

forward by the Leader of the Opposition. We should delete the words "labour conditions" and insert in lieu, "expenditure conditions." That is a reasonable amendment and I hope the Committee will agree to it.

Amendment put and negatived.

### *Progress*

Progress reported and leave given to sit again, on motion by Mr. Moiler.

## **TOWN PLANNING**

*Address: Statement by Speaker*

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr. Norton): I have been asked by the Minister for Town Planning to remind members that there will be an address on town planning in the common room tomorrow afternoon.

*House Adjourned at 10.12 p.m.*

# **Legislative Council**

Wednesday, the 23rd August, 1972

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

## **QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE**

### **POLICE OFFICER**

#### *Resignation and Re-employment*

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

I gave the Minister for Police notice of this question yesterday evening. It arises from the debate that took place last night on the Traffic Act Amendment Bill (No. 2). I will put my question in simple terms, as follows:—

- (1) Can he tell me whether there is anything to prevent an officer, who was employed in the Police Force and who resigned to become either a traffic inspector with some local authority, or for some other reason, from rejoining the Police Force?
- (2) If not, what are the reasons for his being unable to rejoin?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

The Leader of the Opposition was good enough to give me notice of the question, but I think I should repeat it because he has added a little to it today.

The question he intended to ask was—

In the event of a member of the Police Force resigning from the force, is there any

rule or regulation which prevents his re-employment in the force?

My reply is as follows:—

No. The selection of applicants for the Police Force is the prerogative of the Commissioner of Police on the advice of the Police Selection Board. In considering re-employment of police officers who have previously resigned, due regard would be given to previous conduct, diligence, and efficiency, to the reason and circumstances of resignation, and to his future potential as a police officer in comparison with other applicants.

When traffic control is surrendered by a country local authority, favourable consideration is given to the recruitment of traffic inspectors in the Police Force irrespective of whether they were previously employed as police officers or not.

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

Can he appreciate how grateful I feel for his anticipating the reason behind my question? The reason I did not ask for was given as an answer to a "Dorothy Dix" question. I made reference in my question as to whether the officer might be employed.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Apparently I am not to get an answer to my question.

The **PRESIDENT**: The Leader of the Opposition was not asking a question; he was making a statement. I rule there is no question to answer.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Mr. President, that is one way of getting rid of a member's question.

The **PRESIDENT**: The Leader of the Opposition thanked the Minister for answering his question without asking another question.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I will let the matter drop. I do not think you were listening.

## **QUESTIONS (13): ON NOTICE**

### **1. W.A. TEACHERS CREDIT SOCIETY**

#### *Interest Rates*

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

With reference to the publication *The Western Teacher* of Thursday, 17th August, 1972, in which appears an advertisement an-

nouncing the best interest rates available from "The W.A. Teachers Credit Society"—

- 7% on Savings Accounts,
- 7.5% p.a. on 2 year term,
- 8% p.a. on 4 year term—
- (a) what rate of interest is charged on loans from this credit society to enable this rate of interest to be charged;
- (b) what are comparable interest rates charged on loans by permanent building societies?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (a) Personal loans only—  
1% per month reducible, equivalent to 12% simple or 6.5% flat.  
(Information provided by Teachers Credit Society.)
- (b) Housing loans—  
7½% to 8% reducible on quarterly rests.

## 2.

### PARLIAMENT

#### *Unicameral Legislation*

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

When appearing on a television programme on Monday evening the 21st August, 1972, the Premier stated in answer to a question that the Government had in the course of preparation legislation providing for a unicameral system of Parliament and that the Bill providing for this would soon be introduced into Parliament—

- (a) on what date did Cabinet determine that this legislation would be introduced;
- (b) when is it expected that the legislation will be introduced?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (a) 1st May, 1972.
- (b) During this Session of Parliament.

## 3.

### HOUSING

#### *North West: Eligibility*

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

- (1) In view of the Minister's reply to my question on Thursday, 17th August, 1972 concerning discriminatory calculations against Northern residents in State Housing Commission two bedroom flats, will the Minister advise the maximum net income allowed to a qualifying tenant in—  
(a) the Metropolitan area; and  
(b) Karratha?

- (2) What is the base rental of a two bedroom brick flat at—  
(a) Balga; and  
(b) Karratha?
- (3) What is the lowest rental for a two bedroom brick flat at—  
(a) Balga; and  
(b) Karratha?
- (4) What is the highest net income to allow the maximum rental rebate at—  
(a) Balga; and  
(b) Karratha?
- (5) Will the Minister reconsider his answer to my question concerning equality for Northern residents?
- (6) Will the Minister request Cabinet to consider a separate Zone Housing Commission to be established above the 26th parallel for the purpose of decentralisation and for the Northern Commission to receive funds in proportion to the financial return to the State from the North of the State?
- (7) If the answer to question (5) or (6) is "No"; what plan does the Minister have to correct the inequality that exists in this State?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (1) to (3) Apart from an increase in the eligibility figure, which is a benefit to applicants for State Housing Commission housing, the system of arriving at rentals is similar to that which existed under the previous Government. Details may be obtained by contacting the Parliamentary Liaison Officer.
  - (4) The lowest income which could be foreseen for occupants of a two bedroom unit would be unemployment benefit of \$29.50 a week for man, wife and one child. On that basis:—  
(a) rent \$5.45 a week and rebate \$7.95 a week;  
(b) rent \$3 a week (minimum for any unit) and rebate \$26.85 a week.
  - (5) The answer sets out the accurate situation.
  - (6) As advised to the Hon. Member recently, the Housing Commission is proceeding to a regional management structure part of which involves a regional centre at Port Hedland to service the Kimberley, Pilbara and Ashburton.
  - (7) Answered by (5) and (6).
- The Hon. W. R. Withers: Is that the right question?
- The Hon. W. F. Willesee: I think so. I hope so.

#### 4. NEW COMMONWEALTH AND STATE WORKS

##### *Finance*

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

- (1) Of the \$15 million worth of new work in Western Australia as appeared on page 1 of *The Sunday Times* of 20th August, 1972—
  - (a) how much is Commonwealth work and the cost of same;
  - (b) how much is State work and the cost of same?
- (2) Of the \$85 million mentioned in the same article as being under discussion—
  - (a) how much is Commonwealth work and the cost of same;
  - (b) how much is State work and the cost of same?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (1) and (2) The newspaper report upon which the Hon. Member's questions are based did not emanate from any report or reports issued by the Government. According to the newspaper concerned, of the \$15 million worth of new work, \$8 million is Commonwealth work and of the \$85 million mentioned, \$15 million is Commonwealth work.

#### 5. POLICE

##### *Request for Inquiry*

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

- (1) Has the Australian Labor Party made a request to the Minister or the Government seeking an inquiry into certain conditions prevailing in the Western Australian Police Force?
- (2) If so, when was the request received?
- (3) Has a decision been made on the matter and if so what was the decision?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Monday, 21st August, 1972.
- (3) No. The matter is currently under consideration.

#### 6. TRAFFIC

##### *Greenmount Sign*

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER, to the Minister for Police:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that a traffic road sign on the Western approach to the Metropolitan area of Great Eastern Highway, Greenmount reads "Traffic Control Area"?

- (2) Is this sign intended to indicate that East of that point there is no traffic control, or is it intended to mean "Police Traffic Control Area"?

- (3) If so why has the word "Police" been omitted from the sign?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The sign indicates the boundary of the Perth region traffic control area within which traffic is restricted to a 35 m.p.h. speed limit except within a speed zone in which a higher speed is permitted. The sign is not intended to identify the authority which controls traffic. The traffic control area replaces the old metropolitan traffic area which, for geographic reasons, did not provide for realistic traffic speeds.
- (3) Answered by (2).

#### 7.

##### **LIQUOR ACT**

##### *Allocation of Funds Pursuant to Section 168*

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

- (1) Following the introduction of the Liquor Act, 1970, has the Treasurer allocated any funds under Section 168 of the Act?
- (2) If not why not?
- (3) If the answer to (1) is "yes" will the Minister give the amounts allocated to the various Ministries under this section from 1970 to the present day?
- (4) What action has the Minister for Education taken under subsection 2 of Section 168?
- (5) What action has the Minister for Health taken under subsection 3 of Section 168?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (1) No funds have been allocated under this Section of the Act since its inception in 1970 by either the former Government or the present Government.
- (2) Moneys for these purposes are provided for in the Votes of the respective Departments.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) Although specific action has not been taken under this Section of the Act, the Education Department has provided a variety of teaching aids for secondary schools and a book on the effect of alcohol has been written and will be printed in the near future.
- (5) None, although certain treatment for alcoholics is provided at various institutions from moneys provided as mentioned in (2).

## 8. PINE PLANTATIONS

*Acreages and Cost of Land*

The Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) How many acres of pine—
  - (a) one year old;
  - (b) two years old;
  - (c) three years old; and
  - (d) over three years old, are there on land under Forests Department control?
- (2) How many acres in each of (a) (b) (c) and (d) above are planted on—
  - (i) land purchased from farmers;
  - (ii) State Forest land; and
  - (iii) other Crown land?
- (3) What are the annual estimated plantings in each of the next three years on—
  - (a) land purchased from farmers;
  - (b) State Forest land; and
  - (c) other Crown land?
- (4) What is the acreage of land held which has been purchased from farmers for Forest purposes and not yet planted?
- (5) What was the approximate cost of the land mentioned in (4)?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (1) (a) 5,930 acres;
- (b) 6,166 acres;
- (c) 6,311 acres;
- (d) 63,141 acres.

(2)

	(i) Land Purchased from Farmers	(ii) State Forest Land	(iii) Other Crown Land
	acres	acres	acres
(a) One year old	1,543	4,387	....
(b) Two years old	1,247	4,919	....
(c) Three years old	534	5,777	....
(d) Over three years old	8,978	52,189	1,974*

\* Made up from 544 acres of other Crown land at Collier and 1,430 acres of University Endowment land at Applecross.

(3)

	1973 acres	1974 acres	1975 acres
(a) Land purchased from farmers	2,300	2,040	3,020
(b) State Forest land	3,530	3,570	3,230
(c) Other Crown land	....	....	....

(4) 14,560 acres (inc. 8,020 listed in (3) above).

(5) \$800,000.

## 9. RETAIL PRICES

*Inclusion of Tax*

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

- (1) Is it against the law for a retailer to advise the public that a retail price includes a Government tax when the retailer knows that he will not pay that tax and in fact, spends the money on his private needs?
- (2) If the answer is "yes"—
  - (a) what is the offence;
  - (b) under what law could the retailer be charged?
- (3) Will it be an offence if a retailer collects the tax in his retail price but does not specifically advise his customers of the tax and then spends the tax on his private needs?
- (4) Will it be an offence if a retailer is responsible for collecting a tax but neglects to do so and refuses to pay the Treasury?
- (5) If the answer to (1), (3) or (4) is "no", will the Minister advise if he is planning to present legislation that will prevent unfair trading advantages caused by the non-payment of taxes?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (1) This question, seeking an expression of opinion on a question of law, is inadmissible.  
(See Erskine May's "Parliamentary Practice" 18th Ed. p. 327.)
- (2) to (5) Answered by (1).

The Hon. W. R. Withers: That is not bringing justice to the people of Western Australia.

## 10.

## ABATTOIRS

*Midland Saleyards*

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

Will the Abattoir Board investigate ways of making pens at Midland saleyard not normally used for selling (and which do not require cleansing after the day's sale) available for stock which have travelled long distances and which have arrived early for the next day's sale?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

The Board is investigating and considering this situation at present.

## 11. PROBATE

*Payment on Shareholdings*

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

- (1) Is the Minister aware that a shareholder domiciled and resident in Western Australia who has purchased shares which happen to be on the Victorian Register of a Company carrying on certain types of business in New South Wales and who dies whilst still owning such shares will be called upon to pay four lots of probate duty—namely Federal Estate Duty, Western Australian State Probate Duty, Victorian State Probate Duty and New South Wales Death Duty?
- (2) Does the Minister further appreciate that death duties in most States are based on the total value of the estate wherever situated even though the value of the particular shares located in the particular State may be only a few hundred dollars and the effect of this method of assessment is to cause the shareholder's estate to have to pay out a high proportion of the value of the shares in Eastern States probate duty?
- (3) Whilst it is appreciated that Section 70A of the Administration Act of Western Australia is designed to alleviate the position, does it allow for a full rebate of all duties paid in the other States so as to provide full recompense to the shareholder affected by these circumstances?
- (4) In view of the unfairness of the position to West Australian citizens is the Government prepared to undertake any other initiatives such as by endeavouring to negotiate reciprocal duty arrangements or "double tax agreements" with other States so as to eliminate the necessity of State citizens having to pay double, treble, or even quadruple death duties on the same assets?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (1) Yes, but the total of the duty paid in Victoria and New South Wales will be rebated against the duty charged in Western Australia up to the total amount of duty charged on the shares by this State. However, there is no rebate allowed on the amount paid to the Commonwealth Government as estate duty, because probate duties paid in the various States are allowed as liabilities of the estate for Commonwealth assessment purposes.

- (2) Yes. This is the accepted general practice in all States but is subject to the rebating of duty where duty is paid in more than one State.
- (3) In many cases it does. This occurs where the rates of duty in the other State or States are comparable. However, if they are not comparable, then the refund is the lesser of the Western Australian duty or the duty paid in the other jurisdiction.
- (4) The rebating provisions are designed to remove, as far as possible, "multiple taxation". They also protect the States' revenues and apply equally to citizens of other States. However, it is recognised that the procedures are cumbersome, annoying and expensive. Currently our Acts are under review and consideration is being given to proposals to simplify these procedures.

## 12. RAILWAYS

*Employees' Early Morning Calls*

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

- (1) Is the Minister aware that some railway employees have early morning reminder calls made by taxi drivers, and that the taxi charges are paid by his department?
- (2) Is this service given to any employee who has a telephone connected to his quarters?
- (3) Have employees ever caused double charges by falling asleep after the first awakening?
- (4) What is the annual cost of taxi usage by the Railways department?
- (5) Would this service save money if phones were fitted to the houses of those employees who required early morning reminder calls?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) Yes. Relevant industrial awards provide that in certain circumstances train crews shall be so advised.
- (2) Yes. This is done to avoid disturbing the employee's family. Further, some employees object to use of their private telephones for this purpose.
- (3) Occasionally. In these circumstances disciplinary action may then be taken.
- (4) Costs incurred for this purpose are not recorded.
- (5) No. This would involve telephone charges for a good many members of the staff who would be involved only rarely.

13.

## TURF

*Study of Bacterial Disease*

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

Has the Western Australian Department of Agriculture studied reports of a newly discovered Bacterial Disease affecting English turf and the likelihood of it endangering this country's agriculture?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied: It is not clear which disease is referred to.

There are a large number of exotic diseases of potential danger to this State. It is the responsibility of the Plant Quarantine Service to prevent their accidental importation.

An example of such a disease is the fungus disease of turf caused by *Fusarium nivale*. Press reports indicate that this disease was responsible for damage to the pitch at Headingly. Though *Fusarium nivale* has been common in certain countries outside Australia for many years its introduction to this State has so far been prevented.

# BULK HANDLING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

*Standing Orders Suspension*

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [4.53 p.m.]: I move, without notice—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Bulk Handling Act Amendment Bill to pass through all remaining stages at this sitting.

In support of the motion, I wish to say that the passing of this Bill is a matter of urgency. I ask the indulgence of the House to accept this motion in order that the legislation may be passed as quickly as possible.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [4.54 p.m.]: At the outset I make it clear I intend to support the motion moved by the Leader of the House, because I am aware of the importance of the legislation and of the necessity to move for a suspension of Standing Orders. The Bill which the Government wishes this House to pass through all stages this afternoon is Order of the Day No. 2 on the notice paper.

I must say, however, that I do not think there is much co-operation between Ministers in the Government. I first found out about the presentation of this Bill in the Legislative Assembly, following a suspension of Standing Orders in that House, yesterday evening at approximately 6.10

when the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly (Sir Charles Court) came to tell me about it. The Leader of the House knew about it just after dinner last evening, at approximately 7.30. He then informed me and I felt a little guilty, because I could have told him of the fact as I had known about it for 1½ hours.

Had the Premier told the Leader of this House of the urgent necessity for this legislation, there would have been no need to move a motion without notice this afternoon. The Leader of the House would have been in a position to give notice of his intention to move today. I know this does not make any difference to the ultimate result. However, I do feel that, in fairness to the Opposition, the Premier could have made the position known. If the Premier of this State or any of his Ministers has a matter of such importance, I, as Leader of the Opposition in this House, am entitled to as much notice as possible.

I will be in a position to support the Bill when the Leader of the House moves the second reading, because I have looked into the matter today. Sir Charles Court has indicated to me the importance of the measure. I do not utter these words in the way of protest but simply to say there could be a little more co-operation between the Premier and his Ministers. I do not blame the Leader of the House, but I feel the Premier could be a little more helpful than he has been on this occasion.

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [4.57 p.m.]: I am a little disconcerted at the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. There are occasions on which very busy men do not have a great deal of time to devote to details. It is true the Leader of the Opposition knew of this Bill before I did—I think by about 20 minutes. I am sure there was basically the complete and utter co-operation of all parties in the Legislative Assembly as to the procedure which would be followed today.

In essence, what does it matter who is the first to know that something will happen? If it had been possible to act as the Leader of the Opposition suggested, I would have followed the normal procedure. However, we are doing something co-operatively; the Parliament is co-operating to expedite the passage of a Bill so that it may become law. In the circumstances whether I was notified before or after the Leader of the Opposition does not matter very much. The principle is that we are endeavouring to do something as quickly as possible.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Of course it matters.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: It does not matter.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It does matter.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: It does not matter to the extent the Leader of the Opposition tries to imply.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It could have been a complicated Bill requiring a great deal of discussion.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: Had that been the case, the Leader of the Opposition would have been granted an adjournment and this, too, would have been the procedure in another place.

Question put.

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver): To be carried, this motion requires the concurrence of an absolute majority. I have counted the House; and, there being an absolute majority present with no dissentient voice, I declare the question carried.

Question thus passed.

### LAND AGENTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

#### *Third Reading*

Bill read a third time, on motion by The Hon. V. J. Ferry, and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

### BULK HANDLING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

#### *Second Reading*

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [5.00 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to give effect to a guarantee by the State Government for moneys being borrowed by Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited, thus permitting Co-operative Bulk Handling to conclude its financial arrangements for the construction of the proposed Kwinana terminal.

The terminal is to be financed on the basis of a \$30,000,000 overseas bond issue by the Rural and Industries Bank for an Australian dollar/deutschemark borrowing through the Orion Bank Limited, with the balance as an internal Australian borrowing through Chase/NBA Group Limited.

It has been agreed that both borrowings are to be guaranteed by the State Government. The overseas element has been completed, the funds being received on Friday, the 11th August, 1972.

In preparation of documentation, a legal query was raised by the solicitors for the Chase/NBA Group Ltd., as to whether Co-operative Bulk Handling qualified for a Government guarantee under the Industries (Advances) Act, 1947-1961.

Legal opinion on this question is divided. Therefore, to overcome a doubt which could affect subscription to this part of the

borrowing it has been agreed with the company and with the Treasury that the Act be amended as a matter of urgency.

Subscribers to the Australian debenture issue have earmarked and are presently holding funds for Co-operative Bulk Handling and any undue delay in the completion of loan arrangements could lead to the funds being diverted elsewhere.

The Bill proposes that the Act be amended to provide that the Treasurer of the State on behalf of the Crown in Right of the State may guarantee on such terms and conditions as he thinks fit the repayment of any moneys borrowed by, or advanced to, Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited and the payment of interest thereon.

It is the view of the Government that the guarantee power exists without the passing of this measure, but nevertheless to eliminate any doubts which may be held by the parties to the loan, this Bill has been brought to Parliament.

Members are doubtless aware of the importance to the State of an early commencement of the projected Co-operative Bulk Handling operations at Kwinana.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [5.03 p.m.]: I will not take the question of the suspension of Standing Orders any further in case my remarks are misinterpreted. To make it quite clear, I say that I wholeheartedly support this Bill because I realise its importance to Co-operative Bulk Handling, to the farmers who use the facilities provided by Co-operative Bulk Handling, and for that matter, to the welfare of the community generally which profits as a result of the years of work which have gone into building up a present very efficient organisation.

I suppose, Sir, that there is probably nobody in this House who could tell us more about the activities of Co-operative Bulk Handling than yourself as can, perhaps, some of the other farmer members of the House. The farming community certainly knows a lot more about it than I do. However, during my time in this Chamber I have seen the great benefits which have accrued to farmers and the reflected benefit to the community as a result of the work of this organisation.

The State Government is now about to guarantee some borrowings and legal opinion is divided as to whether or not there is authority for the Government to issue these guarantees. There is a fear that litigation may follow if the position is not clarified. Therefore, the Government has hastily brought this measure forward to ensure that nothing can go wrong. In these circumstances the action is commendable and we should pass the legislation.

From my point of view I feel it is unnecessary to enter into a discourse on the value of Co-operative Bulk Handling and what it has accomplished in the past and intends to do in the future. It is sufficient to say that the \$30,000,000 will be expended in further building up facilities so that Co-operative Bulk Handling will render a better service to its members and the community will benefit as a result. In supporting the second reading of this Bill, and also the third reading when the time comes, I would like to say that I congratulate Co-operative Bulk Handling on the contribution it has made to the welfare of the State. I feel sure it will continue with the good work. I wish it well and support the Bill.

**THE HON. L. A. LOGAN** (Upper West) [5.06 p.m.]: As one who has some knowledge of the circumstances which brought about this legislation, I realise the importance of its being speedily dealt with to ensure that the money being made available to Co-operative Bulk Handling is not passed over because of a minor fault in our legislation. I also realise the importance of getting the work under way. On this side of the House we give the measure our wholehearted support.

**THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH** (South) [5.07 p.m.]: In some ways it is rather unfortunate that this measure is being rushed through because quite a lot of discussion took place on this matter this morning at the Farmers' Union and the Pastoralists and Graziers Association.

Perhaps it has not been generally realised that whilst Co-operative Bulk Handling was originally established to handle wheat and only wheat, farmers have been gradually growing other crops and statutory bodies have been set up to handle these crops. Co-operative Bulk Handling also undertakes the shipping and storage of such crops. In fact, it has now got to the stage where one-third of the crops being handled by Co-operative Bulk Handling does not constitute wheat. For this reason I feel that the other grains are important when considering this measure.

I was amazed to be told today by a member of the barley board that the board was not consulted in any way about the proposal to build these facilities. The original facilities built throughout the State form a vast network and have been very successful.

Western Australia should be grateful for the support given to the farming community by Co-operative Bulk Handling. Other States have had much more difficulty with bulk handling; for instance, grain had to be handled in bags in Victoria until quite recently. Many of us are unaware of the wonderful foundation laid in this State by the pioneers of bulk

handling. However, any plan for new facilities should involve the consideration of the new crops, and therefore, I am concerned that the new facilities for which this loan is being raised are chiefly to handle wheat. In fact, I asked the Minister today for more information as to whether the new facilities would be used for other crops, but we find this Bill has been brought forward before we have been supplied with the answers.

It is my opinion that the new facilities will be used mainly for wheat because the berths will take large ships which can be quickly loaded. There will also be provision for long-term storage at Kwinana. If we study other crops we will see that these requisites are not necessary. For example, barley is sold very quickly—in fact, we were recently embarrassed when we became short of feed for livestock after a bad summer and autumn and we were unable to purchase barley or oats. Most of these crops can be sold fairly readily on the world market; they do not require long-term storage.

It is also unlikely that the newer crops will require large ships for their carriage, and this is particularly so in the case of the oil seeds—rape and linseed. We do not know what percentage of these crops will be exported. It is becoming harder and harder to find markets for wheat, and as members know, wheat farmers are on quotas. However, there is quite a large market for some of the other grains.

I am concerned as to whether a proper study has been made to include the handling of these grains in the facilities at Kwinana, particularly as the industry itself has met today to discuss its doubts on this matter.

Members will undoubtedly realise that I have asked a number of questions concerning the effect of the Kwinana depot on the Port of Albany. Unfortunately the loading facilities at Albany are very slow and this fact has been detrimental to the port. The people of Albany are very concerned that ships are bypassing the port because of the slowness of loading facilities. In fact, ships are often partly loaded at Albany and then fully loaded at Fremantle. The people of Albany have endeavoured to get Co-operative Bulk Handling to increase the facilities and the machinery at the port, but the answer given is that any available money must go into the Kwinana project. This is rather frightening when we begin to consider the whole question of decentralisation. It is even more frightening when we realise that Albany is a natural harbour for these newer types of grains. I admit that the Kwinana establishment will handle wheat very well, but it is not a natural port for rapeseed and other crops.

I mentioned that perhaps we will see a change in the pattern of marketing. Even in the case of barley home consumption



will rise as Australia moves into feed-lotting of cattle. A few Americans have visited us to investigate putting up feed-lots in Western Australia. One of the disadvantages against the home consumption of grain is that the consumer has to pay the large costs of statutory marketing and handling. This was well illustrated when we debated the Bill for the statutory marketing of rapeseed. Mr. Medcalf brought up the problem of the extra costs incurred by the local crushers because they had to buy through the Grain Pool. They would be quite willing to pay the amount the producers receive. The difference is that they want more storage on the site rather than have to be faced with the necessity to cart to port and then away from it.

I wonder whether there is very much flexibility in our system. I draw the attention of the House to these matters and also to the fact that the wheat board and the wheatgrowers are considering changing to a different pattern of wheatgrowing.

To date we have entirely based our production on wheat for bread rather than for feed. Large markets are becoming available around the world, particularly in Japan, for feed grains and for the marketing of certain varieties of wheat for this purpose. Up till now Australia has concentrated on f.a.q. wheat, but thoughts are changing in the directions I have indicated, and one wonders whether these new wheats will be grown, not in the lower rainfall areas but rather in areas of high rainfall.

Quite rightly we have stopped grain being grown in areas with a 20-inch rainfall, because the wheat grown in such areas is not good f.a.q. wheat. But if the intention is to produce this high yield wheat for feed we will not be able to grow it in lighter rainfall areas. Such wheat is mostly grown under irrigation and if Australia proposes to meet these demands, the wheat will be grown on the south coast of the State.

Accordingly I question whether we can centralise so much of our exports on these new facilities which are being established at Kwinana. We have been told that the reason for pushing this Bill through is a financial one. I do not doubt that for a moment; but the Government has made a great mention of how it is overcoming the unemployment problem by this additional industry—by the expenditure of some \$40,000,000—and like Mr. MacKinnon I wonder whether some recognition should not have been given to the wheat and grain growers; because, after all, they are the men who will really establish these facilities. It is they who will ultimately find the money for these facilities. I hope this is generally appreciated. I support the Bill.

**THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE** (North East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [5.18 p.m.]: I desire to thank the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Logan, and Mr.

Wordsworth for their support of the Bill, the purpose of which, basically, is to give effect to a guarantee given by the Government. As I see the measure, its purpose is no more than that.

The Leader of the Opposition said there was some doubt as to whether the guarantee could be legitimately given and in order to remove all doubt on the matter, whether it be relative to those who believe or those who do not, this Bill is now before us.

The measure has been given a quick passage, because basically what I have mentioned is all that is required in the legislation. It will help relieve the minds of those who have to provide finance in terms of millions of dollars—it will assist them in preparing for the expenditure of these millions of dollars.

Accordingly I will be brief and merely acknowledge the support the Bill has received from those members who have spoken to it. I thank them for their support and I commend the measure to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

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

*Third Reading*

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

## **TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)**

*Second Reading*

Debate resumed from the 22nd August.

**THE HON. F. R. WHITE** (West) [5.22 p.m.]: A great deal has been said about this Bill both for and against the measure. The Bill itself is rather short, though the Minister's speech is of slightly longer length.

The speech delivered by the Minister has been quoted on several previous occasions so I do not intend to quote from it to any great extent. The essence of the Minister's speech, however, deals with the present situation which exists throughout the country, where we have both police control and local authority traffic control.

In his speech the Minister debated the pros and cons of a separate centralised authority not controlled by the police and of a separate authority controlled by the police. The Minister obviously supports police control—this is evident from his speech—as does the Bill before us.

Reference was made to the desirability of having a separate traffic control organisation. The Bill before us, however, deals with only two points—whether we should

place all traffic control throughout the State under the police, or whether we should leave this control as it exists at the moment; partially with the police and partially with local authorities.

It has always been my opinion, which is substantiated by appropriate documents and books, that the duty of the police is to maintain order and ensure the enforcement of the law. As we all know, the police in this State do carry out these duties. In the Police Department there are five sections, namely, the plain-clothes section, which deals with the enforcing of the liquor laws and the policing of drugs and gambling; there is also the C.I.B.; apart from which we have the uniform police, the traffic police, and the women's police.

The traffic police constitutes only one section within the entire Police Department. In his speech the Minister implied that if this Bill were carried the entire Police Force would have to be reconstituted. He did not, however, indicate how the Police Force was to be reconstituted. Are we to amalgamate the five separate sections or will we merely enlarge the traffic section of the Police Department?

Primarily, however, the Police Force is there for enforcement of the law and, as we all know, enforcement usually means revenue for the Treasury.

Accordingly I feel that if the Bill is agreed to the only advantage that will accrue to the State of Western Australia will be that the Treasury funds will be enlarged from the penalties derived from traffic offenders.

I do not believe that the passing of this Bill will assist traffic safety which, incidentally, was very briefly mentioned by the Minister in his speech. The inference to be drawn from the Minister's speech, however, is that the passing of the Bill will improve traffic safety.

In order to substantiate my statement concerning enforcement, I would indicate that only in yesterday's *Daily News* there appeared a couple of photographs of policemen waiting to apprehend offenders in one of our suburbs. The photographs showed five policemen on motor cycles and one sitting behind a tree operating the amphotometer.

From the photographs, however, it appeared that the public were informed well beforehand of the trap the police had set; they seemed to indicate that the public knew the police were there. My experience of the operation of such traps is that the policemen are generally very well concealed behind bus shelters, and so on. Their purpose, apparently, is to apprehend the offender, give him an infringement notice, and accordingly collect a few more fines to swell the Treasury funds.

If the collection of fines were not the prime purpose for the setting of the trap, the policemen engaged in the operation should be clearly visible so that the atten-

tion of the motoring public may be drawn to the fact that traffic control regulations were likely to be enforced unless the public conformed. Accordingly I believe that enforcement and the swelling of the Treasury funds is the prime purpose of the Bill.

What reasons did the Minister give in his speech in support of the Bill? I will not quote them all, but he did deal with certain aspects. The Minister first said that the present system was incompatible with State-wide traffic management; not the management of road safety, or traffic safety. The Minister certainly did not justify how the measure would provide a system any more efficient than the one we have at the moment.

Secondly, the Minister said that every Australian State except Western Australia had police control, though he admitted that some dissatisfaction did exist in the other States. He did not, however, state what the dissatisfaction was; he was happy to brush this aspect aside and not enlarge on it. He did not say that with police control there would probably be dissatisfaction over and above certain dissatisfaction that exists in our State at the moment.

Thirdly, the Minister said the Government's concern about the road toll is demonstrated by the presentation of this amending legislation. As I have said, the Minister made reference to the road toll. Every time reference is made to the road toll—and I mentioned this aspect in August of last year when speaking to the Address-in-Reply debate—we hear of the number of fatalities on the road. Very little reference is made to accidents, or to quadruplegics, to those who occupy hospital beds in mental institutions, and so on.

I have said this before, and I do so again, that the road toll means more than deaths. If we look at the accident ratio and study the statistics I believe we will find the accident ratio could be much greater in areas controlled by the police than in country areas, even though the reverse may apply in relation to the death toll.

It is stated that the death toll on country roads is higher than on city roads. However, I would point out that in the country the motorists drive over longer distances, on roads which are less safe, and at higher speeds; furthermore, many motorists in the country areas come from the metropolitan area or from other country areas, and they are not familiar with the local roads. A case has not been made out to indicate that control of traffic by the police in the city and in other areas has reduced the ratio of accidents, including the fatalities.

Another point raised by the Minister as being a reason for the police to take over traffic control is the recommendation made by an interdepartmental committee comprising seven members which

was set up in 1965. By a majority of five to two this committee supported the police takeover of traffic control. The Minister did mention that the two dissenting members were the two representatives of the local authorities.

At that time there were weaknesses in traffic control by the local authorities, but since 1965 the position has improved tremendously, so much so that today many of the local authorities have equipment which is superior to that used by the Police Force. I refer to equipment such as two way radios, high speed motorcars, etc.

Another reason given by the Minister for the introduction of the Bill before us is that the Royal Australian College of Surgeons is concerned about the road toll. Of course it is concerned about the road toll, but it also supports the police takeover of traffic. Apparently it did not go into the other ramifications connected with the road toll. I am sure that every member of this Chamber and every person in the State is concerned about the accident and fatality rate, but this concern does not justify the takeover of traffic control by the police.

Let us see what the police do at the present time. They are solely in control of the issue of drivers' licenses. A person who goes to a police station to apply for such a license has to answer a series of questions, and undergo a minor eye test. I would point out that in the community there are many people who are blind in one eye, but yet they are able to pass that eye test. All that an applicant for a driver's license has to do to pass the eye test is to read the letters down to the third line on a chart containing large print. I suggest the letters could be memorised quite easily.

Even a person with good eyesight could lack peripheral vision, and this is a very important aspect. A person who is blind in one eye is not able to see to one side, and it is this ability to see sideways that gives a person pre-warning of approaching vehicles thus enabling him to avoid accidents. The dangers are great enough in the case of a driver with good sight in both eyes.

We also have cases of people who are apparently blind in one eye when it comes to looking straight ahead, but they have very good peripheral vision. However, the eye test given by the police for drivers' licenses is purely directed to the eyes or the mind of a person, and to his ability to read the letters on a chart hanging on the wall. If an applicant can read the letters down to the third line he passes the test, but he could have very limited, or no, peripheral vision.

In the metropolitan area, in particular, we find many traffic lights; these are coloured red, amber and green. To my

knowledge when a person applies for a driver's license he is not given a test to determine colour blindness.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Why?

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: I do not know. The police control the granting of licenses, and maybe that is the reason. A person could be blind to colours such as red or green.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: A person could be blind without any colours at all, if he took the right stuff!

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: Many people are not aware of the extent of colour blindness among the community. Two per cent. of the population suffer from colour blindness. When such people approach traffic lights they cannot see whether the colour is green or red.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It does not make any difference. They know which light is on the top and which light is on the bottom of the signal. They can see which is lit.

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: That is, if they are used to traffic lights. Red gives a direction to stop, and green gives a direction to proceed.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: How long has that been in vogue?

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: To my knowledge ever since traffic lights have been in use. I will not go into the pros and cons of what should be done; but I do draw attention to the fact that the police who control these areas are not doing a particularly good job in respect of traffic safety, because by allowing a driver who is potentially blind or who is colour blind to drive on the roads they are contributing to the possibility of accidents occurring.

There is another aspect of police control of traffic which I wish to mention, and unfortunately this applies in many instances to the local authorities. A person might purchase a motor vehicle and have it licensed. Provided that the owner does not change his place of abode, and thereby is not required to change the number plate, there is no compulsion for that vehicle to be tested again. If the owner is fortunate enough not to be picked up by the police motor vehicle testing squad, he could continue to drive an unroadworthy vehicle for a period of many years.

The previous Government did seek authority for the setting up of vehicle testing centres where vehicles could be examined at regular intervals. Since the present Government has been in office I have not heard any more about this proposal. If this Government is so traffic safety conscious I presume it would have done something to establish these testing centres and put them into operation. Maybe the Government does have this

scheme under way. After having been in office for 18 months something should have been done by the Government.

Still pursuing the aspect of road safety, I turn now to the Government's attitude. The other evening Mr. Ron Thompson quoted from a letter he had received from the President of the Royal Automobile Club. He stated that the president supported the police takeover of traffic control. He pointed out that in the same quotation the president thought this control should rest with the Minister for Transport.

What has this Government done recently? It has removed the responsibility for ensuring traffic safety from the Minister for Police and the Minister for Transport; it has created a new portfolio and a new department, and this portfolio is known as "Traffic Safety." The Minister for Traffic Safety is also the Minister for Works. In the minds of some people this might be a good thing.

The Minister for Works controls the construction of roads, and so forth. Road construction is a very important aspect of road safety. I have criticised the Main Roads Department previously, and I will do so again. Many of the accidents and traffic hazards result from bad highway engineering. In some locations in the metropolitan area we find the sudden convergence of four lanes into two lanes. I refer to two particular places: one on the bridge on Great Eastern Highway which crosses the Helena River, and the other on the bridge just west of Guildford which crosses the Swan River. This is poor highway engineering. Wet weather conditions at such locations create hazards and cause accidents, and the Main Roads Department should have provided safeguards.

In the field of safety we find that if a local authority desires to appoint a crosswalk attendant, to establish a road crossing, or to have traffic signs erected, it must go through the monotonous procedure, as I outlined in my contribution to the Address-in-Reply debate in August, 1971, of having to obtain permission from the Main Roads Department. If the department does not agree, the local authority will not be able to do what it seeks.

Again referring to my contribution to the Address-in-Reply debate in August, 1971, the Minister may well recall the occasion when I described an accident which occurred at the corner of Third Avenue and Great Eastern Highway, West Midland. I drew attention to the fact that a young girl had been hit by a vehicle at a crosswalk which, in my opinion, was very badly situated. This occurred after I had asked a senior official of the Main Roads Department for something to be done to reduce the hazard at that crossing, and after the Governor Stirling High

School and other organisations had complained about the location of that crossing. I drew the Minister's attention to the fact that two other accidents had occurred at the crossing, and I did not want any more to happen.

At the conclusion of my remarks on this particular matter I asked this question—

Will The Hon. Minister for Police take immediate action to have the crosswalk at the intersection of Third Avenue and Great Eastern Highway, West Midland, moved at least 100 ft. in a westerly direction; or, alternatively take action to have it manned by a crosswalk attendant during the periods of maximum pedestrian use?

I think it was on the following day the Minister showed he was concerned at the existence of such a situation. He directed that officers of the department be sent out to inspect the crosswalk. They took photographs, and the photographs were displayed in this Chamber. The Minister did express his concern, and stated he would act promptly.

That occurred in August, 1971, and I am pleased to say that now a crosswalk attendant has been appointed to direct traffic at that crossing. However, it took eight or nine months for that appointment to be made. If we had an authority or authoritative persons who are charged with ensuring traffic safety, surely the authority or such persons would not have waited for so long a period of time before appointing a crosswalk attendant or relocating the crosswalk?

I do not question the sincerity of the Minister. He is very sincere, and is very traffic safety conscious. I do not question his sincerity, but I do question the efficiency and the lack of action on the part of some departments which are involved with road safety. Road safety also involves many other areas with which the police and the Main Roads Department are not directly concerned. I refer to the psychological and mental deficiencies of some drivers, the lighting of roads, and similar aspects.

At this point of time I support the proposal which the Liberal Party members have put forward: That is, if there is to be a change in traffic control, let us set up a separate authority, which is removed from police control and from the Police Department.

I feel that the Minister, by his remarks, has closed the gate to that proposal. I read through his speech about four times in order to see whether I had been wrong in my summation, but the essence of the proposals set out is that it will be police takeover, and nothing else.

I am now dealing with the reasons put forward by the Minister as to why the police should take over traffic control. The

Minister referred to the Victorian police report. He was speaking about a special organisation in that State and he referred, also, to the New Zealand set-up. In New Zealand traffic is controlled by the police plus 17 local authorities. Up to this point of time I thought it was 16 local authorities, but I have not had an opportunity to check any further. The Minister went on to say—

It cannot be denied that the control of moving traffic is a proper police function.

It could be a police function, but not solely police. However, the implication is that only the police are able to control moving traffic properly. The Minister referred to the expansion of the Police Force, and said that the department would be reconstituted; that additional inspectors would be brought into the Police Department for the purpose of controlling traffic. However, the Minister did not refer to the limitation of 45 years of age on such members of the Police Force. I am indebted to Mr. McNeill for drawing the attention of the House to the age limit of 45 years which applies to men who enter the Police Department for purposes of traffic control.

The Minister referred, firstly, to a deficiency in manpower, and a little later he referred to 400 policemen who were to be thrown into the melting pot. Just like that, in one breath; firstly only 100 policemen and then 400 policemen. There seems to be a contradiction in some of the statements which have been made.

I can see very little advantage, if any, to be derived from the police taking over complete control of traffic throughout Western Australia at this time. I can see advantages in a central authority as advocated by some of the previous speakers. However, I fancy there are many disadvantages, and many of them have already been listed by various speakers. All the disadvantages, however, have not necessarily been mentioned in this Chamber during the debates which have taken place and I intend to list some which it has been suggested will occur if the police take over the control of traffic. They are as follows:—

1. A reduction in traffic patrols would occur thus resulting in less effective control.

The Minister may say this is an unjustified statement, but to me it appears to be very justified. Experience has shown that where the Police Department has taken over the control of traffic there has been a reduction in patrols. The Wanneroo Shire Council handed the control of traffic over to the police for a period of nine months, and then requested that the control be handed back to it. I understand that one of the reasons given was the lack of patrols.

The Mundaring Shire Council recently complained about the lack of patrols in its area. An article appeared in a newspaper, which I will quote. The heading was, "Midland police let us down—shire" and the article was as follows:—

The Mundaring Shire Council will seek police sanction to take over all traffic control in the district.

However, the Commissioner for Police, Mr. A. Wedd, said that the department would not consider extending the council's control over traffic.

The shire president, Mr. A. Moir, said that roads in the police-controlled section of the shire had turned into speedways because of a lack of supervision.

And so it goes on. The Mundaring Shire Council patrolled part of its area, but the part controlled by the Police Department was unsatisfactorily patrolled according to the standards of the shire. A second disadvantage is—

2. Traffic problems would be dealt with by a few police only, whereas at the present time they are dealt with by police, traffic inspectors, and shire clerks.

I am aware—and I am sure that most members in this House are aware, as the Minister himself must be—that many of our police stations are understaffed. I recently made a request through the Minister for an additional policeman to be stationed at Kalamunda. I am very grateful for the fact that the strength of that police station has been increased from two policemen to three. However, as a result of many judicious inquiries I am led to believe that the strength of the station should be five. By other judicious inquiries I have been led to believe that the Midland area is greatly understaffed. It should have anything up to a further 14 policemen. It is also alleged that Bassen-dean and Bayswater are understaffed.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Balga is also understaffed.

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: That could be so; I do not know. However, I do have with me a letter from a lady in Lockridge. She is very concerned about the police takeover of traffic control. The letter, which was addressed to myself, reads as follows:—

Dear Sir,

re; Traffic Control.

We the above association, feel that because of all the problems involved with solving the crimes of today, the only sensible course of action is to keep Traffic Control with Local Government. Therefore, giving our well trained Police Force more time for the more serious Police matters.

This opinion has been published in the West Australian.

That letter was written to me on behalf of the Lockridge Community Association. Lockridge, of course, is one of our more densely populated areas.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Does the honourable member think that the attacks by the A.L.P. Executive on the police will make recruitment more difficult?

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: I do not wish to enter into a political argument on this point!

The Hon. J. Dolan: We have an abundance of applicants.

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: It appears that there is a shortage of police officers, and a shortage of recruits. The Minister, when he replies, will be able to refute or substantiate that statement. I can only present what I am aware of, and on the basis of the information available to me.

I can assure the Minister that some of the statements I have made have very solid foundation. I do not want anybody to try to pull the wool over my eyes—and I do not suggest the Minister would—because I may bounce back with a few facts and statistics which could not be disproved. The third disadvantage is—

3. Costs to taxpayers per vehicle registered would be \$1.90 for collection of license fees plus \$3.60 for traffic control—a total of \$5.50—as against the present shire council average cost of \$3.50 per vehicle.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Is that where the inspector does only the job of a traffic inspector, or where he does three or four jobs?

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: Can the honourable member give me a specific instance of any traffic inspector doing three or four jobs? Many traffic inspectors patrol, and do nothing else, and others stay in the office and do nothing else.

The opinion is that it would be more costly to operate traffic control in local government areas under the police than it would be under the existing arrangement, even though the Minister implied—if he did not state—that it would be more economic to operate under police control.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: If they gave the same service.

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: Yes, if they gave the same service. It would certainly be more costly if they gave an inferior service because the cost would be \$5.50 as against \$3.50. That estimate is based on figures which are now 12 months old so there would need to be an adjustment of those figures. The fourth disadvantage is—

4. The loss of some existing shire staff resulting in less employment and, hence, less population in the area.

We already have an unemployment problem but the Minister has suggested, and substantiated the fact, that some of the existing traffic inspectors would lose their jobs. So a changeover would create unemployment. We already have enough unemployment without creating any more. Another disadvantage which is most important is—

5. Further erosion of local authority power.

Local authorities are very jealous of their activities, and they are jealous of any criticism of the performance of their duties. However, local authority powers are continually being eroded, and this has to stop. The changeover to police control of traffic will be a further erosion of local authority powers.

If we are to have a one-authority control then let it be a separate authority where the local authorities still retain their rights to hire and fire. Let them retain some of their autonomy; do not take everything away from them. The sixth disadvantage is—

6. Centralisation of control to the city.

Well, we do not need to go into that point. The Minister said that licensing would be centralised in the city. Those in charge, in the city, will dictate what has to be done even though they will not know anything about local situations and local inspectors. The local inspectors know the people, the roads, and the difficulties associated with their areas. Some of the centralised fellows will not have the foggiest idea of what is required in some of the country areas.

A further disadvantage is—

7. Reduction in local economy. Traffic fines would be paid into consolidated revenue and not retained in the local authority areas.

The money collected for license fees would not necessarily be spent in the local authority area concerned. That would undermine the economic situation in a particular area to some degree.

And so the disadvantages go on. I will not bore members by reading the rest of the list. It seems to me that rather than advantages flowing from a police takeover we will experience quite a lot of apparent disadvantages. I have mentioned the disadvantages experienced by the Wanneroo Shire Council and the Mundaring Shire Council.

Mr. Logan referred to the co-operation which occurs between local authorities and the police at the present time. It has been said that few local authorities co-operate with each other but in some instances there are reciprocal arrangements for the appointment of traffic officers whereby a shire will appoint a traffic officer and, at the same time, a neighbouring shire will appoint the same traffic officer.

This enables local traffic inspectors to travel from one area into another to maintain a better control of traffic. This is very desirable co-operation. We have two-way radio systems linked up on dual bands, such as the one between Swan and Wanneroo, which enables a 24-hour coverage of both of these areas.

I have very little time left, so I will just mention a few other matters. I consider the Minister and the Government, instead of proceeding with this particular Bill for a complete police takeover of traffic, would be much better advised to improve the existing Police Force in its prime function, the detection and prevention of crime. Burglaries, rapes, murders, and so on, are constantly occurring and are not being dealt with as efficiently as the general populace would like, apparently because of a lack of staff. Greater emphasis should be placed on those matters rather than on entering into this other field, which will create problems. Let the Main Roads Department correct existing deficiencies in road engineering, signing, and so on, which have such a large bearing on traffic control. Let the Government stop eroding the powers of local authorities and establish a better relationship with the public as a whole.

The object of this Bill can be put in a nutshell. The fact is that the Bill is not here for the purpose of improving road safety; it is here to satisfy an election promise.

**THE HON. W. R. WITHERS** (North) [6.02 p.m.]: In place of this Bill I would have preferred to see a Bill dealing with a unified traffic authority which would be separate from but closely allied to the Police Force; in fact, an authority similar to that proposed by my colleague Mr. Clive Griffiths.

I should be voting against this Bill. In fact, if many shires within the North Province did not want police takeover, I would be voting against the Bill. However, I find that all the shires in the Pilbara have applied for police takeover of traffic. All but one of the shires in the Kimberley have applied for police takeover, and the one shire that has not done so has asked the Commissioner of Police for a meeting in order to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of police takeover prior to its making a decision. That one shire is the smallest shire in the North Province and it has the smallest number of car registrations.

Personally, I agree with much that has been said by my colleagues who have spoken against the Bill. In fact, I would like to be voting with them for some other form of legislation to set up a unified traffic control authority which is divorced from police authority.

**The Hon. A. F. Griffith:** Do you mean an independent authority?

**The Hon. W. R. WITHERS:** Yes, independent, but unified throughout the State. However, I must face the fact that all but one of the local authorities in my province have asked for police takeover. I think local authorities are most necessary for decentralised Government control, but I must consider the actions of those shires in asking for police control. As I have been elected to represent the North Province, and my electors are the people who have elected the local authorities, I feel I must vote in favour of this legislation in the light of the actions of my constituents, although I will do so reluctantly.

*Sitting suspended from 6.05 to 7.30 p.m.*

**THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH** (South) [7.31 p.m.]: Like many other members I am somewhat amazed at the length of this Bill which has been presented to the Parliament to give effect to the police takeover of traffic control. When I was elected some 18 months ago I was touring my electorate, and I found the takeover of traffic control from shires was perhaps the most talked about issue. We have been waiting now for some 18 months for the Bill to be presented to Parliament.

I am amazed to find that the required amendments are contained in only 1½ pages, and really concern section 11A only, which gives to shires the right to hand over the control of traffic to the Police Department if they so wish. The amendment does little else but state that the Minister may instruct shires to hand over when he wishes. When one looks at the Traffic Act, 1919-1970, one finds that probably it is one of the most comprehensive Statutes on our Statute book, and that it is concerned with many aspects ranging from the licensing of vehicles to the granting of licenses to taxicab operators. But this whole amendment is contained in one small Bill, which is of about the same length as the Bill which provided for the compulsory wearing of seat belts.

This amazes me, because the takeover of traffic control is such an important plank in the Labor Party policy. Indeed, when the Minister introduced the Bill he reminded members that when delivering his policy speech on the 3rd February, 1971, the Premier gave an undertaking to place the control of traffic completely with the Police Department. When I look at the Bill before us I cannot help but feel that that promise is now to be fulfilled; but the measure does not seem to tell us very much about how it will be fulfilled. It appears that will be done by regulations, which we are unable to see.

**The Hon. J. Dolan:** You are wrong there.

**The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH:** Well, how is it to be done?

The Hon. J. Dolan: Just as it is in the Bill. This is the same as the Bill which was presented to provide for the voluntary takeover of traffic control. It is of about the same length as that Bill. The only difference is that the previous Government introduced the first Bill, and we have introduced the second.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I thank the Minister for saying that.

The Hon. J. Dolan: That is all right, I thought it would save you talking about nothing for a long time.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I will quote what the Minister said in his speech. He said —

I am led to believe that the concern of the former Government in initiating this inquiry centred about accident prevention and the rising road toll. My Government's concern about the road toll is demonstrated by the presentation of this amending legislation.

The Minister has just admitted that he is doing nothing more about it than the previous Government did.

The Hon. J. Dolan: Only in regard to the length of the Bill; that is all.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: The Minister's Bill simply changes the wording so that rather than the shires being permitted to hand over control individually at their own wish, the Minister may direct them to hand over at some time in the future. But he has given no indication of when he will take over the control of traffic; nor has he given us any idea of the proposed traffic safety council or the traffic research council, neither of which is mentioned in the Bill, but they are mentioned in his speech.

As those councils are not included in the Bill I will confine my remarks to the Minister's speech because I feel that is all we have upon which to hang our argument. I regret that I may cover some ground which has been already covered, but that cannot be avoided because of the number of speeches we have had.

One of the main points in the Minister's speech is that he said it is proposed to reconstruct the Police Force. I think this may be outside the ambit of the Traffic Act; so we should have some indication of how he will reconstruct it. He then went on to say that every State except Western Australia had uniform police control. I think without doubt every person in this Chamber supports uniform traffic control; certainly we are not against it. The Minister then went on to list the recommendations of the interdepartmental committee, but I cannot see that that has anything to do with the takeover of traffic control by the police. These are the recommendations upon which the previous Government acted.

It was obvious that no Government could suddenly step in and take over the control of all traffic from one end of Western Australia to the other and set up a body to control all that traffic within one week. Indeed, this Government is not proposing to do that. It has not said when it will take over traffic; so I presume it will slowly take over the control of traffic in those shires which have not already indicated that they will hand over. The policy of the previous Government was no different from the policy of the present Government, except that this Bill gives the Government the right to take over traffic control in shires which do not voluntarily surrender it. However, we have yet to see whether indeed any shires will not want to be taken over.

I think most shires have been placed in a difficult financial position and have been forced to hand over traffic control in some cases. These shires have considerable borrowings as, unfortunately, our system of government is such that local authorities are on the end of the line and seem to be obliged to borrow at fairly high interest rates. For example, I know that the Esperance Shire Council, of which I was a member when it handed over control of traffic to the police, continued to borrow until such time as over half of its rates went towards interest and repayment of loans. At that stage the shire was forced to cast off some of its responsibilities, and one of the first was traffic control, not because the shire was not doing a good job, but because it was earning only about \$3 or \$4 per vehicle in licensing fees, and was spending some \$4 or \$5 per vehicle. So it had to prune expenditure somewhere along the line.

Although I have not the figures with me, I recall that a question was asked in this House about 12 months ago regarding what it would cost the police to handle traffic in country areas, and we found that it worked out at a lot more than the \$3 to \$4 that the shires were expected to pay. That is one of the reasons why shires were forced to hand over and, indeed, are still being forced to hand over. The Minister went on in his speech to quote two outstanding surgeons from Western Australia who recommended—and I quote—

It is recommended that enforcement remains in the hands of the Police Traffic Department under the direction of the Commissioner of Police—

I think this next part is important—

—but that the Statutory Body should advise and direct the Commissioner in matters falling within its jurisdiction.

Obviously those surgeons were under the impression when they made that recommendation that there would be a statutory body. I think that is what we are all looking and hoping for. The Minister went



on to quote from the report of Colonel Sir Eric St. Johnston in regard to the Victorian Police Force. I feel this is hardly relevant because in Victoria the police handle all traffic control, whereas in this State we have reached the stage where the police are looking after the control of about half the traffic, and local government is looking after the rest. I think at this time we are in a position to set up another body. It may well have been that as the police had full control in Victoria it was not thought necessary to set up another body, but I hardly think that is relevant to this State. The report of Colonel Sir Eric St. Johnston states—

Such a special organisation would have to be built up almost exactly on the lines of the Police Force. It would have to be comprised of men and women of integrity, who are of adequate intelligence to become knowledgeable of the increasingly complex law; they would have to be good drivers; they would have to be physically fit. . . .

I cannot see that the police have a mortgage on those qualities; indeed, I think most of the people at present administering the control of traffic on behalf of shire councils have proved themselves capable in those directions. The report continues—

Since this would be a parallel organisation, the total cost to the State would be greater than if the Police continue to do the work.

Now we have come to the important point. We have at last reached it. The real worry is that it might cost us more. I think that is a false argument. Everyone is agreed upon the importance of saving life on the roads; yet here we are going into the cost of it and using that as an argument as to why we should not have two parallel organisations. The report continues—

But good Police work goes further than merely detecting offences, for the presence on the road of an adequate number of well-signed and well-driven Police cars manned by men (and women) of smart and alert bearing does act as an excellent deterrent.

We will still have police cars on the road, and they will still have signs on them; so I think they will still act as a deterrent to potential traffic offenders. In fact, an interesting feature is that the police are now using unmarked cars and forgetting about signs. I do not think we can have it both ways. The Minister then went on to discuss the New Zealand system. At one stage it was suggested that we should do the same as New Zealand; but most of

us agree that the system in that country is not very much different from ours. The Minister said—

If indeed more efficient enforcement is provided in New Zealand, this is due, perhaps, to the number of personnel involved rather than the quality.

Having told us of the magnificent Police Force, he then goes on to say that it is numbers which count. Once again, this seems to be most contradictory. The Minister went on to say—

Certain aspects of traffic law enforcement cannot be divorced from police involvement, . . . .

I do not know of any member in this Chamber who would disagree with that statement. If two organisations are involved with traffic control they have to co-operate and when it comes to a question of accidents that involve deaths, or that have been caused by the driver taking drugs, I think the police are obliged to take a major part in such accidents. At the same time, there is a great opportunity to take the day-to-day administration of traffic control out of the hands of the police. I think the Police Department would be at a great advantage if this were done. The Minister went on to refer to the number of road deaths in New Zealand. I find his statement in this regard completely irrelevant, especially when he mentions the figures were supplied by the New Zealand Trade Commissioner. If we are to show any concern at all in regard to the road toll we will want to listen to a more competent traffic authority than the New Zealand Trade Commissioner.

The Minister, in his second reading speech, went on to say—

While it may be possible to establish the nucleus of a separate force from existing traffic personnel, . . . .

At this stage I believe it has a nucleus, but I think the shires have a great deal more than a nucleus.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: They have a lot of nucleus.

The Hon. J. Dolan: Nuclei is the word.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Thanks, Mr. Minister.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: The Minister went on to say—

A separate organisation would undoubtedly require enormous additional outlay in personnel, training, equipment, and accommodation.

If my memory serves me correctly, when we were investigating this problem 12 months ago, we found the shires had more ampometers than the Police Department. Therefore, I do not think we can criticise the equipment that the local authorities supply to their traffic inspectors, though we may, perhaps, be able to criticise some

of the vehicles that are used by traffic inspectors, because they may be a little slow to overtake some of the high-powered cars that are used by the young lads around the town. I know that in my district when the traffic inspector was supplied with a GTS sports car the Police Department was delighted to take it over, so I do not think we should be too critical of the equipment the shires are supplying to exercise traffic control.

The Minister continued as follows:—

Furthermore, it is doubtful whether an organisation of the size and quality visualised to take over traffic law enforcement could be recruited under present-day labour conditions.

I wonder whether we will ever get better conditions than those that obtain at present. Today we hear a great deal about unemployment, and I wonder, if we cannot find the personnel today, whether we will ever find them. Perhaps the Premier could be talked into getting a few Asians from Uganda.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Perhaps you could get them out of the \$14,000 a year your party is promising.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I gather it is envisaged that the Police Department would need some 400 additional men to cover adequately the additional miles of road to be patrolled throughout the State.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: I wonder.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I agree with the comment made by the honourable member. I wonder whether we are really being honest in regard to this matter. The Police Department has already taken over traffic control from some of our shires in the country and, as a result of that, to what extent has the personnel of the Police Department been increased? I can speak from personal experience in regard to this concerning what happened at Esperance. The Police Department has not increased the number of the personnel it has stationed at that centre. If the Police Department is honest about its desire to increase its personnel by 400 men, when the department has really done something to achieve this we could perhaps agree with this legislation.

I know that the Ravensthorpe Shire handed over traffic control within its boundaries to the Police Department and, in doing so, transferred one vehicle to the control of that department. However, there was still only one car being used for traffic control in Ravensthorpe. In fact, the Police Department has no doubt saved itself the use of one vehicle, because it has probably transferred the police vehicle to some other centre now that it has the use of the car that previously belonged to the shire. In addition to acting as a police officer, a bailiff, and a mines officer the person in charge at Ravensthorpe now also

acts as a traffic control officer. Therefore there has been no increase in police personnel in that shire. On the other hand, the shire has saved itself over \$4,000 or \$5,000 as a result of handing over traffic control to the police, and that is the reason for the shire taking this action.

I agree with the remarks that have been made by Mr. Willmott that if there is to be an increase in the number of traffic personnel, and it is so difficult to obtain suitable men, surely it would be easier to get men suitable to act as traffic inspectors rather than to act as full-time policemen. I think there is little doubt about that. A fully trained policeman must require much more training than a traffic inspector.

I lived for some time in the United States of America and I saw independent organisations there controlling traffic which they did very efficiently. There is no doubt in the world that straight-out traffic control in the United States of America works extremely well. Furthermore, that is a country that has a higher density of motor vehicles in its cities than any other country in the world. The steps taken by U.S.A. are aimed at divorcing the police from traffic control.

The Hon. S. T. J. Thompson: It has the highest accident rate as well.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Yes, I do not doubt that. The Minister went on to say—

In this direction, perhaps, there may be some misgiving about the possible role of police in the country from the public relations aspects . . . should some of the country folk find that they come into conflict with the police.

This is quite so. We like to think of a policeman as a protector of the public, and no person really thinks he is doing wrong when he commits a minor breach of the Traffic Act. For instance, when a person drives a car at five miles an hour over the speed limit he does not consider he is committing a great wrong. Therefore, the police lose a great deal of face when they have to prosecute in regard to traffic offences, and, as a result, when it comes down to a real police matter, perhaps a policeman does not receive the utmost co-operation from the public that he should.

The Minister went on to say—

Until recent years, with the increase of traffic inspectors provided by shires, the police had virtually been doing all traffic work wherever they were stationed.

This is an amazing statement to make. In effect, what the Minister is saying is that before traffic inspectors were appointed the police did all the work. Therefore, why were traffic inspectors appointed if the police were doing such an excellent job? If that were so, at that stage there

was no need for shires to appoint traffic inspectors. The Minister has admitted that up until recently the police were doing the work and they found there was an insufficient number of policemen for the duties involved, and that was the reason the shires appointed traffic inspectors.

We do not expect a policeman to perform extra duties. Although he may walk past an accident he has in fact seen it and he will soon apprehend a person if he has done something wrong. The Minister went on to say—

Our State in the decades to come will have large cities throughout its length and breadth . . .

A person who really is seeking decentralisation would have something to beef about in that statement. The Minister went on—

. . . and thus matters between public and police will probably be of a level with what it is now in the metropolitan area. . . .

At that stage our rural community will have been completely denuded. The Minister went on to say—

The posting of additional police as proposed if enforcement control of traffic is vested in the police would provide the presence of officers who could be deployed to any duty as the occasion arose, thus serving a two-fold purpose.

This has been mentioned fairly freely here. That statement is completely incorrect. When we had our own traffic inspectors they could be used to the best advantage by those who employed them. An interesting feature in this regard is that today, if one requires a policeman to attend a football match, in many instances the person requiring his services is told that such a service will be charged to him. I know that when our shire wanted the police to patrol some of the buildings that had been attacked by vandals, the answer was that to provide such a service would entail additional cost and the shire would be required to meet it. If the Minister wishes to bring that argument forward, I think we are better off with traffic being controlled by the shires.

The Minister, in his second reading speech, continued as follows:—

Traffic enforcement is carried out by the police in the metropolitan area by members of the force engaged solely in such work—specialists in specialised sections.

I cannot help but feel this is what we have in the country at present.

We now come to the question of having uniform number plates. The Minister has described our thoughts in this regard as being sentimental. I can assure him that

it goes far deeper than that. One of the great features of Western Australia is that country vehicles bear the local shire's registration plate. It has been of great advantage for shires to keep their own identities in regard to car registrations. My city friends tell me that it is a great advantage for country cars to bear the local shire registration number plate, because when they see such a car they take additional precautions. I think the same applies to the drivers of vehicles in the country. When a car is travelling along a road in a remote region, and it bears a local number plate, the local people realise that the driver of that vehicle is fully aware of where he is going. However, if all vehicles are to be fitted with uniform number plates without indicating the shire to which the vehicle belongs, this advantage would be lost.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: With uniform traffic control, the Police Department would be able to ensure that drivers had uniform traffic ability.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: That cuts both ways. When a city driver visits the country, the local people are able to help him because they realise he is a visitor, but as soon as number plates lose their identity we will be unable to extend that courtesy to a city driver.

We then have the question of the computerising of numbers. I find this argument put forward by the Minister completely fallacious. I have been trained in the use of a computer and have a working knowledge of these machines. Whilst in the United States of America I did a course in computer programming and I would be greatly surprised if a computer could not handle a few country number plates. It is ridiculous to say that it could not. The number of items a computer can handle is fantastic, and to say that it could not handle up to 111 different files because there are 111 different shires is ridiculous.

Let us look at this question a little more deeply. I agree the police do have trouble in the country in regard to accidents. For example, if an Esperance car were involved in an accident in Perth on, say, a Saturday night, and an effort was made to contact the shire clerk who was not available, the authorities would have to wait until Monday morning before they found out the information they were seeking. I agree that such a state of affairs would be most unsatisfactory. However, it is now proposed that the Clerk of Courts shall register vehicles, so what will we do then? Will we have to wait until Monday morning before we can telephone him for any information? I believe not. I understand that he will send his return to Perth and that the information will be fed into the computer. If that is the intention, why was this not done with the shires? They would only have

to complete a form to be sent down to Perth. In fact, I thought the shires did that in any case; that they did inform the police of the number of registration plates that had been issued. I know this was the argument put forward by the police; that they had to have car registrations recorded in Perth. This is ridiculous.

Now let us consider the number of places at which a vehicle can be registered or inspected—and this will be a very great problem in my electorate. If a person at Lake Varley desires to register a car or a tractor he must drive over 160 miles to do so, and that is a fair little trot on a tractor. When the shires had control the situation was a lot more centralised than under police control. The shires realised the difficulties. I referred to Lake Varley which is in the Lake Grace shire. That shire had two centres, one at Lake Grace and one at Newdegate. Newdegate was handled separately and those in authority went there to carry out the inspections. Now this does not apply.

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: And the same would apply to anyone wishing to obtain a permit for overwidth machinery. He would have to go 160-odd miles to get it.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: This applied in some shires, I can assure you.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I agree, but we must find a system to overcome this. The police takeover will not achieve this, but I think that under a statutory body we might be able to find a different way to deal with the problem.

We have mentioned traffic control, but another problem is parking. I will refer once again to the Esperance Shire because it is one with which I am familiar. When the police took over the traffic control they did not take over parking which quite sensibly was being administered by the traffic inspectors. They controlled the traffic and parking is part and parcel of traffic. When the police took over the traffic control they refused to take over parking. I admit we could not have read the Bill because it does not leave the shires with this responsibility. It only includes the construction of roads, etc. Shires should not be left with the problem of parking.

The Hon. R. Thompson: That was the recommendation in the 1965 report.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Was it?

The Hon. R. Thompson: Yes.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I would like the honourable member to quote it. The question of retired traffic police has already been raised and it has been well ridiculed. Once a traffic man does not wish to drive at high speed because of his age, if a statutory authority were established plenty of other positions

could be found for him, particularly on the administration side with the granting of licenses and so on. If such an authority were associated with the shire office, this type of employee could be utilised in other work for the shire. I certainly do not believe he should be sent to the C.I.B.

I do not wish to labour the speech very much, but I do find a lot of it very hard to take. The death statistics have been mentioned. The insinuation is that more accidents occur in the country than in the city because the police are not in control in the country. I think we must all admit that the state of the roads and fatigue are two major problems which face drivers in the country, and I am afraid that no matter who is in control of traffic, these two problems will not be solved.

The police have been in charge of drivers' licenses in the metropolitan area since they were first introduced. How many people who are given a license are tested at more than 35 miles an hour? I do not think any of them are and yet those drivers can leave the city and go into the country and drive at 60 or 65 miles an hour and do something which is completely unfamiliar to them. They have been driving for perhaps a short while at only 35 miles an hour and suddenly they go out into the country and drive at 65 miles an hour.

The Hon. J. Dolan: That is only an assumption of course. You do not think a fellow who is driving goes on the road and because the speed limit is 65 he does it? That is ridiculous.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: They do.

The Hon. J. Dolan: Of course silly people do. They try to drive at 100.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: They may be the ones who have the accidents.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Obviously you have not seen a car with a "P" plate travelling at 65 miles an hour. I have.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: If we are honest we must admit that if we drive in the city at 35 miles an hour for several months, without going into the country, and then drive the car at 65 miles—and everyone is entitled to do so in the country—we are not used to the way the car travels at such a speed.

The Hon. W. D. Willmott: If you hit a bit of gravel you are gone.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You do not go along Canning Highway and see cars travelling at only 35!

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: That highway is under police control.

The Hon. J. Dolan: You cannot have them at every corner.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That is enough for you, Mr. Dans. You are making the Minister feel unwell, you know.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I think I have already pointed out that this legislation does not say anything about a traffic safety council or a safety research council although these are two items the Minister raised as being major necessities. I feel that these are the items which should be included in the Bill.

Finally, I would like to say that because some shires handed over the control to the police is no reason to say it is necessarily a good thing; but this seems to be half the argument. We are told to consider the number of shires which have handed over control. However, this has been mainly because of a lack of finance.

It is about time we looked to the future. We are all pretty well in agreement that we should have a common traffic control. The only disagreement concerns whether such an authority should be tied completely to the Police Force or whether it should be administered by an entirely different organisation which is not centralised entirely on the city, or whether there should be some shire participation, and if not participation, whether at least the facilities of the shires could be utilised. This is a major issue. We are stripping the shires of their responsibilities and thereby making it more difficult for them to operate. The shires should certainly be able to give advice and this participation will provide a co-operative approach.

I hope the Minister will look more seriously at the problem that faces him and will definitely contemplate the establishment of a statutory organisation.

**THE HON. D. K. DANS** (South Metropolitan) [8.09 p.m.]: I rise to support the Bill, but I do so with mixed feelings. I certainly believe that at some stage this State should have a separate traffic authority, but we are not considering that aspect tonight.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: How long do you think that will be?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Give me time to come to that and I will tell the Leader of the Opposition in due course.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You will not forget to tell me before you sit down?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: No. Do not worry about that. I have made a note of it.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: I guarantee you will not let him forget.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: He will not forget.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: It's a pretty good speech you are making Mr. Dans!

**THE PRESIDENT:** Order!

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Give them time, Mr. President, and when they are finished I will continue.

We are considering the Bill before the House and the only alternatives we have at this stage are to carry the Bill or to retain the *status quo*. First of all I believe this subject should be debated at length because it will achieve something for this State, if not at present, at least in the long run.

We must first study the question of organisation and the proposition of establishing a separate authority right from scratch. It would virtually be like trying to organise a brigade of soldiers with an enemy brigade coming over the horizon. There would be no opportunity to put a plan into operation. Consequently it appears to me that as a first requirement the traffic section of the Police Department must be the organisation to take over overall traffic control in this State, and then at some later stage when that system is established we may be able to adopt the suggestions of the Liberal Party.

I am firmly of the opinion that much of the animosity towards the police is as a result of their control of traffic. This is a very essential service, but we must be practical. If we believe that we can sit down and wait for the day when suddenly, overnight, by the waving of a wand, we can put into operation a completely new traffic branch, we have another think coming.

It could be argued that we could detach the traffic branch from the Police Department and establish it as this new organisation under a statutory authority. I can assure members—and I have taken the trouble to talk to some of the traffic branch policemen involved—this would create all kinds of difficulties, firstly for the new service and, secondly, for the Police Force as a whole. For instance, what would be done about promotional opportunities and opportunities in other directions? Would an individual's chance of promotion in the new organisation be increased or decreased? Would he be hesitant to cross over to the new organisation? All sorts of problems would arise and the most important of these from the word "go" would be the human problem which must be considered.

Also we must consider what the traffic authority would do. I cannot envisage a situation under which a traffic authority under any kind of statutory legislation, would be completely divorced from police work. Let us consider the statistics for crime. The most widely used weapon these days is the motorcar. It is certainly not the oxy-torch or the jemmy. Cars are used in all manner of crimes including robbery, breaking and entering, robbery with violence, and rape; in fact any crime which could be mentioned. So a fairly thin line can be drawn to separate some traffic work and police work.

A long time will be necessary to work out this problem, but it appears to me that the obvious thing to do at the moment is to pass this Bill. We have two schools of thought. One is that if a separate authority is established the road fatalities will be reduced. I do not agree with this.

The Hon. F. R. White: Hear, hear!

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I do not care what authority is in charge of traffic in this State, the road fatality situation will not be affected unless we face up to the problem in a correct and proper manner.

I do not know of any Government, whatever its complexion, which at this stage is prepared to face up to that simple experience, because it would ruin the motor industry overnight.

We have no hesitation in issuing licenses to people of 17 years of age who have a bad history while they are at school and, from the day they leave, their history is one of complete irresponsibility. Nevertheless, we put them in charge of a lethal weapon.

The Hon. J. Heitman: Who puts them in charge?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: The required authority. The Police Department is the only authority.

The Hon. J. Dolan: It is the law. In other words, it is us.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: The community.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: As Mr. Clive Griffiths says, it is the community at large that puts them in charge of motor vehicles.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: The law does not say they must hold a license at the age of 17 years.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I know that, Mr. Baxter. I am not completely dull.

The Hon. F. R. White: If they are so irresponsible why give them the vote at the age of 18?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I am not talking about 18-year-olds. Members have not given me the opportunity to finish my comments on this. We find that some people are irresponsible at the age of 45 but they, too, are given licenses. A vehicle which is travelling at over 70 miles an hour is a projectile. It is no longer a car, but such people are in charge of it.

I took a cutting from the paper some time ago. If I remember correctly it was from the *Manchester Guardian* or the *Guardian*. I am not sure of this, but I will hand it to the *Hansard* reporter. With your indulgence, Mr. President, I will read it to the House. The article is headed, "IQ tests urged of big-car drivers." I would like to alter it simply to read, "IQ tests urged of drivers." The article reads as follows:—

Intelligence and aptitude tests should be administered to drivers of "muscle cars", according to chief

superintendent Michael Byrne of the Metro Police Force in London, England.

Byrne, who is deputy commandant of the Metro Police driving school at Hendon, is to be the guest of honour at the seventh annual British Car show at Bayshore Inn, February 10-14 inclusive.

"It seems nonsense that a wealthy man could buy his inexperienced son a car with very high performance characteristics," Byrne told *The Sun* in an interview.

"There should be special tests, preferably related to the type of vehicle the person is to drive.

"The person should be instructed also at the level of the machine he will drive.

"Some sort of IQ test would be a useful thing as well.

"Driving today, in today's complicated and high speed traffic situations, calls for a standard of intelligence of which some drivers are just not capable," Byrne said.

"As vehicles get larger and faster we must take into account the type of driver who may just not be up to it mentally.

"We should isolate people with unsatisfactory aggressive attitudes and get them off the road."

Byrne also placed some blame for high accident rates on modern advertising.

"There is still far too much emphasis on the sporty, masculine, get-away-at-the-lights aspect of vehicles," Byrne said.

As an example of the need for what he called "more responsible" driving, Byrne cited the 1970 accident record for England.

"During 1970, 7,500 people were killed, 93,500 were seriously injured—and by that I mean people who will never fully recover—and some 262,000 were slightly injured," he said.

"There are only about 380 murders per year in England—

When discussing law and order and how the motorcar fits in, this is an interesting exercise. To continue —

—imagine the public outcry if there were 7,500," Byrne added.

Byrne said that at the police driving school, which offers three courses of varying lengths, drivers are taught to exercise responsible judgment along with their advanced driving abilities.

"Anyone can drive fast enough to be foolish," he said, "our men are trained to stay right on the tail of a fleeing car and wait for him to make an error."

"But don't get the idea we enjoy cops-and-robbers chases through the streets of London."

"Our men must rely on their judgment and there are situations in which it is wise to break off a chase and be alive to renew the search later."

This is one of the areas which should be investigated when we are issuing licenses. Perhaps I could be one of the unfortunate people who would not be capable of obtaining a license in a new licensing situation. However, there could well be many others in that same bracket. It is useless to say that by changing the designation of the authority which will control traffic we will break down the road fatality rate. I cannot go along with that situation, whichever way we look at it.

I think it was Mr. Wordsworth who mentioned in his speech the situation in America. From many points of view I do not think any good results from comparing one State with another, because we are dealing with Western Australia. Similarly, I do not think any good results in comparing country with country. The situation in America is quite different from ours. In fact, it is almost our situation in reverse in that State highway patrols virtually become the State police and apprehend anyone at all who uses a vehicle in which to commit any kind of crime.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: They still have sheriffs in America.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Yes, but as one travels through the small towns it is evident that police are employed instead of traffic inspectors. The police action is restricted to the area or county and the State highway patrolmen range across the whole of the State. It has been necessary to do this with the highway patrols and, as members would know, they are very efficient and dedicated to their work. Simply to apprehend speeders would be quite ridiculous. As I said earlier, the car is used in almost every crime which is committed today. It is an easy operation to open the boot of a car or the back of a station wagon to load in a safe.

I must come back to the point. I am not completely opposed to a separate traffic authority under a statutory body, once we get this present system under way. I would defy the most competent organiser to start from scratch at a date to be fixed, with no experienced personnel, and to set up some kind of traffic organisation within the State. It would be virtually impossible.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Has anyone suggested that would be the case?

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: This has been under way now for two years.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: It is slow but sure. I think that 20-odd shires have handed over to the police.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: I have a hunch that a number do want to have their traffic control taken over by the police but they have not yet done anything about it.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I hope the honourable member does not back horses on the basis of his hunches. This could not be an effective operation until the police have control of the traffic in the whole of the State.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Theoretically, if 50, 60, or 100 shires said overnight that they would voluntarily hand over their traffic control to the police, do you think the Police Department could handle it?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: No.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Any more than the situation in reverse about the traffic authority?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: That is very true, but there must be a starting point. It has been suggested that overnight the police will move into this area and sack all the traffic inspectors.

The Hon. J. Heitman: No-one envisaged that.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: It has been suggested, I have looked at all the shires in Western Australia.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I have not heard anyone suggest what you have said.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Very well, I withdraw that remark. I interpreted from what the Leader of the Opposition said that overnight the police would move into this field and, because of this takeover, there would not be enough men to carry out the operation. If I misunderstood the honourable member I am sorry.

The Hon. J. Dolan: It will be over three years.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I said that if they wanted to go over all at the same time the police could not handle it. They would have to say that they could not do this.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I do not think so.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The Minister has just said so.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I do not think so. If what I have heard in this House last night and this evening presupposes that situation will happen, I would be amazed. Most of the speeches have been in opposition.

The Hon. J. Heitman: That is right.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I cannot envisage a situation where every shire will say, "Lock the door on the traffic inspector's office and, as of tomorrow, the police will take over."

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Financially, they are forced into this.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: We must be practical. No member of this House, whatever his political persuasion, seeks to be mischievous. It is a slow process.

I have already stated—and I do not want to restate my view—that at some stage I would go along with the proposition of a separate traffic authority. However, somewhere along the line we must start doing something in this direction and the Bill before us gives us the opportunity to do this over the next three years.

I could quote from the *Local Government Journal of Western Australia* to illustrate a similar position with which many of our country policemen are faced. In many cases a number of shires share one traffic inspector. I think the only one left in Mr. Withers' province is Halls Creek where the shire clerk is the local undertaker, traffic inspector, and somewhat-may. I will not try to argue or to mislead the House into thinking that in many country areas the only operation the police do not perform is that of traffic control. When we look at the areas of the various shires concerned we are left with the feeling that this is an enormous task. Surely when facing up to this from a practical point of view and from the viewpoint of efficiency, this is the time to start off by giving the legislation before us a chance. For the life of me, I cannot see why we should delay the exercise any longer.

If we reject the Bill outright, where will we be? Do we wait 12 months before trying again? Do we wait to see what happens? As Mr. Wordsworth has suggested, shires have been driven to the situation of surrendering traffic control to the police. Up to date some 28 shires have done this.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: The same thing will happen whether we pass the Bill or not.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I hope we can decide the issue in an organised and correct manner. Let me restate that at the moment there is a problem of organisation. The only existing organisation is the Police Traffic Branch.

The Hon. J. Heitman: In the metropolitan area.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I do not understand the honourable member. I am talking of the implementation of the Bill and what it proposes. If I were to say that there were 28 shires with police control of traffic coupled with the situation in the metropolitan area, I could understand

the interjection, but I cannot understand it in the context in which I am speaking to the House.

I suggest that we start now with the required organisation and sort out the human problems which will beset the police with this changeover. I refer to such problems as promotion. We cannot brush these aside, because they exist.

There must be a nucleus of a force before such a takeover could be effected. This includes traffic inspectors. I am not impressed when someone says that a traffic inspector has no qualifications. He may be the best there is by virtue of his service and experience in a particular area.

Having done that we should then set about drawing up the required rules and regulations under which this organisation is to work. In the final analysis it must fit into the existing law enforcement departments. Surely the enforcement of traffic safety and authority over vehicles engaged in breaking the law becomes a requirement for a law enforcement officer. I agree with members in this House who have said that it would be a bad policeman who would walk past an incident in a country town involving a traffic inspector if he could render some assistance.

I do not think we will ever see the golden day of a traffic authority on one side dealing solely with traffic and a Police Department on the other side dealing solely with certain aspects of the law as they relate to the Criminal Code and other lesser offences. Already throughout the length and breadth of this State the police are responsible for the examination of heavy haulage vehicles. The Police Department arranges films and lectures and it has the power to send traffic offenders to these. And it does a very good job.

The Police Force has a whole host of problems and I would hope that tonight and last night I did not detect any suggestion during the debate that the Police Force was not fulfilling its duty reliably, safely, and with benefit to all. I have heard a great number of stories about the actions of traffic inspectors in certain towns. I reject them although some of them are possible. I could possibly tell a great number of stories about the actions of policemen in certain towns even when they do not control traffic. So I do not think that point is germane to the argument. I am not accusing anybody of deriding the Police Force—I said that I hoped I did not detect this attitude.

I urge every member of this House to act responsibly towards the people of Western Australia by supporting this Bill and at least getting a new situation off the ground. No-one has a wand to produce the type of organisation suggested by Mr. Heitman and other speakers. I do not fully reject their ideas, but they should be implemented at the appropriate time. If we



pass this legislation now, we will have fulfilled our duty to the people of this State. In the long term it will be of benefit to all.

I hope that we can squarely and honestly face up to the situation of the bad driver. It is no good clouding the issue by saying that by changing the authority and giving the officers another uniform and another name we will bring down the road toll. This will not be the case.

**THE HON. C. R. ABBEY** (West) [8.32 p.m.]: The honourable member who has just spoken can be assured that I and other members intend to act responsibly. I am certain he accepts the fact that we will.

The Bill before us is obviously the Government's attempt to fulfil a policy decision, and the Government has the right to endeavour to implement its policies. However, the measure is not acceptable and it is not acceptable for the many reasons which have been canvassed by the members of this Chamber. I do not intend to weary the House with useless repetition.

The Bill is only a small one, and as one member said, it is obviously blank cheque legislation. This is not an acceptable way to deal with the problem. I am quite certain that we should set up a State-wide traffic authority which is fully representative of all views. It would be no more difficult to set up this authority than it would be to widen the powers of the Police Force.

I have a great admiration for our Police Force. This body of men does a very fine job particularly in difficult circumstances. A policeman keeps his cool in an emergency. To take away the control the local authorities presently exercise is not a reasonable solution to the problem. It is not logical for the Government to believe that it has a mandate to impose on the people of this State a system which they do not want.

**The Hon. D. K. Dans:** How do you come to the conclusion that the people do not want it? What authority do you quote?

**The Hon. C. R. ABBEY:** We quote the authority of our experience. Any member who has had local government experience anywhere within the State would know.

**The Hon. D. K. Dans:** What about the people living in the metropolitan area? We are also entitled to take notice of their opinion.

**The Hon. C. R. ABBEY:** Yes, and we do this. If the proposal were to set up a State-wide traffic authority, people would have the opportunity to voice an opinion which they cannot do now. In the metropolitan area the Police Department does not have to take into account the opinions of other people. It merely implements what it feels is necessary. It is vital to those members who represent country or near-country traffic authorities to ensure that

representatives of the local authorities should be heard before such a body is set up.

I repeat that it is no more difficult to set up a State-wide traffic authority than it is to extend the operation of the Police Department. However, I agree with many of the points made by Mr. Dans. We all desire efficient traffic control, but we on this side disagree with the proposed method of providing it.

We have known for a few months that this Bill would be brought forward and many of the shires which I have the honour to represent have made evident their very strong opposition to the proposal. Also, many of the shires which I represented before boundary changes have also written to me on behalf of their districts and have very definitely stated their opposition. These people know and accept that some country shires have already handed over control to the Police Department on their own request but this action is deplored because it does not create unity.

It is a pity that we cannot treat the problem as a whole instead of in fragments. The present situation is unduly fragmented and therefore not satisfactory. I am sure that we could find a very good compromise with a State-wide traffic authority. Perhaps the Police Department could control the highways and the local authorities could control the areas within the shires. It would have to be a co-operative effort and one which is acceptable to all.

During the course of the debate it has become patently obvious that if the Minister were to introduce a Bill to set up a State-wide traffic authority it would receive almost universal support in this House. Therefore, it becomes a challenge to the Government to introduce such a Bill and create an authority which is generally acceptable. In fact, I challenge the Government to introduce a Bill which properly sets out the requirements of such an authority. I realise such a measure would require many clauses, but when brought before this House or another place it would receive a great deal of constructive attention. It will be good for Parliament and the State if the Government does this. At the present moment there is very little to examine in the legislation.

At this stage of the debate it is not worth while repeating many of the things which have been said. However, I would like to reiterate that the police takeover of traffic must create a very large central organisation. It will be very difficult for people in the country to license vehicles, arrange inspections, and this type of thing. The Bill is detrimental to our State interests.

I feel I have made my position clear without too many words on the subject. I hope the Minister is prepared to look

again at the situation and to consult the various local authorities throughout the State. He should accept that these are responsible people who could contribute a great deal to the setting up and running of a State-wide organisation. In my opinion a combination of members of the Police Force under a separate authority and traffic inspectors under the local shires would be a good idea. I am definitely opposed to the present Bill.

**THE HON. S. J. DELLAR (Lower North)** [8.42 p.m.]: It is my intention to support the Bill which is now before the House. Over the years much has been said for and against the traffic control situation existing in Western Australia. Opinions vary as to whether traffic control should be operated by a separate authority and whether local authorities have been doing a good job. There have been numerous conferences, discussions, and delegations but none of these has ever produced a definite answer to the problem.

The debate on this legislation has been very interesting. I have observed that the Liberal Party does have a policy which it did not have before.

**The Hon. A. F. Griffith:** Now do not be smart.

**The Hon. S. J. DELLAR:** We are very pleased to hear it has a policy.

**The Hon. A. F. Griffith:** You have either been asleep for the last two days or you have just woken up.

**The Hon. S. J. DELLAR:** Many members have indicated the necessity for uniformity of traffic control in Western Australia. Some of the proposals which have been submitted are worthy of comment and support, but the Government believes at this stage that nothing constructive has been offered—and this includes the submissions from the local authorities. No reasonable argument has been put forward to institute State-wide control of traffic, whether by the Police Force or anybody else.

It is our belief that with the implementation of traffic control by the Police Department throughout Western Australia we have at least a starting point. As Mr. Dans said, we have to start somewhere.

The Bill itself is only very small. However, I do not suggest it is the only Bill which has come before the House in this form. Naturally the implications are very far-reaching. The idea behind the legislation is for State-wide control of traffic by the Police Force, including the control of licensing.

With the exception of the local authorities who have already handed over control to the Police Force, traffic is controlled in the country by the local authorities and in the metropolitan area by the Traffic Branch of the Police Department. I do

not believe this is an ideal situation because it is fragmented, unsatisfactory, and inefficient. We have no complete control of traffic throughout the State and no efficient organisation. I am sure members will agree it is not an ideal situation.

**The Hon. J. Heitman:** Weren't you a shire clerk before you came here?

**The Hon. S. J. DELLAR:** I was. I have had about 14 years association with local government.

**The Hon. J. Heitman:** Have you never heard of the Country Shires Association seeking to take over traffic control?

**The Hon. S. J. DELLAR:** I have, but the matter has never gone any further than that.

**The Hon. L. A. Logan:** The Minister wouldn't listen.

**The Hon. S. J. DELLAR:** Which Minister is that?

**The Hon. L. A. Logan:** Both the Ministers.

**The Hon. S. J. DELLAR:** I can recall this matter being discussed 10 years ago and the present Minister has not been in office 10 years. The efforts made by local authorities to attempt to control traffic satisfactorily in this State should be emphasised. I say this in all honesty. I do not wish to comment on the efforts made by the officers of local governments in Western Australia, but I reiterate it has not been much of an effort. The local authorities have not come up with an answer which would help achieve adequate control of traffic in Western Australia.

They have not been able to suggest anything worth while despite the efforts they have made in this direction. Some of the local authorities have done a great job and I commend them for it.

Mention has been made of the licensing of vehicles. Let us consider some of the aspects of motor vehicle licensing. For this to be done adequately the local authorities must have the necessary staff and facilities. The majority of the local authorities, however—and I refer particularly to the smaller local authorities—just do not have the staff required to effectively carry out the licensing of motor vehicles.

I know this to be the case because I have been mixed up with this sort of thing. As a rule a junior who has just left school comes into the shire office looking for a job. He is introduced to the shire clerk, given a job, and is told that he must make the tea. He is then given the rate book to look after and is told that Tom Brown will show him how it should be kept.

I admit that this does not apply in all cases, but it does in the majority of cases where local authorities are concerned. The officers in question are not trained to carry out the effective licensing of motor vehicles. With the limitations they have placed on them they certainly do a good job, but

they must learn the hard way. I know this to be so because I had to learn the hard way. I was given a copy of the receipt book and a copy of the existing regulations and was told to get on with the job.

The Hon. J. Heitman: Did you become efficient?

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: I did.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: And that was said with all modesty!

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: The first essential in the licensing of a vehicle is the inspection of the vehicle. The regulations require that a vehicle be inspected before it is licensed. Most of the local authorities concerned do not have the necessary facilities or the trained personnel to carry out this function. They never will have these facilities unless a great deal of money is spent on the training of the officers concerned and in the provision of the necessary equipment. Most of the smaller local authorities, certainly, are just not in a position to provide the finance required.

If the regulations were policed stringently I feel sure I would be in Fremantle Gaol at this moment because of the number of vehicles I have licensed without first having carried out the necessary inspection. I would point out, however, that I am not the only one who has adopted this course. In the case of Roebourne the percentage of vehicles licensed without initial inspection has been as high as 60 per cent. It is possible, of course, that the motor vehicles in question have had only minor faults such as a lack of parking lights, faulty tail lights, and so on. These faults, however, should have been picked up.

However, these are some of the problems that confront local authorities and the officers who carry out the licensing of motor vehicles. It is always possible for a tail light to suddenly fuse which, of course, in the strict letter of the law would mean that the vehicle should not be on the road.

Previous speakers on this Bill have said that some local authorities have not been able to carry the cost of traffic control and as a result they have handed over this control to the police. If the local authorities in question have not had the necessary finance in previous years they will certainly not have it in the future.

I cannot see how it will be possible to achieve in the country areas the same satisfactory results that are obtained in the metropolitan area when a motor vehicle is inspected by a qualified person using the best equipment and facilities available.

There is no uniformity of traffic control in Western Australia. I could continue in this vein for a long time, but several speakers have already mentioned the shortcomings of the local authorities and their officers. I would stress, however, that the local authorities concerned and

their officers have done a great deal to achieve traffic control in Western Australia, but it has been impossible for them to do so with the untrained and unequipped officers they have to carry out the job.

There is also the possibility that young Tom Jones does not do what he is supposed to do because he has arranged to meet his girl friend at the top of the road. At this point I must hasten to add that I am sure the police officers have the same human feelings!

On the subject of traffic control, I would point out that a number of the local authorities are conscious of this necessity and as a result they endeavour to achieve a high standard of traffic control in the interests of both road safety and the preservation of lives.

Some local authorities do, however, look upon this aspect as a source of revenue. It has always been my view that the duty of a traffic officer or a police officer is not so much to prosecute but to educate the public in motoring habits. I am sure we would all like to see—and I am sure I certainly would—the inspector of any local authority in Western Australia indicate at the annual general meeting of the local authority that the accidents for the year were nil and that the prosecutions for the year were also nil. This would show that the traffic inspector had done his job; it would indicate that the reason there were no offences committed was that the public was obeying the rules of the road.

The Hon. T. O. Perry: What about the traffic that passes through that area?

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: This of course is always a problem; but if it could be said by any local authority that it had no accidents and no prosecutions it would certainly indicate that some control existed and that the inspectors were doing their job. I said that this was the type of report I would like to see.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: There are some very close to it.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: These must have been at Halls Creek.

The Hon. F. R. White: You talk about traffic control. Does this traffic control cover road safety?

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: I included that.

The Hon. F. R. White: You feel this should be under the control of the police.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Will the honourable member address his remarks to the Chair.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: It is my view that traffic control and road safety go hand in hand. We are all aware that some local authorities take a very serious view of traffic control, but at the same time we know that some of these authorities have the necessary finance to employ

traffic inspectors while others do not. This is particularly so as it relates to the majority of the smaller authorities—they certainly do not have the finance necessary for this purpose.

It has been said that it is not unknown for the shire clerk to also be the traffic inspector, the vermin officer, the bushfire officer, the harbour and light officer—if the authority happens to be near the ocean—the fauna warden, the dog catcher, and the undertaker. This has been the case at Meekatharra.

Some local authorities have combined and formed regional councils which operate very successfully. This of course is indicative of the fact that these authorities appreciate that as a single body it is not possible for them to get very far, but that if they combine it may be possible for them to achieve some measure of success in the control of traffic.

Mr. Heitman and other speakers have referred to the dedication of traffic inspectors. I would like to point out that in most cases some of these traffic inspectors should not be on the job. They, however, were possibly the only people who were available for the job in question. A number of them have no previous experience. Quite often one sees an advertisement calling for applications for the position of traffic inspector which states that while previous experience is preferable it is not essential.

While some local authorities provide the right type of equipment for the job—such as motor vehicles, amphotermeters, two-way radios, and so on—there are others which feel that a standard model car is all that is necessary to carry out the traffic control work in question.

It is only recently that traffic inspectors have had to wear uniforms. Prior to their having to wear uniforms one did not know who was pulling one up on the side of the road.

Mr. Withers said in his position he supported the Bill because every local authority in his electorate, save one, had gone over to police traffic control. It is commendable for Mr. Withers to support his local authorities. In my case, however, not one local authority in the Lower North Province has decided to go over to the police control of traffic. The Lower North Province covers one-third of the State of Western Australia and in that entire area there are only two full-time traffic inspectors. I cannot for one moment see how this can be called uniform traffic control. The rest of the area is covered by shire clerks who perform a multiplicity of duties.

The Hon. S. T. J. Thompson: There is no heavy traffic in that area.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: Mr. Heitman mentioned the number of miles of road in the area of the Lower North Province.

The statistics I have with me include the area of the Kalgoorlie Shire Council in which there are 15,000-odd miles of road. In that area, there are some 5,327 motor vehicles licensed. These figures were abstracted from the statistics of local government areas for the year 1970.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: What problem did they have?

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: Quite apart from its own population and motor vehicle movement this area is also confronted with possibly the greatest through flow of heavy transport in Western Australia. These vehicles are constantly moving to the iron ore areas of the north. Apart from this there is the fact that there are other vehicles which are not licensed in the area; they carry Perth licenses and accordingly the figures do not indicate the true situation.

The Hon. F. R. White: Will this Bill provide more than two full-time traffic policemen?

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: The shire clerks together with their assistants and other officers just do not have the time to devote to the business of traffic control. They have their own duties to carry out; and in other areas it is not always a good thing for an inspector to apprehend a neighbour's cousin with whom he is likely to play tennis that same afternoon.

No doubt some members of the House have driven from Geraldton to Perth at some time or the other. On one such trip I was struck by the lack of uniformity in the road signs. I know this matter has been mentioned previously but I would point out that on the road from Geraldton to Perth the various signs stand out in confusion; particularly those on the school bus stops. Some of these signs are red, some are yellow; some are rusted; there are those which are readable and those which are not; apart from which there are round signs, square signs and triangular signs.

In this area we have eight or nine local authorities adjoining the road in question and I do not think that one of these shire councils has a sign which is the same as that used by the authority next door to it.

We have all heard about the S.A.S. code and the use of uniform signs throughout Australia. We have heard about this proposition and the views expressed by the local authorities and the Country Shires Association. We have this association which is opposed to the police takeover of traffic control—and some individual shires are also opposed to this—while on the other hand there are local authorities which are anxious for the police to take over the control of traffic. This is indicated by the 20-odd authorities concerned.

Some of the local authorities in question disapprove of the takeover by the police of traffic control because they feel this could mean loss of revenue. I believe this is the main fear of the local authorities; they are frightened they will lose revenue by the police taking over the control of traffic.

Provided we can give them guarantees that this will not be the case, I see no reason why local authorities should be concerned about the police takeover of traffic control, which will result in the ultimate objective of achieving uniform traffic control throughout Western Australia.

Mr. Ron Thompson mentioned some figures which relate to shires which have voluntarily handed over the control of traffic to the police.

It is interesting to note that the total area of the local authorities which are now under police control of traffic comprises 300,000 square miles. The total area of the State is 975,000 square miles. In the one-third of the State which I represent there are two full-time inspectors. So, excluding the area that is under police control, and the area which is controlled by the two traffic inspectors, the remaining third of the State virtually has no traffic control.

The Hon. J. Heitman: That area would include the Kimberley.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: Yes, including the North Province. As Mr. Dans mentioned, the Police Department has assumed control over the policing of heavy haulage and overloading; the provision of escorts for large vehicles, as happened when the tracking station was built at Carnarvon and extra large loads had to be carried; and the issuing of engine numbers for replacement engines. If a person approaches a local authority and requests a replacement number to be given for a new motor, the matter is referred to the Police Department.

Regarding stolen vehicles, the local authorities have found that they cannot take any effective action when the stolen vehicles are recovered. Under section 22 of the Traffic Act the police are empowered to apprehend traffic offenders, where no other officer is available. Drunken driving, investigations into fatal accidents, and similar matters come under the administration of the Police Department.

I believe the Police Department has the nucleus of an economic and efficient organisation for State-wide traffic enforcement, and the proposal is to introduce the scheme over three years. This is a realistic and practical approach.

**THE HON. T. O. PERRY** (Lower Central) [9.03 p.m.]: I wish to make it clear at the start that I respect every person's opinion on this matter. It is a contentious matter, and the opinion is

divided. However, no evidence has been furnished to indicate that the police takeover of traffic in country areas will reduce accidents or save lives on the roads; and this is the aspect that concerns me.

The standard of traffic safety will depend very largely on the person administering the control, whether he be a traffic inspector employed by a local authority, or a police constable. We all realise that police officers in country areas are responsible in varying degrees for administering the ordinary police duties. The closing of hotel trading is strictly administered in some country areas, but in other country areas where the police officer lives in the town the hotel is often not closed at the required time. So we find varying degrees of administration by the police in different districts, just as there are varying degrees of administration of traffic control by different traffic inspectors.

Before I say any more about the Police Force of Western Australia I would like to indicate to the Minister that I do not hold the views expressed by Dean Hazelwood! The previous speaker referred to the inadequate inspection of motor vehicles in country areas, but I would point out that in my own district the local authority employs a plant mechanic who has the duty to inspect motor vehicles before they are licensed. I would think that the knowledge possessed by these plant mechanics is as good as, if not superior to, the knowledge held by those engaged on vehicle inspections in the metropolitan area.

To me it is important to prove conclusively that the police takeover of traffic in country areas will bring about an improvement in traffic control, but up to this stage no-one has yet adduced such proof.

On Monday of last week when I was travelling to Perth I came across an example of the police control of traffic accidents in the metropolitan area. An accident occurred at Bedforddale hill at about 7.45 a.m. When I arrived on the scene the casualty was lying down on a mattress with a rug thrown over him. He was unconscious and lying in an incorrect position. As one trained in first aid I stopped to make sure that the injured person was in a three-quarter prone position, in case he was suffering from head injury.

I inquired whether an ambulance had been sent for and whether the police had been contacted. One of those who arrived at the scene of the accident had gone to a nearby house and phoned the ambulance; he also notified the police of the accident. Thirty minutes later the ambulance arrived, and when I saw two qualified first aid officers in the vehicle I left. However, up till then the police had not arrived at the scene.

A civil defence van came along, and the officer in it contacted headquarters on his two-way radio; and his headquarters contacted the Armadale police. Yet at the expiration of a half hour there was still no police officer on the scene. I arrived at the scene at 7.45 a.m. and left at about 8.15 a.m.

We have heard a great deal about vehicles with country registrations being unroadworthy. Recently when I was travelling between Perth and Armadale I passed five vehicles bearing metropolitan number plates which had only one headlight operating. I wonder who is responsible for inspecting these vehicles. On this occasion I passed five vehicles with only one headlight operating.

I would think that the roadworthiness of vehicles licensed by local authorities in country areas after inspection by their traffic inspectors or plant mechanics compares very favourably with the roadworthiness of vehicles inspected by police officers in the metropolitan area.

I cannot agree with several statements that have been made in the course of this debate. The first is that police officers attend accidents in country areas, along with the traffic inspectors. I am sure the Minister for Police will agree that the police only attend fatal accidents in country areas where traffic inspectors are employed.

From time to time figures have been quoted as to the number of accidents occurring in the country areas, as compared with the number occurring in the metropolitan area. I could quote one example where in the district of a particular regional traffic authority, a survey over a three-year period revealed that 45 per cent. of the vehicles involved in accidents carried metropolitan number plates. If one takes into account the fact that only 20 to 25 per cent. of the vehicles travelling on country roads bear metropolitan registrations, then the 45 per cent. of the vehicles bearing metropolitan registrations involved in accidents on country roads is a very high percentage.

I think much more research must be undertaken into the causes of accidents before we can decide what form of traffic control is most desirable. In Western Australia a great deal of emphasis is placed on excessive speed as being the prime cause of traffic accidents; but I have here a report in *The West Australian* of the 9th August, 1972, which deals with this question. The report is as follows:—

#### Speed-death link queried

Sydney, Tuesday.—Speed limits had no effect on accident rates, the director of the New South Wales traffic accident research unit, Dr. J. M. Henderson, said today.

Dr. Henderson was giving evidence to the House of Representatives select committee on road safety.

He said that there was little relation between legal speed limits and the speeds at which people drove.

Fatal accidents tended to occur at speeds much lower than the top limits.

The research unit had studied a sample of accidents where speed had been considered a major factor.

The average speed had been found to be around 44 m.p.h.

Fatal accidents at speeds of 80 or 100 m.p.h. received most publicity, but they were only a small part of the overall crash problem.

Many traffic surveys had shown that people did not comply with speed limits.

Dr. Henderson said: "For example, we have found that the speed limit at level crossings is totally ignored.

"Similarly, it is a fact that heavy trucks drive with the traffic flow rather than at their legal speed limits."

Dr. Henderson said that there had been no reduction in accidents on a section of the Sydney-Newcastle expressway after the reduction of the speed limit from 60 to 45 m.p.h.

It is very important that wherever possible vehicles should travel with the traffic flow rather than at disorganised speed limits.

From what I have said it will be seen that the actual causes of accidents on roads, either within the metropolitan area or in the country, are very confusing. Much emphasis has been placed on uniform traffic control, but we can have either a low uniform traffic standard or a high uniform traffic standard.

Before I can support the police takeover of traffic control in country areas I have to be convinced that it will result in raising the efficiency of traffic control; but nothing has been said in this debate to convince me that with the police taking over control in country areas the standard of traffic control will be raised. From my observations and experiences in the metropolitan area recently I think the standard of traffic control in country areas is at least as high as, if not higher than, the standard of traffic control in the metropolitan area. With those words I oppose the Bill.

**THE HON. R. T. LEESON** (South-East) [9.14 p.m.]: I think, firstly, we must look at the aspect of sincerity in relation to this matter, and as to whether we intend to attempt to do something to reduce the road toll. If we examine the speech made

by Mr. Clive Griffiths the other evening when he made reference to various traffic inspectors and their qualifications—

The Hon. J. Heitman: Would you be surprised if I told you that one traffic inspector who was sitting in the room, and who Mr. Clive Griffiths said had no previous experience, did, in fact, have 14 years' experience?

The PRESIDENT: Order! Will the honourable member address the Chair and ignore the interjections?

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I know that possibly a few mistakes could have been made, but I do know that some of the statements that have been made are right, because I know some of the traffic inspectors in my area and I am aware of their qualifications.

It was very gratifying at one stage to notice that out of six applicants five had "Nil qualifications" alongside their names and the other fellow had, "Fitter and turner." I was very proud of that fact because I am a fitter and turner myself.

However, I do know something about motorcars and I believe that one of the biggest factors in traffic accidents is the condition of the cars involved. Undoubtedly, a terrific number of cars have loose steering, faulty brakes, and quite a number of other faults. When a car is travelling at 65 miles per hour and the driver has to pull up quickly, everything must be in good order.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Especially when there is a loose-headed driver behind the wheel.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Is it not true that the police inspect vehicles in country shires?

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I would not agree with that statement. The point I want to make is that I represent an area which includes Kalgoorlie and Boulder, and it is controlled by the Eastern Goldfields Regional Traffic Council. The council is run fairly efficiently and it has been found that with the amalgamation the traffic inspectors are doing a good job.

However, I am concerned with the situation of some of the smaller towns in my electorate. One I will name is Salmon Gums. The people from that town used to go to Esperance to do their shopping and, consequently, they would license their vehicles in Esperance. However, the Esperance Shire Council handed traffic control over to the police and the people from Salmon Gums now license their vehicles in the Dundas Shire.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: The vehicles should not have been licensed in Esperance in the first place.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: Yes, possibly. However, being supporters of Esperance these people licensed their vehicles in that

town. When the police took over the control of traffic, and carried out rigid checks on the vehicles, the people from Salmon Gums went to the Dundas Shire Council to license their vehicles.

In some respects I am sympathetic with the farmers who live in the outlying districts. It would be fair enough to say that where a father and son run a farm they could have two trucks, a couple of tractors, possibly two cars, and a few motor bikes. It would take a week for that father and son to get all those vehicles in to the local shire and have them checked for registration, and I think that has a lot to do with some of the opposition towards this Bill. I think it would be possible for arrangements to be made whereby the type of vehicles to which I have referred could be checked without unnecessary inconvenience.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You have the Minister worried now

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: The final point I want to make is that at this stage I oppose the setting up of a separate statutory authority. My reason, firstly, is because of the cost involved. There has been a lot of opposition to the proposal now before us but I think it is a common-sense approach to say that the police could take over the control of traffic at far less cost than would be involved in the setting up of another separate authority.

Perhaps at a later date the traffic department could be divorced from the Police Force, and a separate authority introduced. However, to throw the onus on a separate authority and suggest it take over the huge area of Western Australia at such short notice is, I feel, impracticable. I support the Bill.

**THE HON. N. E. BAXTER** (Central) [9.20 p.m.]: The main aspect of this legislation—or its intention—is to introduce a system of police traffic control in order to reduce the number of road deaths and road accidents. Secondly, of course, the measure conforms with the Labor Party policy on traffic control.

I have no argument with the policy of the Labor Party, but I do argue that the attempt to implement police control of traffic, if it is successful, will not reduce the road toll or the number of traffic accidents which occur.

I will first of all deal with some of the statements made by the Minister when he introduced the Bill. The Minister states—

As the present system of multiple traffic control and vehicle licensing is incompatible with State-wide efficient traffic management we shall place

complete control of traffic with the Police Department which we propose to restructure.

Of course, the Minister was quoting the words of the present Premier when he delivered his policy speech. The Minister visualises that the control of traffic through the Police Department will provide efficient traffic control. To that end it is proposed to restructure the Police Department.

The Minister's reference to the proposals for restructuring the Police Department is not very lengthy, and consists of two or three very brief statements. The Minister said—

This legislation is a necessary part of the Government's policy plan to restructure the Police Department. The plan includes:

(a) a Traffic Safety Council which will devote itself solely to those matters within the area of traffic safety; and

(b) a Safety Research Council.

Those are the only words I could find in the Minister's speech concerning the restructuring of the Police Department for the control of traffic.

The Hon. J. Heitman: You will get that with regulations.

The Hon. J. Dolan: There are no regulations.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: With the introduction of a Bill of this nature, with its far-reaching effect, the Minister should have given us more information regarding the plans for restructuring the Police Force so that it can take over the control of traffic in Western Australia. One cannot sum up the sort of restructuring which will occur to allow for the efficient control of traffic.

However, at another stage of the Minister's speech he said that it would take some time—or words to that effect—to make the changeover. Still later in his speech the Minister mentioned a mythical figure of an extra 400 police officers who would be required to control traffic in this State. I do not know where the Minister will find 400 suitable men because traffic officers have to be properly trained.

When referring to the qualifications of the traffic officers the Minister stated—

Such a special organisation would have to be built almost exactly on the lines of the Police Force. It would have to be comprised of men and women of integrity, who are of adequate intelligence to become knowledgeable of the increasingly complex law; they would have to be good drivers; they would have to be physically fit and willing enough to do duty at awkward hours (i.e. outside normal working hours) and in all weathers:

My experience of country traffic inspectors is that they work all sorts of broken hours. They do not work from 8.00 a.m. until 4.00 p.m. or 5.00 p.m.; they work broken hours so that they can efficiently patrol their areas and enforce proper traffic control. I understand that police traffic officers in the metropolitan area work on a roster basis or work staggered hours. I do not think those men would work the awkward hours now worked by the country traffic inspectors. They would work according to union rules.

This will mean that a greater number of men will be required to control the traffic in the shires which are to be taken over. The Minister continued—

... they would have to have good judgment and common sense in order to decide when to caution a motorist and when to report for a summons, while they would, to a greater measure be ineffective unless they had powers of arrest in serious matters.

I believe most traffic officers are very efficient and they treat their job seriously. Of course, there are instances of unreasonable traffic patrolmen but we have to accept that as one of the failings of human nature. At a later stage of his speech the Minister said—

It cannot be stressed too strongly that the Police Department can upon immediate application throw in some 400-odd men on traffic enforcement in the country. . . .

I would not hazard a guess as to how many traffic patrolmen are employed in the metropolitan area. Perhaps the Minister might know but I do not think that anybody knows the exact number in this Chamber.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: There are 30 members in this Chamber.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Of course, I am referring to the number of officers employed in the traffic branch. As the Minister is not listening he cannot give me an indication. I think that a figure of 100 patrolmen has been mentioned as the force operating in the metropolitan area. I believe that figure is ridiculous and I would be very surprised if the number of traffic patrol officers in the metropolitan area was not above 100. Could the Minister tell me whether that figure is right or wrong? I do not seem to be able to get an indication from him. Even if we had 200 patrolmen in the metropolitan area, more would be required to patrol 2,000 square miles.

It is proposed to have 400 men in the country areas to patrol 904,000 square miles. The situation is absolutely ludicrous. In my opinion—and I think many people share that opinion—in spite of the efficiency of the majority of traffic control officers, it cannot be said that traffic control in the metropolitan area is efficient.



One can drive through the suburbs of Perth, see breach after breach of the regulations, and not a traffic control officer within miles.

The Hon. J. Dolan: We will make you an honorary.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I have enough to do without that. I have reported people who have committed serious breaches of the traffic regulations. I think it is absolutely ridiculous to suggest restructuring the Police Force in this State to control all the traffic when in the metropolitan area we do not yet have adequate control.

I agree with Mr. Dans that we must do something about the drivers of motorcars. We must find out the types of nuts we are putting behind the wheels of cars and do something about prohibiting some of these people from driving cars. One sees them every day. One will be driving at the regulation speed and find that they go past and leave one standing. This does not apply in the country any more than in the city.

Last night I turned from London Street into Green Street on the lights. I had not gone 15 yards from the corner when a car passed me, just to race me to the next traffic lights. I suppose I was not doing any more than 30 miles an hour at that stage. He tore past me to get to that traffic light, which was red, then turned into Wanneroo Road when the light turned green and pulled into a snack bar. That is where he was going. I am a steady driver but he beat me to that traffic light by 200 or 300 yards. This is the sort of thing we are up against, and it is happening in the metropolitan area every day. One can drive along Guildford Road and Walter Road, fairly long roads coming into the city, and one would be lucky to see a traffic control officer once a week.

If the Government wants to do something about this matter, police takeover is not the answer. The Government should be doing something towards the efficient control of traffic in the metropolitan area to reduce the number of deaths and accidents to a reasonable percentage. It should not use the argument that the number of deaths resulting from car accidents is greater in the country areas than in the city. That carries no weight at all with me. With a small area under the control of the traffic police, one would think the number of fatalities would be reduced, but it has not been reduced.

I wish to quote from the Minister's speech. I am ducking about with the speech because it is scattered here and there. One finds one reference and has to go back to another. The Minister referred to the setting up of a national road trauma committee, and he went on to say—

In Western Australia we have two outstanding surgeons who have made a submission to the Premier on this

subject. They are G. M. Bedbrook, Chairman of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Road Trauma Committee and B. A. R. Stokes, secretary of that committee.

Like Mr. Willmott, I would like to know what qualifications these gentlemen have, apart from being eminent surgeons, to enable them to decide traffic control policy.

The Hon. J. Dolan: They see the results at Shenton Park Annexe, which they founded. They started it.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: They see the results. I remember seeing years ago the results of something in which one of these surgeons was mixed up. They were not very effective until I raised the matter in this House, and that surgeon very soon straightened out the situation. I would not say he was a full bottle on everything but he was mixed up in quite a number of matters concerning the medical profession; yet he becomes involved in traffic control and makes recommendations in regard to it.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Most of his patients live in the metropolitan area, anyway.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: With the expansion of the Police Force, the police will go out as traffic control officers and will also deal with all crimes that occur in the particular section they are controlling and perhaps perform many other police duties. I can assure the House that any traffic control policeman who goes out into a country area and who also has to deal with crime in that area will be so bowed down under the weight of paper work that he will not have much time for traffic control work. This matter needs serious investigation by the Minister. In some of the country police stations the police officers are weighed down with a lot of unnecessary paper work. It has become part of the bureaucratic system to do a lot of paper work. It happens in the Army, the Air Force, the Navy, and the Police Force. It becomes part of one's job to do so much paper work, with 10 copies of this and that, that one does not have time to do other jobs.

The Minister said that some local authorities had asked for more police officers. That is only natural. Of course they want more police officers when they are bowed down with all this work. At one time, Wundowie had one officer. He became so tied down with paper work that it was necessary to obtain another officer to cope with the growth of the town and the upsurge in petty crime and lawbreaking. That is the reason for local authorities wanting additional officers. Because there is so much paper work to be done, the officer is not free to patrol his area and do the things for which he was appointed.

A number of local authorities in this State have carried out traffic control very efficiently for some years, so that it has

been built into the financial structure of the authority. If this Bill is passed, it will take traffic control away from them and upset the whole of their budgeting and financial structure. The authorities that have efficiently carried out traffic control will be penalised if this Bill is passed. I certainly would not agree to a Bill along those lines.

Some local authorities have given in to this a bit too easily. Some of the shire clerks, particularly, have found it will involve a little more work and their salaries will not be increased by very much. Mr. Withers said only one of the local authorities in his area was not under police traffic control. I was surprised at the reasons he gave for supporting the Bill. They were not very strong reasons. I was waiting for him to give the reasons for these local authorities asking for police traffic control, but he did not give us one reason. I venture to say one of the major reasons was that of finance.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: That is a surmise.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It may be a surmise. I have to surmise because the honourable member told us nothing. As I visualise the area, I think one of the major considerations would be finance for traffic control. The honourable member will probably admit this is a factor in those areas. I think we will find that a large number of local authorities throughout the State have asked for police traffic control because of the financial aspect.

There is a large town in my province—the town of Northam. An announcement was made recently that Northam would go over to police traffic control. One wonders why the council of that town has made that decision. It is up to the council to make the decision but there must be a reason underlying it and I have not been able to find out what it is.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: I can tell you.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I would say to some extent it could be party political. I know that one of the prime movers in that local authority is a rather strong Labor supporter, so that could be a factor that led the authority to make that decision.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: The voting on the decision made on Monday night was six all, and the mayor gave the casting vote.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I think politics are mixed up in this to some degree. In addition, the town clerk has recently decided to retire. There will be a new town clerk who will perhaps re-organise the whole show.

Although I believe it was reported that the council had made a substantial loss on traffic control, I understand on fairly

good authority that when the figures were examined by an outside person who was well qualified, they actually showed a substantial profit on traffic control.

The Hon. G. W. Berry: Figures can lie.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: They do not necessarily lie but people can juggle figures. Included in those figures was the cost of erecting road signs, putting white lines on the roads, and so on. They would not be annually recurring costs. From what I can gather on reasonably good authority, quite a lot of juggling went on with these figures in order to show that the town council was making a loss, whereas on another interpretation the figures showed a substantial profit had been made. So one wonders just what exactly goes on when some of these authorities decide to take action such as that.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: As I said, the voting was very close.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I will leave it to members to form their own opinion about what happened in that instance. I do not think I need convey my thoughts to them.

This Bill presupposes that police control of traffic is the ultimate solution; that because police control of traffic is so efficient in the metropolitan area it should be extended to country areas. If the traffic system in the metropolitan area is so well controlled and so perfect, why do we have continual blitzes on drivers to try to keep them in check? This indicates that the traffic system in the metropolitan area is not as efficient as the powers that be would have us believe.

I think rather than produce a Bill of this nature the Government should concentrate on providing more efficient control of traffic in the metropolitan area and reducing the road toll. At the same time the Government should conduct a survey of what is actually occurring in country areas. It should study those authorities which have reasonably efficient traffic control systems—and many country shires have. It should also look at those shires which are not playing their full part in traffic control. Then it should set about introducing some legislation which will deal thoroughly with the situation.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: That is what we are doing.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That is what the honourable member thinks; it is certainly not what I think. The policy of the Government is simply to go ahead and change over to police control of traffic without considering any other aspect. The proposal put forward by members of the Liberal Party was discussed with, and to some degree formulated by, the Country Shire Councils' Association.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Back in 1964.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Yes. This proposal is one which could be built upon. I understand there are some differences of opinion in respect of some of its provisions. However, if the Government took an interest in the proposal and saw what could be built up from it, and at the same time carried out a survey and considered the granting of assistance to some shires in the meantime to help them handle traffic control, I think it would be a much cheaper venture than restructuring and building up the Police Force to handle the matter.

I cannot see any mention in the speech of the Minister of where the money for this changeover will come from. I know, and I think the Minister knows, this will be a very expensive undertaking.

The Hon. J. Dolan: I have given you the figures in answer to questions.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It will be indeed expensive to build up the Police Force sufficiently to control country traffic. The Government says it is fighting for every penny it can get in order to meet its commitments. One wonders why at this time the Government is going ahead with this proposal. The Government must be deluding itself if it thinks that expenditure will be reduced, and if it thinks the road accident problem will be reduced to any great degree.

I certainly do not think the road accident problem will be reduced until further steps are taken to remedy the driver problem. I believe the amount of money it is proposed to spend on this changeover could well be spent on tackling the driver problem. Perhaps young people and some of the older people should be sent to driving schools to receive instruction. Perhaps we should make it mandatory for drivers to attend a school for a day or so each year in order to learn the rudiments of proper driving, road courtesy, and other things.

This would be a less expensive proposition than handing over control of traffic in country areas to the police, and it would be less expensive in terms of the lives lost on our roads. I think it is high time we had a broad look at this subject, not considering only police or local authority control, but also the nut behind the wheel who must be trained to ensure that he does not injure himself or kill somebody else.

Let us get down to brass tacks; let us get to the root of the problem and not merely introduce Bills of this nature which will take a long time to put into effect and will do no good at all. I oppose the measure.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. G. W. Berry.

## BILLS (5): RECEIPT AND FIRST READING

1. Fuel, Energy and Power Resources Bill.
2. Mental Health Act Amendment Bill.
3. Auctioneers Act Amendment Bill.
4. Noxious Weeds Act Amendment Bill.
5. War Service Land Settlement Scheme Act Amendment Bill.

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

## HAIRDRESSERS REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

THE HON. R. H. C. STUBBS (South-East—Minister for Local Government) [9.56 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill seeks to provide deputies for the Chairman and members of the Hairdressers Registration Board. The board, as presently constituted, comprises a chairman, appointed by the Governor, and four other persons, each of whom is required to have had at least three years' experience either as a principal or employee in the practice of hairdressing. One of these four persons is nominated by the Master Gentlemen's Hairdressers Association, one by the Metropolitan Ladies Hairdressers Association, and the other two by the union, one to represent male employees and the other female employees.

A short time ago the chairman of the board attended a conference overseas, and more recently two members suffered serious illness. As a consequence of these enforced absences the work of the board was seriously hampered.

The obvious solution, of course, is to provide for the appointment of deputies as envisaged in this legislation. It is proposed that the chairman, and each member, be represented by a deputy who will be appointed in the same manner and have the same qualifications as the person he is to represent. When required to attend a meeting of the board, the deputy will receive the same fee as is prescribed for a member and may be reimbursed the actual expenses incurred in attending the meeting. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. G. W. Berry.

House adjourned at 9.58 p.m.