

Mr. R. L. YOUNG: No.

Mr. O'Neill: He does not understand.

Mr. R. L. YOUNG: In his usual tight-minded attitude the Deputy Premier has failed to understand what someone on this side is saying. I said there was no bar at all to such an appointment. I said the secretaries could well be qualified. They could, in fact, be the two best people who could be appointed. However, when secretaries from two Labor senators' offices are appointed, the Government should not expect the people of the State or members of the Opposition to believe justice can be seen to be done because it would be completely impossible for anyone to believe this. In a State of several hundred thousand mature women there must be at least one who could replace one of those secretaries.

Mr. Graham: Just quibbling.

Mr. O'Neill: Just a case of jobs for the girls.

Mr. R. L. YOUNG: I point out to the Deputy Premier that those involved must do a little more thinking about this matter in the future.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Harman.

House adjourned at 10.59 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 28th March, 1973

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

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Dress in Chamber: Statement by President

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver): I have arranged for four additional electric fans to be installed in the Chamber, and I am hoping that this will be done in the near future.

In connection with the resolution regarding members' dress, I consider the conditions in the House today do not warrant the removal of coats.

For future sittings we shall arrange for a notice or other suitable indicator to be placed on the notice board or other prominent place to show when coats may be removed.

When this is done, I trust members will make use of the hanging pegs which are provided in the corridors surrounding the Chamber.

QUESTIONS (16): ON NOTICE

1. CHARGES IN COUNTRY AREAS

Statement by Deputy Premier

The Hon. V. J. Ferry for the Hon. W. R. WITHERS, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Was the Deputy Premier, the Hon. H. E. Graham, correctly reported in *The West Australian* dated the 27th March, 1973, where he is quoted as saying "Despite pressures, the Government had refused to increase charges to offset losses in the country areas on railways, shipping, water, sewerage and electricity"?
- (2) If the answer to (1) is "Yes", if the increased charges in shipping, water and electricity, were not imposed to offset losses in country areas by this Government, why were the charges increased?
- (3) If the answer to (1) is "No", what did the Deputy Premier say?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) The report is generally correct. The Deputy Premier was pointing to the fact that the losses on these services represented substantial indirect benefits totalling some \$40 million to country industries and residents.
- (2) Were action taken to equate, even approximately, the costs and charges of these services, it would involve substantially increased charges on people living in country areas.
- (3) Answered by (1) and (2).

2.

SEWERAGE

Commonwealth Funds

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Since November, 1972 has the State Government been allocated any funds by the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of extending sewerage works?
- (2) If so—
 - (a) how much money has been provided;
 - (b) has all of the money been allocated to particular projects; and
 - (c) where are the particular projects located?
- (3) Is it intended that any special assistance will be provided to ensure an early commencement to the sewerage works in the Queens Park/East Cannington areas?
- (4) If the answer to (3) is "No", why not?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) Yes. Commonwealth funds have been allocated for the relief of unemployment and are being used for sewerage works.
- (2) (a) (i) Metropolitan area \$3,500,000.
(ii) Country areas \$175,000.
- (b) Yes.
- (c) (i) Metropolitan: Balga, Belmont, Rivervale, Balcatta, Woodlands and rising mains from Midland, Balinup, Mount Pleasant.
(ii) Country: Bunbury Sewerage Scheme;
Albany Sewerage Scheme;
Wongan Hills Sewerage Scheme;
Mandurah Sewerage Scheme.

- (3) The Metropolitan Water Board has consulted with the Town of Canning and a programme of works has been evolved to complement the programme of improvement schemes proposed by the local authority.

A major pumping station and rising main to serve the Cannington area is currently being investigated and financial provision has been made for a start this financial year with further substantial work next financial year.

- (4) Answered by (3).

3. TRAFFIC

Motor Vehicle Seat Belts: Regulations

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

- (1) In view of a recent Court decision at Mandurah, does the Minister propose to amend regulations regarding the wearing of seat belts in motor vehicles?
- (2) If so, will all pending cases be re-examined in view of counsel's remarks that "the law relating to seat belts was full of holes"?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) The decision was not one by the Court but a withdrawal by the prosecution, and unless or until the official papers are made available for examination, no amendment is contemplated.
- (2) No.

4. THIRD PARTY INSURANCE

Premiums

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH, to the Leader of the House:

Further to my question of the 21st March, 1973, regarding Third Party Insurance and the reply

thereto, has the Minister anything to add to his reply, indicating the progress being made by the Government along the lines indicated in answers to questions put to the Government by me on the 20th July, 1971, and the 20th March, 1972?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

The Premier, upon receipt of advice from the Prime Minister of his Government's intention to introduce legislation along the lines of that proposed for this State, considered that, to defer action on a State basis and await the Commonwealth legislation, was the sensible thing to do in the circumstances.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Why could not I have been told that before?

5. GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

West Perth Site Development

The Hon. N. McNEILL, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Has the Government any plans for the further redevelopment of the parcel of land bounded by Kings Park Road, Havelock Street, Parliament Place and Harvest Terrace, parts of which are presently occupied by the Education Department and the Government offices building?
- (2) If so—
 - (a) what is the proposed nature of the redevelopment;
 - (b) what further buildings, if any, are proposed to be constructed on the site; and
 - (c) when is construction of all or any such buildings likely to be commenced?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) Tentative plans provide for two low-rise buildings of four or five storeys, each of approximately 100,000 square feet of usable space, plus basements fronting Parliament Place, with an 8 or 9 storey building behind to provide for future expansion for the Departments occupying the two low-rise buildings.
- (b) A further building could be erected to the north-east of the existing Government Office building with its basement possibly linking in with the basement of the easternmost low-rise building facing Parliament Place.

- (c) There is no indication, at this stage, as to when construction could start, as it depends on when finance could be made available.

6. POTATO MARKETING BOARD

Inquiry by Private Consultant

The Hon. V. J. FERRY, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Is it correct that a private consultant has been appointed to inquire into the affairs of the Western Australian Potato Marketing Board?
- (2) If so—
 - (a) has the inquiry been initiated by the Government;
 - (b) what are the terms of reference of the inquiry;
 - (c) what are the name and qualifications of the consultant;
 - (d) when did the inquiry commence;
 - (e) when will the inquiry be completed;
 - (f) when will the findings be made known to the Potato Industry;
 - (g) what will be the cost of the inquiry;
 - (h) will the cost be borne by the Government;
 - (i) if the reply to (h) is "No", who will be responsible for payment of the cost;
 - (j) was the Board consulted prior to the appointment; and
 - (k) what are the reasons for the inquiry?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) In accordance with a general policy of reviewing the functioning and development of Marketing Boards on a progressive basis, King Lissiman and Co., Chartered Accountants, have been engaged to carry out an examination of the aspects of the Board covered by the Terms of Reference given below. This inquiry was commenced earlier this month after discussion with the Board. Consideration will be given to release of the report after it has been examined by the Minister and the Board. The cost of the inquiry, which will be in accordance with fees fixed by the Institute of Chartered Accountants, will be met by the Government. The time taken for the inquiry will depend on other commitments of the inquirer.

The Terms of Reference of the inquiry are:

To examine and report on the need for, adequacy, expertise and cost of the present staff and facilities of the Board, including:

The Manager and Assistant Manager positions.

Board Inspectors.

The Distribution Agent, Alex Murray Pty. Ltd.

The Potato Agents.

The premises at Short Street, and

Store facilities at Robb Jetty.

The need for, adequacy, cost of and alternatives to present administrative procedures associated with:

Board meetings.

Basis of issue of licenses and delivery quotas in total and their respective distribution to growers and merchants.

Costs and returns for export of ware potatoes.

Costs and returns for export of seed potatoes.

To examine and report on:

The methods of pooling and pricing.

The accounting records and practices, and the form and content of the annual accounts.

The sources of finance for fixed assets and working capital.

Any other matters which the investigator considers relevant.

7. ESCORT AGENCIES AND MASSAGE PARLOURS

Legislation

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

Does the Government propose to introduce urgent legislation to control escort agencies and massage parlours some of which are, in practice, common brothels and outlets for prostitution?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

No. I direct the attention of the Hon. Member to the fact that the Police have launched quite a large number of successful prosecutions under existing law against operators of escort agencies and massage parlours.

8. ABORIGINES

Planning Authority Newsletter

The Hon. V. J. Ferry for the Hon. W. R. WITHERS, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Is the author of the article entitled "Comment" in the March, 1973 edition of the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Newsletter an officer of a State department?
- (2) Does the Minister consider the statements and quotations to have party political bias which may indoctrinate disadvantaged people, particularly the passage on page 3—

"The Pledge on land placed Mr. Whitlam in sharp opposition to the Liberal Prime Minister, William McMahon, and to powerful mining interests. It was regarded as a high-risk campaign issue in a country where surveys disclose deep racial prejudice. But Mr. Whitlam never faltered; and in his first press conference since a decisive victory he has reiterated that his Government's policy will not be 'open to suggestions of racism'. Mr. Whitlam's efforts to bring justice to a long-oppressed minority in Australia should command the attention of governments in other countries which are confronted with comparable problems."

- (3) Would the Minister agree that the Aboriginal people should receive advice and assistance without the confusion of party politics?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.
- (3) Yes. The purpose of the comment was to inform Aboriginal readers of publicly announced new initiatives and of overseas interest in their affairs. It is for Aborigines themselves to decide whether the vigorous approach of the new Federal Government means that their best interests are being served by that particular political party.

9. WATER SUPPLIES

Carnarvon

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

What quantity of water per week is supplied to the irrigated areas of Carnarvon from the pilot scheme?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

Approximately 6 million gallons per week.

10. *This question was postponed.*

11. ROAD TRANSPORT

North-West: Permits

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Would the Minister advise how many permits were issued by the Transport Commission to transport operators carting general freight from Perth, during each of the months November and December, 1972, and January and February, 1973, to each of the following towns—
 - (a) Dampier;
 - (b) Port Hedland;
 - (c) Goldsworthy;
 - (d) Shay Gap;
 - (e) Broome;
 - (f) Derby; and
 - (g) Wyndham?
- (2) In each case, how many different operators were involved?
- (3) Who were the operators in each case?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

(1)	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.
(a) Dampier	868	650	647	807
(b) Port Hedland	1,429	1,580	1,234	1,731
(c) and (d) Goldsworthy } Shay Gap	409	581	443	853
(e) Broome	137	339	113	233
(f) Derby	86	111	43	44
(g) Wyndham	15	21	nil	37

- (2) and (3) As indicated by the figures given in answer to (1), considerable research would be involved to extract this information. If it can be done I assure the honourable member I will have the answer prepared for him.

12. ECONOMY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Onslow: Statement by Premier

The Hon. V. J. Ferry for the Hon. W. R. WITHERS, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Was the Hon. Premier quoted correctly on the Regional A.B.C. news on Saturday, the 24th March, 1973, when in reference to my submission on the economic plight of Onslow, he was quoted as saying—"If the situation was as bad as reported he would have heard about it from the Labor member for the area, the Minister for Housing, Mr. Bickerton"?

- (2) If this is not a correct quotation, what were the exact words of the Premier on this matter?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) Yes.
(2) Answered by (1).

13.

POLICE

Stolen Vehicles

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH, to the Leader of the House:

In view of the claim by the Chief of the Police Traffic Branch, Superintendent Monck, in *The West Australian* of the 27th March, 1973, that it was because of the dual system of traffic control that the police could not trace whether a car stolen from the city was re-registered in the country, why do not the police require shires to supply a duplicate of their registrations to the police?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

In practice there is little difficulty in this regard and the introduction of such a system would not be warranted.

14.

BOATS

Licensing and Policing

The Hon. V. J. Ferry for the Hon. W. R. WITHERS, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Are the costs related to the licensing and policing of pleasure boat activities on the Swan River, the Port of Fremantle, and other centres, subsidised by revenue obtained from Northern charges?
- (2) If the answer to (1) is "No", is the cost covered by the revenue derived from the licensing of pleasure craft?
- (3) If the answer to (1) is "Yes", from what source is the revenue obtained?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) No.
(2) Yes.
(3) Answered by (2).

15.

BINGO

Permits

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Will the Minister advise the House of his impressions of the operation to date of the newly legalised game of bingo?
- (2) Will he lay upon the Table of the House a complete list of permits that have been granted, indicating the name and address of each

person or organisation, and all the conditions relating to the issue of each permit?

The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS replied:

- (1) Many church groups, Parents and Citizens Assns., Parents and Friends, Kindergartens and some sporting clubs are receiving a regular source of revenue, resulting from this legislation, but generally organisations are finding they are not getting the support they expected and as a consequence are having difficulty with expenses such as hall hire and hire of tables and chairs.
Already there are signs to indicate the position will steady and the small non profit groups such as Parents and Citizens Assns., Kindergartens and the like who have access to halls for little or no cost will be the ultimate beneficiaries.
- (2) Considerable research is entailed in obtaining this information and it will be supplied direct to the Hon. Member when it is compiled.

16. *This question was postponed.*

FIREARMS BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by The Hon. J. Dolan (Leader of the House), and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: SIXTH DAY

Motion, as Amended

Debate resumed, from the 27th March, on the following motion by The Hon. R. F. Cloughton, as amended—

That the following address be presented to His Excellency—

May it please Your Excellency—
We, the Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.

However, this House is of the opinion that the best interests of the State and the people would be better served if the Government were to concentrate on improving its administration of the affairs of the State, instead of endeavouring to denigrate the Legislative Council (an integral part of the bicameral system of Government in this State) in an effort to cover up its own shortcomings.

THE HON. V. J. FERRY (South-West) [4.54 p.m.]: I wish to support the motion moved by Mr. Claughton, as amended. He made his speech with the aid of a modern electronic device which is an innovation in this Chamber.

The Hon. R. Thompson: These devices are not modern.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: The device is new to this Chamber. Whilst I cannot agree with all that Mr. Claughton said during the course of his address, I do wish to be associated with the motion, as amended, and support it.

In recent times we have seen changes in the ministerial ranks in this House, and I wish to express my regret that The Hon. W. F. Willesee was obliged to vacate the front bench for reasons we all know. We trust that Mr. Willesee will continue to occupy his seat in this House and participate in the proceedings as and when he feels able to. I am sure he will add a great deal of knowledge to the debates in this House, as he has done over many years past. I regret that Mr. Willesee has been obliged to take the step he did. I feel sure we all wish him well in the future.

To Mr. Dolan, the new Leader of the House, we can express our sympathy, because it is not an easy task under any circumstances to occupy the position of Leader of the House. However, I have no doubt that he will discharge his duties to the best of his ability in this difficult situation. To Mr. Ron Thompson I offer my congratulations on his reaching ministerial rank, and I wish him well in his duties. I am glad to see that Mr. Stubbs is still with us in his former capacity.

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: Did you think I was going to die?

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: We hope not for a long, long time. At this stage I would like to comment on the request made by the Leader of the House in regard to the contributions by members to the debate on the Address-in-Reply. He asked members to make their contributions with some expediency so as to enable legislation to be dealt with. I suggest that members should endeavour to comply with that request, but I also proffer the suggestion that members on the Government side should also make their contributions at an early stage. I would point out that up to the present we have heard only one speaker from the Government side.

The theme of Mr. Claughton's address appeared to be based on a eulogy of the Premier and his Government. One wonders why there is a need to harp on such a subject at such a premium listening time as the opening of Parliament. Perhaps it was another attempt to prop up what might be a wavering Government halo.

One subject to which Mr. Claughton addressed himself was education. He was prompted to tell members of the House and the guests at the opening of Parliament about the Government's efforts towards improving education in this State; whereas I have the good grace to acknowledge that attempts are being made all the time to bring about improvements in the field of education. I do not think that at this stage the Government is doing such a wonderful job, as has been asserted by Mr. Claughton.

In his contribution Mr. Claughton used the following words which are recorded on page 7 of the current *Hansard*—

Besides upgrading the quality of education, it has moved to equalise educational opportunity.

The term "educational opportunity" sounds wonderful, but we all strive for that throughout the length and breadth of Western Australia. However, there are still a number of areas where education has yet to come close to being regarded as equal in opportunity.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Have you seen in this morning's *The West Australian* the report by a Belmont councillor concerning an incident at a local school?

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I have not had an opportunity to peruse that report, but I do have a report from the Manjimup Senior High School Parents and Citizens' Association which wrote to me on the 19th March, 1973, in the following terms—

Mr. V. J. Ferry, M.L.C.,
Parliament House,
West Perth.

Dear Sir,

For the past two years the members of the above association have been very concerned that no guidance officer has been appointed to this school and repeated requests to the Education Department on this matter have received unsatisfactory replies from which no action or satisfaction has resulted.

Attached is copy of a letter recently sent to the Director of Secondary Education in a further attempt to have this matter resolved.

I have, on this occasion, been instructed by the above association to send you a copy of this letter, to inform you that this situation exists and to ask for your assistance to bring about the early appointment of a Guidance Officer for this school.

Yours faithfully,

L. G. Marshall,
Hon. Secretary.

I do not intend to quote fully the letter to the Director of Secondary Education. However, I will quote as follows—

At the February meeting of the above association I was instructed once again to write to you to express the profound concern of its members that there has been no Guidance Officer appointed to the Manjimup Senior High School for 1973.

This will be the third year in a row that no Guidance Officer had been appointed to this school and it is felt that the Education Department is not doing enough to ensure that this most important position is filled each year.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Has that school had a guidance officer previously?

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: A permanent officer had been appointed up until 1970. However, since then the position has not been filled and this is the third year that the staff and students of the Manjimup Senior High School have not had the services of such an officer. I believe this is a worthy subject to raise during the course of this debate. We have a situation where students living in a country area are denied equality of opportunity because of the lack of a guidance officer in their high school. In my view the Manjimup Senior High School is most efficient. It comprises 543 students and although that figure might not be the optimum number of students for a high school, that is beside the point. It is a very good school serving a very good section of the State and I believe that a resident guidance officer is essential for the education of the students.

The present situation is that a guidance officer who is based at Bunbury visits the school at infrequent intervals, according to the time available to him. Quite obviously, that situation is not really good enough. His services could not be compared with those which would be available from the appointment of a full-time guidance officer based at Manjimup. By not having a guidance officer, students at the school are denied career opportunities. It is necessary for students to be encouraged by properly trained guidance officers.

As we all are aware there is a limited field for students in country areas. In the metropolitan area, or in the larger country centres, students are in contact with various careers such as engineering in its various fields, medicine, law, and various fields of commerce such as advertising, accountancy, retail selling, and so on. Other career opportunities exist in marketing, market research and promotion, and that sort of thing. Students attending country high schools, do not have much opportunity to rub shoulders with those students who are familiar with career opportunities because of the calling of their fathers. I am now referring to careers such as architecture, various languages providing opportunities for

modern-day travel, dentistry, agricultural science, and veterinary science, just to mention a few.

The students at the Manjimup Senior High School are, in fact, disadvantaged because they do not have the services of, and do not receive the benefits available from, the appointment of a full-time guidance officer. I request the Government to examine the situation once again and do something positive in an endeavour to remedy the shortcoming. This is another example of people being disadvantaged by living in country areas. It could also be another argument against the popular purist theory of one-vote one-value.

People living in the far corners—and the not so far corners—of this State do need special representation because of the problems associated with distance throughout the length and breadth of our State. If we had a system of one-vote one-value it is quite apparent that because of the voting strength and the pressure applied from the metropolitan region the people in the country centres would be outvoted. We would not be able to look after their very real and personal needs.

I suggest that the parents of the students at the Manjimup Senior High School regard this matter in a very personal way. It is to the credit of the P. & C. Association in that town that it is endeavouring to correct the shortcoming.

I was indebted to the Leader of the House this afternoon for supplying the answers to a series of questions regarding an inquiry which the Government has seen fit to instigate into the affairs of the Western Australian Potato Marketing Board. The Government has appointed a private consultant to inquire into the affairs of the board and I find this to be a very curious situation, particularly as the Government seeks such an inquiry at this particular time.

It will be recalled that this Chamber saw fit to appoint a select committee to inquire into the potato industry in Western Australia. The report of that committee was tabled in this House on the 2nd May, 1972. I would particularly like to mention Mr. Dans and Mr. Jack Thomson who, together with myself, served on the committee. We adopted a very conscientious and serious approach to the task given to us, and I want to pay tribute to the two gentlemen who assisted me in compiling the report.

It was an all-party committee, and the report was presented unanimously by the members of the committee. To my knowledge, not one of the 21 recommendations contained in the report have been implemented so far either by the Government by way of legislation or direction, or by the Potato Marketing Board, or any person associated with it. Perhaps some

facets of the report have been implemented but I feel quite sure that very little has actually been done.

It is rather curious to me that following the review of the industry carried out in some depth by the select committee the Government should appoint a private consultant charged with the terms of reference set out in reply to my question.

Members will recall that the Government vehemently opposed the motion for the appointment of the select committee. The Government could see no justification whatsoever for an inquiry. To support my remarks I will quote what the Leader of the House had to say when speaking to the motion. His remarks can be found on page 785 of *Hansard*, 1971 and, in part, were as follows—

The organised potato industry in Western Australia is much admired by our other primary industries and is looked at with envy by the industry in other States.

Over the years this industry has been closely examined from top to bottom and at no time have radical changes been indicated. On the other hand, there is a present need for assistance, examination, and reconstruction of our other primary industries and this would not seem to be the time nor the place to expend our energies on our healthy and viable potato industry. No social injustice has been indicated and future problems of the industry would be technical in nature and, as my later comments will indicate, are already receiving considerable attention by those responsible for the industry.

At page 787 of *Hansard* the same honourable member had the following to say—

At the present time the potato industry in this State is in a very healthy position—the growers' returns have been stable, the trades margins preserved, and adequate supplies of good quality potatoes are available to the consumer.

Should any honourable member have doubts of this being a true picture of the situation I would refer him to the *Economic Survey of the Australian Potato Industry* published in October, 1967, by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Canberra.

As late as the 18th August, 1971, the Government was saying that we had a wonderful industry. It was a shining example of an industry guided by a marketing board and was held up to be a wonderful example for agricultural marketing in this State. It is curious, indeed, following the report of the select committee on this very industry, that the Government should, in March, 1973, see fit to appoint a private

consultant to carry out further investigations into what the Government considers to be an excellent organisation.

I wonder why the Government chose to do this at this time; I wonder who prompted the Government; I wonder who gained the accessible ear of the Government at this time; and I wonder where the pressures are coming from. Does the appointment of the consultant indicate that the Government has lost faith with those charged with the responsibility of administering this industry? I think the Government has something to answer here.

The officers associated with the potato industry are placed in an invidious position. The report of the select committee which was released less than 12 months ago, was very heavily in favour of the existing marketing arrangement, subject to some improvements as enunciated under the recommendations. Basically it was a healthy industry. However, in less than 12 months things must have changed. The Government has decided to have a look at this particular industry. The answer supplied to me this afternoon stated that in accordance with the general Government policy of reviewing the functioning and development of marketing boards on a progressive basis this arrangement had been entered into.

Perhaps it will be a good thing for the Government to inquire into the operations of various boards—I have no argument with that policy—but it does seem strange to me and raises a question in my mind as to why the Government would engage a consultant to examine the potato industry first. As we know, quite a number of marketing boards and authorities exist in this State and it seems strange to me that the Government should choose this course of action. I am concerned with the motive behind the action because it may not be fair to those charged with the responsibility of looking after the industry on a voluntary basis.

I will admit that the terms of reference are a little more far-reaching, in some respects, than those undertaken by the select committee. However, there is duplication. The items to be examined by the consultant include the board's inspectors; the distribution agents—Alex Murray Pty. Ltd.; the potato agents; the premises at Short Street; and the store facilities at Robb Jetty. All of those matters were examined and reported on by the select committee, so what has happened in the last 12 months?

The terms of reference cater for methods of pooling and pricing, the accounting records and practices, and the form and content of annual accounts. I do not disagree with some of the matters which are being examined but I query why it should be done at this time. I am a little concerned that the Government is

undermining the confidence of people charged with the responsibility of guiding the primary industry.

Where will the next inquiry be held and under what circumstances? I would not suggest that this request for an inquiry would have come from the industry itself, or from the board itself; nor do I believe it would have been requested by the Potato Growers Association.

It concerns me that the Government should consider it necessary to undermine the confidence of the people engaged in a good and viable industry. At least that is what I think the Government is doing.

The industry certainly has problems and troubles, but which primary industry does not have to face difficulties from time to time? Here we have a board and an industry geared to meet the challenges that arise from time to time, and the members of the Select Committee in their wisdom saw fit to put their recommendations in print so that they could be implemented to strengthen the industry and to benefit those engaged in it.

I am certainly concerned that the Government should choose to hold an inquiry at this time and I trust the inquiry will be expeditiously carried out. I believe now that it has started it should be concluded as soon as possible. But I cannot see this happening at a very early stage because the terms of reference ensure that the consultants are required to go into the various facets in great detail and at great depth. Accordingly I cannot see that the report will be available at an early date.

In the interim, of course, the public will be asking questions—just as I am doing now—and the public will be entitled to ask what is wrong with the industry to necessitate the Government taking this step. If the Government has some reasonable motive for its inquiry let it come out and say so. The Government says it is general policy. I do not disagree with that, but why choose an industry that has been recently reviewed to a great extent, perhaps not in the terms of reference given to the consultants, but it has certainly been reviewed, and it is quite obvious that the Government has no intention of taking any notice of the recommendations that are contained in the Select Committee's report.

I can substantiate that statement by referring to answers I received in this House towards the end of last year and at the beginning of the current session, when in answer to my question as to when legislation will be introduced to amend the Potato Marketing Act I was told last week that it would be introduced during the spring sitting of this session.

This is sheer procrastination. There is no doubt about that. The industry is very keen to have certain amendments made to the existing Act. I refer particularly to

recommendation (f) on page 9 of the Select Committee's report which recommended that there should be an appropriately graduated scale of monetary fines on a per acre basis for the people who are growing unauthorised potatoes.

The board has requested this provision for some time and the Committee saw merit in recommending that the provision be placed in the Act because it felt that without this provision the growing of potatoes could not be adequately policed.

If blackmarket operators become too vigorous it will tend to undermine the industry and yet we have the Government continuing to procrastinate. A further provision recommends a right of appeal before a magistrate against the cancellation of a license in the event of a grower being placed in such a situation. We felt that should be written into the Act.

The grower should have a right of appeal against the cancellation of his license and we believe under the terms of the report of the Select Committee it should be before a magistrate.

In recommendation (h) we also recommended that the cost of maintaining inspectorial services should be shared by the board and the Government. Assistance from the Government could come from an *ex gratia* grant each year on a percentage basis.

This would help the industry which at the present time carries the full cost of inspectorial services and the policing of the industry. If convictions are obtained against persons offending against the Act the fines in such cases go into Consolidated Revenue.

But the recommendation suggests that the Government could to some extent offset the costs to maintain a viable industry in this way.

Accordingly, I believe the Government has no intention whatever of taking any notice of the Select Committee's report as tabled in this House on the 2nd May last year. I do not think I will say any more in that regard. We all know what our private thoughts are on this matter, but again it seems to me very curious that the Government should spend money now to pay a consultant to look into this industry; an industry which the Government itself has praised—and quite properly praised—as being a good and viable industry.

I sound a note of warning to other boards and authorities and ask what will be the next move. One wonders what other raids will be made by the Government. If there were a public outcry against the Potato Marketing Board or the potato industry, which there is not—and there certainly has not been such an outcry for at least two years—one could see the justification for an investigation at this time.

I repeat that I am not against boards being investigated periodically; I believe this is reasonable because boards, as marketing authorities, are dealing with changing circumstances and it is right and proper that their activities should be reviewed from time to time by outside persons, to see whether some improvement cannot be made as a result of such a review. I believe this would be reasonable enough provided it were done in an orderly manner and without public hysteria which could, perhaps, upset the industry. It is, however, curious to me that the Government should indulge in such an exercise involving the potato industry at this stage.

The final point on which I would like to touch under privilege of this debate is the Government's attitude to the south-west region. I did make some brief mention of this in the course of another debate last week, but I believe it is of sufficient moment that I again touch on it and draw the attention of the Government to the situation in the south-west. I would like to quote a Press report which appeared in *The West Australian* of the 21st March in which the Premier (Mr. J. T. Tonkin) is quoted as having said—

The South-West was a rich region with an economy already diversified between primary and secondary production.

Its growth so far was enough to ensure much greater expansion eventually, even if nothing more was done to stimulate it.

The Government had no intention of reducing the support it was already giving the Bunbury area, but it was time to think about encouraging similar expansion in the almost untouched region between Perth and Geraldton.

I do not disagree with the Government's intention to develop other regions in Western Australia; it is the Government's prerogative and duty to do this. I do not, however, agree that the Government should throw away the substance for the shadow—the substance in this case being the south-west region of Western Australia.

This is a highly diversified region with diversified industries—both primary and secondary—and what the Premier wishes to do, apparently, is to mark time. We all know that if a person or an organisation marks time they get precisely nowhere. We cannot mark time; we must continue to go forward. If we mark time we will find that others are passing us by. In this case one of the other regions that would be passing the south-west region by is the greater metropolitan region.

This is nothing more nor less than a form of centralisation. Although we extend our sights further up the coast and decentralise in a form it will still increase the overall metropolitan region.

I do not agree at all that any Government should say, "All right, the south-west region is doing quite nicely; we will continue as we are doing at the moment and not reduce the support we are already giving the area; but we will not increase the support or do anything new."

In answer to a question I asked last week I was told that the State Housing Commission has no new homes planned for erection in Bunbury this financial year. This is quite extraordinary. Here we have a regional capital—Bunbury—in which no new homes are to be built by the State Housing Commission.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You would have thought that with the Bunbury by-election imminent the Government would have changed its thinking.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: There is not the slightest chance of this, because the Premier has said, "Let things stay as they are."

I suggest that the State Housing Commission is not building any new homes because it realises that a plan of stagnation will be implemented; that there will not be job opportunities in industry and that industry will run down. It feels there will not be the injection of new industries into the Bunbury region and as a consequence there will be no demand for housing.

That is the reason why today Bunbury is feeling this type of recession and it is just not good enough. When I speak of the Bunbury region this involves Collie, Donnybrook, Harvey, Bridgetown, Manjimup and other communities; and we must bear in mind that Bunbury is the only commercial port for the south-west—that is below Fremantle—until we get to Albany on the south coast.

We all know of course that the Government closed the port of Busselton without even consulting the people or the shire about it. Having chosen to close the port of Busselton the Government now chooses to stifle Bunbury with stagnation. It is throwing away the substance for the shadow.

We know that the south-west region is a prime example of planned decentralisation. We have industries scattered throughout the area. The dairying industry in its various forms is well established as is the coalmining industry. Apart from these we have established the mineral sands industry. These industries all support a large population. Quite apart from the industries I have mentioned there are established in that area lamb

producers, wool producers, the cattle industry, the potato growing industry and the fruit-growing industry.

One could go on and enumerate other industries because the area in question constitutes a classic example of decentralisation in its best form. It includes a planned cross-section of the community and if the Government proposes to forsake the area and the people living in it, or if it intends to sell them short by way of not giving them further support it does not deserve to stay in office. The people in the south-west region are highly indignant and incensed about the action being taken by the Government.

THE HON. R. J. L. WILLIAMS (Metropolitan) [5.30 p.m.]: In rising to support this motion I would first like to associate myself with the remarks made by my learned colleague, The Hon. I. G. Medcalf, in regard to the demise of two former members of the Metropolitan Province—Dr. Gordon Hislop and Sir Keith Watson.

It was also with a personal tinge of sadness that I learnt at the end of the last session The Hon. W. F. Willesee had been forced to retire as Leader of the House. Whilst reading I came across a quote which eloquently expresses my personal feelings in regard to Mr. Willesee. This was written by William Shakespeare, who had an ability of expression which many of us would like to share. It says—

Hath borne his faculties so meek,
hath been

So clear in his great office, that his
virtues

Will plead like angels, trumpet-
tongued, against

The deep damnation of his taking-
off;

To his successor the new Leader of the House (The Hon. J. Dolan), I extend my best wishes. I know he will bring to that office all the dignity and strength of his predecessor.

I would like to make a personal comment about the new Minister for Community Welfare (The Hon. Ron Thompson). It is good to see Mr. Thompson sitting in the front bench and I know in time the long-standing interest he has at heart may well bear fruit in the very difficult portfolio he has been called upon to handle.

Looking around the Chamber it appears to me that this will be a rather sad session. We know for certain that seven members will leave our midst because of retirement. By the due process of election we may also lose other members. In this privilege debate, I would like to draw attention to just how much experience the House will lose with the retirement of these seven members.

As I thought of this loss of expertise, I also realised that this House is being attacked from without. It is being attacked as a deliberate policy laid down a long time ago in a senior high school of this State by three colleagues—two of whom are now members of Parliament, and the third their acolyte. It seems to me that these people are attacking the wrong thing. No-one denies that from time to time throughout the world members of Houses of Parliament need to take a long hard look at themselves to decide whether or not they are operating in the best possible manner to serve the people who elect them.

I have come to the conclusion that because of the rapid expansion of this State in the last 15 years—and no-one denies it has expanded rapidly—Governments of all colours have lost control. I mean by this that successive Governments have handed control of our State on a platter to the Public Service. I do not suggest for one moment that the Public Service does not do a good job. All members will know some officers in the Public Service who carry out their duties very well. However, government of the State and legislation rest in the Houses of Parliament and not in the offices of the Public Service. I promise now, so long as I am returned to Parliament by my electors, I will keep hammering away at this theme.

It is Government by default when we are presented with so much subordinate legislation which no private member in this House has the time to study or act upon. I took it upon myself over a period of time to look at the subordinate legislation. The file I have here covers only the period from December, 1971, to March 1972. Members can see just how much subordinate legislation passed through this House in four months. The other file I have—an even thicker one because the period covered is a little longer—contains the subordinate legislation up to August, 1972. There we have the nub of the matter. How could any Minister have sufficient time to ensure that every piece of subordinate legislation, be it regulation or by-law, placed on the Table of the House is completely and absolutely accurate and will cause no harm to our electors? I would say that subordinate legislation has just about taken over in this State.

Legislation is brought before both Houses of Parliament and debated, but what happens afterwards with the use of the magical phrase, “as regulations from time to time are prescribed”? Once a Bill is passed, many provisions may be varied by way of regulation.

In my opinion the solution to the problem lies in our Parliament, and more particularly in this Chamber. I have observed that the role of a back-bencher in Government is almost meaningless—he is almost a puppet. In actual fact, a back-bencher sits in the House, not by the will of the

Government but by the will of the system which has been imposed upon us. From time to time every back-bencher must feel frustrated, and I am not the first to make this remark. A back-bencher is not a dummy or a whipping boy for a Minister.

A back-bencher is elected to Parliament to speak for his constituents. However, because of the pressure of business in the House, he is only allowed to stand up and speak from time to time. In one way I am very grateful to have entered Parliament as an Opposition back-bencher because otherwise I would have been completely frustrated in a political sense.

For many years it has been suggested that certain back-benchers could contribute a great deal to the running of this State and this House if committees were formed to investigate and report back to the House—it being the last authority—on subordinate legislation; in other words, a standing committee.

I do not propose to quote from the debate which took place in another place in 1967. If any member is interested, it is recorded from pages 662 to 682 in volume 176, No. 1 of *Hansard*. The frustrations suffered by people serving in another place were discussed in great detail during that debate. The astonishing fact is that five of the people who spoke on that occasion are now Cabinet Ministers; and yet, whilst in Government, they have done nothing to alleviate the problem. Will they blame pressure of business for this? Will they tell us there is too much important legislation to bring forward? Or will they get down to brass tacks and say, "The proper Government of this State is our business and therefore we will stand firm on what we said in 1967 and form standing committees."

Some members may feel that standing committees or Select Committees are something extraordinary. These members should think again. We have an association called the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and no doubt many members, as I do, read with great interest the papers which appear from time to time on reform of Government. It would seem that throughout the world—not just in Western Australia—successive Governments have felt some little trepidation in appointing standing committees. They are frightened of someone metaphorically peering over their shoulders. That is ill-founded nonsense because the Government itself can decide the limitations to be placed upon the committee. The moment a Government realises that a standing committee is there to serve and assist, the better it will be.

Members who feel that the idea of a standing committee is new will be interested in some remarks made at the Eleventh Australasian Area Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association held in Wellington, at which you, Mr.

President, were present. You, Sir, did not comment on the subject of standing committees, but I did notice that when you were asked about ties you were speechless!

I would like to quote from page 122 of the report of the proceedings where The Hon. D. H. Banfield of South Australia had this to say—

The appointment of select committees was first recorded in the Journals of the Mother of Parliaments in the Third Parliament of Elizabeth in 1571—

So how modern are we if we ask the Government not only to consider the appointment of a committee to study subordinate legislation, but actually to do something about it?

It is absolutely essential that every member of the House is well-informed about what is happening in certain areas. From time to time I have visited Government departments with inquiries and I am always aware of the courtesy and efficiency with which I am greeted. I am also particularly struck by the comparatively opulent surroundings of the people I visit, especially in relation to the surroundings I myself enjoy—or do not enjoy according to the temperature—in this building. I have a so-called perfect air-conditioned room which I share with a colleague—it is hot in summer and cold in winter. If Parliament's role is to be effective, I suggest that we should appoint standing committees, not only to tackle this problem but also to tackle associated problems.

The amount of work expected of a member today has multiplied—a natural result of the population growth. There are still some misguided people in another place who fondly imagine that the solving of their constituents' problems is solely in their hands, and that we, in this House, are not even remotely aware that the problems exist. Some members say this with tongue in cheek, but I have met at least one member in another place who really believes it and who was surprised that I did look into my constituents' problems.

I suppose politicians throughout Australia rate fairly low in the popularity poll; they would be about two pegs above school teachers. I once saw a popularity chart and could not help thinking to myself at that time that were I successful in the next election I would at least go up two rungs, but those two rungs are still fairly low on the popularity ladder. I suggest there is a reason for this. I suggest it is because the workings of Parliament are not well known. I suggest that all-party committees would perform a valuable service in playing the proper role of Parliament, but hand in hand with that must go certain other reforms which I know have been promised from time to time.

It is of no use anybody telling me or trying to convince me that we have the best Parliament in Australia, because I am already convinced. However, I want a better Parliament House for Western Australia and better amenities for the members. I admit that the progress made since 1960 has been truly remarkable. Nevertheless, in the appointments of this place, every member of it is aware of certain defects. I am sure it is no secret that something like 67 members share the services of three typists. I do not know of any company in this State—and this Parliament is the largest company in Western Australia—where 67 members of that company would be sharing the services of three typists. The result of such a situation is that the work has to be syphoned off here, there, and everywhere. I hasten to point out that those three typists do a remarkably fine job, and how they cope, I do not know. Their efforts are really tremendous.

Another point I would make is that the security of these premises needs a little attention. It is surprising, on many occasions, how many odd people are found to be strolling around the corridors of Parliament House. I believe some security precautions are taken within the building or without the building as a necessary safeguard. I know for a fact that from time to time the papers in my room have been disturbed, and that I did appeal to the previous House Controller to have the matter considered. I also know that on one occasion the workers who wished to get up onto the roof of Parliament House used my room without so much as a "by your leave" or "thank you", and I must confess I was deeply touched by their attitude. However, I made sure that they were deeply touched before they left my room.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: But your room would only be about as big as a manhole.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: Perhaps that is how they got the issue confused. There are certain other reforms that will have to be made in this House as we mature. We are a comparatively young Parliament, but one of the essential factors in any legislature is stability which I think is established only by the presiding officers.

You, Sir, are one of the seven members of this House who will retire at the end of this parliamentary session. By that time you will have occupied the presidential Chair for some 13 years. Only one other President has served for a longer term of office; that was Sir John Klrwan, who occupied your Chair for 20 years. If we turn our attention to another place we find that the longest serving presiding officer of that House, apart from the first one who served for some 13 years—Sir James Lee Steere—was The Honourable John Hearman who acted as Speaker for nine years.

I am suggesting it is time we had a look at other systems used for the election of presiding officers. To add dignity to the proceedings of the House and to add stability to the proceedings of the House, we need a presiding officer who will occupy the Chair for some time. The system used in Britain for the election of presiding officers is well known to some members and another place could do well to copy it. It would be a sound move if the British system were followed by another place even if it were found necessary to create another constituency to follow that system to the letter, because I find it very hard to take, on reading time and time again—and I am not referring to events that have occurred during the life of any particular Government—that a motion was won or lost on the casting vote of the Speaker. I consider that such a state of affairs is repugnant. No matter which party has the majority in that House the action of a presiding officer in such circumstances is brought into disrepute.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I draw the attention of the honourable member to the fact that he cannot cast any reflection on a presiding officer in another place.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Or in this place.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. President, but it was not my intention to cast any reflection on the presiding officer of another place. I was merely referring to the system of parliamentary procedure and the role the presiding officer plays within that system. I believe that the members of the House should elect their presiding officer. He should be nominated for, say, the seat of Parliament Hill. Then, at the will of the House, he would continue to be nominated and re-elected to Parliament until such time as he retired.

The creation of an extra seat would still leave an odd number on the floor of the House, and therefore one or the other party would have a majority. The position should be the same in this House. However, the moment the presiding officer is installed in the presidential Chair he should resign from his political party. He should relinquish all his affiliations with that party. This is the position that obtains in Westminster with great success, because the presiding officer can then be truly impartial.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What would such a person do when his term of office expires and he applies to reaffiliate with his old political party? Does he then re-affiliate with his previous political party?

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: Usually, when the Speaker of the House of Commons retires, he has had quite enough political activity because often he is too

venerable at 65 or so and he has no further desire to re-enter politics. In point of fact I do not think there is any case on record of any retired Speaker re-entering politics.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: But look at all the young men in this Chamber who will be here for quite a long time. One of them may be elected as President of this House and then wish to stand for re-election.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: Does the Leader of the Opposition mean after his term of six years has expired?

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Yes, of course.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: Obviously, if the presiding officer proves to be the man the members of the House want, he can continue to serve for 30 years if necessary. If this did occur he would add stability to the House, because he would have a great fund of knowledge of parliamentary procedure.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: If he is to stay in the office for 30 years he would have to be elected and re-elected after the expiration of each six-year term of office.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: Yes, that is correct; at the end of every six years.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Well, he would then have to reaffiliate with his old political party, or stand as an independent.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: The usual custom in the United Kingdom is that a seat is specially created for the Speaker. All parties come to an agreement that they will not put up any candidate to oppose the person nominated for that seat. In other words the person nominated would be standing for, say, the seat of Parliament Hill without any opposition. Once within my living memory it did occur—and it is certainly on record—that when an independent did nominate for the position of Speaker of the House of Commons, all the members sitting on the front bench on both the Government and Opposition sides of the House canvassed that electorate for the Speaker regardless of their political affiliations. That is how the system works.

I did not want to go into any detail. I merely wished to point out to the House that the motion states that it would be in the best interests of the State and the people would be better served if the Government were to concentrate on improving its administration and affairs of State. I believe that we should look high and low. We should read a few more learned papers discussed at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. I could continue for another four or five hours suggesting various reforms that could or could not be made, but I do not propose to do so,

because members have been extremely patient with me until now and I have no desire to try their patience.

However, let me say that reform is necessary. We should not have a smoke-screen of inadequacy by calling for the abolition of the Upper House. There is, of necessity, a need for some reform in our system and we cannot abrogate Government by subordinate legislation to those who frame subordinate legislation, no matter how well intentioned they may be. It is on that note that I reaffirm my decision to support the motion as amended.

THE HON. S. J. DELLAR (Lower North) [5.57 p.m.]: The motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor has since been amended by this House and I rise to support that motion, as amended. I am still trying to understand the words uttered by Mr. Williams, but I do agree with his remark that he was pleased to enter this House as a member of the Opposition and not as a member of the Government.

I want to take the opportunity to support the remarks made by other members in offering their congratulations to Mr. Jerry Dolan on his appointment to the position of Leader of this House and to Mr. Ron Thompson on his election as a Minister in the Government and as deputy to the Leader of the House. Also, I feel, at the same time, some sympathy towards Mr. Ron Thompson because of the portfolio he has been given to administer, but I am sure he will execute his duties to the best of his ability for the benefit of the people of this State, and also for the benefit of those who elected him to this House.

To Mr. Willesee I extend my regrets that he has had to step down as Leader of the House and relinquish his position as a Minister of the Crown. A great deal has been said about Mr. Willesee and therefore I do not intend to make remarks in a vein similar to those that have been made by other speakers.

It is customary for members to take the opportunity, in debating this motion, to speak on matters of a topical nature and those that affect their own electorates. It is not my intention to discuss the merits or demerits of the subjects discussed by previous speakers, but to direct my remarks to the area I represent; namely, the Lower North Province. One matter that has been concerning me ever since I was elected to this House, and even before that, is the attitude of the Postmaster-General's Department, which shows a singular lack of thought and consideration for those who live not only in the outback areas of the State, but also in those far flung towns where the population does not

warrant a continuation of certain services which are readily available to the populace in the metropolitan area.

I am referring mainly to postal and telegram services, and although my remarks will centre mainly around Exmouth, other towns are in the same predicament, including Mt. Magnet and, to a certain extent, Carnarvon. Members will have towns in their electorates experiencing the same difficulties.

I have received from the Lions Club in Exmouth a letter regarding postal deliveries. It is dated the 27th February, 1973 and reads—

Dear Stan—

We have a very friendly relationship up there. To continue—

On behalf of the Lions Club of Exmouth I have been asked to point out to you the desperate need of a mail delivery service in the town. As there is now a population of over 4,000 people in the town, it is most evident that a lot of people do not get their mail until sometimes two or three days after the mail has reached the post office. As you know yourself a woman who lives in Stokes Hughes Road and whose husband works long hours can hardly be expected to walk all the way to the P.O. every day to see if there is any mail for them. Also it was suggested that during or when a cyclone is imminent, someone be on duty to receive any telegrams that might come through and deliver them to their destination.

I would ask for your quick action on this and hope that you can answer our request as soon as possible.

This is not the first time the matter has been raised with me. The Federal member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Collard) and I have each been contacted on several occasions, but our subsequent approaches to the appropriate quarters in Canberra or the regional offices in Port Hedland or Geraldton have resulted in the same type of reply. It is apparent that the main concern of the Postmaster-General's Department is to make a profit which it can utilise for capital expenditure elsewhere. The department is disregarding the needs of some people and is not providing the service for which it was established.

The discontent has not occurred only recently, but has been brewing for several years. At one stage Mt. Magnet had a postal delivery and a telegram service but for reasons better known to others than to me, they were discontinued. The reason given was that the size of the service did not warrant the retention of a full-time officer. However, I feel sure that someone could have been appointed to carry out the delivery of mail on a part-time basis.

It is ludicrous that Exmouth, a town with 4,000-odd people, has no mail delivery service on the ground that the population is not sufficient to warrant such a service; and this despite the fact that mail was delivered in the early days of Exmouth's development when the population was far smaller. It is consequently obvious that the concern of the Postmaster General's Department is not the number of people to be served, but only the profit to be made. Consequently the intention is to dispense with any service when it is possible to do so.

A telegram can arrive in Exmouth at 10.30 a.m. on Saturday and if the addressee does not call at the post office before 11.00 a.m., it is Monday morning before he learns that a great aunt in England or somewhere else has died. Such instances do occur. Urgent telegrams have been sent to Exmouth, but the addressees have not expected them and as they have no other need to call at the post office for several days, they are unaware of the existence of any telegram unless the next door neighbour calls at the post office and observes the name on a blackboard.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: How long would it take a person in Magnet, Cue, or Meekatharra to receive a letter from Perth?

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: In answer to the Leader of the Opposition I would say that Menzies, Wiluna, Gascoyne Junction, Shark Bay or Denham, and Useless Loop would be the only towns, except for settlements on the Eyre Highway, which do not receive a daily airmail service backed up by a weekly road service.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The delay in the receipt of mail is caused by people not collecting it.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: That could be so, but I am saying that in some towns there is a justification for a mail service to be established or, in some cases, for a discontinued service to be re-instituted. Most people in the metropolitan area enjoy a daily mail delivery service to their homes and they also have the advantage of a telegram delivery service, but this is not the case in some of the towns in my electorate.

I realise this is a Federal matter, but I trust this Government will make representations to the new Postmaster-General for an improvement in the service.

Sitting suspended from 6.07 to 7.30 p.m.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: Prior to the suspension I had just concluded commenting on postal services. The next point upon which I shall touch is the new camp school which is to be established at Bluff Point in Geraldton with the assistance of the Rotary Club, the Education Department, and other agencies. I have received correspondence from various shire councils in my electorate such as Cue, Sandstone, Carnarvon, and others. They are

concerned about children in isolated areas of the State who will naturally attempt to use the facilities which are to be provided at Geraldton.

Before I proceed further, I wish to congratulate the Rotary Club of Geraldton for its foresight in bringing this project into being.

The concern expressed is that children in isolated areas will not receive a priority to attend the camp school during the hotter periods of the year when they would naturally be pleased to escape from their own environment and enjoy a holiday at the seaside. I have made representations to the Minister for Education on this matter and he has replied to me giving certain conditions which will relate to occupancy of the camp school. I am heartened by the final condition which reads—

- (d) It should be noted that all applications are carefully vetted and it is the policy to give favoured allocation to schools and school groups from less advantageous areas.

I trust the reply given by the Minister for Education will be borne in mind when applications are received and that children from isolated areas of the State will be given preference to attend the camp school at Geraldton.

I am not being selfish in making this request. Not only in my own electorate but also in Mr. Hunt's electorate there are children who look forward to a holiday at the seaside but do not have the opportunity to have such holidays in pleasant surroundings. I hope their needs will be met when the time comes to vet applications and give approval as to who will attend the camp school.

The Hon. J. Heltman: Would you raise your voice a little? It is rather hard to hear you.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: Of course. The news of the north in today's *The West Australian* features the headline, "Move to get Roebourne Council back." I do not intend to read the article but it has prompted me to consider the situation which now applies at Exmouth. Members may or may not realise that Exmouth is in a unique situation. There is not only a Commissioner for the Shire of Exmouth but also a civil commissioner. I want to make it perfectly clear that I am referring only to the respective positions and not to the person who holds those positions.

Members may not know the background of these two appointments. The townsite of Exmouth was developed purely as a support centre for the United States Naval Communications Station at North-West Cape. A representative of the Department of Defence was appointed on a nonpermanent basis and given the title of civil commissioner. As such, his duties included

Commonwealth and State Government representation on the site and he was also the first point of contact between the United States Navy, subcontractors, and other contractors in the area. He was also appointed commissioner for the Shire of Exmouth. In the early stages of development such an appointment was absolutely necessary. It would have been hopeless to try to form a shire council because nothing had existed previously. The town was being developed and construction of the base was under way. It would not have been possible to form a shire council from the workmen on the site because they would not have had the necessary qualifications to be elected under the Local Government Act.

The situation has, however, changed over the years. It is now almost 10 years since the Shire of Exmouth was gazetted. Perhaps the time is coming—if it has not already come—when the local people of Exmouth are entitled to a say in their own affairs. A great deal of money has been spent on private development in Exmouth quite apart from the money spent by the Commonwealth and State Governments.

As far back as the 22nd July, 1971, I asked the Minister for Local Government a question on the Shire of Exmouth. My question appears on page 130 of *Hansard* Volume 1, and reads as follows—

- (1) Has further consideration been given to the appointment of an Elected Council for the Shire of Exmouth?
- (2) If an Elected Council is not to be appointed in the near future, will the Minister consider the formation of an Advisory Committee to work in conjunction with the Commissioner for the Shire?

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs, the Minister, replied—

- (1) Yes, but no immediate change is proposed.
- (2) Yes.

As I have said, I asked that question in July, 1971. Up to date I am not aware of any move which has been made to form an elected council for the Shire of Exmouth or even to form an advisory committee to work in conjunction with the commissioner—either the present commissioner or any commissioner who may be appointed in the future.

As I have said, the level of private investment and the numbers of people are sufficient for a shire council to be formed. I ask the Minister to give further consideration to this matter. If he considers the time is not yet ripe for a formal council to be elected I hope that he will at least reconsider the suggestion I made

in 1971, that an advisory committee be formed consisting of residents of Exmouth who would work in conjunction with the Commissioner for the Shire of Exmouth. In this way people in Exmouth would have an avenue to express their opinions. This would not detract in any way from the duties of the civil commissioner who has certain rights and must perform certain duties. The staff of the Shire of Exmouth is now separate from the civil commissioner's office. The Shire of Exmouth has its own office buildings and employees. It is a separate entity except that the civil commissioner is still the Commissioner for the Shire of Exmouth and still performs joint duties and responsibilities.

I know this matter has been discussed at length in previous years and I am sure Mr. Logan will recall the earlier discussions. I feel the time is ripe for a council to be formed. I repeat my plea to the Minister: If a council is not to be formed, please give the people some representation whereby they may voice and give expression to their opinions.

During the debate on the Address-in-Reply, Mr. Withers referred to the need for forward planning. He said that Governments must look ahead and plan in advance.

Recently it has been announced that a new town may possibly be established at Agnew or Perserverance by Australian Selection. At Windarra Poseiden has announced that it will go into production in 1974. Such announcements lead me to recall my maiden speech in the Parliament. At the time I referred to the need for forward planning. I said that thought should be given to upgrading facilities in the area. I also said any contemplated work on the Kalgoorlie-Leonora railway line should be carried out to standard gauge specifications. During the debate on the Address-in-Reply not many bouquets have been given. However, I offer my congratulations to the present Government for its foresight and ability to forward plan. The Government has announced that the railway to Leonora will be rebuilt to standard gauge specifications. In addition, the railway from Esperance to Kalgoorlie will also be built to standard gauge specifications. This is the first step towards an integrated rail link connecting the iron ore railways in the north. I believe that such a link is essential for the future.

Mr. Logan referred to some answers to questions given by Ministers in this House in connection with new taxes and charges which have been imposed since the present Government took office. If members intend to refer to these taxes and charges I suggest they refer to *Hansard* No. 2 of 1971. On the 5th October of that year I asked a question which appears on

page 1747. I would like to read the question which is as follows—

During the term of office of the Liberal-Country Party Government from 1959-1971—

- (1) (a) What new taxes and charges were imposed; and
(b) from what date were they operative?
- (2) (a) What taxes and charges existing at the date of assumption of office—1959—were increased during the period of office; and
(d) what was the percentage increase in each case?

Mr. Logan mentioned that the answers given to questions asked by myself and other members extend over several pages. The answer to my question extends from pages 1747 to 1752 inclusive.

Mr. Logan raised one other point which related to the tragic death of a police patrolman. It is unfortunate that this happening was referred to in the manner in which it was. I am not sure I have fully understood the tenor of Mr. Logan's meaning. I will stand corrected if I am wrong, but I understood Mr. Logan to say that it was not the duty of a police patrolman—or any patrolman for that matter—to chase traffic offenders at excessive speeds under dangerous conditions. I understood him to say that a chase should be abandoned if it would create a further hazard to other road users and that it should be sufficient to obtain the number of the vehicle for subsequent investigation and possible apprehension of the offender. Am I correct?

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Do you not think it constitutes a hazard?

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: I am not referring to that immediately but, instead, am asking a question.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Read tonight's *Daily News*. The high speeds occurred because of the chase.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: If we are to have laws they must be obeyed. This applies to all laws including traffic laws. If a person speeds or goes through a stop sign he commits an offence. We have seen it stated in the Press that pedestrians will be watched more closely. Once an offence has been committed the courts determine what the punishment should be after reaching a decision on the case. I do not think an offender should be let off scot-free.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: I did not say he should be.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: In the case of an habitual traffic offender who has no respect for the law or for other motorists on the road—and there are many of them

at the present time—it is sometimes necessary that he be chased at an excessive speed. If he is asked to stop he will make a rude remark and carry on regardless. It is also necessary for fire engines to travel at excessive speeds, incurring the risk of danger to the crew and other road users, in order to attend fires. The same applies to ambulance drivers when going to the scene of accidents.

If I were driving up Stirling Highway and a clown went past at 80 miles an hour, I would immediately ask, "Where the hell are the police? Why aren't they doing their job?" If I were driving at Goomalling and the same thing happened, I would ask, "Where are the traffic inspectors? Why aren't they doing their job?"

The Hon. F. R. White: Other motorists can pimp on them now.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: I am not sure I agree with that but it may help to do something about the problem. The whole point is, if a motorist drives past a traffic policeman or a country traffic inspector at 60 miles an hour, should he be told, "If you can catch him in 100 yards, go ahead"? Should he be told, "If you can't catch him at 65 miles an hour, let him go"? Should he be told, "He can run into Tom, Dick, or Harry down the road but do not endanger your life"?

Traffic policemen and country traffic inspectors are charged with the job of controlling traffic and enforcing the Traffic Act and regulations. They are very experienced in controlling high powered motorcycles and motorcars. Flashing lights and blaring sirens warn other road users to make way for police cars, ambulances, and fire engines. It is a fact of life that people will break the law, and if they are not chased and apprehended they will continue to do so over and over again. We should not place limitations upon the police, traffic inspectors, or anybody else in the course of apprehending lawbreakers.

If a man ran out of the National Bank in St. George's Terrace at three o'clock in the morning with a big black bag, jumped into a car, and tore off, am I to assume the C.I.B. would not be able to chase him and apprehend him?

The Hon. F. R. White: There would not be congested traffic on the road at three o'clock in the morning.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: That would depend on whether there had been a concert at the Concert Hall the night before. While I agree with much of what Mr. Logan has said, and while I share his view that perhaps the chasing of an offender would create an additional hazard on the road, I suggest we will not reduce the road toll, educate drivers, or restrict their activities if we tell the officers to go only so far and no further.

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West) [7.49 p.m.]: I wish to associate myself with the adoption of the Address-in-Reply, as amended. In doing so, I would like to express my regret at the circumstances which necessitated the retirement of Mr. Willesee from his position as a Minister and as the Leader of this House. Throughout the time I have been in the House I have enjoyed the co-operation he has willingly given, both in his private capacity and as a Minister of the Crown.

I also associate myself with the congratulatory remarks to Mr. Dolan on his appointment as Leader of the House and to Mr. Ron Thompson on his elevation to the Ministry.

When speaking to the motion, Mr. Claughton delivered what has been described as something of a eulogy of his Government. I suppose we can understand his desire to express sentiments of that nature in relation to his own party's Government. He also spoke in extravagantly glowing terms of the Premier and of the capacity of that gentleman, above all others in this Parliament, in steering Western Australia through a difficult period.

Other speakers have already commented on those remarks and I will not elaborate on them at any length. I do not think they deserve any further comment, because in the past we have had experience of equally if not more difficult times which have been coped with and handled with a great deal of dexterity, perseverance, and success. I am sure the same situation will apply in the future. I fail to see the reason for specially placing the Premier in a position of paramount importance in this State.

I quote from page 5 of *Hansard* No. 1 for 1973, where Mr. Claughton said—

Members of the Labor Party are justifiably proud of the Government's record during its short period in office.

I wonder which record they are so proud of. Again, I simply draw attention to the remark, because there is a variety of records to which attention could be drawn.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The gambling record, for instance.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Mr. Claughton may be proud of all those records, but in due course I think the electors of this State will correct the delusion under which he is apparently labouring.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Would you like a copy of the authorised version?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: If Mr. Claughton had said, "an autographed version"—

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Anyway, you have him interjecting again, which shows he is interested.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Yes. I note the interjection and I am pleased about it. I will take what he said a little further.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: As you are so familiar with our policy statement, I thought you might like the authorised version.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: In moving the Address-in-Reply Mr. Claughton also said—

It is hardly necessary to detail the elements which contributed to the State's economic problems. They originated in America and the effects are still being felt around the world.

The story changes from time to time according to whether one happens to be in Government or in Opposition. As far as the Commonwealth Government is concerned, we have been told all the problems arose while the McMahon Government was in power.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: That might have been claimed by you. It was not claimed by me.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Order! Will Mr. Wordsworth please take his seat in the Chamber and read Standing Order 168.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: If Mr. Claughton is under any misapprehension that I claimed the problems arose in the time of the McMahon Government, I will correct him. I think he knows as well as I do where those suggestions arose. However, in confirmation of that fact, he went on to say in his speech—

The difficulties which resulted for our mineral industries were compounded by the fiscal policies of the former Federal Liberal-Country Party coalition Government.

Perhaps he specifically referred to the mineral industry, but he also referred to the fiscal policy, so I think one could safely presume he was not referring only to the mineral industry.

In the course of this debate we were given a very good dissertation by Mr. Withers on the subject of the difficulties of the mineral industries in Western Australia. I think his view, particularly in relation to this State, was supported by Mr. Dans in an interjection.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: In relation to this State, yes.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Of course, it was the fiscal policy of the present Commonwealth Government in relation to the revaluation of the dollar on which Mr. Withers placed so much emphasis and which contributed even more to the difficulties which Mr. Claughton claimed were compounded by the fiscal policies of the Liberal-Country Party coalition Government.

Mr. Claughton may not be aware of the report to which I am about to refer. I think he must have read it but it is a pity he did not use portion of it.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: I had very limited time.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I refer to a three-column item with a Melbourne date-line which appeared in *The West Australian* of the 20th January, under the headline, "Pace of inflation slows". The report says—

The rate of increase in Australia's cost of living eased in the last three months of 1972.

This is a sharp reversal of the trend of recent years.

Figures released today show that the consumer price index rose in the December quarter by 1.2 per cent.

I think the new Federal Government took over in the early part of December, so it would not have been any of its policies which contributed to the slower pace of inflation.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I think it would be more accurate to say that two Ministers took over in December.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: That is right. I recall a very interesting letter which was published in *The West Australian* shortly afterwards by one W. C. Wentworth. He referred to "the slender threads of democracy". I think his letter should be read, re-read, and read again for some time to come by the people of Australia.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: He had a unique view.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: How close to a dictatorship or a totalitarian State were the slender threads of democracy exercised by that two-man Government! I am glad Mr. Claughton interjected and gave me an opportunity to refer to that.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You cannot blame him for interjecting. It is a touchy subject.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I think it is a matter of regret from Mr. Claughton's point of view that he did not have in mind the report in *The West Australian* of the 20th January, to which I have referred. The report continues—

Perth's increase was 0.4 per cent.—the smallest rise of the capital cities.

It surprises me that Mr. Claughton did not claim that the smallest rise in the consumer price index, which has a controlling influence on the rate of inflation in Western Australia, was the net result of the Labor Government's administration in this State in the last two years.

That might well have been so. I think the Labor Party places great stress on the consumer price index. Members of that party think the index and the indications it provides are tremendously important to

their cause. However, let me continue to refer to the Press article. The Federal Treasurer acknowledged that the change was due to the introduction of a Budget that did not boost indirect taxation. I presume he was referring to the earlier Budget of the McMahon Government.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That was the only one at that time.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I think it is appropriate that I should also refer to the statement made by the Federal Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Snedden). Before I do so, in all fairness to Mr. Crean, perhaps I should say that he went on to say—and I presume the report is correct—that by next December the Government hoped to have cut the rate of inflation by about 50 per cent. That is a very commendable hope. We hope the Government is successful in controlling the rate of inflation and cutting it even further than mentioned in that article.

It was pointed out that the annual rate of growth of the consumer price index in 1972 was 4.6 per cent., compared with 7 per cent. in 1971. Mr. Crean hoped that by December it would be half that—perhaps down to 2.3 per cent. I am sure that would cause all sorts of strange reactions and implications, because I seem to recall from Press reports that even in the highest of trade union circles it is considered that an inflation rate of up to 3 per cent. can be a rather desirable thing. Any rate less than that tends to be deflationary; in other words, it takes a stimulus away from the economy. However, I merely relate that point of view; I am not necessarily advocating it.

In the same article Mr. Snedden said—

..... the figures showed that the former Government was having success in slowing the growth of prices.

That is the fiscal policy to which Mr. Claugton referred in his speech. The article continues—

Mr. Snedden said that the annual rate of growth in the consumer price index for 1972 was 4.6 per cent. compared with 7 per cent. in 1971.

"We had identified the cost-push inflation as the most serious economic problem because it is difficult to control, because of the serious effects it has on the lives of people—particularly those on low and fixed incomes—and because it causes overall economic dislocation," he said.

I will not read all the article, but I think it is pertinent that I should refer to the last paragraphs, which are as follows—

"The burden on the new Government is not to let up on inflation control. This will require a responsible approach to excessive industrial demands and rational constraints on Government spending.

"There are already emerging elements in the Labor Government's approach which suggest they may not be sufficiently aware of these responsibilities."

I suggest to the House—and this has been referred to already in the debate, so I do no more than emphasise it—that surely the acknowledgment by the Federal Government of what will be a record deficit in the order of \$1,000,000,000 must have a great influence on the question of inflation, and point to the lack of ability to control it. Undoubtedly deficit budgeting has always been believed to make a considerable contribution to the inflation spiral.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: And the State Government is in no way concerned about that.

The Hon. J. Dolan: Nor is Mr. Snedden.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What has that to do with it?

The Hon. J. Dolan: If your Federal leader is not concerned, why should we be concerned?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I feel I should acknowledge the fact that so many people are trying to help me with my speech. I note the interjection of the Leader of the House that our Federal leader is not concerned. I wonder what he is alluding to. I wonder whether it is an allusion to the comment of Mr. Dans—if it was not he, I apologise—in an earlier interjection when he said that Mr. Snedden declined to comment on this subject.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That is exactly right.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: If the Leader of the House was alluding to that remark, I am pleased to comment upon it; because to complete his remarks on that occasion Mr. Snedden said he would decline to comment because he was not going to place himself in the same irresponsible position as had the former Leader of the Opposition when referring to the question of revaluation.

The Hon. J. Dolan: You are referring to something entirely different. I am referring to what he had to say on "Conference" last Monday week.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What about the Federal Government's deficit?

The Hon. J. Dolan: What about the financial position?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: In view of the remark of the Leader of the House I believe that is the comment to which he was referring. It gave me the opportunity to put the record straight inasmuch as when the Federal Leader of the Opposition declined to comment on the question of revaluation he did so out of a sense of responsibility and not because he did not

have a point of view. He did so simply because it would have been highly inappropriate for him to comment, just as it was highly inappropriate for the former Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Whitlam) to comment in the manner he did on the need for revaluation of the Australian currency.

I want to pass now to some matters of greater local interest so far as I am concerned. The first is in relation to a subject which has also achieved a good deal of prominence in this House recently; it has been prominent not only in debates in this Chamber, but also in the Press. I refer to the question of water supplies. Members will recall that I asked a number of questions in the House recently regarding the availability of water in the Serpentine and the North and South Dandalup Rivers, and their lesser streams, as a result of damming for the purpose of metropolitan water supplies. This, of course, is something of a hobby horse of mine and I do not mind acknowledging it.

For many years I was fortunate to be the agricultural adviser for the coastal plain and the Serpentine area came within my jurisdiction. At that time the dam was being built on the Serpentine, irrespective of the rights and the jurisdiction of the settlers along the river. Those people were faced with the situation of having their water supplies greatly restricted. That was the price they had to pay in order to provide water for the metropolitan area. We have seen the metropolitan area extended and the North and South Dandalup Rivers dammed for the purpose of additional water supplies, with the same net result; that is, a restriction of the flow of the streams. As indicated by the Minister, water is released for the use of settlers, but only to the extent of their actual need for farming operations. Their dependence upon their water supply from the streams has been limited to the amount which was available prior to the construction of the dams.

I thought the Minister made an interesting observation in his reply to a question I asked on Tuesday, the 20th March. Parts (5) to (7) of my question were as follows—

- (5) How many farmers in the areas referred to have been forced to construct artificial water catchments or reservoirs as an alternative to river water previously available?
- (6) What has been the expenditure incurred by farmers on such construction?
- (7) Is any compensation or concession allowed by the Government to farmers so affected?

The Minister's reply was—

- (5) to (7) From the answers already provided it will be appreciated that the Government, subject to advice from an Advisory Committee, is releasing sufficient water to maintain activities which existed prior to the dams being constructed. There has been no coercion on the part of the Government for settlers to develop alternative sources of supply. If any farmer has built artificial water catchments or reservoirs, it is presumed his decision has been based on a commercial assessment of the potential of his property.

That fascinates me. Of course the situation is that a farmer's decision to spend considerable sums of money in order to construct artificial reservoirs is based upon a commercial assessment of the potential of his property! The point I wish to emphasise is that the potential of his property has been reduced by the fact that the amount of available water has been lessened.

Let us take the situation of a farmer who throughout his life—and perhaps several generations before that—has developed his property along the Dandalup, and he sees in the long term a greater potential for his property by more economic use of the water of the river with a view to greater production. This would necessitate greater capital expenditure on his part. Then the rug is pulled from under his feet—or the water is taken from his river—and he is forced to rely on his own resources to construct artificial reservoirs or dams. Yet the Minister says this is based upon the farmer's commercial assessment of his property.

I will not cease—I have done this over a number of years in this House—to voice my protest against the removal of water from agricultural areas for domestic and industrial use elsewhere when that water will never be replaced from a natural source; and, perhaps even more importantly, it will never be available for agriculture as economically as it is at present. It may well be that the metropolitan area will run out of water at some time in the future if these catchments and dams are not available; but in order to supplement those supplies to cope with the intensity of the use of water in the metropolitan region, other more costly measures are completely justified. In other words, the demand in the metropolitan area justifies more sophisticated methods of producing water. Such costly, sophisticated methods will never, in my opinion, be justified in the agricultural sphere.

I still recall the time some 12 to 15 years ago when there was a very strong move in this direction in Sydney as a result of

a water crisis. At that time the Snowy Mountains area was flourishing with a glorious scheme in which Lake Eucumbene had just been opened.

There was a very strong move to tap the waters of that lake, and divert portion of it into the Sydney water supply. I was gratified that those moves were very strongly resisted. In relation to its domestic supply, today Sydney is probably as well blessed as any other city in Australia—and it does not have to use the water from the lake.

Had the water been diverted from Lake Eucumbene it would have gone forever, and it would not be available for hydro-electric purposes in the Snowy Mountains scheme; furthermore, it would not be available for irrigation purposes for centres in the Eastern States, right down to South Australia. The same water would never be available from another source at the price at which it is now available at the Snowy Mountains.

For these reasons I shall continue to resist the incursions that have been and continue to be made into country water supplies, because such waters will never be replaced.

I was rather interested in a Press statement that appeared, following some remarks uttered in another place at the opening of this session of Parliament. This is a report contained in *The West Australian* of the 19th March, 1973, under the heading of "Govt. looks into water recycling". I shall not read the whole of it, but I am concerned with the last two paragraphs which are as follows—

The board would augment its existing supplies by drilling more artesian bores and by increased tapping of the shallow underground water in the metropolitan region.

I acknowledge that the metropolitan region includes some rural areas, and this refers to the taking away of their underground water supplies. To continue—

Then consideration would have to be given to reclaiming waste water,

I have no objection to that. To continue with the report—

recharging the underground water storage from the metropolitan drainage system,

I have no objection to that either. To continue—

forming a catchment on the Murray River and, ultimately, desalting sea water.

I am perfectly well aware that one reason the Murray River has not been used as a source of water supply for the metropolitan area at this point of time is the salinity of its water. I am quite sure when that problem is resolved and a means has been found to treat the saline

water, or when the Hotham River is diverted from the Murray River, then the Murray will be dammed and its waters will be directed into the metropolitan water supply. I wonder how far we can expect this process to go.

In this situation we find some of the old established lands of Western Australia; for example, Location 1 on the Murray River is held under some of the old Imperial grants the titles of which extend into the middle of the river and the water belongs to the properties. This is quite apart from the powers which may be exercised by the owners with riparian rights under the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act.

I think a serious situation faces the agricultural areas. A couple of nights ago I was present by invitation at a meeting at Mundijong called by the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale. This was a meeting of all the ratepayers to consider the question of amalgamation with the Armadale-Kelmscott Shire. I shall not go into that question, because I am sure the Minister for Local Government is aware of the situation. I shall not develop the theme other than to acquaint the House of the fact that the 95 persons present unanimously passed a resolution opposing the amalgamation. Members will realise this is a reasonably large shire in terms of area, but not large in terms of population.

Those present also passed a resolution that before any question of amalgamation is decided it should be referred to the electors by way of referendum. My particular reason for mentioning this subject is that during the course of the discussions—and some very good discussion took place on this question—reference was made to the viability of the shire.

I think the word "viability" is a much overtaxed word, but in this context I think it is appropriate because the capacity and the ability of that shire to survive as a real shire is dependent very largely on the availability of water for the proper and appropriate development of the agricultural industries.

I make the comment that if anyone in the future wants to see the abandonment of the identities and the operations of the shires in that vicinity he can do so very easily by—to use an expression—cutting off their water. This will happen because the viability is immediately reduced. It is a limiting factor. It is vital to these areas that the waters continue to be available.

In relation to the Murray River—and this applies to the Serpentine, the North Dandalup, the South Dandalup, and the lesser streams including Samson's Brook, Drake's Brook, as well as the Harvey River—the waters are now conserved by dams or reservoirs for irrigation, and for use in the country and metropolitan water

supplies. One would think that in view of the tremendous assets which exist in that subregion of the Peel Inlet some very close attention would have been given to the effect on that inlet brought about by the damming of these rivers and streams.

Recently I asked a question in this House as to whether there had been any effect on weed growth in the Peel Inlet as a result of the damming of the rivers. My question was—

Is it yet known whether the restriction of the flow of the Serpentine, Dandalup and Harvey rivers, and lesser streams, brought about by the construction of dams and weirs, is contributing to the estuary weed problem?

The short answer of the Minister was, "No."

The Hon. J. Dolan: You cannot get a shorter answer than that.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: That is correct. This is just about the extent of the knowledge relating to the effect of these dams. I would not like it to be interpreted that I do not consider these dams ought to have been constructed. I have been so involved in their construction, and so aware of the need for the conservation of water, by way of these dams, that it would be quite hypocritical of me to be critical of the fact that these have been built.

I go a step further and say that in the construction of these dams those responsible have added an additional asset other than the conservation of water. These places have become playgrounds and scenic attractions. They have become very popular tourist spots, and are used for aquatic sports, fishing, catching of marron, boating, and so on. I do not wish to take anything away from the advantages which have accrued as a result of building these dams; but by the same token if these steps are to be taken—quite apart from the diversion of the water or restricting the water available to agricultural communities—in the long term there may be an adverse effect on the viability of the Peel Inlet, although I should point out that up to the present there has been no indication of that.

The weed problem in Peel Inlet, which is serious, may result from the restriction of these waters, or as a corollary to that the fish and bird life in that inlet has been affected. Despite that, this season was a first class crabbing season in the Peel Inlet. So in the case of crabs the situation has worked in reverse.

I hope that I have made my point in regard to the availability of water and to the cut-back on what I firmly believe to be the line of least resistance; that is, let us take the water from where it is available. In fact, the evil day is being postponed—the day when great, sophisticated, and very costly measures will have

to be introduced in order to provide water for industrial and domestic users; and this water will have to be provided. I would not like to think that it will not be provided or that it will not be available.

It has often been said that Perth is a beautiful city, and that it is made beautiful by the existence of its suburban gardens. Already suggestions have been made that on the sandy land on which the Perth suburbs are built it is a waste to pour this valuable resource on the gardens, and that it would be to our advantage to do away with the gardens. I hope that theory is not developed, because should it be there will be more than the loss of beautiful gardens; there will be the loss of great pride in a beautiful city, and ultimately I believe the loss of the city itself. In my belief Perth is quite a unique city because of the beauty of the home gardens.

I hope that in the great explorations and investigations that are to be undertaken to provide the State, and particularly the metropolitan region, with water, an early start will be made on the more sophisticated means, whether they include the bringing of water from the great rivers of the north or other means. What I have said in relation to the rivers in the south will apply sometime in the future to the rivers of the north.

We can go a stage further and talk in terms of desalination and recycling, and even in terms of the use of nuclear energy, and so on. Surely the day for such methods to be used is getting much closer than we think.

Let me now refer to another matter which was the subject of a question I asked, and the reply to which was given to me today. For a while the Minister gave me quite a turn. It will be recalled that I placed two questions on the notice paper of today. The Minister asked for the deferment of the reply to one of them, and this was quite acceptable.

I listened to the reply to the second question with very great interest. I thought I was being quite a good member for the Lower West Province, particularly in representing that electorate in Parliament. The subject matter of the question was in relation to proposed Government buildings and Government facilities at Mandurah. When the Minister replied to this question he was, in fact, giving the reply to my other question which referred to the development of a piece of land bounded by Malcolm Street, Kings Park Road, Have-lock Street, Parliament Place, and Harvest Terrace.

I thought the construction of two low-rise Government buildings and one high-rise Government building in the not too distant future, and subsequently another high-rise Government building would be undertaken on the same site. I considered these to be rather elaborate provisions for Mandurah.

The Hon. J. Dolan: I thought that even the honourable member would wake up to that. He asked two questions and he knew to which question the answer applied. It was purely a clerical error.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The Leader of the House has come in a little too soon; he has not given me time to complete my remarks.

The Hon. J. Dolan: I was just being facetious.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I was about to say that the mistake was quite understandable. The only reason I have drawn attention to the error was for the sake of the record. It had to be done in order that the record would be corrected. I was making a jocular reference to the reply.

I did not receive a reply to my question concerning Government buildings in Mandurah. However, I can still develop the theme of my argument even though I have not received the information. I will refer to an article which appeared in the *Coastal Districts Times* on the 23rd February, 1973. It appeared under a three-column heading which stated, "Plan for old bank rejected". The article was as follows—

The State Government has rejected a suggestion from the Mandurah Shire Council that it should purchase the old Bank of New South Wales building in Pinjarra road for offices. The Government says there is no need for them.

Yet at the same time, the Government is spending money on extensions to the courthouse and the local Fisheries Department office.

In a letter to the council, Under Secretary of the Premier's Department, Mr. Lonnie, said that an investigation had revealed that there was no definite requirement for additional accommodation for government purposes at this stage.

The council wrote to the department in January suggesting the purchase of the former bank building as it would be ideal for office accommodation.

This matter was brought to a head very largely by the fact that the S.E.C. accepts payments for accounts in mobile vans. We know that in many localities, in order to provide a convenience for the public, the S.E.C. provides a mobile van on one day during each quarter for the payment of accounts. The convenience is well appreciated. However, the provision of a van in a town the size of Mandurah—which is of an urban nature—seems highly inappropriate, particularly as the population of Mandurah has such a large proportion in the elderly pensioner group. Some of the people are in the very elderly group.

Another more recent issue of the local paper included a picture of people queueing up during the heat of the day to pay their accounts. Those people could have been there during a considerable rain storm, queueing up in the street to pay their accounts.

The suggestion which had been advanced was that the Government should have submitted a tender for the old Bank of New South Wales building in Pinjarra Road. I am led to believe that the figure for the tender was quite reasonable but the Government saw no need for that type of expenditure.

I want to press the point that Mandurah has one of the largest urban populations in this State outside the metropolitan area. I consider it deserves and warrants better facilities than are available at present. Here was an opportunity where a building was available in Pinjarra Road, in the centre of the business area, which could have been acquired at a reasonable figure. I think it is worth commenting and advising members of this House that the cost of land in the shopping centre of Mandurah is equivalent to the cost of land in the city of Perth. I am sure that members will be aware of some of the very expensive commercial development which is taking place in the centre of Mandurah right now. The Government had an opportunity to acquire the building in Pinjarra Road at a reasonable figure for the purpose of locating Government offices in that town. I know the Government intends to extend the Department of Fisheries and Fauna building, and possibly the Harbour and Light Department office. I understand the police station is being extended to provide more office accommodation.

The difficulty, of course, is servicing the local population for the payment of accounts. A very expensive water supply scheme and sewerage scheme is at present being developed. Accounts are normally paid through the courthouse, and that facility could have been centralised in Government offices in Mandurah.

The reason I asked the question—the answer to which I hope will be available tomorrow—was to find out the plans of the Government for expenditure in the town during the next three-year period. I think it will be seen that the purchase of the old building in Pinjarra Road could well have been completely justified. I will quote further from the Press report. The shire clerk, Mr. Donohoe, said—

The opportunity to buy the building provided an economic means of establishing government offices in the town to meet the increasing demand for such services and a central point where queries on services provided could be answered satisfactorily, the shire clerk said.

"The under-secretary's reply does little to support the State Government's policy of decentralisation."

I hope the Minister and the Government will take some notice of the representations which have been made.

I will now refer to another question which is also related to buildings. I now refer to the development of the site known as the "Government offices site." I will refer members to some of my comments recorded at pages 271 and 272 of *Hansard* of 1967. I had the following to say—

I speak of the ground in close proximity to Parliament House bounded by Malcolm Street, King's Park Road, Havelock Street, Parliament Place, and Harvest Terrace; and also fronting a Government reserve. The area comprises approximately 18 acres on which at present is situated that monstrous building of Government offices.

I recall very well those words which I used in 1967. The Government reserve referred to in my remarks is the Parliament House reserve. To continue—

This area is one of the most highly valued pieces of real estate in Western Australia and I understand from information which has been provided on prior occasions that when it is fully developed it will contain four or five sets of buildings. There will be in the vicinity of 7,000 employees, and public parking space for somewhere in the vicinity of 1,700 or 1,800 service vehicles.

Mr. Logan interjected at that stage and said, "That has already been amended downwards." He was referring to the parking space and the number of buildings. At a later stage of my speech I went on to say—

I wonder what the reaction of people will be in the future when there is a greater number of buildings on this site. I ask members to bear in mind that the city will be dominated by Government offices. However, what is possibly more important, there will be the physical domination of this House. From the psychological point of view, I am not certain that that is necessarily a good thing. If there is physical domination, might it not be implied—I believe this is the real question—that there is also some other effective domination. I would not wish to have this thought extended, but I believe it is important.

I am sure members will appreciate that I was referring to the effect of a great concentration of Government offices on that prime piece of real estate. The area dominates the city and Parliament House and I think that something is implied in this. I have never been in favour of the utilisation of that piece of land for occupation by Government offices. During the course of the debate from which I am quoting The Hon. F. J. S. Wise interjected and said that the site was turned down

by a Select Committee of both Houses. In other words, it had been the subject of a great deal of debate and discussion in past years. I refer to the utilisation of that piece of land, in particular its proximity to Parliament House and its location in that portion of the city. I went on to say—

I do not necessarily desire to throw anything into the ring on this subject, but this site could be considered for the establishment of an auditorium, concert hall, and cultural centre. What better site could be found for these purposes?

I do not intend to give the Government any food for thought that this site might be used as an alternative site for the development of the auditorium on the railway land. I sincerely hope that will not happen because that is not the type of auditorium I would like to see placed on the site. I went on to say—

I cannot help but wonder whether a more suitable site could be found for the Government buildings. I have felt this concern for some considerable time. In making my statement, I have no feelings against Government departments or Government officers; I have the greatest respect for them. However, I do not believe this is the appropriate area in the city on which the Government buildings should be located. I hope the general flexibility to which I have referred on the part of the Government will be brought into play so that further consideration will be given to the siting of these buildings.

Today I received the information that the Government does have some intention in relation to the redevelopment of the area. In reply to a question from me the Leader of the House answered as follows—

- (a) Tentative plans provide for two low-rise buildings of four or five storeys, each of approximately 100,000 square feet of usable space, plus basements fronting Parliament Place, with an 8 or 9 storey building behind to provide for future expansion for the Departments occupying the two low-rise buildings.
- (b) A further building could be erected to the north-east of the existing Government Office building with its basement possibly linking in with the basement of the easternmost low-rise building facing Parliament Place.

In other words, it is clear that we would have a high-rise building on the north-east corner of the piece of land dominating the city and, more particularly,

dominating Parliament House. I hope there will be some restriction placed on the utilisation of the land on that particular site.

It seems highly inappropriate that such a prime piece of real estate should be used for the location of Government offices. It may well serve the citizens of Western Australia, but such a service can be provided in any other part of the city, and probably in a far better situation and where redevelopment would be far more justified.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: What about redevelopment in East Perth?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The area in question does not need redevelopment; it is a beautiful site.

The Hon. J. Dolan: What type of real estate would the honourable member suggest if not Government offices?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I indicated originally in 1967 to the present Leader of the House the sort of place I would like to see in that position. I referred to a concert hall or auditorium. I would rather see that type of development than have Government offices on the site. One cannot always find land on which to locate auditoriums, concert halls, or cultural centres but one can find locations on which to site new Government buildings. Redevelopment could be of tremendous advantage to some parts of the metropolitan area and would improve those areas greatly. It would be better to benefit those areas than to detract from the beauty and the attractiveness of that particular site, which we all know as the old observatory site.

I now refer to some questions I asked on the main road from Kwinana to Mandurah. Members will recall that on the 20th March I asked what was the average daily density on the Kwinana to Mandurah road during the 1972 and 1973 Australia Day long weekends. I asked a number of other questions and I particularly drew attention to the accidents and the traffic hazards and the fact that the road is, in my opinion, inadequate for the traffic that uses it.

I received a reply that in 1972 no traffic count was taken and that in 1973 the average daily traffic numbered 14,310 vehicles. That is a considerable number of vehicles. The Minister's reply continued—

While the present road capacity is over-taxed at peak holiday periods, no undue traffic hazard exists.

I do not travel on that road unless I am forced to do so; I do not travel on it on any day, let alone on the Australia Day weekend, and I gave up doing that simply because I believed that a constant hazard

exists on that road. I prefer to use the South-West Highway. The Minister's reply continued—

It is proposed to increase the capacity of the road by constructing a dual carriageway on selected sections of this road on a staged basis.

The rate at which this can be achieved will depend on the allotment of funds by the Commonwealth under the 1974 C.A.R. legislation.

I gave notice of this question for Tuesday, the 20th March. Coincidentally,—and it was coincidental—on Friday, the 23rd March there appeared an article in the local paper headed "Drivers want to make a pass". The article continued—

WORKS Minister Mr C. Jamieson has said that passing lanes will be introduced at intervals along Fremantle road between Mandurah and Kwinana.

The move had been envisaged to ease congestion caused by the heavy volume of traffic now using the road, he said.

In a letter to the South-West Regional Council, Mr Jamieson said that the Main Roads Department was aware that the volume of heavy traffic was reaching proportions which were causing an inconvenience to travellers.

The statement continued in much the same vein as the reply I received and I do not suggest that this can be taken exception to. That information, however, was contained in a letter to the South-West Regional Council in which Mr. Jamieson said he was aware that the volume of heavy traffic was reaching proportions which were causing an inconvenience to travellers. That information, however, was not supplied to me in this House by the Minister. The statement continues—

The department is preparing plans to meet this situation and envisages duplication of this route on a stage basis.

Mr. Jamieson said in the newspaper article that the passing lanes would provide some early relief. Passing lanes were not referred to in the answer I received. I contacted the Shire of Mandurah to acquaint it with the fact that I had asked the question and to give it details of the reply I received. Having seen this statement in the paper of the 23rd March the Mandurah Shire sent me a letter which is obviously the subject of the Press comment.

Coincidentally the date of the letter from the Minister's office is the 19th March which, of course, was the day I asked the question in this House. The date of the Press statement is the 23rd March, which is four days later and the part that interests me particularly is the Press report which continues. I have previously quoted from the letter written

by Mr. Jamieson to the South-West Regional Council. I now continue to read the statement which appeared in the Press which states—

Metropolitan Divisional Engineer Mr. R. Button said yesterday that ultimately the road would become a four-lane highway.

Deceleration lanes for cars wishing to turn would be put in at main road junctions on the road, particularly between Kerosine lane and Kwinana, which would assist the free flow of traffic.

South of the lakes area the department proposed to provide sections of dual carriageway to provide slow lanes and facilitate passing.

He said that the road would become a four-lane highway in some places.

Mr. Button said that at present the road had no shoulders and with the heavy volume of traffic using the road it was difficult for traffic to pass on the single carriageway.

It is most regrettable that on the 19th March when I asked a question in this House generally seeking information in relation to that road and asking about the programme of the Main Road Department and of the Government for its upgrading and development, that I should have been given the briefest possible information; and on the same day a letter should have been written to the South-West Regional Council containing much the same sort of information; while also at the same time and probably on that same day the divisional engineer of the department makes a comment to the local Press enlarging on those comments.

It seems to me that the whole thing is quite pointless; in fact the shire clerk in Mandurah laughed and said to me when I was discussing it with him over the phone that it looked as though they could get more information than I could get as a member of Parliament.

That is not a very satisfactory state of affairs. If that information were available to the Main Roads Department and to the Minister—which it obviously was—why was not a complete answer given to me in this House?

I do no more than express my very great regret that the information in question was not given in detail and in full response to a question I had asked. It cannot be argued that my questions did not give the opportunity for a full answer, because they did.

I hope this practice will not be continued; but of course we will never know whether or not it will be continued, because this happens to be one of those occasions when I had the opportunity to know that there was a different answer

from that given to me; different to the extent that the answer given to me was far less complete than that provided to the local people.

How foolish I would have seemed had I got my remarks printed in the Press, or if I had acquainted the local council or the South-West Regional Council of the position as I knew it. The Government seems to ignore us.

Having made those points I hope that in future when questions of this nature are asked we will receive more detail. Perhaps the Divisional Engineer was in error—I do not know and I do not blame him—but he is in print as having made a statement. If he could make a statement surely the Minister could have made a similar statement to me in response to a question in this House.

With those observations I will make an allusion to Mr. Cloughton's remark when he moved the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply, and I can only hope that the record of the Government about which he talked can be improved upon, particularly in relation to the matters I have raised in the House tonight.

THE HON. G. W. BERRY (Lower North) [8.53 p.m.]: I rise to support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply as amended. At this juncture I would also like to join with other members in extending my best wishes to Mr. Dolan and to Mr. Ron Thompson together with my regrets to Mr. Willesee.

I would now like to refer to a few matters that relate to my province and particularly to Carnarvon. I have stood here every year for six years now, and asked for something to be done to stabilise the water supply in the Carnarvon area. I hope that on this occasion I will have some brighter news given me than I have been given in the previous five years.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: You are optimistic.

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: Yes.

The Hon. J. Dolan: You have tried two Governments.

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: I do not propose to relax my efforts or my endeavours in this relation. It is an old saying that the squeaking wheel gets most of the oil. I will continue to work on the assumption that if I keep at it long enough there is a possibility that something may be done.

I was told that a submission had been made to the Commonwealth Government, not to build a dam in the Gascoyne River, but to use a system of acquifers in the river bed, to draw upon them and join them in a pipeline to extend some 42 miles up the Gascoyne River.

This will, so I am given to understand, give some stability to the area around Carnarvon. As I have said I have been told

that a submission has been made and I should have hoped that by now we would have had some word as to whether money was forthcoming to put this scheme into operation. As yet, however, I have heard nothing; I have received no information whatsoever.

I can only hope that the matter is still under consideration. This was a favourite expression during the war—anything that could not be handled was always under consideration.

I do not think it is good enough that nothing has been done to save the water and keep it back so that it can be used when needed particularly after so many years of the river flooding and the water has poured into the sea. This could be the year that the water will be needed. By the grace of the good Lord above last year the river flooded for the first time in July and saved a serious situation. The coming year also points to the fact that the situation could again be very serious.

I notice that an announcement has been made in connection with other projects about which the Commonwealth Government has been approached, or which that Government has initiated. There seems to be no shortage of funds whatever for these projects. The Commonwealth Government is buying sheep stations and helping get other projects on the way. The amounts required for these projects run into tens of millions of dollars, but yet there seems to be nothing forthcoming to help assist in the stabilisation of the water supply in the Gascoyne and Carnarvon area.

It is high time someone had a good hard look at the position because the situation will be calamitous, as I have said on many occasions. On the 21st March I asked a couple of questions regarding water supplies, one of which reads—

- (1) What was the average weekly water usage in Carnarvon for—
- (a) irrigation purposes in 1962 and 1972?

The answer given was that in 1962 it was 970,000 gallons and in 1972 it was 5,243,000 gallons.

Perhaps this will bring home to the Government just how important a stable water supply is in the area. I ask the Government to use all its endeavours and to further press the Commonwealth Government for money to get the work under way immediately. I will say no more on this topic until we know what the Commonwealth Government intends to do. I will perhaps have more to say at a later date.

Another matter of serious concern to my electorate is transport costs. Mr. Withers referred to this matter in his speech, but I would like to bring another incident to

the notice of the House. I will quote from an article in the *Northern Times* (Carnarvon), dated Thursday, the 1st March, 1973. It is headed, "Council protests to Premier on increase in charges", and it reads as follows—

At its meeting on February 21, Carnarvon Shire Council reacted strongly to the increase in freezer/chiller charges by transport companies and adjourned their meeting to phone the Premier, Mr. J. Tonkin, asking that he take some action to have these charges reduced.

The Premier promised immediate action.

The Transport Commission advised council that as a result of representations made by Bell Bros. Pty. Ltd. and Gascoyne Trading Pty. Ltd., the Commissioner had agreed to a new scale of freezer/chiller rates from February 12, 1973.

The Commissioner said that, in setting the new rates, the basis of the previous rate was altered to a new schedule where the charge for consignment is related to each and every pound of goods being transported, considered to be a more equitable method of assessment.

I will say it is certainly more equitable for the council. It continues—

Mr. Phil Arthur of Phil's Fruit and Vegetables, in a letter to the shire said that the only notification he had received of an alteration in chiller/freezer charges was a circular letter which had been posted by Bell Bros. to all respective clients.

Some weeks later he was notified verbally by Bell Bros. Carnarvon staff that the parcel rate or the rate for any consignment under 1,000 lbs. from Carnarvon to Dampier and Karratha and Tom Price and Paraburdoo was as follows:—

Chiller freight: \$1.50 handling charge—six cents per lb.

General freight: \$1.50 handling charge—four cents per lb.

These prices, as will be seen by the comparative charges set out below, amount to an increase of between 80 per cent. and 110 per cent. on the weights taken at random from Phil's Fruit and Vegetables invoices.

Mr. Arthur said that, on hearing of these charges, he rang Bell Bros., Guildford, to make sure that these charges were correct. He was informed that they were correct and that he was in fact being charged the same prices ex Carnarvon as those people operating in Perth.

Bell Bros.' argument was that the space that Mr. Arthur needed on the company's trucks ex Carnarvon had to be provided ex Perth, and that, therefore, he had to pay the extra charges to compensate for their lack of revenue. In actual fact, this space is utilised by loading Carnarvon-bound goods on to the Dampier or Tom Price trucks and unloading them on arrival to leave the required space for his orders.

The Hon. R. Thompson: How old is the article from which you are quoting?

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: It is dated Thursday, the 1st March, 1973.

The Hon. J. Dolan: That matter has been fixed up long ago.

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: I am pleased to hear it.

The Hon. J. Dolan: Ask Phil the next time you talk to him.

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: I will read the rest of the article—

Mr. Arthur said that since he had notified his clients of the new freight rates, he had had several cancellations of orders and he could only expect many more in the near future.

He said that apart from affecting his business, the main part of which is the supplying of Carnarvon produce direct to the North-West, it is victimising the people in these towns by preventing them from obtaining fresh-grown fruit and vegetables landed in their homes at a reasonable price.

I thank the Leader of the House for the information as I was very concerned about this matter. If something similar occurs in the future, I hope immediate action will be taken without the necessity to resort to a telephone call to the Premier.

I also wish to speak once again about the system of rating in the Carnarvon area. The rates are based on an estimated rental value, and my concern is chiefly in regard to the sewered areas of Carnarvon. By coincidence this happens to be the area in which I live, so I am personally affected by the current system of rating.

When this area was subdivided and developed, the shire stated that a sewerage system would be implemented and the inhabitants were very happy about this. The shire informed the residents that the indications were the charge would be in the vicinity of \$50 per annum over a period of approximately 40 years. The residents were quite happy about that, although it may be a little higher than the rate prevailing in other places. However, most people felt the scheme was well worth while, and they accepted the council's estimate of the rates.

Members will be well aware that the country sewerage scheme is subsidised; the Government contributes to it quite generously. However, the catch is that whilst the Government contributes to it, the maximum rate in accordance with the estimated annual rental value must be charged. Without any request by the shire, but no doubt at the instigation of the Public Works Department or the Treasury, subsequent revaluation took place and residents of the sewered area found that their premises were immediately revalued. They will now be expected to pay in the vicinity of \$100 per annum, and if the present rate of development continues in the area—as I am sure it will—the rates will go even higher. It will soon be too costly for people to use the sewerage, and we will find people wishing to return to septic tanks. This is a very unsatisfactory state of affairs. We are told that sewerage is in our best interests and we are then faced with an exorbitant rate increase.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: What is the rate?

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: It is 15c in \$1. I believe a different approach to rating should be made. At the moment, the owner of the more expensive house is paying out far too much in rates. There is no incentive to build better houses. The Government appears to desire that we all build houses to the minimum requirements of the shire.

I believe that people should be encouraged to build nice houses in these areas, and I ask the Government to look at the rating system, particularly in the northern areas where some people are paying astronomical rates. If we wish to develop these towns and bring people to them, we must make conditions as attractive as possible.

The Hon. R. Thompson: What solution do you suggest?

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: When a country sewerage scheme is planned, the authorities must know the number of houses to be served and the capital cost. I therefore cannot see why a flat charge is not applied to all house owners. If we take the example of electricity charges, the consumer pays for the amount of electricity he uses. This charge incorporates the capital cost and the running costs. I feel a similar system could be adopted for country sewerage and country water supplies.

Another small matter I wish to mention is the police station and lock-up at Laverton. The present setup is an absolute and utter disgrace. Last year, in company with the then Minister for Community Welfare, I visited Laverton. On this occasion we inspected the facilities at the police station in the company of some departmental officers. I am sure that Mr. Willesee will

agree with me when I say that the conditions were beyond description. On the 20th March, 1973, I asked the Leader of the House the following question—

- (1) Has any work been effected at the police station or lock-up at Laver-ton since my question on the 17th August, 1972?
- (2) If not, what is the latest position regarding this matter?

Mr. Dolan replied as follows—

- (1) Since 17th August, 1972, the following work has been carried out at the Police Station and Lockup at Laver-ton—
 - (a) Screen placed around toilet in lockup,
 - (b) New stainless steel pedestal pan installed in lockup,
 - (c) Leach drains from septic tanks renewed,
 - (d) Purlins timber supporting roof sheeting in lockup re-placed.

(2) Answered by (1).

I would say these improvements would make very little difference to the whole situation.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Did you make any representations to the previous Government on this matter?

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: I have raised this matter over a considerable period. I have no doubt that probably the previous Government would have had the matter in hand. I must say, however, if it takes as long to build a new police station at Laver-ton as it did at Carnarvon, I do not think I will live to see it. I believe the problem in that area was first raised when Mr. Norton was newly elected to Parliament, and that did not occur yesterday.

I again appeal to the Minister to look at the problem. We cannot expect officers to work in the existing conditions. I would have plenty to say about it if I were expected to work there.

The Hon. J. Dolan: My top officers have looked at it and reported to me. Their report, of course, is in accord with your statements. The position will be remedied as soon as funds are available and as soon as a decision is made as to whether the station is to be at Laver-ton or at the mining settlement.

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: I hope this decision is made very shortly.

The Hon. J. Dolan: It is a difficult decision to make until the company makes up its mind.

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: I would like to also mention another matter raised by Mr. Withers; that is, the allowances for children in isolated areas. He expressed concern about the Government's intention to continue the present allowances. However,

I can put his mind at rest on that point. On the 27th March, 1973, I asked the Leader of the House the following question—

- (1) Has the matter of the terms of Commonwealth allowances for isolated children been clarified?
- (2) Is it the State Government's intention to continue State allowances and free student air travel for isolated children?

Mr. Dolan replied as follows—

- (1) Yes. The Commonwealth Department of Education has distributed information statements outlining the scheme and application forms are also being distributed.
- (2) The Commonwealth allowances will replace those previously provided by the State but the State will continue to provide free air travel for two visits home per year.

So far as I can understand the matter has been transferred from the State to the Commonwealth. That is all that has happened, and I do not know whether anyone will derive any great benefit. That is about all I have to say on this occasion, but members will hear more from me at a later date.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. J. L. Hunt.

House adjourned at 9.16 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 28th March, 1973

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

QUESTIONS (41): ON NOTICE

1. TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Morrison Road-Great Northern Highway Intersection

Mr. BRADY, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Are any plans being made to avert the numerous accidents, major and minor, taking place at the corner of Morrison Road and Great Northern Highway, Midland, by placing traffic lights on same?
- (2) What was traffic density at last count at this intersection?

Mr. JAMIESON replied:

- (1) The position is much the same as when the Member inquired regarding this intersection in September 1971. At that time he was advised that no timetable had been set for the installation of traffic lights at the intersection of Great