

Legislative Council

Thursday, the 22nd March, 1973

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

DEPUTY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Election

THE HON. J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [2.37 p.m.]: I move—

That, in accordance with Standing Order No. 34, the following members be elected to act as Deputy Chairmen of Committees for the present Session—
—The Hons. F. D. Willmott, J. M. Thomson and R. F. Claughton.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North-Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [2.38 p.m.]: It is not my intention to oppose the motion, but I take the opportunity to say that the question of the election of the Deputy Chairmen of Committees has exercised my mind for some time.

One of our standing orders states that three Deputy Chairmen of Committees shall be appointed. It is customary, therefore, to select and appoint one member from each political party in the House. Nominees for the positions of Deputy Chairmen of Committees are correspondingly made by the three political parties.

The Deputy Chairmen of Committees have held office for a fairly long time—in some cases for many years. My remarks are not intended in any way to reflect upon the work of these gentlemen. I take the opportunity to point out that I know it is within the scope of a political party to change its nominee, but I feel there is a certain reluctance to do this unless the member concerned wishes to be relieved of the position.

I suggest to the Government that perhaps the Standing Orders Committee could look at this with a view to amending the Standing Orders so that six Deputy Chairmen of Committees may be elected. In this way other members of the Chamber would be given an opportunity—perhaps a limited opportunity only—to conduct a Bill through the Committee stage. In this way other members of the House would be encouraged to participate in one of the Standing Committees and therefore gain experience.

I am prompted to make these remarks now because it is known that Mr. Willmott and Mr. Jack Thomson will not seek re-election to Parliament next year. We will therefore lose two of our present Deputy Chairmen of Committees. The remaining Deputy Chairman, Mr. Claughton, was

appointed only recently and has therefore not had the opportunity to gain a great deal of experience.

In my opinion the Government should give some thought to my suggestion. The pertinent Standing Order could be looked at and, if necessary, it could be amended during the present session. The first part of the session has only just commenced, and we will then face a very heavy burden of legislation in the four or five months of the second part of the session. I hope that my suggestion will meet with the approval of the House.

THE HON. J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [2.43 p.m.]: I see a good deal of merit in the suggestion put forward by the Leader of the Opposition. I will refer the matter to the Standing Orders Committee because it would mean an amendment to Standing Order 34.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The President is the Chairman of the Committee, and he could be asked to look at it.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I will certainly speak to him privately so that we may exchange our ideas.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION

Election

On motion by The Hon. J. Dolan (Leader of the House), resolved—

That, in accordance with Standing Order No. 37, the following members be elected to the Standing Committees for the present session—

Standing Orders.—The Hon. F. D. Willmott, The Hon. J. M. Thomson, and The Hon. R. F. Claughton.

Library.—The Hon. V. J. Ferry and The Hon. L. D. Elliott.

House.—The Hon. Clive Griffiths, The Hon. S. T. J. Thompson, The Hon. J. L. Hunt, and The Hon. D. K. Dans.

Printing.—The Hon. R. T. Leeson and The Hon. F. R. White.

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Dress in Chamber: Motion

THE HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan) [2.44 p.m.]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the rule which applies regarding members' dress in the Chamber should be altered to permit the removal of his coat should a member so desire.

I do not move this motion frivolously. I understand the problems associated with the aim expressed in my motion to allow members to take off their coats when they deem it is too hot in the Chamber.

There is a diversity of opinion on this matter, but I do not feel opinion is divided on party lines. The situation now is that in another place members may remove their coats if they so desire. It is only the member himself who can determine whether or not he is uncomfortable.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: On the coldest of days I have seen some members uncomfortable in this House.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I will comment on that in a moment. The Leader of the Opposition made the remark with a smile on his face, but I agree we have some problems to face. We could look at this question from another aspect. Perhaps a member of this House suffers severely from the cold and he decides to come here in winter dressed in sea boots, oilskins, ear muffs, and a woollen jumper. He would look decidedly out of place, and yet if he were asked to remove this garb, he may plead that he would contract pneumonia because of the cold atmosphere in the Chamber.

I do not feel any member in this House or in another place, having been elected to Parliament, would be so unaware of his responsibilities as to come along dressed in this way. If my motion is carried, it will be the responsibility of individual members to use the privilege, having regard to the dignity of the House and respect for their positions. No member of this Chamber would be unable to exercise such a small amount of self-discipline.

I do not suggest that members should remove their ties, nor do I suggest that it should be compulsory for members to remove their coats. The motion is worded, "to permit the removal of his coat", and this would not permit the member to enter the Chamber on a cold day in a cardigan without a coat.

For the record I would like to spell out my meaning very clearly. I do not suggest that members should enter this Chamber wearing shorts, long socks, a shirt, and a tie. My proposition is a simple one; that is, if a member is uncomfortable he should be permitted to remove his coat. It will be left to the good sense and decency of individual members to observe the minimum dress requirements I have stated here.

It could well be argued, but not very convincingly, that if we allow a member to remove his coat we are, somehow or other, interfering with the decorum of this Chamber. Surely in the year of 1973, having some regard for what took place in this Chamber yesterday, no-one could seriously suggest that we should comply with the old maxim that clothes make the man. Surely, merely because a member of this House is clad in a coat it does not make him any better than another member in the community who does not

wear one. It certainly does not make him any better than any other member in this Chamber who wishes to remove his coat.

For the purpose of pursuing my motion, let me say that one of the most conservative institutions in Australia; namely, the banking industry, has long since permitted its officers during the summer months to wear shorts, long socks, shirt and tie and, believe it or not, where officers are employed in those banks situated in holiday resorts, provided they are respectably attired, they can remove their ties also.

After the closing stages of the last war, and since, the admirals of the Navy have conducted their business for the Government at the highest possible level when climatic conditions were unfavourable, wearing open-necked shirts with short sleeves together with shorts, or with long trousers, according to the rig of the day. Also, air-commodores in the R.A.A.F. and generals in the Army have been granted the same privilege without any loss of dignity to the positions they hold and without denigrating the service to which they belong or affecting the loyalty they hold to the Government of Australia.

Some people seem to have a very vivid recollection of what is quoted in the newspapers, and therefore it is probable that many will recall that not long ago when a sensible judge was conducting an inquiry into the prisons system—I think his name was Judge Jones—close to the front page of our daily newspaper published at that time appeared a photograph of that judge leaving the Fremantle prison sensibly attired in shorts, shirt and tie.

It was not long after this that another sensible judge in Port Hedland decided he would discard the regalia of his office and, in addition, he permitted counsel appearing in his court to do likewise. I am not suggesting that the President or the officers of this Chamber should follow the example set by that judge and remove their wigs.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: What is the position of officers and men in the Navy?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Mr. Medcalf would probably know that officers and men in the navy wear the rig of the day, and the rig of the day during the summer months has always been shorts with open-necked shirt and short sleeves.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: And the rig of the day means that everybody wears the same.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: The honourable member knows full well that a captain does not wear the same kind of rig as an A.B. The captain of a ship may decide that the rig of the day, whilst the ship is in port, shall be entirely different from the rig of the day whilst the ship is at sea. I am not discussing that point. The honourable member knows full well what all service chiefs wear.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: I have not met admirals at such close quarters as you have.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I think the honourable member has.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: He has probably not talked to them as you have.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: No, I have not talked to them; they usually talked to me. The point I am making is that in the community today it is generally accepted that people can dress in comfortable clothing and can still retain their dignity and uphold the office they occupy. To do that there is no need for them to wear a coat.

Just as an aside, I would mention that I visited the Legislative Assembly this morning to find out how many members were exercising the right that has been granted them by the Speaker to remove their coats when the weather is hot or humid. I discovered that some members were and some were not.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You did not happen to be visiting that Chamber at midnight on Tuesday evening, did you?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: No, I did not wait around that evening to make a check on what the members were wearing. The point I am making is that some of the members in that Chamber, because of their metabolism, may not feel the heat to the same degree as do other members. If my motion is agreed to I do not think there would be any need to make any great changes to the procedures followed by this Chamber. If we have been correctly informed that this is a place of work—and as we attend here to represent the electors of this State it must be a place of work—then the adoption of my motion should allow some members to work more efficiently. On that basis alone my motion should be agreed to. If, on the other hand, the motion is rejected we will look like "patsies". I am not saying this on a political note. I am merely pointing out that in this Parliament we will have one Chamber where the members will be permitted to remove their coats during hot or humid weather, while in the other the members will not be permitted to do so.

Surely even those who may think that this is some breath-taking move on my part would agree that this is not a very sensible arrangement.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: But we would be in different ships.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Let me say to the honourable member that different ships use different long splices, and I will explain that to the honourable member at some later stage.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You could consider yourself lucky that you are not a bishop and do not have to carry a mitre and all the regalia worn by him.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Today I was standing beside a priest at the Customs Office and he had his shirt open right down to the navel. I have also seen the bishop in the north-west clad in sandals. Perhaps he is "with-it"; I do not know. Perhaps I would be better off if I were a bishop.

The Hon. J. Dolan: You could not be any worse off.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Perhaps I could be one of those monks who wear hair shirts inside out. One either agrees with this motion or does not. It is a matter in keeping with the modern conditions of 1973. It is a move designed to assist those members who desire to work in more comfortable conditions. It is a move to allow them to exercise more efficiency and permit them to work in greater freedom. You would be well aware, Mr. President, that before moving this motion I tried to achieve my goal along other avenues. We tried to get the House Committee to reach some agreement with the Premier and Treasurer to put into operation a move to have the whole of this House of Parliament air-conditioned, but sad to say this request was turned down.

The Hon. R. Thompson: On cost?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Yes, on cost. However, sooner or later the question of air-conditioning the whole of Parliament House must be faced. If someone had said to me that he was going to make a feasibility study with a view to taking some steps not only to air-condition the Chamber but also to air-condition the rooms occupied by members of Parliament, I would have been quite prepared to sweat it out until such time as that goal was reached, and would not have moved this motion, but as this is not to be, I commend my motion to the House and I hope members will support it.

THE HON. J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [3.00 p.m.]: I believe the mover of the motion was inspired only by a desire to improve conditions for members in the House. He may have also been influenced by the fact that a certain amount of relaxation has been permitted in another place.

I have had a slight experience of the Legislative Council in Darwin which is a body similar to ours. There the standard dress is shorts, shirt, and a tie, and I do not believe that at any time the dignity of that House has been affected by the members dressing in that manner. They dress in accordance with climatic conditions and I feel that this is the motive behind the present motion. Mr. Dans believes that when the weather is hot and oppressive the privilege contained in the motion should be granted to members.

I have no strong views on the matter. I believe I dress moderately and comfortably and I have not experienced overmuch discomfort at any time. Probably the worst time I can recall is the opening last year when it was a most oppressive day and I think that if a vote had been taken even the Governor would have supported a motion that he be allowed to remove some of his trappings and trimmings. I do not want to be long-winded about this matter. We live in an age when certain relaxation in dress is evident and I believe that this can be permitted without any loss of dignity whatsoever. I have always been a great stickler for accepted practice, but as the years have progressed changes have occurred. We ourselves have installed fans and we wish to make a further change by installing air-conditioning. This is a sign that members recognise they are uncomfortable and therefore cannot carry out their work as successfully as they could otherwise. The proposal for air-conditioning was not rejected on the grounds of comfort or discomfort, but on the grounds of cost. We all agree that we would like air-conditioning installed. However, I think that the proposal in the motion is a preliminary step to ultimate improvement.

I imagine that if air-conditioning is installed and the temperature in the Chamber can be regulated Mr. Dans and others would be quite happy to revert to the present-day custom.

I support the motion because I do not want to impose on anyone else a restriction which personally does not cause me any inconvenience.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [3.03 p.m.]: I have some sympathy for the motion, but I must qualify that statement in a moment or two. The motion reads in part—

That in the opinion of this House the rule which applies . . .

No rule applies; at least I have been unable to find one. The only rule referring to dress in the Chamber is Standing Order 63 which reads—

Order shall be maintained in the Council by the President.

That is the only Standing Order applicable, so no rule is involved. I suggest that we abide by tradition rather than a rule and that although the Standing Order is silent upon the point it is left to your judgment, Sir, to decide whether the dress of a member in attendance during the hours of sitting in the Chamber meets with your disapproval. If it did, you would exercise your authority and advise the offender accordingly.

If, as I did today, members looked at the albums and studied the appearance of those who were here at the time Standing Order 63 was adopted, they would find

that the members of the Legislative Council at that time were gentlemen who wore longish hair; some of them had long hair. They had sideburns and flowing beards.

The Hon. L. D. Elliott: Hippies!

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Some of them had bushy moustaches, long black coats, stiff collars, tight pants, and—

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: Obedient wives.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I did not realise Mr. Willesee had been here for so long!

I do not think there were any lady members in the Chamber when Standing Order 63 was adopted.

In some respects we have gone back to the kind of sartorial appearance which was evident when the Standing Order was adopted. We certainly have some attractive looking sideburns and hairdos. The pants which some members wear are tight, or appear to be tight.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: As long as the members are not.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: It depends how long they have been here and whether they have increased in weight.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The honourable member can make his contribution and tell us how he feels in his pants!

The Hon. D. K. Dans: With his hands!

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: We are returning to this type of convention.

Mr. Dans' motion has been occasioned by the fact that Parliament opens in the middle of March. If Parliament opened at a sensible time of the year—I know the Government of which I was a member also opened Parliament in the summer—no necessity would arise for the motion.

If one member had expressed his opposition in a dissentient manner then by the time we reached the stage where we could discuss the motion the summer would have gone and the cooler weather would be with us. However, I did not want that to occur and I took my lead from the fact that the Leader of the House was prepared to support the motion so that the matter might be discussed.

Often when I have seen you sitting there, Sir, in your traditional wig and gown, I have felt that you could have been hot. I have thought that the Clerks at the Table have been hot and uncomfortable in the very hot weather. I have attended in another place to see the effect of the decision made there on this subject, not by the members of the Chamber, but by the Speaker, who said that members who so desire may remove their coats.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That is correct.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I will not take that point any further because I do not need to speak upon a situation which prevails in another place. However, the decision was not made by the members of that Chamber and I do not know whether they had an opportunity to discuss the matter.

I think it is quite right that the decision on this matter in this Chamber should be made by the members. It would not offend me in any way, shape, or form, if you, Mr. President, decided that it was such a hot day you would remove your wig. It would not concern me if you said to your Clerks, "It is a very hot day. If you wish you may take off your wigs." I would be somewhat concerned if the traditional gown of the Clerks was not worn. I would not mind if they removed their stiff collars, but I would be concerned if the traditional or standard dress were dropped.

I think the Minister hit the nail on the head when he referred to his knowledge of the situation in Darwin where, he said, members are dressed in shirts, shorts, ties, and stockings, but that a standard of dress was maintained.

The words "standard of dress" which were used by the Minister are most important. As we know, Darwin has a tropical climate. The general standard of dress in the wet season comprises shorts and a shirt.

If any member in this Chamber removed his coat purely because of the way he felt at that particular moment or on that particular day, the standard would straightaway deteriorate and we could perhaps become slipshod in our ways. I personally would not like to see that happen.

The decision ought to be left with you, Mr. President. I do not oppose the principle that a member should be comfortable. I do oppose the idea that, in making himself comfortable, he may become slipshod. I am referring to a member leaving off his coat and perhaps leaving his tie undone. People in the Gallery will be looking at the members in this Chamber.

I am not concerned in the slightest that the Legislative Council acts differently from the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Dans said, I believe, that if the decision does not go in his favour he will appear to be a patsy—was that the term?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That was the term.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The only connection I have had with a patsy was, in fact, a doll which my daughter had and, I believe, still has.

The Hon. J. Dolan: It means somebody who has been set up.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I did not know that.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Apparently, Mr. Dans now has two interpretations of the meaning of the word "patsy". One is his own and one is the Minister's. I am not concerned about that, but I am concerned about the conduct of our own affairs in this House.

I repeat that the decision should be made by you, Mr. President. If, in your opinion, the climatic conditions are such that we would be uncomfortable in orthodox dress, you, Sir, ought to be able to say, "This is a day on which coats should be removed." I understand, Mr. President, that when approached on the matter you were not prepared to give your personal concurrence but wanted an expression of opinion from the House. Quite frankly, that was a wise approach. Once an expression of opinion, one way or the other, is obtained from members of the Chamber, there will be something definite upon which to act.

I realise that Mr. Dans' motion is well intended and I have some sympathy with it. However, I do not want to see our standard drop in any way. I am one of the people who believe that we ought to preserve some of our traditions. Certainly we should not be inclined to drop our standards in any way. If the decision is left entirely to members, as individuals, the standard may consequently be affected.

I propose to test the feeling of the House by moving an amendment to Mr. Dans' motion. My amendment, if accepted, means that the motion would read—

That in the opinion of this House the convention regarding Members' dress may be altered from time to time to permit Members, who desire to do so, to remove their coats during sitting hours should the atmospheric conditions in the House, in the opinion of the President, warrant such modification to this convention.

Amendment to Motion

I move an amendment—

Delete all words in the motion after the word "House" in line 1 and substitute the following—

the convention regarding Members' dress may be altered from time to time to permit Members, who desire to do so, to remove their coats during sitting hours should the atmospheric conditions in the House, in the opinion of the President, warrant such modification of this convention.

THE HON. R. F. CLAUGHTON (North Metropolitan) (3.15 p.m.): I listened to the Leader of the Opposition when he mentioned the possibility of slipshod attitudes developing in this House because of the

way in which members happen to dress. I call to mind a gentleman who runs a rather large salt company in the north. He is reputed to dress frequently in shorts, sandals, and open-neck shirt or singlet. I do not think anybody would be able to accuse him of running his affairs in a slipshod manner because of his style of dress. I support Mr. Dans' remarks that the manner in which we dress does not really affect the manner in which we go about our work.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It does, you know.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: We are elected to Parliament as responsible people in the community. Any one of us, at any time, may be placed into the highest political positions in this country. Members of the public would not place us in this position unless they felt that we were responsible people. Surely we should be able to determine in a sensible way our day-to-day dress in the Chamber. We are dealing with a fairly simple matter and not one which will affect important decisions of State. Nevertheless, we must still think about the processes by which this would be applied. I, certainly, am not at all clear about those processes.

Let us assume the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition will be carried. Suppose that, immediately afterwards, the weather is such that I feel like removing my coat and do so. You, Mr. President, will be called upon to decide whether, in your opinion, the climatic conditions are such that I should be permitted to do so. This would happen each time the House sits. As an individual I will make a decision in the interests of my own comfort and will enter the Chamber wearing, or not wearing, a coat. If I come into the Chamber without a coat you, Sir, will be called upon to make a decision on that day. I do not think this is a satisfactory way for us to go about our affairs in this House. To be called upon to make a decision of that sort each day would be an unnecessary and an unwarranted imposition on you, Mr. President. Sir, you should be able to feel that we are responsible members of the community and of the Parliament, and that we are well capable of making a reasonable decision on the matter of our dress.

I cannot imagine any circumstances whereby any member of this House would dress in a slipshod or untidy manner which would be to the detriment of the dignity of this Chamber.

I do not really see any great difficulty in the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition in so far as it would still be possible to operate in this way. However, I do not think that you, Mr. President, should be asked to make the decision on each occasion. The motion moved by Mr. Dans is quite adequate.

Together with Mr. Arthur Griffith I was not sure which rule we were being asked to change. I thought Standing Order 66 was the one in question until the Leader of the Opposition referred to Standing Order 63.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That has nothing whatever to do with it.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: It is the only Standing Order which refers to dress.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It refers to whether a member's head is covered or uncovered when he speaks.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: It simply relates to headgear?

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Yes, in the olden days members wore hats in the House.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: We have progressed a little.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I think a member could still wear a hat in the House if he desired.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: That is the only Standing Order which refers to dress. Perhaps Standing Order 63 could be said to be relevant but I do not see the relationship between dress and order. To change a rule, we would need a ruling by you, Mr. President, or a person succeeding you in the Chair. I cannot recall whether or not you have made a determination on this matter.

It is my opinion that the amendment should be rejected, and members should be permitted to enter the Chamber without their coats if they feel this will add to their comfort in hot weather.

Point of Order

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: On a point of order, Mr. President, I moved an amendment and I am not sure whether or not you stated the question.

The PRESIDENT: I thought I did.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I beg your pardon, Sir.

The PRESIDENT: For the sake of clarity I will restate the question. The Hon. A. F. Griffith has moved an amendment as follows—

Delete all words in the motion after the word "House" in line 1 and substitute the following—

the convention regarding Members' dress may be altered from time to time to permit Members, who desire to do so, to remove their coats during sitting hours should the atmospheric conditions in the House, in the opinion of the President, warrant such modification of this convention.

*Debate (on amendment to motion)
Resumed*

THE HON. W. R. WITHERS (North) [3.22 p.m.]: I agree with Mr. Dans when he says he does not believe that dress maketh man. I would like to quote my old school motto, "Manners maketh man." In my opinion manners, plus a few other appendages, maketh man. With respect to Miss Elliott, I still have to discover the complexities of what maketh woman. I point out that Mr. Cloughton must have been asleep again.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: I hope you are able to substantiate that.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: He was not asleep—he just looked as though he was.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: Appearances can be deceptive.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Mr. Arthur Griffith said that Mr. Dans had moved a motion to change a rule which does not exist. The amendment moved by Mr. Arthur Griffith is reasonable and will satisfy most people. I am quite sure, Mr. President, that you would permit a member to remove his coat if he approached you and explained that he wished to do so for reasons of efficiency or health. In your wisdom you would not deny a member this privilege. I support the amendment.

THE HON. R. THOMPSON (South Metropolitan—Minister for Community Welfare) [3.24 p.m.]: I support the motion—

The PRESIDENT: I direct the Minister's attention to the fact that we are dealing with the amendment. I will admit that the motion and the amendment are substantially the same.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I oppose the amendment. I intended to say that it would place an unfair burden on you, Mr. President, to have 29 people approaching you to seek permission to remove their coats.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The President has that burden now.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It would be 28—Miss Elliott already has the privilege.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I must admit that I feel jealous of Miss Elliott; she may wear a cool dress. I wonder what the position would be if I borrowed some of Miss Elliott's gear and entered the Chamber in it.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: In the words of Mr. Dans, I think you would look like a "patsy".

The Hon. J. Dolan: It would be an offence under the Police Act.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: During my years in this Chamber I have seen a great transformation in the standard of dress of members—it has improved considerably. I

can remember several members who frequently wore blazers with open-necked shirts.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: In this Chamber?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes, in fact one member sat right behind where Mr. Arthur Griffith now sits. For a long time certain members in another place have not worn ties. I consider that a member who is not reasonably and correctly dressed does not do himself justice. A member would not take the risk of dressing incorrectly. His electors may hear of it and it would do him no credit.

A member should have the privilege to exercise his own common sense and remove his coat on a very hot day. I would suggest that members should wear long-sleeved shirts, ties, and slacks. I have seen the South Australian Parliament in session where dress in the Chambers is not laid down by the rules, but apparently it is the custom—even though the Chambers are air-conditioned—to dress rather slovenly. I do not mean this to be a reflection on the manner of operation of the South Australian Parliament.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The Premier's shorts are so short they could almost be hot pants.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I have not seen him in hot pants. I know that tradition dies hard, but I feel we could relax our practice a little. If members do not play the game and do not dress neatly in the Chamber, we could then take action. If the amendment is carried, members will have to approach you, Mr. President—

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: If the motion is carried, the member will be free to do as he wishes.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I have discussed this matter with you Mr. President, for many years. I have always been of the opinion that I should be able to remove my coat.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: If you felt like removing your coat and the President felt you should not, I am afraid the President would not have any say.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: He will not have any say.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: At least he has a say now.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes. Years ago I could have removed my coat whilst I was sitting in this Chamber. I realise that no Standing Order prevents me from doing so. However I was not prepared to do that, and I am still not prepared to step out of line and break an unwritten rule. I do not think any member would appreciate any other member taking the same course of action. It is better that we should know, on a common ground, what we are permitted to do. I still say that we should

leave it to the discretion of the member and if he did not act responsibly we could soon change the rule.

THE HON. I. G. MEDCALF (Metropolitan) [3.32 p.m.]: I listened with considerable interest to the comments made by Mr. Dans. I hope, Sir, that you did not consider that the questions I asked of him were by any means hostile to the proposition he put forward. I was merely attempting to clarify in my mind some points he raised when he referred to the dress of an admiral. I will relate what I am saying immediately to the amendment. I referred to the dress of the admiral and that of members of naval vessels.

I support the amendment which the Leader of the Opposition has put forward. The reason I referred to the comments made by Mr. Dans was that it seems to me that, basically, it boils down to the question of whether the President has discretion in this matter or whether a member can do as he pleases. That is why I think the situation regarding the admiral and the sailors may have some relevance to the question we are discussing.

It seems to me important that you, Sir, should maintain the discipline of the House. On the other hand, I think it is important that we should dress sensibly in accordance with the climate and in accordance with the situation in which we find ourselves at this time of the year with hot weather prevailing. The conditions now are entirely different from those we experienced in former times when we met during the winter months. For those reasons I have a natural inclination to support the motion. However I think the amendment is superior to the motion in that it allows the discipline of the House to be maintained by the President, in whom we have every confidence. I hope we will always continue to have every confidence in the President so that he will be able to exercise some discretion and lay down some rule, depending on the circumstances at the time. It could be that the President might suggest that we remove some other piece of clothing as well as our coats. For example, he may say that some members may remove their shoes. That, I am sure, would be a great relief to some of us. With changes in dress, in the future there could be other items of clothing that we may wish to remove.

An important point was raised by the Leader of the Opposition which he has not actually covered in his amendment. I wish to go further than his amendment. Quite properly, he did refer to the staff. Personally, I would feel very guilty if I were permitted, during extremely hot weather, to remove my coat, when members of the staff, including yourself, Sir, with your garment, were fully robed.

Whilst I appreciate that you, Mr. President, would be included among the members, nevertheless I think we should give some consideration to the members of the staff. Here I return to the comparison I made with the admiral and the sailors. It would not be sufficient just to permit members to remove their coats during hot weather without making any arrangements for the staff to do likewise when conditions were extremely unpleasant.

It would be quite impossible for any of us to lay down any rules in any motion, or in any amendment to a motion, regarding the dress to be worn by members of the staff. This is a matter that lies within the discretion of the President. It seems to me that we are all under the discipline of the House which is administered by the President. Therefore I believe it is important for the President to have discretion not only to permit members to remove their coats, but to alleviate the convention regarding dress in the House worn by members of the staff during unpleasant atmospheric conditions. For those reasons I support the amendment.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Move an amendment to add after the word "members" the words "and staff" if you feel so inclined.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: I feel that if members are to be granted this privilege the staff should also be included, but it must be within the discretion of the President.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I think the President is able to deal with that situation now under Standing Order 63.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: That may well be so because the Leader of the Opposition would know about that better than I. I raised that point because it would not be proper for members to be granted special alleviation from discomfort and to be sitting in the House in those conditions whilst members of the staff were unable to enjoy the same alleviation themselves, particularly as they have to move around the Chamber and perform quite a deal of physical activity.

I reiterate that it should be allowed, but at the President's discretion. I am perfectly confident that the President would be able to exercise proper discretion in this matter. That would overcome any problems which Mr. Dans mentioned may occur if we were not all responsible members of Parliament. I agree with him that I hope we are all responsible members of Parliament, but the fact remains that if the President had the final discretion to permit some alleviation this would, I believe, overcome any problems of that nature and ensure that the discipline of this House and the appearance of members attending in it are kept at that high level which we hope will be kept indefinitely.

THE HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan) [3.40 p.m.]: Under normal circumstances I would be prepared to accept the amendment, but I can envisage many difficulties arising if I do. We would merely retain the *status quo*.

I would not have moved the motion had not Mr. Heitman and I interviewed you, Mr. President, to ascertain your views on the subject. I have endeavoured to go about this simple exercise in the correct manner. Under the amendment it would be your prerogative, Mr. President, to tell us when we could remove our coats. You already have that power and you could have exercised it when you were first approached.

I can envisage many problems. I am not against the staff removing their wigs as they probably suffer more discomfort than we do. However, under the amendment the onus would be placed back onto you, Sir.

I can assure Mr. Medcalf that I do not take offence at anything, but in regard to service dress certain rules are laid down which bear on duties, time of the year, and places in the world. It is not unusual to see particular members of the Navy in ice-cream suits, despite the fact that the weather is freezing cold and it is raining. We have that situation because the rules state that from the 15th March until perhaps some time in June the men in service must wear ice-cream suits, and that is it.

In raising this point I am groping a little. Perhaps the wrong word was used in the first place.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I feel that perhaps "rule" was the wrong word to use. Perhaps it would have been better had I used the word "tradition". I do not go along with the suggestion that some members would become unduly slovenly in their appearance. Each and every one of us knows that some members could come in here dressed in a dinner suit and look awfully untidy. I would suggest that in such circumstances you, Mr. President, would have the authority—and I would be the last person in the Chamber to take that authority away from you—to order the person concerned to leave the Chamber and not return until he was dressed appropriately.

You have the authority—or if not the authority it is traditional that you have the right—to order a person out of the Chamber if, in your opinion, he looks out of place because of the colour of his shirt. I would expect your action to be supported by members of the Chamber.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You suggest that if a member came dressed in a green shirt and the President did not like green shirts, he could ask the member to leave?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: What I was trying to do was to illustrate that there are certain shirts around today which would be out of place here.

The Hon. J. Dolan: If a man had on a yellow shirt on St. Patrick's Day he would probably be asked to leave.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Seriously, I can envisage many difficulties. An amicable conversation ensued with you, Sir, but I can see that we would retain the *status quo* if the amendment were passed because it would place an onerous duty on you.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Have you asked the President whether he would accept it?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: We did have a conversation with you, Sir, but I do not wish to expand on it as it was held in private.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Perhaps the President would not regard the task as onerous.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: It would depend on the circumstances. Some people feel the heat while others do not. It may seem strange to members, but very rarely do I feel hot. However, I do perspire profusely and this is the cause of my discomfort. The back of my coat becomes wringing wet.

I can assure members that I would not enter the Chamber dressed in a slovenly manner. I am interested in being correctly dressed and at all times I endeavour to be so.

My opposition to the amendment is that it would still give rise to disagreement. We would again be placing on your shoulders, Mr. President, the right to tell me whether I am hot and whether I may remove my coat. This would not serve the purpose. Perhaps you, Sir, do not feel the heat. I do not know. If you do not, this would again pose some problems.

As I have said, the amendment would give rise to further difficulties and I certainly do not want this to arise as a result of a simple motion which seeks, only under certain circumstances and based on good sense, to enable members in this House to work with some semblance of comfort. I oppose the amendment.

Sitting suspended from 3.47 to 4.05 p.m.

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (Lower West) [4.05 p.m.]: This has been an interesting debate, although I believe neither the amendment nor the motion is the proper way to tackle the problem.

We are all creatures of habit and bound to some extent by convention. The matter we are speaking about is a matter of convention. We are accustomed to wearing certain sorts of dress, and the normal dress in this House has always been a dark suit. Quite frankly, I was a little surprised at

the evening opening to find people wearing what I have always regarded as afternoon wear—light, slub-type summer suits, and so on. We find people coming in in slacks with a contrasting coat, which are very neat and tidy. We find a few people in slacks and blazers. A few years ago this would have been frowned upon but it has now become accepted as conventional.

I find people going to cocktail parties in light brown or light green suits, which appears to me to be quite wrong. It seems we need someone to set up some new conventions. Whether or not an officer of this House feels the heat is beside the point. Your attire, Mr. President, stems from a traditional convention handed to us by the United Kingdom, which is a comparatively cold country. It was found to be bearable in this Chamber when we sat during the winter months. But whether or not you find it bearable, Sir, is beside the point. It appears to me to be quite unsuitable for a March-April session in Western Australia. Personally, I could not stand it; physically, I could not stand it; medically, I could not stand it—I would have a heat rash that would drive me mad within a week, and members know the reason for that.

How members of the clerical staff stand the garb which they are forced by convention to wear, I do not know. We see them dressed in uniforms which are conventionally accepted and which were designed 100 or 200 years ago, in the main—a full evening suit with white tie and all.

I suppose conventionally some members of the staff are expected to wear on top of that a clerk's robe and a wig. The wigs were probably designed in England, bearing in mind the climatic conditions there. The clerks could possibly wear some sort of a wig or head covering which was designed to be much cooler.

I believe it is possible to design a new set of conventions. Personally, I like conventions. I think it was a great pity the evening opening of Parliament was not arranged differently. If we were to have an evening opening, I would have thought it infinitely preferable had we all been asked to wear dinner suits. But here again we find a reluctance on the part of men to wear dinner suits—perhaps because they have not quite got over the memory of stiff shirt fronts and stiff collars. However, it is possible today to buy a dinner suit which is, generally, much lighter in weight than the conventional suit. The shirts are soft and the ties are light, and it has been my experience that a dinner suit is infinitely preferable. In addition, I would know precisely what to wear: I would wear a dinner suit. It would also help my traditional outlook, in that I would get a bit more value for money out of a suit I do not wear very

often. I think a dinner suit looks attractive. I do not say I look attractive in a dinner suit, but it looks attractive to see a group of men in dinner suits. I therefore think it is a pity that at the evening opening we did not establish the convention of wearing a dinner suit.

There is another problem. In these relaxed and permissive days one's wife asks, "What are you wearing?" When one replies, "Lounge suit", she asks, "What am I supposed to wear—long sleeves, a long dress, or a short dress?" On the bottom of invitation cards one usually reads, "Lounge suit—long or short dress." If the bulk of the women at the function happen to be wearing long dress and one's wife turns up in a short dress, one gets the rounds of the kitchen for a week. By the look on the faces of members, I think they all agree with me. It is a pity we are not given more instructions on invitations and that we do not use the conventions more wisely.

However, I suggest greater thought could have been given to both the motion and the amendment. The changed circumstances should be considered. I think it would not be beyond the wit of men in a Chamber which is charged with the responsibility of facing up to problems affecting the future welfare of the State to nominate a small committee—unofficially, if desired—to suggest some changes which would be acceptable and which in the course of the year would become the accepted convention from which people would depart with some reluctance. It may be possible, at not very great cost, to design a lightweight outfit for the staff for this session. Perhaps they could wear just a small square of silk on the top of their heads, if it is thought desirable. I can see why it is desirable; I believe in setting certain people apart from the rest of the community.

I have always liked the idea of the President, a judge, a counsel, or a lawyer being made easily distinguishable and a little different. I deplore the modern trend for school teachers to attend school in shorts, an open-neck shirt, and a pair of sandshoes. Many of them dress in that fashion, and they are not as neat as the children they intend to teach. They do not set a good example. On the other hand, many teachers do set a good example. But I believe they should be distinguishable. It is no good saying that employees of banks are allowed to wear shorts—they are behind counters. However, I have yet to see a bank manager who does not wear a tie and long trousers and put on a suit coat when he is receiving someone important. Surely we are in the category of the managers, not the staff.

A female member of Parliament has a decided advantage because women were not in this situation 100 or 200 years ago when

the traditions were established, so they wear what they traditionally wear outside. It is not beyond the imagination that if there had been female members of Parliament 200 years ago, a female member would now be expected to appear in a bustle.

The Hon. R. Thompson: It would be hard to sit on.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: It is not the fashion this year.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I repeat that I like convention and I like to know what I should or should not wear. It is possible today to buy very lightweight suits. Foolishly, I did not wear one today.

We are talking about our comfort, but I believe that the people who should receive first consideration when we are designing outfits are those who, perforce, must dress in a uniform manner—and such people range from you, Mr. President, through the Clerks, down to the Chamber Attendants. I believe a definite move should be made and the matter should not be merely left to the discretion of one person, because in one year we might have a President who does not feel the heat and who wants to sit in his wig and gown; and he would expect members to follow his example. Yet two or three years later we might have another President who suffers from the heat and wishes to dress differently; of course, he would allow members to follow his example.

I repeat: now that Mr. Dans has raised the subject we should organise a small, unofficial group—obviously you, Mr. President, are the one to do this—to investigate the desirability of a new convention for the summer months in order to arrive at a happy solution. I have already said I am a conservative man and I really deplored the fact that on opening night we were not expected to wear dinner dress. Surely we all own a dinner suit. Members would have looked more impressive quite apart from the fact they would get a little more value out of their dinner suits. Possibly we may be able to overcome the problem with an approach of the type I have suggested, bearing in mind our climatic conditions and the reluctance of the Premier to air-condition the Chamber.

Debate (on amendment to motion) adjourned, on motion by The Hon. J. Heitman.

Removal of Coat: Request from Member

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Mr. President, have I your permission to remove my coat?

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You are a smart aleck.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think the honourable member is serious.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I am serious, Mr. President.

The PRESIDENT: I cannot give my permission.

QUESTIONS (23): ON NOTICE

1. CANNINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

Hall-gymnasium

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

- (1) What would be the estimated cost based on today's prices, of constructing the existing section of the gymnasium hall at the Cannington Senior high school?
- (2) Based on the plan used for the existing section of the building, what is the current estimated cost of providing a complete gymnasium hall at the Cannington Senior high school?
- (3) Using the existing completed section of the gymnasium hall, what is the current estimated cost of completing the building?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) \$60,639
- (2) \$230,257
- (3) \$188,513

2.

WHEAT

Quotas

The Hon. C. R. Abbey for the Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH, to the Leader of the House:

In each rainfall isohyet of the agricultural zone of Western Australia—

- (1) How many farms—
 - (a) have not got a wheat quota;
 - (b) have been refused a wheat quota;
 - (c) have a quota—
 - (i) under 1,000 bushels;
 - (ii) under 2,000 bushels;
 - (iii) under 3,000 bushels;
 - (iv) under 4,000 bushels;
 - (v) under 5,000 bushels?
- (2) How many of these farms are conditional purchase blocks?
- (3) Does the Government consider that the present relaxing of quotas gives farms in these categories an ample chance to enjoy the world demand for wheat?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) (a) The Wheat Quota Committee do not maintain a register of non-quota farms in W.A.

- (b) Under 13 inch rain fall isohyet 14
 13 and 14 inch rain-fall isohyet 5
 Above 14 to 16 inch rainfall isohyet 5
 Above 16 to 19 inch rainfall isohyet 9
 Above 19 to 22 inch rainfall isohyet 40
 Above 22 inch rain-fall isohyet 113
- (c) (i) 336
 (ii) 759
 (iii) 1,230
 (iv) 1,757
 (v) 2,295

The assessment of "Established Farms" in each rainfall zone is not yet available.

The "New Land" farms included in the above figures for each rainfall zone are:—

	Under 1,000 bush.	Under 2,000 bush.	Under 3,000 bush.	Under 4,000 bush.	Under 5,000 bush.
Under 13 inch isohyet	2	5	12	28	44
13 and 14 inch isohyet	1	6	15	22	22
Above 14 to 16 inch isohyet	4	9	18	24	24
Above 16 to 19 inch isohyet	2	6	11	14	28
Above 19 to 22 inch isohyet	20	45	67	98	119
Over 22 inch isohyet

- (2) It is estimated about 80% of "New Land" quota farms are held under Conditional Purchase conditions.

- (3) The Government considered a complete relaxing of wheat quotas to give all farmers an opportunity to enjoy the present world demand for wheat if they so desired. However, strong pressure from growers' representatives both on a State and National basis resulted in the present basis of allocating quotas being adopted. This does give all quota holders a reasonable opportunity to enjoy the world demand, at least up to and probably considerably in excess of the base quota allocated to each property.

3. *This question was postponed.*

4. LAND TAX ASSESSMENT ACT

Review

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

With reference to the debate in this House in September 1971, on a Bill to amend the Land Tax Assessment Act, when the Leader of the Government in this House stated that he would refer to the Government a suggestion that the whole of the Land Tax Assessment

Act be reviewed (see page 1360 Hansard No. 2 of 1971)—has any progress been made in this matter?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

Yes, considerable progress has been made. As has been announced, the whole of the Land Tax legislation is currently under review, not only to deal with the type of problem raised in the debate referred to by the Leader of the Opposition, but also to deal with other unsatisfactory aspects of this law.

A Bill to amend the Land Tax Assessment Act will be introduced during this session, but this will deal only with one specific matter which has been already announced publicly, and will not cover the problems mentioned in this reply.

Currently, the examination of the current law, including the matter raised by Mr. Griffith, is still to be completed, and recommendations for amendments to the law are to be made to the Government as soon as the investigation has been finalised.

5.

HEALTH

Venereal Disease: Treatment

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

- (1) Is it a fact that—

- (a) a 14 year old Aboriginal girl was committed to the care of the department this month because she ran away from home and was cohabiting with men in Port Hedland;
 (b) this girl was sent to Perth where it was found that she had venereal disease;
 (c) after one week the girl was returned from Perth because of the lack of resources to care for her even though there are absolutely no resources at Hedland?

- (2) What is the Minister doing to correct this situation?
 (3) In all fairness, can departmental officers be expected to act responsibly if they know nothing is done to provide corrective facilities for any of their charges?
 (4) Has the girl been cured of V.D. prior to releasing her to cohabit with other men?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON replied:

- (1) (a) A 14 year old Aboriginal girl was committed to the care of the Department last month because she ran away from home and had been cohabiting with men at Port Hedland.

- (b) Yes.
- (c) No. The girl is still in care in Perth.
- (2) and (3) Answered by 1 (c).
- (4) It is not the policy of my Department to release any girls to cohabit with men.

6. **ILMENITE**

Rail Cartage to Bunbury

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON, to the Leader of the House:

In view of the answer to my question on Tuesday, the 20th March, 1973, when the Minister stated that almost all locomotive and rolling stock servicing for the proposed cartage of ilmenite to Bunbury Harbour would be done in Bunbury—

- (a) in view of the recent arrangements whereby normal rolling stock and locomotive servicing was transferred from Bunbury to the metropolitan area, can it now be taken that this decision is being reversed;
- (b) if so, will the Bunbury depot be reinstated as a major servicing centre?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (a) Only one locomotive will be involved in the ilmenite movement and its servicing at Bunbury will not materially alter the present situation.
- (b) Answered by (a).

7. *This question was postponed.*

8. **GASCOYNE RESEARCH STATION**

Staff

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) What staff are employed at the Gascoyne Research Station at Carnarvon?
- (2) Is the present office accommodation adequate for the present staff employed?
- (3) If the answer to (2) is "No", is it intended to construct additional office accommodation?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) Staff employed includes Horticulture, Rangeland Management and Agriculture Protection Board officers and typists.
The total number is 15.
- (2) No.
- (3) It is planned that additional office accommodation will be built in 1973/74.

9. *This question was postponed.*

10. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Hedland Shire: Finance

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Will this Government guarantee the repayments or any part thereof, if the Hedland Shire Council borrows \$300,000 for expenditure in Hedland and South Hedland?
- (2) If the answer is "Yes"—
 - (a) what will be the annual contribution by the Government;
 - (b) how many years will the guarantee be in force?
- (3) If the answer is "No"—
 - (a) does the Minister consider a capital debt of over \$2,000,000 to be excessive for the Shire of Hedland;
 - (b) how is the Shire expected to carry out the desired works without Government assistance;
 - (c) if the shire does not borrow the money, will the Minister agree the growth of Port Hedland will be retarded and it will also put back the development of South Hedland by five years?

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

- (1) The Government has already indicated that it will assist the Port Hedland Shire Council with repayment of its loan borrowings during the 1972/73 — 1974/75 financial years.
- (2) The Government has authorised special grants to assist loan repayments of—

\$20,000 in 1972/73
\$30,000 in 1973/74
\$30,000 in 1974/75

By its action, the Government has shown an awareness of the immediate need for adequate community facilities in Port Hedland and South Hedland and it has recognised the special problems which face the Port Hedland Shire Council during the current period of rapid growth.

The extent of financial assistance in future years will be reviewed by the Committee established under the Local Authority Assistance Fund and would depend on the financial position of the Shire at that time.

- (3) Not applicable.

11. *This question was postponed.*

12.

ROAD

Leach Highway: Completion

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

- (1) With regard to the construction of the remaining sections of Leach Highway, would the Minister advise the order of priority and the anticipated completion date for each section?
- (2) Is the Minister aware of the discomfort and nuisance being caused to residents in Treasure Road and nearby streets in Queens Park, by the traffic from the completed section of Leach Highway being diverted on to these streets?
- (3) Does the Minister agree that this discomfort and nuisance will continue until such time as the Highway is complete?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) Owing to heavy financial commitments for a number of major metropolitan highway projects and the expiry in 1974 of the Commonwealth Aid Roads Act 1969, the Main Roads Department is unable to indicate the order of construction and completion dates. It is likely, however, that the next section to be constructed will be from Manning Road to Welshpool Road.
- (2) Similar to many parts of the metropolitan area, it is realised that there has been a build up in traffic in the Queens Park area.
- (3) Completion of Leach Highway will provide an alternative route for this traffic.

13.

LAND

Purchase by Government

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

Further to my question of the 22nd November, 1972, relating to the land known as the Wooroloo Farm—

- (1) Has the Government finalised the re-purchase of this land?
- (2) If so, what was the price paid by the Government?
- (3) What area of land was involved?
- (4) If the purchase has not been completed, will the Minister please advise the present position?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The total consideration was \$149,000.
- (3) 1,370 acres.
- (4) Answered by (1).

14.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Charges: Caravan Sites

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

- (1) In view of the answer to my question relating to electricity charges to caravan parks dated the 11th October, 1972, will the Minister reconsider domestic charges for power rates rather than the higher commercial charge?
- (2) If the answer to (1) is "No", will the Minister please explain why blocks of flats are charged at the domestic rate rather than a commercial rate?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) and (2) In view of the lengthy nature of the reply, the information is being compiled and will be conveyed to the Hon. Member early next week.

15.

FUNERALS

Costs

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) What provision is made for burials in—
 - (a) the metropolitan area;
 - (b) the agricultural area;
 - (c) the North;
 when pensioners or other citizens die with no immediate evidence to indicate that the estate can pay for a funeral?
- (2) What are the usual minimum costs in these areas for—
 - (a) the plot;
 - (b) the digging of the grave;
 - (c) the coffin;
 - (d) other expenses?
- (3) Does the Public Trustee receive many complaints from undertakers that their expenses have not been recovered?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON replied:

- (1) (a) to (c) Throughout the State funerals of persons who die in indigent circumstances are paid for by the Department for Community Welfare under Government contract. Tenders for funerals are called annually. Police officers or officers of the Department for Community Welfare investigate the circumstances and authorise these burials to be conducted by the contractor for the area where the person dies. Claims for recoup of the cost of burials are made on the Public Trustee where there is an estate.

- (2) (a) to (d) The cost for a pensioner buried in the metropolitan area is \$155, including cemetery and clergy fees of \$14. Costs in country areas vary considerably, e.g.—

Broome—\$244, including cemetery and clergy fees of \$19.

Dongara — \$152.75, including cemetery and clergy fees of \$12.25.

Morawa—\$180, including cemetery and clergy fees of \$40.

Pingelly—\$160, including cemetery and clergy fees of \$25.

Kalgoorlie—\$160, including cemetery and clergy fees of \$44.75.

Cost of coffins is included in undertakers' fees.

In some north western areas coffins are supplied by the Department and issued free for the burial of indigent persons.

- (3) The Community Welfare Department has not received complaints from the Public Trustee. Accounts that are the liability of the Department for Community Welfare are paid as quickly as possible. Any complaints received re delays in payment are dealt with immediately.

16. MARKETING OF POTATOES ACT

Amendment

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

- (1) Is it the intention of the Government to introduce amending legislation to the Marketing of Potatoes Act, 1946?
- (2) If so, when will this be done?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) During the second sitting period of the 1973 Session.

17. WATER SUPPLIES

Mt. Barker

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) (a) Has the survey for the water supply line from the Denmark River to Mount Barker been completed;
- (b) if not, will an undertaking be given to have this preparatory work completed by the end of the current financial year?
- (2) If the answer to (1) (b) is "Yes", can it be assumed that the construction of this pipe line will be included in the 1973-74 programme of public works?

- (3) If the answer to (2) is "No" due to possible insufficiency of money being available, will the Premier make urgent representations to the Federal Government for a special grant to meet this and other present water supply needs within the State to enable these works to proceed during 1973-74?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) (a) Yes.
- (b) Answered by (a).
- (2) No.
- (3) No, not specifically. Negotiations are in hand with the Commonwealth to see what further assistance will be forthcoming for country water supplies.

18. BANK HOLIDAYS

Easter Tuesday

The Hon. V. J. FERRY, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Is it the intention of the Government to proclaim Tuesday, the 24th April, 1973, a Bank Holiday?
- (2) If not, what are the reasons for the decision?

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

- (1) No.
- (2) When the five day Bank Bill was introduced in 1961, all factors were considered and the Government indicated it was not proposed to grant extra holidays at Easter.

19. ECONOMY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Port Hedland and Pilbara Region

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that the population of Port Hedland has been reducing in recent months and that two drapery stores and a general business have recently closed down?
- (2) As this reduction and closure are symptomatic of the problems facing the mining industry at the present time in the Pilbara Region, does the Government propose to take any action in order to try to reverse the situation?
- (3) Does the Minister believe that the decision of the Prime Minister in December to revalue the Australian currency and the further decision of the Prime Minister and the Treasurer in February not to devalue with the dollar, are having or will have some effect on the general economic climate of the Pilbara?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) There are bound to be some minor population fluctuations in towns where major construction projects are being undertaken. Statistical information available reveals that Port Hedland has for several years enjoyed one of the fastest growth rates of any town in Australia—almost 20% per annum compared with an Australian average of 1.9% per annum. The closure of any business premises must be related to reasons other than population fluctuations.
- (2) Known major capital works in hand or about to be commenced in the town do not indicate any requirement for corrective action by the Government. Committed programmes indicate that some hundreds of new homes will be commenced within the next year or two.
- (3) Expansion programmes announced by existing iron ore producers do not indicate that there will be any immediate adverse effect on the general economic climate of the Pilbara.

20.

TRAFFIC

Fatal Accidents

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN, to the Leader of the House:

Further to my question on the 20th March, 1973, concerning traffic fatalities, will the Minister now complete the answers to parts (1) and (2) by naming the Local Authorities concerned, and giving the number of fatal accidents in each as requested?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

The answer requires considerable research and will be supplied to the Hon. Member when available.

21.

ROAD TRANSPORT

North-West: Costs

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

Further to my question on Wednesday, the 21st March, 1973, concerning the increase in permit fees for carting general freights from Perth to the North West, would the Minister advise—

- (a) is it compulsory for all transport operators to be members of the Road Transport Association of Western Australia;
- (b) are all transport operators carting general freight to the North West members of the Association;

- (c) if the answer to (b) is "No", by what means were those operators expected to be aware of the increased fees?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (a) No.
- (b) It is understood that some operators are not members of the Association.
- (c) Under the Transport Commission Act, the Commissioner is required to determine the fee for each individual license or permit and the applicant is then advised of the amount so determined.

In practice, a scale of fees is set out as a guide to ensure uniformity of treatment but is subject to variations if warranted by circumstances of any particular case.

A copy of the scale is supplied to the Road Transport Association but it is not practicable to circularise all individual operators in anticipation that they may become future applicants for permits.

22.

ABATTOIRS

Stench from Effluent

The Hon. F. R. WHITE, to the Leader of the House:

Further to my question on the 21st March, 1973, relating to stench from effluent—

- (1) Will the Minister—
 - (a) supply details of the "rendering operations other than that at Midland Abattoir" to which he refers in his answer to part (1) of the question;
 - (b) answer the question asked in part (1) of that question?
- (2) For what period of time has the Government been aware that an offensive odour problem exists at Midland Abattoir?

- (3) (a) When will the new effluent system be operating at Midland Abattoir; and
- (b) will this enable operation of the Ridge Hill Road effluent pond to cease?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) (a) Private rendering works and skin sheds are in this vicinity.
- (b) The most recent complaints of stench received by the Public Health Department were not traced to the Ridge Hill effluent lagoon.

- (2) A mechanical breakdown of rendering equipment caused offensive smells in recent months. The fault was remedied during January.
- (3) (a) It is hoped that the new system will be installed by December 1973.
(b) Yes.

23. TAXES AND CHARGES

Increases

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON, to the Leader of the House:

Further to the question on the 21st March, 1973, relating to taxation increases in the various categories listed, what is the increase of revenue derived from the various taxation and charge increases?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

Estimated revenue in 1972/73 is:—

	\$
Wharfage, berthage and haulage charges at North West ports	98,000
Flammable Liquids and Explosives Regulation fees	20,000
Local Court fees	24,000
Court of Petty Sessions Fees	37,000
Titles Office fees	350,000

Whilst on this subject of taxation increases, it may be of interest to the Hon. Member to know that, according to the Commonwealth Statistician, State and local government taxes were highest in New South Wales in 1970/71. During the year these taxes increased by \$6.02 to \$128.73, compared with a six State average rise of \$4.12 to \$114.30 (*The Australian* 10/3/72).

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FOURTH DAY

Motion, as Amended

Debate resumed, from the 21st 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. W. R. WITHERS (North) [4.36 p.m.]: I was very surprised to hear Mr. Cloughton's speech when he moved the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply. I was surprised by the political bias expressed in his address. I am very sorry to see he is not in the Chamber to hear what I am about to say, because on the one hand I am paying him a compliment; that is, he has unwavering loyalty to his party, but because of this he has been blinded to the facts to the point that he has started to swallow some of his party's propaganda. In his address he showed a complete misunderstanding of certain points. In fact, in respect of one point he appeared to be in conflict with his own party leader.

I refer to what he said, and this appears on page 5 of the current *Hansard*. It is as follows—

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

What he said there was a lot of tripe. I would like to point out to him and to others who might think this is correct that late in May, 1971, the U.S.A. devalued the American dollar by 6.3 per cent. The Government of the day considered this devaluation, and looked at it in the light of Australia's parity with gold. The Australian Government decided at the time that the economy could stand that amount of devaluation, without having to devalue the Australian dollar.

However, when there was a change of Government subsequently, the incoming Government revalued the Australian dollar by 7.05 per cent. At a later date the American Government devalued the American dollar by 11.1 per cent. The combined effects of the American devaluations and the Australian revaluation meant that companies exporting from Australia, with contracts written in American dollars, lost approximately 25 per cent.; that was the extent of the loss to our gross national income. This is a very serious matter.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: For the iron ore exporting companies.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Not just the iron ore companies. I shall explain how the companies were affected. Many people expected the present Federal Government to devalue the Australian dollar, so that Australia would not lose so much in its exports, and so that we could continue the projects in this State.

When I realised that the Commonwealth Government was not going to devalue the Australian dollar I contacted all the companies in the North Province which were exporting under contracts written in American dollars. To answer the interjection made by Mr. Dans I would point out that these companies are exporting iron ore, beef, salt, and cotton.

I asked these companies for their official figures. I explained to them that if they made these figures available to me on a confidential basis I would not name the individual companies or the individual figures but I would use the total figure to express the loss to the North Province and to the national income for the year 1973.

They agreed to this request, and between 9.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. on the 14th February they were able to use their computer systems in the Eastern States to supply me with the figures. The figures show that the State experienced a loss of \$112,000,000 in export income in 1973 alone.

I passed this information on to the Press, because this was the income lost to the Pilbara and Kimberley areas in the North Province which I represent. I realised what this would do to the economy of the State.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The Commonwealth is charged with safeguarding the economy of the whole of Australia, but look at the three days during which it boggled on the question of devaluation.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: The honourable member can make his points afterwards. What I am saying is factual and he cannot deny that. I suggested in the Press that Australia should devalue the dollar, and that the Federal Government should go along with the devaluation. I refer to the report which appeared in *The West Australian* of the 15th February, under the heading of, "North to lose \$112m." It states—

About \$112 million would be lost on exports from the north of W.A. because of American and Australian dollar valuation changes, Mr. W. R. Withers (Lib., North) said yesterday.

The Federal Government seemed intent on destroying the north, he said.

It did not appear to be aware of the effect that revaluation would have on the State's economy when northern exports were considered.

Exporters of minerals, beef, cotton and salt had advised him that their expected export income for the year would drop \$112,390,000.

"The total loss on the national scene must be mind-boggling," Mr. Withers said.

"It is incredibly naive to expect companies to absorb such losses.

"There should be some devaluation of the Australian dollar or allowances made from Federal funds to help the companies to cope with the results of the Government's actions."

Several days later the Deputy Premier (Mr. Graham) was reported in *The Sunday Times* of the 18th February as having made the following statement—

The Deputy Premier, Mr. Graham, who returned from Canberra, said Commonwealth policies were flexible and ore companies could apply to the Reserve Bank for some compensation. He made no mention of the other companies involved in the export of beef, cotton, and salt.

Later on in the week the Premier (Mr. Tonkin) wrote to the Prime Minister with a request for a devaluation of the Australian dollar. I am sure that Mr. Claghon does not intend to mislead the House in presenting his facts. I have given him the facts to show him the source of political responsibility, and I advise him to take notice of the action of his leader, because the Premier took Liberal advice and also advice from industry to apply to the Prime Minister to bring about a devaluation of the Australian dollar so that the economy of Western Australia would not be affected.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: There was one notable person who did not agree with that, and it was Mr. Snedden.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Where did Mr. Snedden say that?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: He declined to comment.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I am being involved in a debate which I find quite useless, and I will not continue to waste the time of the House.

The facts which I have given to members in this House cannot be denied.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: In relation to Western Australia, I will agree with that.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I will now raise another subject. The children who are attending our schools today—and those who are younger—may live to see the cities of science fiction constructed of concrete and steel. They will be more sophisticated than the cities of today. Those cities will

have aseptic cleanliness, purified air, hydroponic tanks, recycling factories, and unfortunately they may have a rigidly controlled society.

The children of those children may not be able to play on private lawns because they may not exist. The children of that second lot of children may still be able to go to King's Park, but it will possibly be reduced very much in area. The Government of the day may not be able to supply one particular precious commodity—water.

I recently asked some questions in this House concerning water supplies and their source, and the answers I received were not really satisfactory. The replies showed that the anticipated future water supplies for industry were based on conjecture. Nobody really knows the source of our water supplies for future industry. I am not talking about backyard shows; I am talking about large industrial complexes.

I know that some Government officers have made reasonable estimates but they do not really know if those estimates will cope with the huge industrial complexes which will develop in this State in the future. Members do not have to accept the information which I am giving to them; they can obtain it for themselves from the 1972 *Year Book*.

I would point out that the increasing usage of water in this State, an increase of 46.3 per cent. each five years, will mean that we will come to the limit of our population expansion growth by 1990 unless some other water supplies are found. Some members who are here today may have to face this problem in the Legislature in 1990 because it is possible they will still be here.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I hope we will have our coats off by then.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Communities will have to be planned and created on the availability of natural resources, the potential of the areas concerned, and also the availability of water supplies. We should scrap our current policies and short-term thinking. Present-day thinking is usually based on the three-year or five-year life of a Government. This will prove to be disastrous if we wish to plan an industrial nation and an industrial State.

I would like to quote from a book called, *Our Economic Environment*. It was first printed in 1968, and later reprinted in 1971. It was published by Gallagher and Burkhardt, and I will quote from page 330 as follows—

(e) *The absence of long term economic planning.* The Australian economy does not have a long term economic growth plan as in some advanced economies in Europe. There are no output targets or government proclaimed growth rates to which the economy is geared. Development planning in Australia has gone little

beyond the presentation and publication of official reports on our recent economic past such as the Vernon Report. Most economic planning in Australia has been of a short term anti-cyclical nature designed to prevent inflation and promote full employment with external balance in the short period. The Australian economy really needs a long term development plan if it is to solve such vital economic growth problems as:

- (i) long term capital supply;
- (ii) sources of skilled manpower supply;
- (iii) the role of foreign private enterprise in our market system;
- (iv) the promotion of social welfare programmes and their share of national capital investment;
- (v) the role of import replacement industries in future decades.

Our current policy is to take water from the vicinity of the metropolitan area to meet the needs of the city of Perth. This limits the potential of the areas from which we take the water. We all know that cities are necessary centres of trade, commerce, and industry. However, cities can only generate income from the manufacture of products, the handling of country produce, the manufacture of items, and tourism.

Work forces do congregate in the cities because of the greater choice of work and the greater range and availability of those things necessary for a creative environment, such as entertainment and social welfare.

Politicians realise the voting power which exists in the cities and aim at obtaining those votes. I had something to say on this subject yesterday and I referred to some comments made by Miss Lyla Elliott which appeared in the Press. The cities do wind up with a greater share of the cake than the country areas, even though the majority of the State's income comes from the country. This occurs even though some people complain that they do not have enough voting power and this, once again, points to the impracticality of the one-man one-vote of equal value system.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: I am wondering what is the basis of that statement. I would have thought that the output per unit of industrial plants would be greater than that of rural properties.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Apparently Mr. Cloughton missed part of my speech. I have already said the cities are the centres of industry. I agree that industry does exist within the cities because that is where it is being kept.

I would point out that for political expediency this Government is planning an industrial centre which is a sub-region of the city. It is not true decentralisation. Such policies will increase water usage within the metropolitan area and, as I have already explained, we do not have enough water available to keep up with the expansion of industry. Existing policies will increase requirements and reduce the chance of industrial expansion, particularly in the south-west of the State.

Of course, if industrial expansion is reduced in areas away from the cities, more people will flock to the cities looking for work. This will create further demands on the water supplies, and so it will go on and on. We will create a great urban mess in this beautiful city if we do not plan for decentralisation and long-term projects.

I am not advocating the cessation of industry, but we must limit industry to the available resources. New industries should not be set up within the city area or in surrounding areas until we have proven resources to maintain such industry.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The honourable member does believe in economic long-term planning?

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Yes, I do. However, that is not being undertaken at the moment—or not on the plans which have been produced publicly. We need to decentralise industry into areas where water is available. I would suggest that one of the areas we need to move into is the south-west. Other areas are the Pilbara and the Kimberley where vast water supplies are available.

I have previously pointed out that the potential of the north of this State is almost unlimited. In fact, if some huge complex were set up in the north it would have the potential to expand and make cities like Wollongong and Newcastle look like cottage industries by comparison. However, I have expounded that point previously.

I recently pointed out that the Ord River, at this time, holds 6.6 times more water than is contained in the rest of the dams and reservoirs in this State. I would also point out that the Fitzroy valley is capable of holding three to five times that amount of water, so members can imagine the potential of that area. I believe we will eventually bring water to the northern and the eastern goldfields area from that valley.

Our planning departments need a bold approach so that they will invite world industries to become involved in long-term planning. The planning will have to be on a long-term basis. I say again: We do need immediate industrialisation in the south-west, and immediate planning for the Pilbara and the Kimberley. Such planning would allow our city to remain beautiful, and truly become a garden city.

Also, the excessive spread of urban areas would be reduced. The wealth of the State would be increased because we would become more competitive with our exports.

Long-term planning would mean that our industries would be set up in areas where we could supply cheap power and adequate water. The freight on raw materials would be reduced considerably. Also, use could be made of the findings of those who have studied the protection of our environment. I have expounded on that matter previously.

I consider that the fiddling scheme involving 80,000 acres, as planned by this Government in the Yanchep region, is quite ridiculous. We still cannot get an answer from the Minister concerning the amount of water which can be drawn, and the salinity of that water.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: No investigation has been carried out.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I again emphasise that we will need to transport water to the eastern goldfields area, and that water can only come from the area of the Fitzroy valley. The same water could be brought to Perth at a later stage to be used by future generations. We should make full use of all available water and we should take no notice of what the Premier said recently. I cannot understand his argument that we should make use of all available water before planning uneconomic ventures. He was referring to the bringing of water to the south of the State. This shows a weakness in our long-term planning.

Having mentioned our lack of long-term planning and the continuance of our short-term policies, I would point out that these are possible reasons for the lack of a railway system into the northern half of this State.

It is impossible to build a railway of this size, to service the whole of this State, on short-term planning. It can only be done in the very long term. Without economic transport systems, a very high cost of living will be maintained in the north, with all its associated problems.

But quite apart from that, there will be two other consequences. The amount of trade with the suppliers in the south of the State will be reduced because the high cost of living will cause the northern residents to look for more economic sources of supply. This is already happening in the East Kimberley. Because of our past policies and our short-term planning, and because we have not had an economic transport system to the north of the State, each year \$500,000 worth of trade with the south of the State is being lost. At the present time the towns in the north—that is, Wyndham, Kununurra, and Halls Creek—have been bringing in \$500,000 worth of groceries, frozen goods, fruit, and

vegetables through the co-operative system in the Eastern States. Those towns are no longer buying those commodities in Western Australia. This trend will increase and become very damaging to the south of the State.

When I speak about the north, I am not saying we should only look after the people in the north; I am also saying we should look after the people in the south—in other words, the whole of the State.

There is another point. Through not having an economic transport system, the primary producers in the north cannot trade with the south. The transport beats them. I will quote one product. This State cannot produce enough bananas to supply its needs. Carnarvon cannot supply the total needs, so we have to import large tonnages of bananas from north Queensland. One plantation owner in the east Kimberley has started to grow bananas—and when I say “bananas” I am talking about bananas which surpass any I have ever seen in Queensland, New South Wales, or anywhere in this State. They are unbelievably sweet bananas and their texture and size are excellent. This grower is now supplying the local market and it is hoped he will be able to supply the Pilbara next year. However, that is where he must stop until we have an economic freight system.

This plantation owner has asked me to look into the possibility of getting cheap freight. I believe he has approached the Transport Department but as yet on the prices quoted he cannot compete with the Queensland bananas. In other words, even though his product is better and can compete as regards on-site costs, because of the freight he cannot compete in selling bananas to our market. So it means a Western Australian cannot afford to compete in this State against the State that is farthest away. This is an enigma. I will refer to costs on freight systems a little later.

I again refer to Mr. Claughton's speech and the comment he made about the improved unemployment figures. I quote from page 5 of *Hansard* No. 1 for 1973—

I doubt whether any other member in our Parliament today could have provided the qualities of experience, ability, and leadership—which the situation demanded—in the measure these qualities are possessed by our Premier.

I venture to assert there is not one sector of the community which has not gained from the benefits of good Government, wise planning, and a concern for the welfare of the whole community—which the Labor Government has provided.

It was said that our unemployment record has improved, but when we look at the record we find it has not improved right

throughout the State. I quote from *The West Australian* of Wednesday, the 7th March, 1973. The heading is, “Record for unemployed”, and the item reads—

A record number of people were unemployed in the north of W.A. in January.

The officer-in-charge of the Commonwealth Employment Service in Port Hedland, Mr. Doug McIntyre, said that unemployment was about 30 per cent higher than for the corresponding period last year.

The figures are for the area north of the Tropic of Capricorn.

In January 815 people were registered as unemployed. About 75 per cent were Aborigines.

Mr. McIntyre said most of the unemployed were in the Kimberleys.

However people were looking for work in virtually every town, he said.

The figures were seasonal.

The figures may be seasonal, but last year's figures with which they were compared would also have been seasonal.

There must be a way in which to benefit recipients of unemployment relief, particularly those in the country areas. Surely we could have a labour pool for the unemployed, so that if they refused to work they would not receive relief. I think assistance such as this would reduce the criticism from those people who are working and who are against those who are receiving relief. It would also eliminate the “work-shy people” and possibly induce them to work. The expression “work-shy people” is not mine. I have quoted the previous Minister for Community Welfare who used the expression in reply to a question I asked in this House.

Many of the people who receive unemployment relief spend their money on alcohol, to the despair of their leaders, their friends, and the community generally. To give an idea of the extent to which these people—and I do not mean the people of any particular ethnic group but people on unemployment relief—are involved with alcohol, I will quote a small article from the *Northern Times* of the 15th March, 1973—

Derby police court

Recent Derby police Court prosecution included:

March 3: Harry Umbalgarri, drunk, seven day's gaol; Margaret Green, disorderly by fighting, cautioned; May Barnes, disorderly by fighting, bail estreated; Mick Gordon, interfered with motor vehicle, one month's gaol; Edward Roe, drunk, bail estreated; Philip Morlumbun, drunk, seven days gaol; Paddy Nance, drunk, fined \$10.

March 6: Lennie Jorda, escape legal custody, fined \$20, unseemly behavior, fine \$10.

March 9: Danny Bluey, drunk, one day gaol; Maria Clement, drunk, seven days gaol; Lucky Green, drunk, fined \$2; Alex Rogers, drunk, fined \$2; Harry Johnson, drunk, fined \$2; Mannick Jarafoo, drunk, 14 days gaol; Jeffrey Fletcher, drunk, fined \$2.

Freddie Wonetta, 2 charges of assault, three month's gaol.

Maria Clements, idle and disorderly, seven days' gaol.

The newspaper said that 75 per cent. of those people were Aborigines. That is not a pretty picture.

This leads me to a discussion of welfare policies. In the Community Welfare Bill which passed through this House, no mention was made of different racial groups of people, and I commend those responsible for bringing such a Bill to this House. The Minister was commended for it by those who spoke during the debate on it.

We find, however, that discrimination against non-Aborigines exists, which causes hatred to develop. The matter I am about to refer to is a Federal matter; that is, the secondary school grants scheme for Aborigines. Let us suppose an Aboriginal family is living next to a non-Aboriginal family. The Aboriginal family might be able to send a child to high school under the secondary school grants scheme for Aborigines, whereas the non-Aboriginal family cannot afford to do so. This causes hatred to develop.

On the last occasion I mentioned this matter in this House—it was in the course of my first speech in Parliament—I pointed out that any type of discrimination was dangerous and caused hatred to develop, which would further develop into racism. At that time, some people were very quick to brand me as a racist because they did not realise what I was getting at. It is not right to have discrimination. We must have policies which give equality to all people. Wherever there is discrimination, there is hatred and racism. That is wrong, yet we allow such policies to remain in existence and we put up with them.

I would like to demonstrate how hatred can develop through the actions of people who have the best intentions. They mean to do well but they unwittingly create hatred. I will quote from a circular issued by the parents and citizens' association in a northern town. It advises the parents that book hire fees are due. In the town in question there is a predominance of Aborigines. It is not desired that the Aborigines should pay the book hire fees, and the circular reads like this—

Book Hire Fees of \$3.50 per child (European) attending school are now due . . .

Perhaps a non-Aboriginal parent receives this advice on a particular day when the child endowment has not come through or when the old man has gone out on a bender and "blown" his pay at the local pub, so that the mother does not have a "brass razoo" and is beside herself. When she reads that circular, what does she do? Unthinkingly and unwittingly she says, "Those b— black so-and-sos."

I am not beating about the bush. This is what happens. The woman does not realise this form of hatred is being developed in her by the people who are trying to do the right thing by society. She blames the innocent, and that is wrong. We should not allow this hatred to develop.

The Hon. J. L. Hunt: This is the sort of talk that is stirring up hatred in this country. There is far too much of it.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Mr. Hunt is dead right. I was about to point that out. This type of discrimination will cause racism such as has never been known in this country.

I now quote from the *Northern Territory News* of the 3rd March, 1973. The headline is, "Rights for Whites". I will read only part of this article because it is very long. It is a report of an interview with a woman who was one of the instigators of the "rights for whites" committee. She is reported as saying—

She said: "We aren't anti-Aboriginal, but we think there should be a big stir into the running of the Aboriginal Affairs.

"The townspeople are particularly concerned about the benefits Aborigines and part-colored people are getting without any means test at all.

"They're getting money for all sorts of things no matter how badly off they are, while there are white people around who need help just as much.

"We want an inquiry into the whole department to find out how and why they are going to spend all this money, and to see if it's going to do any good for Aborigines.

"You can't help getting the feeling that all the money being poured in is just political yah-hooing to improve our image overseas.

"I've been up here 27 years, and I try to be honest about Aborigines.

"I know it sounds a bit racist, but I can honestly say I have never met an Aboriginal I have considered intelligent or responsible by our standards.

"I think it's about time everyone was a little bit honest, and the whole thing was brought out into the open."

There is more to the report but I think I have read enough for members to get the idea. Until we adopt welfare policies that provide equality for all, we have failed as legislators.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Do you approve of that sort of statement being made?

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I do not know whether Mr. Claughton keeps falling asleep or whether he just cannot hear me. Can other members hear me? I am sure they can. I said that is the type of statement that is causing racism.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Do you approve of that sort of statement?

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I am trying to prevent such statements being made. That is what I am trying to get across to the honourable member.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Then you don't approve of them?

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I agree the statement is valid, but I am very sorry that it had to be made by a person who says he is not a racist but feels that he must be honest in the matter. He feels people should be honest enough to come out and say Aborigines are disadvantaged under our welfare policy, but there are also some white people who are disadvantaged under it.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I have never yet met a person who has said he is a racist.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I have met people who say they are racists, and I feel sorry for them. However, I know other people who were not racists until they went to remote areas and saw the disparity that exists between Aborigines and non-Aborigines. That is when they start to become racists; and that is what I am trying to prevent by pointing out that members opposite must take action through their Cabinet, their Government, and the Federal Government. We must make everybody realise that welfare must be equal for all people, regardless of race.

I would now like to present another point in the matter of welfare. I point out there is another group in the north that is disadvantaged by virtue of the fact that it is in a remote area. I am referring to pensioners. A pensioner receives no consideration for living in a high-cost area, or in an area without public transport.

I approached the Federal Minister for Social Security (Mr. Hayden) regarding this matter and asked that he consider the provision of district allowances for pensioners so that they may live in their home towns—in the areas they helped to develop. The Minister for Social Security replied to my letter and told me he considers the matter to be a State responsibility. In view of that reply I then wrote

to the State Minister for Community Welfare (The Hon. R. Thompson) enclosing a copy of the Federal Minister's letter. Mr. Thompson replied that such a system should be introduced by the Commonwealth and pointed out the fiscal position of the State. In this instance I agree with Mr. Thompson. I think this district allowance should be instituted by the Federal Government.

The Hon. J. L. Hunt: Mr. Fred Collard has been advocating this for many years.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: He has not been successful to date, so apparently this is just another plea which will not achieve anything at all.

I would like members to ask themselves what they would tell a man who is about to go into retirement. Let us suppose he has worked with a shire council or the Main Roads Department in the north as a labourer or a grader driver, and has spent his life helping to develop the area. There are many such people who have lived in the north so long that it would be cruel to send them to the city. What does one tell such a man? Does one say, "I am sorry, you cannot live with your friends any more because you cannot afford to live anywhere other than in the city."?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Would you agree—and I have agreed with this for years—that the people in the north should receive a direct subsidy and not subsidies on goods and services? The subsidy should be paid to the person.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I have spoken in this House previously on the matter of allowances, and I will mention this later. There are some aspects which cannot be covered by zone allowances. Of course, it is quite useless to provide a taxation zone allowance for people such as pensioners who are not earning an income. I have singled out pensioners as an example because they need a district allowance.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I mean a cash subsidy for everyone.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: It is the same thing; they would be district allowances.

I think it is a great injustice to allow a person to live in a remote area without any compensation in the form of taxation zone allowances to bring him into parity with those who live in cities. I have pointed out that the taxation zone allowances for which people in the north now qualify are insufficient. They recognise the problem, but do nothing about making the situation more realistic. However, it is an even greater injustice to condone allowances based on a means test figure which

is below the figure required to live in remote areas. I will mention two examples, although there are others.

Firstly, the Federal Government has put forward a proposal to allow interest paid on housing loans to be a tax deduction. In other words, a person who buys a home and is paying interest on a loan will receive a taxation deduction for the interest he pays if his income is \$4,000 or less. That means it is a \$4,000 means test. There is a sliding scale involved, but it may be ignored for the purpose of my argument. Because a person on that income cannot afford to live in a remote area, let alone build or buy a house, the legislators are immediately creating a greater disparity between people of the cities and people of the north.

If we are to have means tests—and I do not like them—let us make them realistic; let us apply them to income regions and not just on city income bases.

The second example concerns the assistance for isolated children which has been introduced by the Federal Government. The scheme looks very good when a city person studies it. People in the city would say, "Hurrah, hurrah! Let us congratulate them." However, there is a trap. The allowance for isolated children, as presented by the Federal Government, is in three parts. The first part is \$350 per annum and has no means test attached to it. That is reasonable. The next two parts of \$350 and \$304 per annum respectively are the subject of a means test of \$4,200.

I have already pointed out that a person in the north who has a child who must be educated in a high school cannot even live on an amount of \$4,200. So this means that the people for whom the allowance was created cannot even qualify for it. Therefore it is merely a political bogey.

I would like to refer now—and I have mentioned this previously in the Chamber—to a speech I made on the 27th July, 1971. I do so in order to emphasise the point that means tests are completely unrealistic and cannot be applied to the people for whom they were designed—especially in the cases of education and housing loan interest. I pointed out in July, 1971, that in order to be able to live, without saving anything, a Kimberley householder must have a net income of \$2,168.42—which is the absolute minimum net income upon which a person could live in Perth—and an additional income of \$2,671.43, which is the disparity figure between living costs in the north and in the metropolitan area. Therefore he must have a total net income of \$4,839.85, or \$4,840 in round figures. In order to achieve that net income he must earn \$6,599 in taxable income. That was in 1971. Since then we have had tremendous inflation. So members can see that in 1971 the means test was not fair.

To continue with the matter of education for isolated children, I do hope the State Minister retains the present boarding-away-from-home allowances. If he does not then the whole thing will become a political farce. It will be absolutely criminal if the State Minister intends to use the excuse that the allowance provided by the State might be included in the means test for the Federal allowance, and to say in the same breath that this will mean that the State is subsidising the Federal Government and, therefore, the State allowance must be disallowed.

I have already pointed out several decisions that show a lack of understanding of all Australians by the Government. I think it is necessary for all of us, both as legislators and as members of committees of various types, to make public the facts of any proposal presented by any Government. That is our duty and responsibility.

For instance, one finds that Government members are talking about prices control and saying it is necessary in order to protect the people. That is a lot of hogwash. I will deal with the matter fully if it ever comes to a debate in this House. I hope the Government has sense enough not to allow it to come to a debate in either House of Parliament.

However, I would like to point out that the Government cannot prove its own theories—and I call them theories because in practice prices control has not worked out; in fact, it has had the opposite effect to that claimed by the Government. Since the Government has been in office it has increased the freight rates of the State Shipping Service to the north by 28.5 per cent. Members need not take my word on this. They may phone the State Shipping Service and ask how much it cost to send one ton of groceries to the north—to, say, Wyndham—in 1970, and then ask how much the cost is at present. However, I will inform members of a trap they are likely to fall into if they make such an inquiry. Probably they will be told, "You will have to tell us what sort of groceries they are, because we have different freight rates for volume and weight."

So if any member wishes to check my remarks I request him to ask the State Shipping Service how much it cost to send one ton of groceries to Wyndham in 1970 if that ton of groceries just happened to measure 40 cubic feet, which is a shipping ton. Then he should ask the same question in relation to the year 1973. Any member wishing to check on my statements who follows those suggestions will not be bogged down in red tape and fouled up with the figures supplied by the State Shipping Service, because in this manner the truth comes out and indicates the increase in rates.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Is that 28.5 per cent. applied to both shipping space and weight?

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: No, there are variations and it gets complicated. I used the example of one ton measuring 40 cubic feet in order to avoid a lot of complicated figures.

I refer now to another example. If members go to the State Housing Commission and ask how much it cost to build a three-bedroom, low-level, fibro house in the Kimberley in 1970 they will be told the cost was \$15,000. That is not a bad figure. It will be found that at that time the same house would cost \$7,000 to build in the city.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: How many squares would that be?

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Just over 10 squares.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I doubt whether you can get a 10-square timber framed house built for \$7,000 now.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I understand that today the figure is \$7,500 for a fibro, timber framed house. However, that figure is not important. The figure I am referring to in the Kimberley is factual, but the other one for Perth is hypothetical.

The figure I am dealing with is the cost of building the same size three-bedroom, fibro house of the low-level type under a State Housing Commission contract in the East Kimberley in 1970. It is \$15,000. This figure has increased to \$19,400 at the present time. Under the contracts let in November of last year the cost was \$18,600. Let me be fair about this and take a rough mean of \$19,000. If we compare this figure with the \$15,000 we will find that since the present Government has been in office there has been an increase of 27 per cent. in building costs in the north.

This is tied to the increase in shipping freights, because materials used in building are transported by ship to the north. Before the Government should recommend price control it must show that it can implement this very thing in its own departments. It has not been able to implement price control in its departments.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: It does not want price control of Government charges.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: Mr. MacKinnon tells us this is price control.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: If we look at the other prices and charges which have increased since this Government took office we find that electricity charges have risen by 25 per cent. I referred earlier to the loss of trade from the south to the north of the State. I pointed out that we lost \$500,000 in trade to the north.

It is rather interesting to see the 1973 inflation factors. We find there is an increase of 28.5 per cent. in the freight charged by the State Shipping Service, an increase of 27 per cent. in State Housing

Commission contracts, and an increase of 25 per cent. in electricity charges. However, when one looks at the foodstuffs inflationary factor for the East Kimberley one finds it is only an increase of 10 per cent. Why is this so? It is because the people up there have discontinued dealing with the State Shipping Service and the rest of this State.

I have outlined some of the errors in thinking as expressed in Mr. Cloughton's speech. What I have been saying is factual, except for the hypothetical figure of the cost to build a timber framed house in the city. I hope that members of this House will consider some of the points that I have made, and participate in the debate accordingly. I support the motion as amended.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. D. K. Dans.

TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [5.34 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill, which seeks to remove a possible cause of injustice occurring as a consequence of provisions contained in section 29 of the Traffic Act, is sponsored by the Law Society of Western Australia. It deals with a subject appropriate to be chosen as the privilege Bill in this Chamber and, I feel confident, will be acceptable to members generally.

Some little time ago, the President of the Law Society communicated with me with effect that his council had been giving consideration to the provisions of subsection (1) of section 29 of the Traffic Act.

That subsection deals with the duty of the driver to stop and to do certain other things following an accident. The second sentence of the subsection states that any person convicted under this subsection of an offence, of which failing to stop immediately after the occurrence of any accident by reason of which any person is injured is an ingredient, shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not less than three months nor exceeding 12 months.

This sentence is followed immediately by a proviso which states that if the court itself is satisfied that the person convicted was not aware of the accident, or if in the opinion of the court there are special reasons why a sentence of imprisonment should not be imposed, the court may in lieu of imprisonment impose a fine of not more than \$200.

In the council's view, with which I concur, it is manifestly unjust that a driver who is unaware of having been involved in an accident, by reason of which a person is injured, and fails to stop immediately

after the occurrence of the accident is guilty of the offence of failing to stop and is liable to be imprisoned for not less than three months or fined up to \$200.

There can be no justification whatever for imposing a penalty on a person for failing to stop after an accident of which he was totally unaware.

This Bill is accordingly brought to Parliament in order that we may delete the offending words from subsection (1) of the section and support this deletion by adding a new subsection (1)(a), with effect that it shall be a defence for the person charged to prove that he was not aware of the occurrence of the accident to which the alleged offence relates.

The effect of the initial amendment will be that an offence will only be created if the court is satisfied that the driver concerned was aware that an accident had occurred when he failed to stop.

I would point out to members that the Law Society does not wish to place the onus on the prosecution to prove that an offender was aware of the accident and also aware that some person had been injured. However, it still feels strongly that ignorance of these matters should not merely constitute a mitigating circumstance, but rather a complete defence to the charge. In the society's view, with which I am fully in accord, it is both wrong and unjust that a person can be found guilty of an offence and have a penalty imposed for failing to take certain action in circumstances of which he was totally unaware. While in support of the existing provisions it could be advanced that no appeals concerning this section have so far been recorded, it is more to the point—I suggest—to state that an appeal against conviction under the provisions of the section as now worded would have virtually no chance of success.

By providing the means of defence now proposed, an accused person will be given the opportunity to satisfy the court that he was not in fact aware of the accident or that anyone had been injured.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Where the person is able to, does the Government propose to compensate him? If the police is unable to substantiate the charge against such a person and the case is dismissed, what happens?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: If the honourable member will raise that matter in his contribution to the second reading debate I will have the inquiries made and supply him with the answer.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You do not know at this stage?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: No. It comes under a different category—offences.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I was thinking of the Governor's Speech delivered at the opening of Parliament, and what he said about this.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: On the other hand, it is conceivable that even though the driver were unaware of the accident he could be culpable in another direction, in that his unawareness was due to some other breach of the Act or regulations; namely, excessive speed, driving under the influence or driving without lights. It would seem fair then that under those circumstances, he be not convicted of an offence under section 29 (1) but charged with the particular offence which caused him to be unaware of the accident.

As I mentioned earlier, the proposed amendment would not have the effect of shifting the onus of proof to the prosecution, but would simply give the defendant the opportunity to establish a defence. He would have to do this by producing appropriate evidence of his own. But in cases where the defendant was unable to establish unawareness, he could still show special reasons as a mitigating factor.

In commending this Bill to members, I would point out finally that as things stand at the moment, even though the defendant is able to establish that he was unaware of the accident, and that he was otherwise quite blameless, he may still be found guilty of an offence under this provision; and this is, I consider, wrong in principle, for which reason I support the Law Society's proposals.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. R. J. L. Williams.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MARINE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [5.42 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill now before members is to amend the Western Australian Marine Act, 1948-72, to provide for the licensing and control of air cushion vehicles. It also imposes a responsibility on operators of air cushion vehicles and operators of conventional vessels used to carry fare-paying passengers on inland waters and within harbours to insure against death or injury to third parties.

Air cushion vehicles, normally referred to as hovercraft, are used in commerce and for pleasure in a number of countries with England, where the air cushion principle was first developed, leading the world in the number of craft manufactured and the scale of operations.

Their use in Australia is not widespread, though with a few operating in the various States it can be expected that, as our population increases and new models are produced, their numbers will increase.

Consequently the Australian Transport Advisory Committee, a joint Commonwealth-State organisation, has seen fit to examine the prospective impact which air cushion vehicles will have in Australia and what measures become desirable and necessary for their control.

Resulting from these studies the committee has drawn up and adopted a standard code of regulations. This code deals with the structural and technical specifications of air cushion vehicles and the qualifications of drivers.

Legislative authority is required in all States if this code is to be applied on an Australia-wide basis and this initial legislation will doubtless bring about consequential amendments in good time to several Acts—such as the Local Government Act and the Traffic Act, to mention but two.

The Government has also accepted a recommendation from the State officers committee which examined the question of application of the regulations in Western Australia that the third party insurance requirement should be extended to include any vessel carrying fare-paying passengers on inland waters or within any harbour, and I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. Clive Griffiths.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

THE HON. J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [5.44 p.m.]: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

I want to draw the attention of members to one matter. A big legislative programme will be placed before the House and I feel that members should get down to the business of making their contributions to the Address-in-Reply as soon as possible. They have had a long while to prepare their material, and if they have not had the opportunity to do so previously, they now have one to bring their contributions up to date by including matters which have occurred in recent weeks.

I see the possibility that if there is a delay in legislation which will be coming before this House we may have to sit late at night. Also, we may have to sit after tea on Thursdays and that is something which we devoutly do not want to happen. I would prefer that we finish at a reasonable time on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and, if possible, at tea time on Thursday nights.

I want to be extremely reasonable in the matter and I ask for the co-operation of all members. If members respond we will

all be much happier. None of us wants an undesirable situation to develop. I ask for the overall co-operation of members in this House, and ask them to get down to the task and not to put their speeches off so that the debate has to be adjourned night after night.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [5.46 p.m.]: I sympathise with the Minister in his desire to complete the Address-in-Reply debate as soon as possible. However, I feel that he should repeat his message next Tuesday afternoon for reasons which are fairly obvious at the moment.

I proffer the suggestion that if the Address-in-Reply debate were to collapse at this moment, the Government would be out of business. Whilst I do not want to commit myself to openly supporting the two Bills which are on the notice paper, on brief examination they do not seem to be very contentious.

I will speak to my colleagues in this House with a view to dispensing with the Address-in-Reply in an appropriate time, bearing in mind that members are entitled to take up some time to address the House on matters of importance to themselves and their electorates.

The conduct of the session will depend very largely on the management of the legislative programme by the Government. Without being overcritical I would say that unless the situation improves on what it was last year then the difficulty which the Leader of the House has foreshadowed may arise.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.48 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 22nd March, 1973

The **SPEAKER** (Mr. Norton) took the Chair at 11.00 a.m., and read prayers.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FOURTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed, from the 21st March, on the following motion by Mr. Bateman—

That the following Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech be agreed to—

May it please Your Excellency:
We the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign,