, and well conceived; and it is as good as one can hope for in the circumstances, because some difficulties do present themselves.

As with most matters, under this legislation 18 years is accepted as the age of adulthood. The fact of reaching 18 years of age does not necessarily mean that the person has reached the age of maturity, when he is able to cope with business propositions anymore than he is able to determine which films he can see or which everyday problems and trials he can overcome. However, an age has to be set, and 18 years has been selected.

The Bill contains an interesting proposition which I consider to be fairly reasonable. Up to the age of 14 years the responsibility devolves entirely on the proprietor of the picture theatre; but between 14 years and 18 years there is a dual responsibility, and not only the proprietor of the theatre or the drive-in but also the juvenile can be held responsible and be penalised. I think this is a good principle.

A person of 14 years of age and over knows very well when a film is classified "R" and that its viewing is restricted. He knows he is not of age and should not see the film. I can understand the desire of the very young to see these films, because generally this is an area which excites great curiosity and interest, with the interest—not so much the excitement—ex-

tending even above 14 years of age. Like many things, the forbidden fruit tastes the sweetest.

One aspect will present a problem to theatre proprietors, more particularly to proprietors of drive-in-theatres. If the daylight saving proposition being put forward by the Government becomes law, the drive-in proprietors will face a fairly difficult situation, with the actual film commencing at 9 p.m. by clock time, because before that time it is not dark enough. They will be faced with this problem, as well as the problem of policing the provision in the legislation to ensure that every patron is over 18 years of age.

A worth-while provision in the Bill will make the position in one respect easier for the proprietors of drive-in theatres. I can understand these people not wishing to show "R" certificate films. As the Minister has said, these films would be more likely to be restricted to the arty, and the small, intimate type of theatre. So very rightly the legislation allows a choice; they may elect not to show "R" certificate films.

Because of the problems associated with the distribution of films it is necessary to include that provision in the legislation. Under certain circumstances, a theatre virtually must take a run of films as put out by the distributors. It is necessary that the theatre proprietors be given the right to refuse "R" films. This is a very wise provision, because the type of theatre which normally caters for what might be euphemistically regarded as the clean, family type of entertainment will be permitted to develop its pattern and refuse to show "R" films. I expect most drive-in-theatres to adopt this pattern, because policing the age of patrons will be an extremely difficult task.

I repeat that this Bill is another step towards the easing of the censorship law. One could even say it is another sign of the permissive society, but I think the Bill would have been introduced despite the state of society. The gradual trend has been towards the easing of the censorship laws as they concern books, pictures, films, TV shows, and the like and this indicates that the general attitude of mind is altering.

The Bill will cater for those who desire to see a certain type of picture which can be viewed in other parts of the world. It has been on the stocks for a long time and actually it would be hard now to say who was originally responsible for it. I suppose on the ministerial side, Mr. Chipp—the Federal Minister for Customs and Excise—probably was the father of the Bill.

For the reasons I have enumerated, I support the measure.

THE HON. R. F. CLAUGHTON (North Metropolitan) [7.46 p.m.]: The previous speaker has covered most of the points contained in the Bill. The arrival of Mr. Chipp on the Commonwealth scene has been welcomed by those who desire a relaxation of the censorship laws. A campaign has been held for a considerable period in this regard to obtain a more realistic approach to the censorship of films and books. As Mr. MacKinnon has said, it is very difficult to know the genesis of the Bill.

Those who follow films seriously are frustrated when important sections are deleted to conform with the moral standards, or whatever standards are used, of some unknown person. The censorship system has been criticised for a considerable time because those responsible were unknown. They were departmental officials who might have had very little grounding in literature or film appreciation. For this reason the Bill is extremely welcome.

The responsibility in regard to the viewing of these films is to be placed on the exhibitor and the viewer. The exhibitor has a certain responsibility to ensure that a person under age does not enter the theatre, but obviously many youngsters are maturing at 14 years of age and a little older and it is very difficult to gauge their age. Consequently it is realistic to place the responsibility on the viewer as well as on the exhibitor.

Many arguments have been advanced concerning the effect of films and literature on those who view and read them. Recently I read a report that youngsters are affected by the films of violence shown on TV, and I have no reason to doubt this. I am normally a viewer of ABC Channel 2 and I have become rather tired of watching the F.B.I. year after year. It is about time the programme was changed. The problems shown in the series are normally resolved by the law agents shooting the culprits which is not a very good attitude to inculcate in our youngsters. However, this seems to be the solution in many American films, but it is not the British procedure which we have inherited. This is one programme I would like censored, or taken off the screen for a while.

On the other hand, a United Kingdom parliamentary committee investigating censorship visited one of the Scandinavian countries recently and it was reported that the Scandinavians were amazed by the attitude of the British committee. They had not been to see the pornographic shows the British committee was interested to view. They thought the members of the committee were odd, but they went along with them to see what all the fuss was about.

It is very difficult to assess the effect of films. It was recently stated that children are affected by films of violence, and yet

in a country where the censorship laws are much less rigid, the people appear to ignore what is displayed. Because it is available they are not interested.

Under the legislation before us those who are interested will have an opportunity to see art films in their entirety as they were produced without any segments being deleted; deletions which tend to destroy the artistic value. Like Mr. MacKinnon, I do not believe these films will be screened in the ordinary theatres attended by the general public. Because of the age limitation involved they are more likely to be screened in particular theatres. The local drive-in theatres will not want their audiences limited; nor would they wish to be faced with the problem of turning away any of their clientele.

I support the measure and hope that as a result of it no serious problems will arise and that eventually some further relaxation will be possible.

THE HON. R. H. C. STUBBS (South-East—Chief Secretary) [7.54 p.m.]: I wish to thank Mr. MacKinnon and Mr. Claughton for their contributions to this debate. When I was giving my second reading speech, Mr. MacKinnon by interjection referred to pornographic films, and Mr. Claughton also raised this matter. No pornographic films are involved. Mr. Chipp has assured me that the films he wants to show are of a high quality and well made.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: It depends on how these are defined.

The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS: We will find Mr. Chipp is a responsible person. The Commonwealth Government is actually carrying out the censorship because it has the staff we do not have. As I said when introducing the Bill, all States have adopted similar legislation and I think this is the last State to do so. The reason for our lateness is that usually an autumn session of Parliament is held, but this was not the case this year.

Mr. MacKinnon said this legislation has been on the stocks for quite a while, and he is correct. It emanated from a meeting of Ministers from all States last September, and our Minister would have been the Chief Secretary of the day.

I do not believe the pictures under discussion will be screened at the drive-in theatres because they are usually a family affair with all the kiddies attending with mum and dad. A drive-in theatre would find very little value in screening such pictures. The film people themselves envisage only one theatre in Perth catering for an audience which will not be large. It will consist of mature people and this legislation will allow them to see the films of their choice.

I also agree with Mr. MacKinnon regarding censorship. We must pause for the time being until we ascertain the effects

of this Bill. We must have a responsible attitude and I think this is the case with all State Ministers. We think the legislation will be a success and I am sure we can leave the matter to the advice of the experts in Canberra because, after all, as I said, Mr. Chipp's department has the staff to handle the situation.

The States are frequently advised. Not a week passes without our receiving a very interesting letter from Mr. Chipp whose department is keeping a finger on the pulse of censorship, for which we are very grateful.

Once again I thank Mr. MacKinnon and Mr. Claughton for their interest in and support of the Bill which I commend to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (The Hon. P. D. Willmott) in the Chair; The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs (Chief Secretary) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4 put and passed.

Clause 5: Amendment to section 12—

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I choose this opportunity to make some remarks following the Minister's reply to the second reading debate. I cannot remember the exact wording of the Act, but it is to the effect that films, books, or plays must conform to certain standards, but no precise standards are laid down. Consequently the classification of films is based on opinion. I remember quite recently seeing a film called "Ryan's Daughter" which contained a very passionate love scene.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: Three of them.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I was rather surprised that this was permitted, but in the context of the whole film it was not objectionable.

Had I seen it some years ago I might have thought seriously about allowing my children to see it. I probably would not hesitate in the same way these days.

On the other hand, I recently saw a production at the Playhouse wherein a minister of religion had a relationship with a rather free young woman. Because of some of the dialogue in the play a number of people left the theatre. For these people, the standards of the play were not acceptable.

I only indicate that it becomes a matter of opinion and it is not easy for a censor to decide what the classification should be.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: I am a little worried about drive-in theatres. Perhaps we should be willing to add to proposed subsection (1a)(d) the words, "in a restricted picture theatre, as defined in

the principal Act." As I understand it, drive-ins are included under the definition of "picture theatre" in the principal Act.

The only reason I make the suggestion is that drive-ins are difficult to check. I appreciate the Minister's comments that these films will be shown in a theatre—in the accepted sense of the word as we know it—in the town. Perhaps the Minister may give some consideration to my suggestion, but if he feels there is no danger of this occurring—namely the difficulty of checking people in and out of drive-in theatres—of course the matter would not arise.

I was sorry to hear Mr. Claughton suggest that the F.B.I. series should be banned. After all is said and done, I have never seen any violence in that series.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: You cannot watch it. They shoot three or four people every week.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: Perhaps that may help some people.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: They shoot them quite dead.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: Of course the F.B.I. men inflict injuries. After all, the G-men are very good shots.

The Hon. J. Heitman: Perhaps Mr. Claughton wanted the robbers to win on some occasions.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: The Hayes office of the United States of America controls films very tightly.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It could fix Mr. Claughton's desires by shooting the policemen and then there would be no more series.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: I am sure Mr. Claughton takes the point.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: We get the impression that if they shot Effram Zimbalist Jnr. there would be no more F.B.I.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: Edgar Hoover's best part! As I have said, the Hayes office tightly controls films. For instance we never see a hypodermic needle entering the flesh or any acts of violence as such. American standards may differ from ours.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: They must do.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: I was surprised to hear Mr. Claughton talk about the Swedish experiment.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I was talking about the committee.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: I am talking about the committee and the socialist peer, Lord Longford, who packed his bags after one day; he was not impressed at all.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: He was chairman of the committee.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: He packed his bags, said, "I have seen it all before" and went home.

I ask the Minister to look at the question of drive-ins. If he is perfectly satisfied I shall accept his reassurance.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I am constantly amazed at the facility with which Mr. Claughton makes a simple statement sound so profound. He went on about censorship being a matter of opinion when that is quite clearly stated in the Bill, virtually in those words.

At the bottom of page 2 of the Bill it says, "The censor shall not approve a film which is, in his opinion"—I certainly admire Mr. Claughton's facility to take something which is written in black and white in his own Minister's Bill and make it sound so profound.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I am flattered.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: A primary school child could read it. I am full of admiration for the way in which Mr. Claughton does this type of thing and I must study his form a little.

The parent Act certainly does use many fancy words, as was the tendency at the time the Act was passed. It says—

The censor shall not unconditionally refuse to approve a film which, in his opinion—

- (a) reproduces or adapts, in good faith and with artistic merit, any work of recognised literary merit; or
- (b) represents, in good faith and with artistic merit, any scriptural, historical, traditional, mythical or legendary story.

The verbiage in the present measure is greatly abbreviated.

I reiterate the point that what Mr. Claughton said is stated quite simply and in words which are easily understood at the bottom of page 2 of the Bill.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I think both Mr. Williams and Mr. MacKinnon were being provocative in what they said.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: We are trying to help the Minister get his Bill through.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I overlooked one point when I spoke to this clause previously. A number of films create a great deal of public interest, but the censor may decide that some scenes are not suitable for general exhibition. Will two versions be released? Will there be an "R" version released for those who wish to see a play or film in its original form and a cut version which is suitable for general release?

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: No, there will only be one certificate. It will be an "R" certificate that the production is to be presented in a given theatre.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Yes, but sections could be cut from a film to make it suitable for general or adult exhibition.

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: That would defeat the present proposition.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: If this were possible it would be a mature audience.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I only ask whether two versions—an uncut version with an "R" classification and a cut version for exhibition to the general public or a mature audience—will be available. I shall leave it at that. I did want to comment on what Mr. Williams said, but I will not prolong the debate.

The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS: Mr. Williams mentioned the fact that people are shot on the F.B.I. series. Perhaps that idea has a deal of merit. The provision in clause 5 will allow censors to approve of films unconditionally, to approve them subject to certain conditions, or to refuse to approve them. The proposed new subsection sets out the new classifications.

The idea of the "R" certificate is simply to allow a film to be shown in a given theatre to a mature audience. This would be lost if we cut films, which is happening at the moment. Films of merit are being cut because they cannot be shown under a general classification, which are the films to which families usually go.

The idea of the exercise is to allow mature people to go to a given theatre to see a film. The interesting and most important fact is that theatres have the right to refuse to take a film. Consequently there will be no trouble so far as drive-in theatres are concerned. They will continue to cater for ordinary audiences as they do now. They will not be embarrassed, because they have the right to refuse to take a film. I am sure drive-ins will continue to show the type of film which they do at the moment, because it would probably cost a fortune to police drive-ins. I have had discussions with all the film people and they are happy about this suggestion.

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: Proposed subsection (1a) (b) which contains the words, "not recommended for children" intrigues me. What effect will this have? Should children not go to the theatre or should parents not take them?

The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS: Previously we had classifications but no power to enforce them. The classifications were given in an advisory capacity to the film world. When the classifications enumerated in this measure come into effect the censor will be able to do whatever he thinks fit.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 to 13 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

LOTTERIES (CONTROL) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 14th September.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [8.14 p.m.]—Some people at least will regard this Bill as an important one. The passage of the two-clause Bill will permit the Lotteries Commission to grant to a religious body or charitable organisation, or to any other body or organisation not established for the purpose of trading or for securing pecuniary profit to its individual members, a permit to hold or conduct the game commonly known as bingo, housie-housie or tombola, on such terms and conditions as the commission may think fit to impose.

I suppose it will not be very long before we hear some of the expressions attached to this interesting game. If the police had overheard these words, they could take action against the people playing this unlawful game. However we will soon hear ringing from the rooms where people are engaged in this game of bingo, such expressions as, "Legs 11, No. 11," "Kelly's Eye, No. 1," "Clickety-click, No. 66," "Doctor's orders, No. 9."

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: I can see you have played this game before.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Indeed I have, and I have played it without very much success—indeed, it is a frustrating game. I find I usually get to the point where I have one or two numbers uncovered, and will the fellow call out those numbers? Not on your life.

The Hon. J. Heitman: You want to get him to shake the barrel.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: This is the very thing he is asked to do. A player who is not getting a fair go will call out, "Give it a shake."

Other expressions will be heard, such as "All the sevens seventy-seven," "Top of the shop, No. 7," "Blind Eye, No. 60," and "Lucky for some, No. 13," "The key of the door, No. 21." That would be very interesting to all the young people participating.

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: It is 18 now legally.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: We will still know the key of the door to be 21 for some time.

A member: Bingo!

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: "Was she worth it? 2 and 6, 26," and "Never been kissed, Sweet 16." These are some of the expressions which are used to make the game exciting.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: "What killed Jessie James? A 45."

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: A lot of people get a great deal of fun out of the game.

Personally, I am not pleased that we need to introduce a Bill to Parliament to make the game of Bingo, or whatever else you like to call it, legal. What on earth will we come up with next?

Don Smith wrote a very interesting article in *The West Australian*, and I think his comments are worth repeating in this House. The article commences—

While the members of the Bingo Liberation Front prepare to emerge from their underground dens, the State Government could have a bit of a gamble itself by taking a more tolerant look at the Lotteries Control Act.

Though the legislation is no longer the manifesto on public morals that it set out to be back in 1931, it is still in many ways an unrealistic statute.

Some members will probably recall the reason for the introduction of the Lotteries Control Act in Western Australia. The article continues—

Some of the practices which it outlaws happen every day of the week, and few people seem to care a darn.

For a community hooked on raffle tickets it is a sobering thought that the club secretary who runs a raffle and the office boy who organises a Melbourne Cup sweep are technically in the same boat as the backroom Crown and Anchor operator—they could all go to gaol for three years. And anyone who dares to sell a ticket in an unauthorised raffle can be fined up to \$100.

When laws are broken as frequently as some of the provisions of the Lotteries Control Act, and when authority has to turn a discretionary blind eye as often as it does, they are due for an overhaul.

Last financial year the Lotteries Commission issued more than 4,000 permits for raffles and similar fundraising ventures. For every raffle conducted with the commission's blessing there were probably dozens that were not.

This does not mean the Government should lift the lid completely on illegal lotteries. But it could move to confer a little more respectability on the mainly-harmless raffles and sweeps that are the financial salvation of many organisations, including Parents and Citizens' Associations, sporting clubs and charitable bodies.

One way to go about it would be to put a reasonable ceiling—in terms of gross receipts and the price of tickets—

I notice the Minister foreshadowed that some people might play this game for as little as 1c or 2c a card. I do not think the Minister came down in the last shower.

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: The Minister can show you letters from pensioners saying they are doing just that.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Playing the game for 1c or 2c?

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: Yes.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am glad to hear that. However, I personally think the stakes might be a little higher. To continue—

—on individual money-raising schemes that could be conducted without the express approval of the Lotteries Commission. The Act could still provide heavy penalties for the shady operator who set up for personal gain.

It is an odds-on (but illegal) bet that no-one could guess anywhere near the total amount that West Australians invest in all forms of gambling.

Much of it, of course, ranging from two-up to illegal raffles, is hidden. But a fair degree of the community's gambling is assessable.

Even setting aside the sophisticated punting arenas of the Sandover Medal and the stock market, the measurable flutters of West Australians in 1970-71 involved a whopping \$114 million—equal to almost a third of the State Budget—

I am not sure whether this article was written before or after the last State Budget—the figures may have to be altered. The article goes on—

—or more than \$2 a week for every man, woman and child.

The Lotteries Commission handled public investments totalling \$6.25 million—but this was dwarfed by the \$107.7 million worth of bets carried by horses during the year.

High though it appears, the total wagered on horses was by no means all money down the drain.

Mr. Jack Maher, chairman of the T.A.B. (which last financial year held bets totalling \$56.2 million) has some interesting observations on wagering on the horse sports.

He estimates that the collective losses of punters for the year was between \$13 million and \$14 million, or roughly 13 per cent of the total \$107.7 million invested.

The gambling propensities of the community produces one winner.

Last year the State Treasury cracked the jackpot for almost \$6 million in direct gains.

It collected \$4.6 million from betting taxes and was saved more than \$1 million by the Lotteries Commission's contribution to the running costs of hospitals.

I was prompted to say to the Minister, somewhat good-humouredly, was the State Government aiming to impose a tax on bingo? Even though we joke about it, I think this is something to be watched.

In his introductory speech the Minister said that the intention of this Bill was to permit religious bodies and charitable organisations to play the game of bingo, and I think that is the real objective of the Government. In the circumstances I am personally prepared to accept that as the objective. However, I am not enamoured of the necessity to introduce legislation of this nature. Having seen the game played in other countries of the world and on ships, I am aware it is a game which gets people in. If it affords pleasure to some sections of the community, then I have no real objection apart from one thing, which is that I do not think it should be allowed to get out of control. I would not like to see it played in big public halls as is done in some parts of the world.

The Hon. J. Dolan: In England.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes in England, where the winner calls out in a very excited manner one of the three words, "Bingo," "Housie-housie," or "Tombola," and receives a very substantial prize as a result of a completed card.

Of course, I am not suggesting for one moment that this game is anywhere near as bad as the poker machines in New South Wales which are commonly known as the one-armed bandits. On one occasion when Sir David Brand was Premier and Treasurer of this State, he was asked whether he would legislate to permit the introduction of one-armed bandits in Western Australia. His comment was to the effect that he had no intention of tying the economic future of Western Australia to a one-armed bandit. Personally, I was very pleased to hear such a remark. I do not wish to see that sport—if we like to call it a sport—introduced into Western Australia.

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: I would call it a disease.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It is a disease of course to the one who has it.

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: Quite a few have it in New South Wales.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: They have. Has the Minister ever subscribed to the one-armed bandits in New South Wales?

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: No.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Never? The Minister is too good to be true.

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: I will tell you in a minute about my betting when you have finished.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: No, I do not want to hear the inner secrets of the Minister's life—

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: It is a sad life and worth listening to.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: —in regard to his betting propensity. I was just asking the Minister if he had ever put 20c into a one-armed bandit.

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: You said in New South Wales.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes, I did, but I have played it here in Western Australia.

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: I have too.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: At the time these one-armed bandits were tolerated, but I am very pleased they were outlawed. In some places I do not think they were doing a great deal of harm because they were in clubs and could only be patronised by members of that club.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: They were doing some damage.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Nevertheless, I do not want to see them in Western Australia again.

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: Neither do I.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is very interesting to hear, but that is not part of this Bill.

I intend to support the second reading of the Bill. In fact, I had some amendments prepared which I proposed to offer to the House when the Bill went into Committee, because I do not like the over-simplified manner of clause 2. However, when I received the amendments from the draftsman this afternoon and read through them, I found I needed a little more time to ask the draftsman one or two questions. Therefore, I hope the Committee stage of the Bill does not proceed tonight and that the Minister will give me an opportunity to put these amendments on the notice paper. I do not imagine there is any great hurry for the passage of the Bill. Maybe it need not be dealt with until after Show Week, unless the Minister has some particular reason to allow people to be in the position to call, "Legs 11," "Kelly's Eye," or something of this nature.

My reason is that clause 2 of the Bill will give power to the commission to grant to a religious body or charitable organisation a permit to conduct the game of bingo, and similar words are also expressed in section 18 of the Lotteries (Control) Act. However, the proposed new subsection set out in clause 2 of the Bill goes on to state—

... or to any other body or organisation not established for the purpose of trading or for securing pecuniary profit to its individual members, a permit to hold or conduct ...

Immediately I think there is a very distinct likelihood that the issuing of a permit to a registered club or any organisation that holds a liquor license or a permit under the Liquor Act will run contrary to that Act. Section 126(1)(f) of the Liquor Act reads as follows:—

Subject to the succeeding provisions of this section, a licensee and the servant or agent of a licensee who—

(f) bets with any person, or suffers betting, gaming or the playing of unlawful games or the conduct of lotteries on the licensed premises;

commits an offence.

Penalty—Two hundred dollars.

So there is a distinct possibility that the Bill in its present form could run contrary to the Liquor Act, and I know that this is not the objective of the Government. So one amendment I would put forward would be to remove the possibility that the provision in the Bill runs contrary to the Liquor Act, by providing, in fact, that the commission should not issue a permit for this game of bingo to be played on licensed premises in whatever form they might be.

In fact, I would have to ask the Committee to introduce a clause as a substitute for clause 2 as printed in the Bill. On looking at clause 2 as it appears in the Bill now I think it would be unfair to place on the Lotteries Commission the responsibility to issue a permit to any religious body or other organisation not established for the purpose of trading or securing pecuniary profit to its members. It would be very hard pressed to refuse a permit to one organisation but grant it to another. Once the commission is allowed to start this kind of practice we do not know where it will end.

As a matter of interest, I would like to know what the Lotteries Commission itself thinks about this provision. Is the commission willing to take upon itself this responsibility; or has the Government said to the commission, "Because you control the conduct of the lotteries in this State and certain organisations want to conduct this game of bingo, you, the Lotteries Commission, shall assume control of this legislation"? If the Lotteries Commission is to do this willingly I suppose that is all right, but if it is a responsibility that is being foisted upon it against its will then I think we should know that this is the true situation. The Minister may not be able to enlighten me now, but possibly he can do so when he replies to the debate.

What I will ask the Committee to agree to is that the Bill will, fundamentally, grant to a religious body or a charitable organisation, upon application, a permit issued by the Lotteries Commission under

certain conditions and let the matter stop at that point. As, in some way, it has relation to licensed premises, it is important to note that as the Bill stands there is no reference to premises whatsoever in regard to the power that will be given to grant a permit. It does not state where the particular game will be conducted.

The permit will simply be one to conduct a game of bingo and if we restrict the permit that is to be issued to a religious body or a charitable organisation we will further the request contained in the Minister's second reading speech. I am prepared to leave the matter at that point repeating that I am not terribly enamoured of legislation that is introduced into Parliament to permit the playing of this game. I realise it will, as the Minister said, bring pleasure to a section of the community that is anxious to engage in this sport or competition—whatever it may be called—and I am therefore prepared to support the second reading of the Bill.

THE HON. R. J. L. WILLIAMS (Metropolitan) [8.36 p.m.]: I have extremely mixed feelings on this Bill. However, we have heard Mr. Griffith say he will support the Bill subject to amendments, and I know that the Minister who introduced the measure had no bad intentions whatsoever. I want to make it perfectly clear at the outset that those are my thoughts on that aspect of the legislation.

However, I remember that in this House the Leader of the Opposition asked a question as to whether the Government sought an extension of gambling and the answer was "No."

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The question was: Does this Government encourage gambling?

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: Yes; that is correct, and the answer was "No." Therefore, I find it hard to reconcile that answer with the introduction of the Bill. No matter which way one looks at it this is a Bill that will extend gambling. Do not let members think I am a man who has never gambled. I have, and still do, and I think that every member in this House has, at some time or another, engaged in gambling. If one buys a lottery ticket it is a gamble.

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: I thought people bought lottery tickets with the idea of helping charities.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: Indeed, but I will come to that later. It is surprising to me, therefore, that a socialistic Government seeks to introduce legislation to extend gambling. I appreciate the motives behind the Minister's introduction of the Bill, but I do not appreciate its principles. A book titled *Lacon* written by C. C. Colton defines gambling in these words, "Gambling is the child of avarice but the parent of prodigality." I once remember listening to a speech made in

the House of Commons by one of the most famous socialists of his time—Aneurin Bevan. In that speech he said that every time there was an extension of gambling the only man that suffered was in his class—the working class—and it is a fact that every day in this Chamber we bow our heads devotedly and hear the words, "Lead us not into temptation" expressed.

It strikes me that someone must look at this Bill in another way. Gambling is a disease. Do not let any member flinch from that fact. I will prove that to the House later. I wonder whether the Chief Secretary who introduced the Bill realises what a terrible burden he could be thrusting upon those already over-burdened shoulders of the Minister for Community Welfare. We are being asked to agree to a Bill that will lead to the establishment of gambling treatment clinics or something of that nature. Unfortunately I have observed at first hand these bingo parlours working.

I have seen derelict cinemas taken over for the purpose of carrying on the game of bingo. In the afternoon session I have seen women queuing up with their shopping baskets waiting for the commencement of the two-hour session at two shillings a game. I have seen children waiting on the steps of a deserted cinema at 4 o'clock in the afternoon for mum to come home, and in the north of England I have seen a mum returning at 6 o'clock in the evening and leaving her children at the cinema until the 8 o'clock bingo session was over.

Anyone who has seen a bingo session in England will realise that it is a game that has caused certain hardships in the community, particularly among the working classes who cannot afford to play it.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: My research in the *Daily News* is that it keeps Andy Capp going.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: It is in the Andy Capp country that this game had its genesis on a large commercial scale. The Leader of the Opposition quoted the figures in relation to gambling in this State, but actually we are only amateurs at it, although I admit we are about 55 times smaller. During 1969-70 the annual turnover for gambling in England totalled £2,220,000,000, and out of that the Government took roughly 33½ per cent.

It was purported that the Minister was introducing the Bill to satisfy some pressure groups, and I believe he also named certain British migrants, amongst others. I wonder whether the opinion has been canvassed among remaining British migrants as to what they feel about the matter. I wonder whether any inquiry has been made as to how many British migrants come out here to escape this game of bingo.

The other aspect which worries me quite considerably is the fact that the Minister, in his second reading speech, stated the following which appears at page 1282 of *Hansard* proof No. 9:—

The consensus of opinion is that a game of bingo or the like is a "gimmick" which would help get members along to gatherings where they could have an evening's harmless enjoyment, maybe win or lose a small amount, and help raise a modest amount of money for the club or organisation to devote to some worth-while purpose.

What have we come to, Mr. Deputy President? We, who are supposed to have the welfare of this State at heart! Let members ask my colleagues in the Country Party opposite, and Mr. McNeill, what they know about fund raising in the country.

If any member had been watching television the other night he would have seen a group of junior farmers handing over a sum of money in excess of \$400 for the W.A. Institute for the Blind to be used for the purchase of talking books. I am very well acquainted with that organisation and I know how it raises its money; it is not raised by bingo or by cards.

When the Scarborough Senior High School wanted a swimming pool the money was not collected by playing bingo or by gambling. The money was collected by conducting walkathons or jogathons or similar functions for the purpose of raising the money required. In my book the club that has to depend on bingo to raise finance is not a very good club. One can become a member of a club by paying the necessary subscription and sharing in the conduct of the affairs of that club, and if it cannot budget properly without resorting to gambling it is a poor old type of club.

I have no doubt that Mr. Logan could tell many people in the metropolitan area how people in his district raise money. They conduct bottle drives, engage in hay carting, root picking, and stone picking. At least these people are doing something useful and it teaches the youth in our community that they cannot get money for nothing. The money that is gained corresponds to the amount of effort that is put into the exercise. If it were otherwise it would destroy any initiative that is held by our young people. The idea should be to encourage the holding of walkathons among the youthful members of our community.

All members in this House who came from the teaching profession I am certain would not countenance gambling for a number of reasons which I can visualise written out on the blackboard in front of the school children.

Once this is legalised it will mean that we will be the second State in the Commonwealth to have passed such legislation. This form of gambling is illegal in Queens-

land, Victoria and Tasmania; in New South Wales it is played for charitable purposes only and in South Australia it is legal.

I promised to prove that this form of gambling is as much a disease as is alcoholism. I quote from a book called *Psychology—An Introduction to Behavioural Science* by Henry Clay Lindgren, Donn Byrne, and Lewis Petrino. Incidentally, this book is a first-year standard handbook at the University. I would like your permission, Sir, to quote one short piece on gambling which reads—

Gambling is another form of behaviour which, like alcohol and drug addiction, appears to have its choiceless aspects and thus dominates the life of its victims. The person addicted to gambling becomes just as undependable and as unpredictable as the confirmed alcoholic, as far as his responsibilities to his family and his employer are concerned. Once he has become addicted, he behaves as though he has no choice but to gamble, even though he may recognize the harm he is doing to himself, his family, and his associates. The gambler lives in a state of tension and suspense, often masked by a facade of stolid calm (the well-known "poker face"). He cannot afford to relax, since he is continually planning or making bets, or raising funds to gamble or to pay off his debts. Just as many alcoholics hoard liquor in secret caches to tide them over a "dry period," the addicted gambler will maintain a reservoir of funds—his "betting money"—which he will not touch even for the pressing and urgent needs of his family and himself.

The report then goes on to summarise the case history of an inveterate gambler. I will not read that because it is far too tragic. I will merely read the last paragraph which states—

When interviewed by a sociologist, he was 83 years of age, living in a nursing home and prevented from gambling by the infirmities of age. He summed up his feelings about gambling by saying: "I don't know why I did it, but gambling is like a disease; I couldn't stop it even though I often wanted to."

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I do not think we had better pass this Bill because the Chief Secretary might fall.

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: I would not gamble at 80.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: There are several of these mentioned, like drug addiction and drinking and on my own behalf, I might also refer to smoking.

I wonder how many of us in this Chamber can honestly say that they wish they had not had their first this, that, or the other. I wonder how many of us would not have said that at some time.

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: What do you mean by that?

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: *Honi soit qui mal y pense*. What I intend to say is that this type of addiction generally starts in a simple way—the first social drink or the first cigarette. Members can go on from there. I am sure we all have some friend or acquaintance who is in a sorry plight today as a result of these things.

Let us consider the work that is being done by Mr. Ron Thompson in connection with divorce reform.

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: Is that also a disease?

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: It is in this State. We will find without any shadow of a doubt that in a large percentage of these cases the miseries of addiction of one form or another has been responsible for the breakup of the marriages in question bringing into play all the consequential burdens of administrative law and what-have-you. I would like to quote from this book—it is not one of Mr. MacKinnon's—which is called, *Games People Play* by Eric Berna, M.D. Members can make something out of that if they wish.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That is over my head; what is the allusion?

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: The paragraph in question reads—

The situation is similar with gamblers. At the social or sociological level a "professional" gambler is one whose chief interest in life is gambling. But at the psychological level there are two different kinds of people who are professional gamblers. There are those who spend their time gaming, i.e., playing with Fate, in whom the strength of the Adult's desire to win is exceeded only by the strength of the Child's need to lose. Then there are those who run gambling houses and actually do earn a living, usually a very good one, by providing opportunities for gamblers to play; they themselves are not playing, and try to avoid playing, although occasionally under certain conditions they will indulge themselves and enjoy it, just as a straight criminal may occasionally play a game of C&R.

This throws light on why sociological and psychological studies of criminals have been generally ambiguous and unproductive:

It is a disease. We may think this is a simple Bill but I will not support this type of legislation without amendments because I think we should lock this one up pretty tightly; it is open to abuse.

We know that this sort of thing is going on now in the State of Western Australia. I know a person who goes two nights a week every week to a private house with a view to supporting two sporting organisations; one

swimming and the other football. She loses, or should I say spends, \$4 to \$5 per night. That lady has had her telephone cut off for not being able to pay the rental.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: What did she have cut off?

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: Her telephone. She could ill-afford to play this game and she does not know why she does so. I have no desire to stop age pensioners and those who derive enjoyment—as the Minister assured us—by playing a 1c or 2c game. But do not let any of us persuade himself that this kind of sport is harmless.

There is always on the sidelines of gambling the professional shark who will move in faster than legislation can catch up with him. Do not let us imagine for one moment that these games of bingo are straight. There are 90 numbers and there is nothing to prevent—and this has been proved in some cases—the taking out of 10 numbers at the wrong time and making sure that the huge jackpot inducements are never won. Do not let us imagine that these air machines which drag numbers up one by one are harmless because they have dropped in the number which the house has intended. At the end the operator quietly takes out any of the balls that might have been in before he started.

No matter how well we legislate for this sort of thing there are always those waiting in the wings to move in and drive a hole through the legislation or twist it in such a way that we will be forever chasing them afterwards. As examples we need only consider the experiences gained from horse racing and by the T.A.B. and bookmakers.

As I have said I am sorry that I must, reluctantly, support the Bill. I do hope, however, that when the Minister comes to the amendment he will really lock this whole thing up tight. I wonder how much thrilling stimulation the people concerned would receive from bingo, tombola, housie-housie or, to give it its original name, lotto, if there were no money involved, or if they did not have to pay for a card.

I know that many years ago a game was included in compendiums of games which were put out for children, and this game was called lotto. It is still played in the United States though mainly by women.

Having the character he has and the integrity which I have always attributed to him, together with the respect and esteem in which I have always held him, I am sure the Minister will give due cognisance to my remarks. I would ask the Minister to emulate William III. The reference I make is recorded in Macaulay's *History of England*, Volume 4, chapter 17, and reads—

He began to think that he had bet too deep and that it was time to hedge. I thank members for their attention.

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

RURAL RECONSTRUCTION SCHEME BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 15th September.

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West) (8.57 p.m.): I feel at a very considerable disadvantage in having to speak to this Bill in the present circumstances, particularly because I can only express some sort of envy on behalf of those who are particularly, or might I say desperately, interested in the subject of reconstruction.

We are all envious to the extent that we only wish we could attract the same interest as has the subject matter of the two Bills with which we have just dealt—the censorship legislation to create an “R” certificate, and what I might describe as the “Bingo Bill.”

Not only am I envious on behalf of those who find such intense interest, bordering on desperation as it relates to reconstruction because of the tremendous interest the subject matter in the Bills has aroused and will continue to arouse and the place it occupies in the mind of the community, but we are also envious because of the funds which accrue to those who display such an interest or addiction to these particular matters. On the figures mentioned by Mr. Williams in his reference to the Budget in the United Kingdom the amount of money involved is absolutely astronomical; and I need hardly say how much we wish that we could enjoy just a mere fraction of that sort of money or, perhaps, some proportion of it in order that it might be devoted to the problem we have in hand. Tremendous amounts of money have been obtained in this State through lotteries and other forms of gambling.

I daresay there is something symbolic in the fact that we should now debate the matter before us after listening to the submissions made by members on the previous Bills I have mentioned. I would go a step further and say that any resemblance between the Bill before us, as it relates to interest and what the Bill seeks to do, and the two Bills we have just discussed is purely coincidental.

Might I say inasmuch as this Bill deals with agriculture and primary industries in this State perhaps they represent even a greater gamble than those subjects referred to in the Bill discussed immediately prior to this one. This Bill provides for a rural reconstruction scheme in Western Australia, and has certain major functions. The main one is to ratify the agreement entered into between the Commonwealth and the States, and in this case between the Commonwealth and the State of Western Australia.

In addition to the ratification of that agreement, which is contained in the schedule attached to the Bill, there are certain provisions as to how this scheme

shall be administered. Firstly, there is provision for the creation of a body described as a rural reconstruction authority. A body of four gentlemen is specified in the Bill. It also provides for the establishment of a fund, into which fund shall be—or may be—received contributions from the Commonwealth. In this instance, so far as Western Australia is concerned, the amount will be \$14,600,000 out of a total of \$100,000,000 which has been made available to the States by the Commonwealth.

The authority will have the opportunity to receive a return from those who are in a position to be able to take advantage of funds made available by the authority; in other words, the repayments of principal and interest. There is also provision for repayment to the Commonwealth of principal and interest amounting to 75 per cent. of the total money made available to the State. In addition, there is provision for the receipt of funds from certain other accounts and, in particular, from trust funds mainly set up for the purpose of the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act of 1935.

In addition, there is a most important and very vital provision in the Bill relating to the opportunity for the authority to issue protection orders for the benefit of those who apply for and receive assistance from the authority by way of reconstruction funds. The protection will be against the creditors of such people; their mortgages, terms, encumbrances, and the agreements which exist in relation to their assets and properties. There is something which I think is very important and quite vital so far as the Bill is concerned, which is not contained in the word, but rather in the spirit. It is a recognition which exemplifies the acknowledgement by Governments of a responsibility towards a certain section of our community and to certain industries within our community where there is any need of assistance during what might be described—and which has been described in various quarters—as the most serious time in the existence of the agricultural industry in Australia.

It is a tremendously important fact that Governments are prepared to recognise the necessity for assistance of this nature. The Bill provides in its ratification provisions—contained in the schedule—for the payment of funds to the appropriate applicants for the purposes of debt reconstruction, for farm build-up, and for farm amalgamation. It also provides for rehabilitation purposes which, in some quarters and in some journals, has been described as the golden handshake portion of the reconstruction assistance.

In its operation the Bill allows a great deal of flexibility to the authority for the administration of the scheme and the disbursement of funds. This is only right and

it is permitted under the agreement entered into between the Commonwealth and the States. It is most important that the authority should have flexibility and this is a matter to which I will give some attention a little later.

The fund and the scheme are not limited to the amount of \$100,000,000. They are not limited to a particular period of time. In other words, there is the opportunity contained in both the Bill and in the agreement—and which has been pointed out in the second reading speech by the Minister for Primary Industry and his representative in the Senate—for further approaches to be made to the Commonwealth for assistance or for variations of the conditions contained in the agreement.

Those are tremendously important provisions and I support the fact that there is a necessity to have them. It will be appreciated by all members in this House that while our rural industries are experiencing serious times, this is not the first time this has occurred. There have been a number of occasions in our history which those who went through them at the time may well have considered to be as bad as if not more serious than the conditions experienced at the present time. That, of course, depends on whether one happened to be one of the victims and how severely one was affected by the conditions.

I would like to refer to the situation attaching to the introduction of the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act or, as it was more properly known in those days, the Rural Relief Fund Act of 1935. That is quite relevant to this Bill. The Minister, in his second reading speech, referred to the necessity as laid down in the agreement for any funds held in trust under the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act of 1935 to be utilised by the State prior to the use of funds made available by the Commonwealth for rural reconstruction purposes.

I would like to very briefly refer to the parliamentary debate which took place in 1935 when a Bill was introduced to provide for a rural relief fund. It was introduced by The Hon. W. H. Kitson in the Legislative Council on the 24th September, 1935. The speech appears on page 783 of *Hansard* for 1935. I will not read the entire speech but I think the section I am about to quote is relevant to the present situation. It reads as follows:—

With a view to bringing about such prosperity, inquiries have been made, Royal Commissions have been appointed, and reports have been submitted to the various Governments of Australia, and I think that, generally speaking, one can say that the concrete fact which has emerged from all those inquiries, etc., is that there

can be no hope for the farming industry of Australia until the liabilities of the farmers have been materially reduced and additional financial assistance has been provided for them, or until there has been a very material increase in the world's prices for the commodities which the farmers produce and export. Responsible authorities have taken the view that there is very little chance of the latter coming to pass, at any rate for some time to come, and although quite recently there has been a very welcome increase in the price of wheat, and also in the price of wool, nevertheless I cannot believe that anyone would be so optimistic as to say that we are approaching the time when the primary producers of Australia will be in anything like the position they occupied a few years ago.

A member then interjected and said, "It will take some years to get back to that position." It has taken some years to get back to the position as they understood it in 1935.

So the wheel has turned and we find ourselves in the present situation which I might describe as deplorable. We are in a similar situation once again and the Bill now before us has provisions similar to those contained in the Bill introduced in 1935. The Bill now before us is to provide financial assistance to meet the existing and extremely onerous liabilities which so many of our farming community are required to bear at this time.

It is not infrequently claimed that the agricultural industries of Australia are in receipt of—and have been in receipt of—a tremendous amount of assistance from the Australian taxpayers. The question is often raised as to whether, in fact, they justify this sort of assistance. Why should the farming community of Australia merit the expenditure of taxpayers' funds when other sections of industry in Australia are not in receipt of similar assistance?

In order to justify the fact that there needs to be this assistance I would like to make several references. The first is to an extract of a second reading speech made by the Minister representing the Minister for Primary Industry in the Senate when introducing the State Grants Rural Reconstruction Bill of 1971. The reference I am about to quote is simply to the wool industry, but I think it most appropriate that it be referred to in this particular debate. I quote as follows:—

The industry's outstanding debt has increased from \$980m in 1966-67 to about \$1,200m today. Net income calculations for the wool industry can only be approximate but with the fall in wool prices, drought in some areas, and a decline in wheat incomes not offset by improved beef returns, the industry's net farm income in total has probably fallen from some \$760m in

1966-67 to about \$450m in 1969-70 and to \$290m in the current year. The debt position has moved in consequence from one where debt represented something like $1\frac{1}{2}$ times net farm income in the industry in 1966-67 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ times in 1969-70 and about 4 times in 1970-71. In the current year about one-third of the industry's average net farm income of some \$3,000 per property is required simply to meet interest payments on existing debt.

Those comments apply particularly to the wool industry in Australia. I will also refer to a question I directed to the Leader of the House on the 28th July. My question, in part, concerned rural indebtedness, and was as follows:—

- (1) What is the estimated total debt commitment of the farming industries in Western Australia?
- (2) Is it considered that the rural indebtedness is beyond the capacity of the industry to service under present and foreseeable circumstances?

The reply which the Minister provided was as follows:—

- (1) Approximately \$300 million to \$330 million, in January 1971 being the most recent statistics available.
- (2) Investigations lead to the conclusion that approximately one third of Western Australian farmers are viable in present economic circumstances, one third can possibly be made so with the help of the Reconstruction Authority and the remainder have little or no prospect of servicing their debts.

That gives some indication of the nature of the problem we in this State are endeavouring to face and intending to cope with in the Bill that is now before the House for the provision of \$14,800,000 for reconstruction purposes. I now refer to a report from the Bureau of Census and Statistics in the *Farmers' Weekly* of the 9th September, 1971. The article is headed, "The Number of Occupied Farms Drops in WA," and it states—

There were 345 fewer occupied farms in Western Australia last year than in 1969-70 . . . In the year ended June 30 last, they had dropped to 22,592—a decline of 589 in four years.

That is a drift which I believe we in Western Australia—whether our interests be in farming or anything else—are not in a position to tolerate indefinitely.

I am mindful of the figures given by Mr. Williams when referring to the Budget and the expenditure and turnover on gambling in the United Kingdom. I conducted a little arithmetical exercise for myself

and consulted the *Year Book of Western Australia* for 1971 in relation to the value of production of certain of our major primary industries; that is, those industries which are most seriously affected by the circumstances of today—the wheat industry and the wool industry. The figures I will quote are not in fact contained in this *Year Book*, but the figures I have used to arrive at the sums are certainly contained in it on pages 537 and 538.

The total value of wheat produced—not just exported—in Western Australia since 1900 is \$2,312,000,000. The total value of wool produced since 1907 is \$2,218,000,000. In other words, the total value of wheat and wool is in the vicinity of \$5,000,000,000. I thought that was a tremendous sum of money but, compared with the figures Mr. Williams gave us in relation to gambling activities in the United Kingdom, it does not seem to be very great. But, in fact, it is a tremendous sum of money that has been derived from those two isolated industries, and it is an indication of what those industries have meant to Western Australia.

On the 14th September I asked a question in this House in relation to the dairying industry. I have not the total value of dairying production in Western Australia. I am not sure it has any relevance but in this instance I contend that dairying is very closely associated with the matter of reconstruction. On the 14th September I asked what was the value of dairy produce imported into Western Australia in the years 1969-70 and 1970-71. The figures for 1970-71 are not yet available but for 1969-70 the value of dairy produce imported into Western Australia was \$8,895,000, which gives some indication of just how valuable to us this industry is. There is an aspect of that question to which I will return a little later.

In the belief that I have created a picture of the value of some of our primary industries, I now refer to a booklet which I am sure will be well known to all members of the House; that is, *farm policy*, which is produced by the John Thomson Agricultural Economics Centre at the University of Western Australia. On page 122 of volume 9, No. 4, of March, 1970, Dr. B. R. Martin, the Lecturer in Agricultural Economics at the University of Western Australia, wrote—

Although rural industries may become a smaller component of the economy in terms of their contribution to the total value of production, they are expected to continue to be the major contributor to the export earnings of the State. In 1965-66, 90 per cent. of overseas exports from Western Australia were primary in origin. In this year, the trade surplus of rural industries was \$237 million, and of extractive industries \$50 million. By 1981, these surpluses may grow to

\$650 million and \$800 million respectively. As a result, primary industries are expected to continue to contribute about 90 per cent. of the overseas exports of the State.

In a slightly different vein, I refer to an article in the *Farmers' Weekly* of the 2nd September, 1971, which is, once again, a report on figures supplied by the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics. The article is headed, "Japan: The farmer's biggest customer," and reads, in part—

Australia's best customer for her primary products is Japan. She bought \$648 million worth in the year ended June 30 last—31 per cent. more than the combined value of iron ore and coal exports to Japan.

She was the biggest buyer of our mutton and lamb, our cheese, our sugar and our wool.

She was our second-best customer (after the USA) of beef, and (after the Philippines) of milk and cream.

She came third (behind West Germany and Britain) as a buyer of barley, and fourth (behind Britain, Mainland China and the United Arab Republic) as a buyer of wheat . . .

Wool of all kinds, greasy, greasy equivalent, washed and scoured, etc., bought by Japan totalled \$395,586,000.

By comparison, the value of iron ore and concentrates exported to Japan during the same year was \$329,290,000, and of coal \$165,116,000.

I mention those figures for a particular reason and I hope the House will be somewhat impressed by their enormity. I relate them to the point that in this Bill we are endeavouring to ratify an agreement which provides a sum of \$14,600,000 for reconstruction of the rural industries in Western Australia—\$14,600,000 compared with the figures I have quoted.

In a column entitled "agrisearch" in *The Bulletin* of the 10th July, 1971, there is a report of an article by Mr. J. P. Makeham, Senior Lecturer in Agricultural Economics and Business Management at the University of New England. A portion of this report reads—

He quoted the Commonwealth Yearbook (1969), which shows that the total assistance per man in manufacturing was \$1,214 a year while in agriculture it was \$1,110 and that the export earnings per \$1,000 of assistance was only \$228 in manufacturing but \$3,466 in agriculture.

Once again, my purpose in quoting those figures is simply to enlighten those who would argue that there is no justification for this measure of assistance to the primary industries of Australia because other industries do not receive equivalent assistance. I am sure the figures quoted by Mr.

Makeham will be a revelation to such people. I believe they also add justification for the measure we are discussing.

In view of all I have said, and in view of the fact that the Government has introduced this legislation, I am sure we would be quite justified in believing that the Government has approached the whole subject with some enthusiasm. Of course, that was the situation prior to the 20th February, 1971. I have with me a page from *The West Australian* of Wednesday, the 17th February, 1971. It is a rather illuminating page, which I hold up so that members may see it. I am sure all members saw it at the time it was published. There is a large headline across the left hand corner of the page which reads, "You're a farmer—you could try growing it." There is a sketch of a tree and on the branches and limbs of the tree are numerous \$20 bills. The advertisement reads—

The Liberal/Country Party must think you can.

Of 14,000 farmers in W.A.:

3,000 are doomed—

4,000 in serious difficulty—

Trouble is looming for more—

That is quoted as coming from the Western Australian Department of Agriculture Report to the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Canberra. I do not intend to read any more of the advertisement. I simply mention it because it indicates that at that time the Labor Party suggested it would inject something into the farming industries, that it had all the answers, and that it could supply all the necessary finance; it would not be necessary for farmers to grow money on trees, which the Labor Party believed would be necessary if the previous Government remained in office. One could therefore believe this Government intended to make considerable provision for assistance to farming industries.

I now refer to *The West Australian* of Saturday, the 13th February, 1971—just seven days before the elections—in which appeared an article headed "Cost of election promises" by D. B. Smith. The article covers four columns, two of which were contributed by Sir David Brand, the Leader of the Government at that time, and two of which were contributed by Mr. Tonkin. The column under the name of Mr. Tonkin refers to farmers' income-subsidies of \$3,000,000. Mr. Tonkin says—

Farmers' income subsidies; I estimate that I will find \$3 million a year through the agencies of the R. and I. Bank. I am banking on the certainty that the Commonwealth will make more money available, especially to assist farmers.

The Country Party leader, Mr. Anthony, has admitted that it will be essential to continue making more money available in addition to the

initial \$100 million. Even without additional Commonwealth assistance, I am prepared to spend \$3 million a year on this form of relief.

Queensland itself was able to find \$10 million for drought relief last year—W.A. should be able to find \$3 million.

I do not doubt that sort of material had a very considerable bearing on the elections in this State. A sum of \$3,000,000 a year for reconstruction is not inconsiderable. I therefore say we and the farming community would have been quite justified in believing that following the change of Government some very adventurous, real, and positive steps would be taken to achieve the figures outlined in the pre-election statement I have just quoted.

On another occasion I referred to the fact that the Government did something which was most useful; it enabled the release from the funds held under the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act the sum of \$400,000. I have also mentioned that it was necessary for the Government to release those funds. It had to do so before any Commonwealth assistance would be made available, so it really was not a terribly magnanimous gesture. In relation to that situation, the Government released what it called, "emergency carry-on finance," but it did not last very long.

In *The West Australian* of the 4th August, 1971, the heading appeared: "\$571,000 aid for 303 farmers." I quote from the article as follows:—

About 350 farmers had applied for help when applications closed last Saturday.

So the sum of \$571,000 was made available to 303 farmers although 350 farmers had actually applied for assistance before applications closed. That seems to me to be a long way short of the \$3,000,000 a year which the Government indicated it would make available for this purpose; not just for emergency carry-on purposes, but for rural reconstruction purposes.

However, the Premier has indicated on so many instances that he did not know the state of the Treasury and, of course, he subsequently found he was not able to make available that sort of money. Nevertheless, perhaps some other action could have been taken.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Surely you did not believe that.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: No, I am not that gullible. I have learnt to be considerably less gullible than I might have been previously in relation to this sort of matter.

On the 18th March—approximately one month after the election—an article appeared in *The Countryman* under the

heading, "Rural debate to be soon." The article states—

The new State Government is looking into the practicability of conducting an early session of parliament specially to take up the issue of rural reconstruction.

I shared the view that perhaps the Government, as it had expressed enthusiasm, intended to hold an early session of Parliament and that we would be really involving ourselves in this overwhelming problem of rural reconstruction. But, as we know, that new session did not eventuate. Obviously a certain amount of wire-crossing occurred at the time because one week later in the *Farmers' Weekly* of the 25th March the heading, "Early aid is unlikely" appeared. The article states—

It seemed unlikely that any significant funds for rural reconstruction would be available before the end of May, the Director of Agriculture, Dr. T. C. Dunne, said on Tuesday.

However, the farming community of Western Australia did not lose hope because on the 22nd April an article appeared in *The Countryman* under the heading of, "Rural aid legislation set for coming session." The article states—

The State Government will introduce legislation during the forthcoming session of State Parliament to set up a statutory authority to administer the Commonwealth rural reconstruction scheme in Western Australia.

The Premier, Mr. Tonkin, said after a meeting of Cabinet last week the Statutory Authority will probably consist of representatives of the State Treasury, the Department of Agriculture, the R. and I. Bank and a farmer who was preferably not engaged in the activities of a farmer organisation.

That article appeared on the 22nd April, 1971.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: The Bill was beaten by the bingo Bill.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I have managed to survive the situation of not having an early session of Parliament and the assistance not being made available as early as it should have; but, nevertheless, we had heard all about rural reconstruction from a Commonwealth source and so I thought that at least the Minister would be committed to it. However, then on the 30th June, 1971, an article appeared in *The Blackwood Times* under the heading of, "Agriculture ministers attack reconstruction scheme." Note that the word, "ministers" is plural. The article states—

W.A. Agriculture Minister Evans and Victorian acting Agriculture Minister Borthwick made a joint attack on the Commonwealth Rural Reconstruction Scheme in Manjimup last week.

That article continues and in reading it I can see many references to statements made by Mr. Borthwick, but I can see no report of, or reference to, statements made by the Minister for Agriculture in Western Australia (Mr. H. D. Evans). But the report is headed, "Agriculture ministers attack reconstruction scheme." I wonder what the Minister was attacking; I would be most interested to know what he was attacking in relation to this scheme because on the 30th June, 1971, we did not have any scheme in Western Australia. However, that is the situation in which we found ourselves on the 30th June.

The Parliament met shortly after the reconstruction agreement between the Commonwealth and the State was signed and the Bill was introduced into the Legislative Assembly on the 11th August. Today is the 22nd September; so a considerable time has elapsed since the legislation which we have always understood to be of such tremendous importance to Western Australia was introduced in another place. It was introduced on the 11th August and here we are in the Legislative Council on the 22nd September debating the second reading.

I was under the impression from all the indications we were given prior to the election, and even immediately following the election, that this was a matter of the greatest possible urgency. I would have thought also, from reading the Bill—as I did as soon as it was printed—that particularly in view of the protection order provisions which were contained in it there was a necessity for great urgency.

The Hon. J. Dolan: Who delayed the Bill?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: That is a very good question indeed. I know it was delayed by request on one occasion for a week.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: If a Government Minister does not know the reason, what hope have we got of knowing it.

The Hon. J. Dolan: I am merely seeking information.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am afraid I cannot give the answer.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Ask Mr. Ron Thompson. He gets into Cabinet every now and then.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: This has indeed disturbed me. I wish to make it clear that I appreciate that very little of the delay to which I am referring has occurred in this House. In fact, I am appreciative of the assistance and co-operation I have received in relation to this Bill and the adjournment of the debate. However, the fact is that, bearing in mind the statements which were made prior to 20th February, and all the statements since the introduction of the Bill, it has still taken

us six weeks to get to this point. I will refer a little later in the same context to another aspect in relation to the second reading of the Bill.

However, be that as it may, I suppose we have had set up a certain amount of machinery, and so on the 24th August I asked the Leader of the House a question on the subject of rural retraining schemes. This is, after all, of very vital and crucial importance to rural reconstruction—the necessity for retraining schemes—and all the experts throughout Australia had been advocating retraining. I asked a number of questions, and I think the answers were rather illuminating. Firstly, I asked—

- (1) Which Government departments are responsible for the planning and implementation of the rural retraining schemes in Western Australia?

The answer was that the Education Department is responsible. Bear in mind that these questions were asked on the 24th August. My next question was—

- (2) What specific courses for retraining are at present available?

The answer was, "None." My next question was—

- (3) How many persons—

- (a) are currently enrolled in rural retraining courses;
- (b) have completed courses of retraining?

to which the Leader of the House replied—

- (3) (a) None in specific courses.
- (b) 38 out of 40 males successfully completed the first 12 weeks full-time intensive course of meat inspection.

That is a very good course. I have heard very complimentary remarks about it, and it was in fact entirely successful. The point I am making is that retraining is a most important facet of rural reconstruction and, considering the necessity for action and the enormity of the problem we in this country face, one would have thought that by the 24th August, 1971, a little more progress might have been made in regard to this particular aspect especially as facilities are available in Western Australia to set something in motion. Bearing in mind we believe that retraining is not simply and solely a responsibility of Government; that it is natural that there are others involved who could contribute to it, I also asked the Minister in the same bracket of questions—

- (6) What private or other companies or firms are participating in rural retraining schemes in Western Australia?

The answer was, "Not known." My next question was—

- (7) Which financial contributions, if any, are made by the Government to firms providing this training?

The answer was—

- (7) There are no known State contributions made to companies or sections of industry participating in retraining.

I also asked the following question:—

- (5) What financial or technical assistance is being made available by the Commonwealth Government for rural retraining in this State?

The Minister replied—

- (4) Not known. No announcements of the Commonwealth schemes have been made.

I was perfectly aware of the fact that no announcements had been made on that subject. However, I was interested to know what approaches had been made by the State to obtain any sort of assistance and to make any provisions under this particular category.

I do not wish to be unduly hard in this matter, and I understand the enormity of the problem. However, I maintain that, considering all the tremendous claims which were made and the indications which were given that we were going to do so much, that so much could be done, and that all others had failed in this task, at least we might have had some greater amount of assistance provided.

Then, of course, I could refer briefly to a further statement which was made by the present Premier and in those days the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Tonkin). I refer to the Labor Party policy speech of the 3rd February, 1971. I directed attention to this matter in a question to the Leader of the House on Thursday, the 5th August, 1971. I referred to the subject of the costs borne by primary producers and the Leader of the Opposition at the time (Mr. Tonkin) had indicated that he was seriously concerned about the cost structure. He promised that he would take some very positive action to investigate the question of costs and he felt confident he would be able to do something about the matter. But, after he was elected to Government, I asked the following question:—

- (1) Does the Government agree that—and I quote from the Labor Policy Speech of the 3rd February, 1971—"all primary producers are seriously affected by a cost structure which places an increasing burden upon them"?
(2) Has the Government made an assessment of the extent to which the cost structure, as against

lowered market returns or loss of markets, is contributing to lessened profitability for primary producers?

- (3) If so, will that assessment be made public?
(4) What action is the Government taking, or intending to take, in order to—and I again quote—"enquire fully into all aspects of this matter, with a view to bringing about worthwhile savings"?

The Leader of the House replied, "Yes." The answers to questions (2) to (4) were grouped together. I will not read out the statement because it is recorded in *Hansard*. It provides a run-down of what the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in Canberra is doing. I believe that it did not answer my question; but it did refer to the fact that the rural economics section of the Department of Agriculture collaborates with the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in this work.

My particular concern was to see whether the Government was in the process of justifying the promises it made prior to the elections with regard to the aspect of costs to primary producers. We should bear in mind this was a great election issue. This is one of the great and continuing concerns of the farming industry in Australia. I have here also the questions and answers on the subject of the European Economic Community, with which I will not deal in detail at the moment.

Let me say that there is nothing new about the whole subject of rural reconstruction; there is nothing new in the need to render assistance. I refer to the December 1970 issue of the publication *Farm Policy*, which is devoted to the policy and to the programme of rural reconstruction. In an article prepared by Dr. Mauldon and Dr. Schapper, there is reference to the statement that has been made in relation to the sort of problems we are endeavouring to face up to in a Bill to provide for rural reconstruction. I quote from page 76 of the publication on which the following appears:—

For ten years low income problems have been recognised to be a potential problem for all agriculture in Australia, not only dairying. A study group of the New South Wales branch of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science in 1962 warned that continuation of traditional policies of closer settlement "will most likely result in low-standard, high-cost, inefficient low-income farms".

In 1964 Professor K. O. Campbell drew attention to the major forces affecting the incomes of farmers, and called for a reorientation of policy.

Further down the page the following appears:—

The first serious attempt to measure the extent of low farm incomes in Australia was made in 1967 by D. H. McKay, then the Director of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

Further on the following appears:—

Despite the growing awareness of low farm incomes since then, a comprehensive survey has not yet been undertaken specifically to assess the dimensions of the problem in ways which could be useful for governments to identify benefits and costs of different types of assistance.

I should indicate that those references are not intended to be in any way critical of this Government; and neither were my previous remarks. I have changed the theme of my address a little in respect of this subject, and objectively refer to the question as a whole. I made reference to the article I have quoted simply to illustrate that this has been a continuing problem—one which has been recognised in certain quarters for a considerable period. I would stress the final quote in relation to the awareness of low farm incomes, and the fact that a comprehensive survey has not yet been undertaken specifically to assess the dimensions of the problem. I believe that to be a most important quotation, because all too frequently we find that we are saddled with what can be described as crash programmes for the purpose of resolving a situation. As we all know, crash programmes all too frequently are not in the long term very satisfactory.

Let me now refer specifically to the Bill. As a measure to provide for the ratification of an agreement for rural reconstruction, it is probably satisfactory and I support it. I do not argue a great deal with its provisions. However, I must say that as a means and as a measure to provide reconstruction for the agricultural industry of Western Australia it is, to me, a miserable failure. It is a paltry document, bearing in mind the sort of figures I quoted earlier—the thousands of millions of dollars of production, and the sort of problems we are facing.

This takes me back to 1935 and to the sort of problems then existing, and to the amount of money that was made available for farmers' debt adjustment, and the like. I have quoted the figures from the *Year Book* in relation to the production of wool and wheat. For just one year the amount in each case is one and a half times more than the total amount of reconstruction funds to be made available by the Commonwealth for the four-year period.

However, that is the Bill; but I believe its provisions merely fiddle with the problem and barely scratch its surface. I believe this Government cannot take any satisfaction from the fact that it is the

Commonwealth's responsibility to make funds available, because as I indicated earlier there are implied provisions in the Bill for approaches to be made to the Commonwealth. The Federal Ministers have invited the State Ministers and the States to make their approaches to review the terms of the agreement. In view of the situation which I have recounted—the dismal picture showing what the present Government said before the last election and what has happened up to this point of time—I am interested to know what steps have been taken and what approaches the Government has made to the Commonwealth, in order to put the whole problem into its proper perspective, and to keep it in proportion with the enormous problem it really is.

As I mentioned previously, all that the Bill does is to give the authority particular functions to distribute funds. It is charged with the duty of receiving applications, and it lays down conditions under which applications shall be made. It specifies the conditions of eligibility of applicants before they gain assistance, and in one little line in the Bill it is specified that the authority may reject an application. This is a pretty bald statement—the power to reject an application. What does that mean to a farmer who is in, say, an almost extreme financial position? Yet the Bill says the authority may reject an application.

What does the Bill do for those who are rejected? For those who are rejected there is a provision in the agreement which states that they can be granted \$1,000 in rehabilitation assistance, and this may be a grant and not a loan. It is a golden handshake incentive, to which I made reference earlier. It does nothing to resettle any of those farmers who are not eligible for grants and who do not gain assistance, except the \$1,000 rehabilitation grant. We know how far \$1,000 will go in resettlement of a farmer who is forced off the land!

There is no provision for the retraining of farmers. I know the Bill provides that when an applicant is successful in gaining financial assistance for debt reconstruction or for farm build-up he is very much subject to the control and the supervision of the authority. He is required to conduct his operations in a very proper manner.

The Hon. J. Heitman: There are 70 of these people who have been retrained as meat inspectors.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I have referred to the retraining of these people, but that is not provided for in the Bill. This training was provided under the meat inspectors' scheme. What I am saying is that this Bill, as a reconstruction measure, falls a long way short of what is required. The optimum in terms of reconstruction is for a return to an adequate market in which we can sell our products, and in which we can provide a fair price. If that

were done, all the other steps would be unnecessary; therefore it seems that markets, prices, as well as costs would be fundamental in a measure of reconstruction. However, I see no words describing markets in the Bill. I know, and I am sure I will be reminded, that this is not a Bill to provide for that sort of reconstruction. It is merely to ratify a reconstruction scheme.

What I am pointing out is that people, and Governments in particular—I do not specify this Government but all Governments—can be easily satisfied. Having accepted the responsibility to provide assistance, they can say, "We have set up a reconstruction scheme and set aside \$14,600,000 for Western Australia for a certain number of farmers in the next four years. We have done our share, and we do not need to do any more." What I am saying is there is need for a total reconstruction measure in Western Australia, and I believe this would be the opportunity for that to be introduced. I am quite sure the Government has no intention to bring in another reconstruction Bill, and the Bill before us is the sum total of its assistance.

I am curious to know at what stage in our history does it become necessary to make available reconstruction assistance; in other words, when did the necessity for reconstruction arise? I have made some reference to farm policy, but what are we doing under the heading of "Reconstruction"?

The major amount of money which is being granted by way of assistance comes under the heading of "Debt Reconstruction." When did this debt first arise, and what does the scheme really do? Is it the means of financing all those creditors who commenced making money available a long time ago, perhaps in the days when wool fetched a high price, and sheep and farming properties were very costly? At that time astronomical prices were being paid for land, many people felt justified in taking on large debts, and financial institutions were, no doubt, confident of the future.

In those circumstances is it really debt reconstruction, to the extent that we are actually assisting the farmers, or are we assisting those creditors who in the past—I say this quite definitely—had contributed to the sort of problem we are now facing, and from which the farmers themselves are suffering?

I wonder whom we are subsidising, if in fact we are subsidising. I say this assistance is intended for the farmers, and I hope that scrupulous care is being exercised in the use of these debt reconstruction funds to ensure they are used for that purpose and are directed for the benefit of the farmers, and not for the purpose of getting the credit finance institutions off the hook. I hope the funds will be made available to assist the financing of the

farming industry. In fact, that is one of the difficulties from which we have been suffering—a shortage and a lack of funds in the farming industry in recent years. However, I am not sure this is the best way to go about solving the problem. Furthermore, we might be directing most of our commitments in the farming industry into one institution or another, and at the present moment perhaps through the agency of the Rural and Industries Bank. I am not suggesting there is any ulterior motive in this approach, but there is a strong tendency that what I have just said might well be happening.

I have made some reference to the use of reconstruction funds, but I have made no reference to the figures which have been made available by the Minister in his second reading speech.

I will do so now. I believe my remarks will be relevant to what may be described as my caustic and critical remarks previously made of the Government in relation to its tardiness in really doing nothing about rural industries and assistance. My point is that when the measure was introduced in another place figures were quoted in respect of applications and so on. The statistics of the rural reconstruction authority stated the position as at the 6th August. I invite members to look at the figures quoted in relation to applications and assistance granted by the authority when the measure was introduced in this House on Wednesday of last week. The figures and statistics still relate to the 6th August and I believe members of this Chamber deserve better treatment than that. Am I right in assuming it was not considered important that we should be provided with the most up-to-date figures? I am grateful to Mr. Wordsworth for the question he asked on this subject. The answer, which was given yesterday, gave the latest statistics. Later statistics than those given by the Minister when he introduced the Bill were made available to me privately by the chairman of the authority at my request. I know this is not the fault of the Leader of the House and I do not hold him responsible, because this does not come within his portfolio. However, he is responsible for handling the legislation in this House. I am sorry I have to comment so strongly but the figures were not up to date.

In summation, I say I have been critical of things that have not been done and perhaps of the way in which action is being taken. Nevertheless, I believe there is great enthusiasm within the authority and within the departments concerned with the application of rural reconstruction in this State, such as the Department of Agriculture, the Rural and Industries Bank, and related agencies. They really are keen to try to do something and to get on with the job. At least, that is my understanding of the situation.

I emphasise there needs to be a recognition that a total reconstruction effort is vital to this State. It may be vital to the whole of Australia but it is certainly vital to our State. There needs to be engendered a positive attitude of confidence in the ability of agricultural industries in this State to surmount their difficulties.

I have made reference to the *Parliamentary Debates* of 1935 and, in particular, to the speech of the Honorary Minister, Mr. W. H. Kitson, who made reference to the sort of problems faced in those days. The State has faced these problems before and will continue to face them in future. I believe the agricultural industries in this State can surmount them again. I repeat that a positive attitude and confidence needs to be engendered from the highest sources; preferably from the Government, but certainly also from industrial organisations and leaders.

It is not sufficient to say there should be a total reconstruction effort. I believe a comprehensive plan must be prepared for the use of all our resources in this State to determine exactly where we are going on reconstruction so that reconstruction programmes of today do not become reconstruction problems of tomorrow. That could so easily happen. We must know where we are going.

A short time ago I referred to an article from *farm policy*. This comprehensive survey has not been made. Information is not available to Governments at the moment, but it must be made available. We must utilise our resources to obtain this information. Otherwise when we have surmounted this problem we will face it again in another 20 or 30 years. I could ask: Don't we ever learn?

The Government must take the initiative and the opportunities are available. The Government must take the initiative to approach the Commonwealth Government for such a plan. I do not believe all the resources are available in Western Australia and that somebody must take the initiative; this Government can and should.

Certainly more money must be made available under the scheme. This brings me to another point. If the Minister replies to my comments, I would like him to satisfy me that there is no shortage of money. We have seen the figures made available yesterday to Mr. Wordsworth and we know the State Government has made application for the sum of \$7,000,000 for this year's operation of the scheme in Western Australia. I have heard on what may be described as the grape vine that there is a shortage of money for the operation of the authority. I have heard this said in the country. I hope it is not the case; because if it is, it could clearly mean that applicants would not be judged eligible on the basis of viability, as is laid down in the agreement, but on the basis of

the shortage or the availability of funds. I would like the Minister to make the necessary inquiries to satisfy me on this point. I would be deeply disturbed if the rumour is correct. I cannot personally believe it in view of the fact that I understand only \$2,000,000 has so far been allocated to a proportion of the 669 applicants. However, it is a critical point in my opinion.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: I will see if I can ascertain something for you.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Thank you. There needs to be a rethinking on the allocation of funds between debt reconstruction and farm build-up. I think this fact is recognised by the authority and the Government. The agreement specifies that as nearly as possible funds should be distributed equally between debt reconstruction and farm build-up, but we find most of the funds are being applied for on the basis of debt reconstruction. Quite clearly this is the need. The Commonwealth would probably welcome some urgent review on this matter to ensure that the available funds are better balanced.

Provision must be made for farmer training, advice extension, and for research facilities. I do not originate the statement which bears out a well-recognised fact—but I take the opportunity to stress it—that greater support must be given for the farm management foundation in Western Australia and the work being done in conjunction with Dr. Schapper in collaboration with the Australian Broadcasting Commission, which produces the TV programme on farm management. These are excellent moves and some support should be expressed for them. I like to think that the Government may give some thought as to how this may be done as part of the comprehensive plan.

I have mentioned the need for much more farmer retraining to equip farmers to take on other occupations. We must provide resettlement facilities and remove obstructions in the way of people who have to move on. We should not simply force people to stay on properties because they have no opportunity to go elsewhere. Whatever obstructions are in the way of those who, in their own interests, wish to make this move, should be removed and resettlement facilitated.

I suppose I share the general disappointment of everyone in country areas in connection with the stringency that will be applied in terms of funds available for education, although obviously this is not the case in the present Budget. It will be basic and fundamental to the total reconstruction effort that greater educational facilities be made available in country areas. This is absolutely basic and fundamental to the improvement of our conditions in farming areas and the provision

of better equipped farmers in the future. I believe all these factors will be part of the total effort.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: When you mention retraining, what types of occupation do you have in mind?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: In reply to the interjection by Mr. Claughton, I say that I believe a great opportunity exists in the State at the moment with the development of decentralisation—a word which has been much overworked in this place in the last day or so. My comments apply to decentralised industries, particularly those which have come about through our mineral deposits. Opportunities now exist to allow many people to be retrained and resettled. I shall give one example from my own electorate, although I could instance several. To illustrate my point I shall refer to Alcoa, which most members have visited in recent days. There have been opportunities—and will be in the future—for people to be retrained to fit into that industry and to live in the same country environment to which they are accustomed. The alternative for such industries, in terms of labour, is to import people; in fact, to sponsor a special migration scheme to provide the labour force.

We have the opportunity, as part of the total effort, to provide the labour force. That is why I earlier directed a question to the Minister on the subject of retraining.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: When the honourable member says "in the country" he means in towns where these industries are located?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I do not mean simply where industries are located; I merely quoted an example. Firstly the opportunity must exist and, if it does, certainly towns would make use of the workforce. This all helps to decentralise the population. It may not always be possible to provide the facilities for retraining which are now available. Those who take advantage of it could fit in anywhere in the State; wherever the opportunity arises. That is all I am saying. This should not be looked at in isolation but it should be part of the total programme.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Especially in places where there are employment opportunities.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I could not agree more and that is why I gave the example I chose. I mentioned Pinjarra, but it could be Bunbury, Northam, or Geraldton—wherever employment opportunities arise. I simply stress that if we have an opportunity to retrain and resettle, surely it would be much more satisfactory for the people concerned to remain in the environment they understand. It would be better to provide a workforce in this way than to sponsor a migration scheme specifically for the purpose of supplying such labour. That is all I am saying.

Retraining should give people the opportunity to have another avenue open to them from the employment point of view. I am not advocating that great numbers should leave the land, because I hope they will not.

In discussing a comprehensive plan, I now turn to the question of marketing. I believe too much refuge is sought in statutory authorities and marketing boards. I agree both with their necessity and establishment. In fact I have taken part in discussions leading to the establishment of so many of these authorities. Although they are of great use, they can tend to reduce the effort made by private enterprise and others concerned to adventure further into the field.

I particularly instance the marketing of meat. In the last 36 hours I have heard it said by a responsible person, who spoke to me on the subject of meat, that perhaps much more could be done by the Australian Meat Board; an authority supposed to look after our meat marketing interests overseas. Is sufficient interest and action being taken by private organisations? In saying this I refer to people who have a vested interest in selling our primary products overseas particularly, or even in this State for that matter. Are we doing enough? I do not believe we are. Have we faced up to the seriousness of a situation which may be even more serious in future?

I shall mention the subject of wool. I am justified in doing so even though I have not been a wool grower for 15 years. Everybody else in Australia is having his say on wool, but probably with no greater effect than I will have tonight. Nevertheless it is on everyone's lips. Many figures have been quoted about trade, particularly in primary produce with Japan, and the vested interest which Japan has in our mineral fields and other industries. Is it so dreadful for Japan to have this interest when it is playing such a tremendous part in the promotion of the total national Australian economy? I do not think we have suffered greatly from this.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It gets down to the market again, the availability of the market.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I wonder if we have seriously looked at the possibility of stabilising our market in these countries and making our position more secure. In view of the seriousness of this situation, it deserves to be looked at.

I would like to think there could be a similarity between our wool industry and our alumina industry. The other day we looked at the alumina industry at Jarrahdale and Kwinana and we discussed the possibilities of the market. When the industry was set up in Pinjarra, a representative of the company told us they always planned five years ahead. As we know from agreements which have been

ratified in this House, some contracts are 20 or 25 years ahead. Although the alumina industry is suffering a slight trough in its upward rising graph at the moment, I believe Alcoa is not greatly concerned because of the possibilities of extending production of alumina as well as the bauxite explorations in this State.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: They would like some security on the American market, too.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: These people have a fixed portion of the world market for alumina. They can approach their future with some degree of confidence without being affected by the supply of alumina in Western Australia. I would like to think we can achieve this happy situation with wool today, and I believe all these things should be looked at in the total complex of reconstruction.

What I have said in relation to the wool industry and the meat industry might well apply to other industries. There was a report in *The West Australian* the other day by the West Australian Chamber of Commerce referring to the situation which will be applicable in the 1980s. This article is dated the 13th September, 1971, and is headed, "Busy future expected." The article quotes the *Economic Look at Western Australia in 1980*, which was published in the week prior to the 13th September. I will not read all the article but I would like to make the comment that it surveys the situation and refers to some of the steps taken in regard to reconstruction. It points out that the need for food in the world is increasing faster than production. However, despite problems, production will continue to increase.

It is important for us to recognise as a primary-producing State we must maintain our share of production in the future. This is vital in the wool industry; we have to produce our share for this particular market.

The report also touched on the meat industry, and this is vital. This is one of the problems we are facing today with rural reconstruction. In the meat industry the problem is within our control, because of the abattoir situation. It is referred to in the *Economic Look at Western Australia in 1980*, and I quote from the article as follows:—

Current slaughtering and wool-storing facilities would be entirely inadequate to handle the projected increase in volume, particularly if there were no technological advances in handling.

We do not need to be reminded of just how inadequate our slaughtering facilities have been for a long time, and what the inadequacies of slaughtering facilities have cost us in terms of possible overseas trade. Our farmers have been affected because

they could not market their produce. This is a very direct factor contributing to the need for reconstruction.

Reconstruction is within our control, but there are many other factors. There is the question of price, with a narrowing margin between costs and prices, the necessity for better farm recording, farm management work and so on. I see that the farm management foundation has set up a secretarial course for the wives of farmers. Once again, this is a matter for which they should be complimented. However, the Government should go a little further and make provision for the training of secretarial assistants. Of course, already some farm management consultants have been employing such assistants, as Mr. Wordsworth would know in the Esperance district, and I believe this is working very successfully.

Reconstruction is not just something for today; we must also look to the avoidance of problems in the future. I have been very much involved with this matter over the past few years at a Federal level, but I believe the same ideas could be applied in this State.

We recognise that transport plays a very important part. Mr. Withers commented on this in relation to his own province. He spoke of the transport costs, but there is more than that involved in the problem of reconstruction. Where does transport fit in? Where do the transport costs fit in? Not in the way the Government handled the question of the transport of wool in the Albany area. It needs to be more comprehensive than that and the Government should show a bit more understanding of the problems involved.

I also mention the necessity for a continuing body to look at the overall problems of agriculture in this State. I make no apology for mentioning the fact that I have been pottering about for a long time with the question of a rural industries board. The Western Australian Government, as part of a reconstruction scheme approach, could make an overture to the Federal Government and put some pressure on it to appoint an authority to continue the survey of the needs of the rural industry in this State.

I am also rather pleased that we have taken part in the past in the advocacy to the Federal Government in relation to the credit facility of which I spoke earlier, the necessity for a rural loans insurance corporation. I am pleased to say that the Minister has recently indicated that the establishment of this corporation is a little closer—the financial institutions have been asked to report on the proposal. However, it has taken at least 18 months to get to this point and I believe we are not in a situation where we can wait much longer for something to be done.

I have gone on at considerable length, but I believe for no longer than is necessary on a subject of this importance to the State. Even if much has already been said, there is a great deal more to be said. Some people may say it is time we got on and did the job and stopped talking about it. Maybe that is a good proposition and I should stop talking about it myself. However, I wish to conclude on this statement: I believe we have a magnificent agricultural State and we have an agricultural industry which has shown itself to be capable of adjusting to many problems in the past. I believe it is a function and a responsibility of the industry itself and the organisations connected with it to do everything possible to induce a positive confident attitude. I ask the question: are the problems of today really any greater than those the farmers have faced and overcome before? There have been drought years, the financial crises of the 1930s, and the problems of establishing farms in a harsh environment before the days of fertilisers and trace elements. These tremendous difficulties have been overcome.

I feel this Bill falls a long way short of what is needed. I might describe it almost as a pitiful effort, but I hesitate to do that because, after all, it represents a genuine and sincere effort. I said at the outset of my speech, this represents an acceptance of responsibility by Governments to at least make a major effort in the spending of \$100,000,000. This is not perhaps the effort I would like to see, but it is the total effort we should support.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. L. A. Logan.

House adjourned at 10.28 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 22nd September, 1971

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

TIMBER RIGHTS

Urgency Motion in Council: Personal Explanation

MR. H. D. EVANS (Warren—Minister for Lands) [4.33 p.m.]: I desire to inform members of this House, by way of explanation, of a rather serious matter which was reported in today's issue of *The West Australian* under the heading, "Minister centre of contempt move." The matter was also the subject of an urgency motion in another place, but I understand the motion was subsequently withdrawn.

I am not critical of the Press in any way; however, I do make reference to the report as it has been presented. The significant point is this—

... moved an urgency motion in the Council because of a contradiction between an answer given to him by Mr. Evans and a letter Mr. Evans wrote.

I make the point that I gave the honourable member in another place no information at all. I could not have been guilty of contradiction because I had no knowledge of the question and answer, and neither did any of the officers in my department. I make that point at the outset.

I can probably give some clarification of the content of the report, and I would like to do so. The report probably emanated from the fact that such a reply was prepared by my colleague, the Minister for Forests, and it was prepared with every correctness having regard for the time the answer was given.

I would like to refer to the dates contained in the documents I have with me. I did write to a constituent indicating that revision in the timber royalties regulations was to become effective as from the 1st February, next year. I did so in every good faith and with every justification, having also been empowered to make such an announcement. But on the 7th September the Minister for Forests had his attention drawn to a rather awkward situation which could have arisen and changed the entire policy being proposed.

The situation was so serious that a senior officer of the Forests Department was immediately sent to make an on-the-spot investigation, having regard for the possible change of policy emanating from this. The honourable member who asked the question, referred to in the newspaper report, did so on the 15th September, and the Minister replied stating that the matter was under review. So it was; a senior officer was at that time in the south-west conducting such an investigation. I have with me a file containing the minute to which I have alluded, and I can quote it, if you so desire, Mr. Speaker, or I can make it available for perusal by any member who so desires.

The SPEAKER: It can be quoted provided it is not too long.

MR. H. D. EVANS: The minute is dated the 7th September, 1971, and it will suffice to read the concluding sentence, which is as follows:—

As suggested, I am arranging for a senior officer to look further into this and will advise you.

A subsequent minute, which is also involved in this matter, is dated the 21st September and refers to the report of the officer to whom I have referred. So it can be seen that as far as the Minister for Forests was concerned the matter was under review until yesterday. So the Minister for Forests got that correct.