stockpile areas for materials which would be either exported or imported over the wharf complex which will be developed in the area.

Those facilities, of course, would relate to the whole host of activities completely removed from, or in addition to, the industry which is the subject of this Bill.

The hour is reasonably late and presently it will be later still. This is a Bill to make possible the establishment of a most important industry and I repeat that every safeguard possible has been undertaken. Any one of us can become emotive and excited in the matter of protection of the environment. We know perfectly well there is an effect when we walk over grass in a paddock; when we clear for the construction of a road; when we build a house upon a site; when we light a barbecue fire; when we turn on the ignition key of our motor vehicles; when necessary power lines are erected; when parking areas are provided. I could keep on and on. The activities of man—virtually every activity of every sort—have some detrimental effect upon the environment. Either we go back to nature 100 per cent. or we allow industrial development, but at the same time take every care possible—every precaution of which we are aware—and this, of course, is the spirit, the essence, and the ingredients of this legislation.

I am extremely sorry that so many people have become, I suggest, quite genuinely concerned and perturbed over what they envisage is likely to happen to the beautiful environment of the city of Perth, or the metropolis generally, if this industry is established. However, I think that some of those who have been stirring up trouble should examine their consciences in the light of the economy.

I well remember an occasion when some representatives of the Government and representatives of those who speak so freely of their concern for the protection of the environment visited a certain local authority. One of the shire councillors concluded the evening by saying, "I am fed up to the back teeth with you. I have listened to nothing all the evening except what might happen, what could happen, and perhaps it would happen, and all these illusory, imaginary things, whereas on the other side facts, evidence, and argument were given to show that every precaution has been taken."

In the establishment of this industry, to the nth degree we have dotted every "i" and crossed every "t" in an endeavour to ensure there will be an absolute minimum of grounds for anybody to have concern. One of our prime concerns is the protection of the environment. This goes hand in hand with our desire to provide, with the downturn of our primary industries, opportunities for employment and continued progress in the State of Western Australia.

I hope and trust that the large, broad, and sensible view will be taken by this Parliament and the legislation will be given as speedy a passage as possible to enable the principals of this firm to get on with the job of carrying out their negotiations with those who will no doubt be their partners in other parts of the world.

Mr. Court: You have brought this problem on yourself.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 11.34 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, the 23rd September, 1971

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

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

LAND

Timber Rights

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

Can the Leader of the House inform me on what date the letter which referred to timber rights—signed by the Minister for Agriculture and the member for Warren—and dated the 20th August, 1971, which I quoted to the House on the 21st September, 1971, was actually posted?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

First of all, let me thank Mr. Willmott for giving me prior notice of this question. I was able to take it to the Minister concerned in an endeavour to clarify this important matter which I think is the key to the whole argument. I am advised that a letter was written on the 20th August, 1971, and posted on that same day.

QUESTIONS (8): ON NOTICE

1. EDUCATION

Annual Expense per Child

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

(1) What is the relative annual expense of educating—

(a) a child in a suburban school;

(b) a child involved in a country school on a school bus network;

(c) a child on the School of Air network; and

(d) a child purely on correspondence?

(2) In the answer to (1) is any capital expenditure or repayment of principal and interest involved?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

(1) (a) $305.

(b) Child who travels on a school bus—$435.

Child who does not travel on a school bus—$350.

(c) $300.

(d) $625.

(2) No capital expenditure but interest repayment equal to 63 cents per child in Government primary and secondary schools in 1969-70.

2. EDUCATION

Capital Expenditure per Child

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

What is the relative capital expenditure per head for education for—

(a) a child in a suburban school;

(b) a child involved in a country school on a school bus network;

(c) a child on the School of Air network; and

(d) a child purely on correspondence?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

(a) $500.

(b) $555.

(c) $550.

(d) $515.

3. LAND

Pastoral Rents and Fines

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

Will he ascertain from the Minister for Lands, and advise the House, the position regarding payment of pastoral rents and fines?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

As previously advised, legislation will be introduced to defer or remit pastoral lease rentals. Applications for relief from rentals or fines will be considered on the merits of the case submitted.

4. LAND

Yardie Creek Pastoral Company

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

(1) Has a decision been made on the re-allocation of land at North West Cape, formerly held under pastoral lease by the Yardie Creek Pastoral Company?

(2) If the answer to (1) is "No" when is it expected that a decision will be made?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

(1) No.

(2) The matter is under active consideration and a decision is expected in the near future.

5. TRAFFIC

Motor Vehicle License Fees

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS (for The Hon. Clive Griffiths) to the Minister for Police:

(1) Is he aware that pensioners in Western Australia—age, invalid, civilian widow, Tuberculosis, Service Age, Service permanently unemployable, Australia-United Kingdom reciprocal, war widow and others—do not receive similar treatment in regard to motor vehicle licence fees to that which has applied in the State of Queensland since 1969 where a concession of 50% of the normal registration fee is being granted?

(2) Will he investigate the position and give urgent consideration to implementing a similar concession to pensioners in Western Australia in respect of—

(a) motor vehicle registration fees; and

(b) motor vehicle drivers' licence fees?

(3) If not, why not?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

(1) Yes. Generally Queensland pensioners in the categories mentioned are entitled to a 50% concession, provided they are in receipt of the maximum pension. Many Repatriation and Social Service pensioners on reduced pensions at present receiving concessions in Western Australia, would not be eligible under the Queensland scheme.

(2) No. I might add the matter of concessions was investigated several times during the term of the previous Government, which decided not to extend the range of concessions.

(3) While sympathy may be extended to the plight of many pensioners, Western Australia is generally more liberal than other States in the granting of concessions. To extend the range of concessions would either reduce funds available for road works, or require increases in licence fees, which would have to be met by the community at large. Social service benefits are properly a matter for the consideration of the Commonwealth Government.

6. ELECTRICITY

Uniform Charges

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

(1) In view of the report on page one of *The West Australian* on Wednesday, the 22nd September, 1971, which quotes the price of domestic power at 1.9c per unit in the metropolitan area, and 2.3c a unit for consumers in the State Electricity Commission country network, and further quoting a fixed charge of one dollar per quarter for city and country areas, will the country people of the North be considered in the Premier's statement to bring uniform power costs to metropolitan and country State Electricity Commission consumers?

(2) If so, when will a decision be given?

(3) If the answer to (1) is "No" will Cabinet advise what it is going to do for those persons who have participated in decentralisation, and who are paying to the State Electricity Commission a fixed service fee which is 400% above those figures quoted in the paper for country consumers, and are paying up to 360% more per unit than the figures quoted for consumers on the country network?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

(1) No. There are insufficient funds available to finance such a proposal.

(2) Answered by (1).

(3) Since the State Electricity Commission took over, domestic tariffs have been reduced as follows:—

(a) Roebourne from 1st September, 1969: 18c to 8c per unit to 4.3c per unit including service charge.

(b) Port Hedland from 7th December, 1967: 10c to 5c per unit to 2.8c per unit including service charge.

(c) Kununurra from 1st February, 1970: 5c per unit to 4.4c per unit including service charge.

(d) Halls Creek from 1st May, 1970: 15c per unit to 9.4c per unit including service charge.

At this time there are no funds available for further reductions.

7. HOUSING

Pilbara and Kimberley Areas

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

(1) With particular reference to the Public Works Department, what are the rentals on Government Employees' Housing Authority homes in the Pilbara and Kimberley?

(2) (a) If G.E.H.A. homes cannot be provided for employees, will the Public Works Department rent State Housing Commission homes;

(b) if the answer is "No" how do they house employees?

(3) (a) If an employee is living in a State Housing Commission home, can he receive rent subsidy to align himself with an employee in a G.E.H.A. home;

(b) if so—

(i) what is the subsidy;

(ii) will it apply to all employees;

(c) if the answer to (a) is "No"—

(i) what is the rental subsidy on a G.E.H.A. home;

(ii) what is the subsidy paid to an employee living in a caravan park; and

(iii) what are the necessary qualifications for an employee to receive a subsidy?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

(1) Salaried Officers—$10 per week.
Wages employees—$4.60 per week.

(2) (a) No—the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement precludes authorities renting housing.

(b) There is no firm provision for housing employees generally—key personnel are housed in G.E.H.A. or departmental accommodation if available.

(3) (a) Generally, no.

(b) (i) and (ii) In very special cases only, key personnel could be subsidised rental in excess of those stated in (1) above.

(c) (i) Rental in excess of—

$10 per week—Salaried Officers.

$4.60 per week—Wages employees.

(ii) A special allowance of $6 per week is paid to four employees occupying a private caravan park.

(iii) He must be a key employee.

8. STATE SHIPPING SERVICE

Freight Increase

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

(1) Will the Minister explain his reason for stating by way of interjection that I was talking rubbish

when I advised the House of the effects caused by State Shipping freight increases into the north during the debate on the Pay-roll Tax Assessment Bill on Tuesday, the 21st September, 1971?

(2) What is the basis of the Minister's thoughts that it will cost five dollars extra for a ton of butter and the same amount for a ton of cornflakes?

(3) After consideration of these questions, has the Minister now been enlightened to the point where he realises that instead of costing $5.00 extra to send a ton of cornflakes into the north, it will now cost $14.94 extra due to the freight increase on the State Shipping Service?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

(1) to (3) The Minister needs no enlightenment on the substance of the honourable member's questions. However, he would point out that, when discussing shipping freight charges which are based on cubic content, a packet of cornflakes has a disproportionate volume to weight ratio as compared with a pound of butter. Hence the higher cost for a dead weight ton of light density cargo.

Question time is not an appropriate time to debate issues.

SUITORS' FUND ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

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

BILLS (4): ASSEMBLY'S MESSAGES

Messages from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Council to the following Bills:—

1. Pay-roll Tax Assessment Bill.
2. Vermin Act Amendment Bill.
3. Noxious Weeds Act Amendment Bill.
4. Offenders Probation and Parole Act Amendment Bill.

CENSORSHIP OF FILMS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Third Reading

THE HON. R. H. C. STUBBS (South-East—Chief Secretary) [2.51 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

THE HON. R. F. CLAUGHTON (North Metropolitan) [2.52 p.m.]: During the debate yesterday I made some remarks which were commented on by another member. I was referring to the television programme the "F.B.I." I merely wish to make it clear that I was quite serious in my comments. I do not think we should convey to our young people that our difficulties can be resolved by the use of firearms, whether the users be the upholders of the law or those outside the law.

It is difficult to gauge the effect of this type of programme on the serious and increasing incidence of armed holdups in Australia. A rather tragic example of the use of firearms was the recent experience in the gaol rebellion in the United States in which a number of hostages were reported to have been shot by the guards.

People in Western Australia do not demand the right to own a firearm. We have tried to keep this matter restricted because we feel it is more in keeping with our way of life in Australia.

It is not necessary for me to enlarge any further. I just wanted to indicate that my remarks were intended to be serious. I would like less of this type of film produced because of the serious effect on the young people who watch such films.

THE HON. R. J. L. WILLIAMS (Metropolitan) [2.55 p.m.]: I did not doubt the honourable member's sincerity, but the subject matter of his speech was totally irrelevant to the Bill. He was referring to the "F.B.I." which is a television series and not covered by an "R" certificate.

The honourable member further dealt with irrelevant matters this afternoon when he referred to the situation at Attica in New York. This subject has no possible relevance to the films the Minister assured us would be shown. Consequently the matters discussed by the honourable member were irrelevant.

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (Lower West) [2.56 p.m.]: I am at a loss to know why a member of the Government, which wants this Bill to pass, has dealt with matters completely irrelevant to the contents of the Bill. As the Minister and I endeavoured to explain, the Bill deals with a restricted certificate for artistic or adult films. I do not believe those responsible for the production of the "F.B.I." would classify it as an artistic or adult show. With Mr. Williams I am at a loss to understand why a member of the Minister's party, which is sponsoring this issue, should deal with irrelevancies. It is pointless and merely confuses the Opposition. I join with Mr. Williams in protesting about the confusion which is being created by a member of the Government which is trying to have passed this Bill dealing with artistic or adult films.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Not forgetting that you need not watch if you do not wish to.

THE HON. R. H. C. STUBBS (South-East—Chief Secretary) [2.57 p.m.]: This Bill deals with the "R" certificate, and all I am concerned about is getting it passed. Therefore I commend it to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Minister for Police) [2.58 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill, to amend the Traffic Act, is to confer power to make regulations requiring drivers and passengers of motor vehicles to wear prescribed items of equipment. The prescribed items of equipment intended at the moment are, of course, seat belts and, in the case of motor cyclists and pillion passengers, safety helmets.

The Bill proposes to repeal section 27A of the Traffic Act which presently requires motor cyclists and passengers to wear safety helmets, and in so doing will open the way for the regulations to deal with safety helmets in the same manner as the regulations will deal with seat belts.

In an effort to cause a significant reduction in the road toll, the State Government had little alternative but to make the wearing of seat belts compulsory.

Statistics on metropolitan road accidents —compiled by the Police Traffic Department and published by *The West Australian*—have fully confirmed overseas and Victorian experience with safety belts—that they are the cheapest and most efficient safeguard available against injury and death on the roads.

No-one wearing a seat belt was killed in a metropolitan road accident for the first six months of this year, 1971. The death toll among the nonbelt wearers climbed to 84 in the same period. A significant drop in the injury rate was also evidenced.

Among the belt wearers only 13 per cent. were injured as against 37 per cent of the nonwearers of belts.

The statistics also revealed that less than half the seat belts fitted in cars are being worn. Too many car occupants are sitting on the life-savers which are now compulsory in many vehicles.

Victoria has seen a significant drop in road deaths since belt wearing became compulsory on the 1st January, 1971. For the period the 1st January, 1970, to the 2nd September, 1970, the road fatalities were 775. For the period the 1st January, 1971, to the 2nd September, 1971, the number was 627—a fall of 148.

The introduction of this type of legislation in New South Wales has been delayed due to difficulties in drafting the necessary regulations. The law is expected to become operative on the 1st October, 1971.

South Australia and Tasmania are in the process of introducing similar legislation, and Queensland—*vide The West Australian* of the 6th September, 1971—is contemplating similar action.

In Sweden the research associated with seat-belts involved a check on 28,000 car crashes in speeds of up to 60 m.p.h. More than 9,000 occupants of these cars had been wearing the approved lap-sash belt and not one had been fatally injured.

The Perth Police report—with the cooperation of *The West Australian* in informing the public—stated that in the 2,380 road accidents during the six months period to the 30th June, 1971, 4,654 cars were involved.

Of the 5,118 people involved who were not wearing belts at the time of the accidents, 1901 were injured and 84 killed.

Among the 1,157 people wearing belts, only 151 were injured—there were no fatalities. Australia has the world's worst record for spinal cord injuries resultant from motor vehicle accidents. This is one of the observations of Dr. David Cheshire, the Director of the Spinal Injuries Centre at the Austin Hospital in Melbourne. He visited the Shenton Park Quadriplegic Centre on the 15th June, 1971. This is the only centre of its kind in Australia and is a monument to the work in this field of Dr. Bedbrook who considers as urgent and vital legislation to enforce compulsory use of seat belts.

Dr. Cheshire is quoted as saying that of 155 consecutive accident victims admitted to his spinal unit in three years, only two had been wearing seat belts. One had been wearing a lap belt and the other had worn a lap-sash belt, but it had been incorrectly mounted and was torn away from the flooring.

Members will be aware of the amazing safety record of the Snowy Mountains Authority.

In 1959 Sir William Hudson, the authority head, made the wearing of seat belts compulsory for all employees.

From 1959 the authority's 600 vehicles travelled more than 5 million miles, often on icy, winding, mountain roads. Despite head-on collisions, crashes into trees and rolling-down hillsides only one occupant of a vehicle was killed—while reversing a heavy truck after he had removed his seat belt.

For those who may be concerned about the penalty for non-use of seat belts, I would advise that the Snowy Mountains Authority's penalty was instant dismissal.

This legislation has the full support of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, the Australian Medical Association, the National Safety Council, Paraplegic Associations, Police Traffic Departments, the Royal Automobile Club and—although I have no authority for saying this—perhaps all those associated with road accidents—ambulance men, hospitals, doctors, nurses—could be included in the list.

In a recent meeting with the City Coroner, Mr. Wickens, I was informed of an inquest last March associated with a double fatality involving a young man and a young woman. They were in a motor vehicle involved in an intersection collision in the Metropolitan area with another vehicle containing a young couple. There was no indication that speed was the determining factor in the cause of this accident. Both cars were fitted with belts. The two killed were not wearing the belts. The other couple—only shaken in the collision—were wearing their belts.

Mr. Wickens has informed me that his experience—associated with his official position—has convinced him of the need for this legislation.

Suggested Regulations in the Road Traffic Code to implement the compulsory wearing of seat belts are as follows:—

(1) For the purposes of this Regulation "motor vehicle" includes a passenger car or derivative thereof and a goods vehicle having a gross vehicle weight not exceeding 10,000 lb., but does not include an Omnibus.

(2) Where pursuant to Regulation 1009 of the Vehicle Standards Regulations, 1965, a motor vehicle is required to be fitted with seat belts—

(a) No person shall, while occupying a seat position in a motor vehicle to which a seat belt has been fitted for the seat position, drive or travel, upon a road in that vehicle unless he is wearing that belt and the belt is properly adjusted and securely fastened;

(b) (i) No person travelling upon a road as a passenger in a motor vehicle fitted with one or more seat belts shall occupy a seat position not fitted with a seat belt unless each seat position for which a seat belt is fitted is occupied by another person.

(ii) Provided that where a motor vehicle has front and rear seat positions, subregulations (2) (b) (i) of this regulation shall not apply to a person occupying any rear seat position in that vehicle.

It will be seen from the foregoing that omnibuses and makes of cars prior to 1969 are exempt. It is not the purpose of these regulations to force on motorists the expense of fitting anchorages and seat belts to cars not already equipped with such. However, it is expected that in time the majority of these cars will phase out.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Don't you think there would have been more merit in giving a period of time for double the amount of vehicles on the road that are not fitted with seat belts to enable them to fit these belts?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: If the Leader of the Opposition refers to any subject during my speech I will take careful note of it and will give serious consideration to all aspects when drafting the regulations.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Surely you would not ask me for suggestions. Surely your department has followed up that aspect.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: It has, but the Leader of the Opposition is making a suggestion now and we will give every consideration to any suggestion that will assist us in framing the regulations. Further exemptions contemplated will be contained in Subregulation (3) as follows:—

(3) The provisions of subregulation (2) of this regulation do not apply to any person—

(a) who is driving a motor vehicle that is travelling backwards; or

(b) who is in possession of a current certificate signed by a Medical Practitioner and certifying that that person is unable for medical reasons to wear a seat belt; or

(c) who is driving a motor vehicle and who is in possession of a current certificate signed by a medical practitioner and certifying that, because of that person's size, build or other physical characteristic, he is unable to drive a motor vehicle with safety while wearing a seat belt; or

(d) who is travelling as a passenger in a motor vehicle and who is in possession of a current certificate signed by a medical practioner and certifying that, because of that person's size, build or other physical characteristic, it would be unreasonable to require him to wear a seat belt while so travelling; or

(e) who is actually engaged on work which requires him to alight from and re-enter a a motor vehicle at frequent intervals and who, while so

engaged, does not drive or is not travelling in that vehicle at the speed of, or at a speed exceeding, 15 miles per hour; or

(f) who is under the age of eight years; or

(g) who is travelling as a passenger in a motor vehicle and who is of or over the age of seventy years; or

(h) who is in possession of a written authority from the Commissioner of Police exempting him from the provisions of this regulation.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: If some of these regulations are not *ultra vires* the Bill, I will be surprised.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: We will see. All road safety authorities regard the compulsory use of seat belts as being one certain way of reducing the road toll, and the support of members is sincerely and earnestly sought.

Compulsory wearing of approved safety helmets by motor cyclists: This compulsion has been operative under section 27A since the 1st May, 1971. It is felt desirable that safety belts and safety helmets should be dealt with in the same manner under regulations.

The New South Wales traffic research unit studied 120 motor cyclist fatalities in 1969 and the first four months of 1970 and reached the conclusion that if 100 per cent. of motor cyclists in New South Wales wore safety helmets—rather than the 75 per cent. as at the 1st May, 1970—the death rate could be cut by about 35 per cent. Most of the victims were young males, the group of people the community can least afford to lose.

It is my intention to publicise that it is most desirable for motor cyclists to take steps to protect themselves by making themselves more visible on the road. The constant use of headlamps—a precaution taken by big haulage vehicles—would be a sensible initial move. The wearing of bright clothing could also be a worth-while consideration.

The two matters raised in this measure are most meritorious, and I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. V. J. Ferry.

PARLIAMENTARY SUPERANNUATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [3.12 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Parliamentary Superannuation Act, 1970, requires that the initial investigation into the state and sufficiency of the Superannuation Fund be carried out as at the thirty-first day of December, 1970. This early appraisal of last year's legislation was considered desirable for the purpose of establishing whether the increased contributions from the Government were sufficient to meet the liabilities of the fund under the new Act.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What about the increased contribution from members?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: There is no reference to that.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: They are part of it.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: While carrying out the actuarial valuation, the consulting actuary has encountered a number of actuarial complications, and as a consequence has requested that we revert to the 30th June valuation. Previous valuations were made as at the 30th June, 1961 and 1966, and it is now considered to be in the best interests of comparability to continue on this basis and triennially thereafter.

The Treasurer can see no compelling reasons for not changing the date and has satisfied himself that the 30th June, 1971, would be a more appropriate date for the first investigation under the new legislation.

Following the recommendations which he has received, this Bill has been introduced to Parliament for the purpose of amending the appropriate section of the Act; that is, subsection (2) of section 28. This is the sole purpose of this amending Bill. The amendment appears in clause 3 and is deemed, in clause 2, to have come into operation on the thirtieth day of December, 1970.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. V. J. Ferry.

MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Minister for Police) [3.15 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill, Mr. President, is to amend the Main Roads Act in two respects. One relates to an added responsibility of the Commissioner of Main Roads in the matter of control of main road reserves; and the other to the control of advertising signs adjacent to or on main roads and controlled access roads.

The provisions in this piece of legislation support the policy being implemented by the Government and by the Commissioner of Main Roads in respect of the conservation of roadside trees and natural vegetation and the control of litter as it affects the general tidiness of road reserves.

The policy was described rather aptly in another place as being one of conserving and improving the road reserves of the principal road systems throughout the State in the interests of environmental protection and in accordance with the modern concept of developing these reserves as scenic corridors.

As yet the responsibility for the road reserves of declared main roads has not been clearly defined. At present, there is therefore some confusion concerning the responsibility for such reserves. The principal Act states in effect that all trees shall be vested in the Crown with the commissioner having the care, control, and maintenance thereof. Another section of the Act makes reference to the powers of a local authority over a road reserve. There is accordingly interpreted a joint responsibility—not clearly defined.

Under this Bill the responsibility for main road reserves will be placed in the hands of the State road authority where it properly belongs. While other authorities will continue to carry out appropriate functions within main road reserves, it will become necessary in the interests of conservation of roadside vegetation for the approval of the Commissioner of Main Roads to be obtained. This change will better authorise the commissioner in his control over road reserves of declared main roads and also require Main Roads Department acceptance of financial responsibility for the proper care and management of road reserves—which latter aspect will no doubt be welcomed by local authorities.

Legislation of a similar nature exists in the Eastern States. After consultation with local government representation, an expression of local government agreement with the principle involved in the legislation has been obtained

As earlier hinted, the other amendment empowering the Government to promulgate regulations on the recommendation of the Government for the control of advertising signs along main and controlled access roads will, from scenic amenity and road safety aspects, benefit the community. This new provision is somewhat parallel with the powers possessed by local authorities to make by-laws for the control of advertising along local authority roads.

It is of interest to note that the amendment as presented to members makes provision for a degree of flexibility under which the Commissioner of Main Roads may transfer his authority where necessary to local authorities. Representatives of local authorities have expressed a desire to retain control of advertising along main roads in country towns and built-up areas. The commissioner has no particular wish to intrude into those built-up areas where local authorities are effectively controlling advertising under their own powers.

The proposals for both amendments have been discussed with representatives of local authority associations, who have expressed their agreement with the principles set out in this amending legislation.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. N. McNeill.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [3.20 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. President, were members to read the substance in clause 2 of this small Bill in conjunction with the marginal notes it will be apparent that its sole purpose is to increase the maximum penalty for infringement of railway by-laws to $200. The principal Act at present sets the figure at £20.

However, members are entitled to some explanation as to why it is proposed to lift the penalty. Therefore, I would mention that Main Roads Department tests in this State have shown that, particularly with the multitrack lines and vehicles slowly moving over crossings when commencing from rest prior to crossing, there is insufficient warning in many instances between the time of commencement of the flashing of the lights and the arrival of the train.

In another place mention was made of a particular accident which occurred in January, 1968, in England when a road transport of a length of 148 feet, carrying a transformer weighing 162 tons in all, and moving at 2 m.p.h. over Hixon level crossing was struck by a train travelling at 75 m.p.h. There is no occasion for me at this point to dwell on the loss of life and the extensive damage that can occur as a result of such accidents.

Local concern has been increasing with the possibility of a major accident occurring at a level crossing due to the combination of more extensive use of out-of-gauge slow moving road transport and the operation of faster and heavier trains. I mentioned the Main Roads Department tests which were carried out.

Existing Police Department regulations provide that all road transport in excess of 70 feet in length, 14 feet wide or 16 feet high, must operate under a special permit.

At an interdepartmental meeting between representatives of the Main Roads Department, the Police Department, and the Railways Department brought together to discuss this matter it was recommended that the movement of all vehicles of these specifications which are limited to speeds

of 10 m.p.h. or less should in addition to the Police Department permit be made subject to special authorisation by the Railways Department before being permitted to travel over a railway level crossing.

This would entail at least a 48-hour notice being given to the railways before the out-of-gauge loading is scheduled to pass over the level crossing. In view of the possible serious consequences of failure to obtain this authorisation it is proposed that the maximum penalty for noncompliance with this requirement should be $200—as stated in the Bill.

It is not intended of course that all penalties provided under the by-laws will automatically be lifted to the proposed new maximum of $200. The maximum will merely permit increased penalties being provided in cases where a heavier penalty is deemed necessary. The proposal to provide a new by-law for greater protection at level crossings makes it apparent that there is a need for more realistic penalties. The Commissioner of Railways considers the proposed amendment to the Act is most desirable because of the unrestricted movement of such traffic over railway level crossings, and if this is allowed to continue eventually there could well be a major accident.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. F. D. Willmott.

ABATTOIRS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Minister for Police) [3.25 p.m.]: I move—

> That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this measure, Mr. President, is to enable the Midland Junction Abattoir, which has become a major Government capital investment, to trade; and by that means make the maximum use of the capital resources now at its disposal.

In 1909, when the principal Act was passed, abattoirs in this State were placed under the management of a controller.

Increasing requirements in meat products to meet the expanding population brought about changes in slaughtering and the preparation of meat and also in the administration of those operations. As a consequence, Parliament concurred in the establishment of the Midland Junction Abattoir Board to administer the abattoirs and saleyards at Midland.

The board has for many years operated the abattoir merely as a service works for the butchering industry for the reason that it has no power under the Act to trade in its own right.

The passing of this legislation will enable the board to purchase livestock, process it, and sell it on the open market as a trading concern.

It is worthy of mention at this point that when current improvements are completed at Midland, 1,000,000 cubic feet of freezer space will be available.

There is a prospect also of reducing killing charges through the abattoir handling offal and the by-products for operators and compensating the operators in respect of those offals and by-products.

It is important also to mention that Treasury officials agree that this expansion of the abattoir activity is desirable.

A further safeguard—and this is in respect of undesirable developments in trading operations—is that the board is subject to direction from the Minister and as a consequence the Minister of the day retains control.

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

TOWN PLANNING: CORRIDOR PLAN

Inquiry by Select Committee: Request to Confer

Debate resumed, from the 16th September, on the following motion by The Hon. W. F. Willesee (Leader of the House):—

> That a Message be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly acquainting the Legislative Assembly that the Legislative Council has agreed to the appointment of a Select Committee of three members to inquire into and report upon the Corridor Plan for Perth as published by the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority, and to make such recommendations as to the feasibility of the Plan or to recommend such alterations and amendments as are considered to be desirable in the interests of Planning the Metropolitan Region; and requesting the Legislative Assembly to appoint a Select Committee with the same number of members with power to confer with the Committee of the Legislative Council.

THE HON. J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Minister for Police) [3.28 p.m.]: Mr. White, when replying to the motion to seek a Joint Select Committee of both Houses, said he would have no objection to the appointment to the committee of members from another place if he could be satisfied that the members to be appointed by another place would be back-benchers and not members of the Government. He said that the three members should be composed of one member from each of the Labor Party, the Liberal Party, and the Country Party.

The honourable member added that if this proposition were not agreed to he would lose the impartiality he had inserted into his original motion.

This proposition has been considered and I can only say that we are not prepared to give such an undertaking. I, personally,

am not in a position to anticipate a decision in another place. We represent 30 members out of a total of 81 and in those circumstances, and with a subject of this nature, I feel a Joint Select Committee should be appointed.

I would prefer to leave this issue to the decision of the House. If a Joint Select Committee were appointed it would embrace members from both Houses of Parliament; it would be a stronger committee, and would seek a wider expression of views than a Select Committee appointed from this House. I feel a Joint Select Committee would bring forward more desirable and worth-while findings than would be the case if it were left to a Select Committee of this House. I will not delay the House on this issue; I will leave it to the judgment of members, and they may vote accordingly.

I trust that the House will agree to the motion that this be a Joint Select Committee of both Houses.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: How many members did you say you represented in Parliament?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I said that this House comprised 30 members out of a total of 81 members of Parliament in Western Australia.

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [3.31 p.m.]: I was rather surprised to hear Mr. Dolan refer to this motion as being one for the appointment of a Joint Select Committee of both Houses. I would point out that the motion does not request the appointment of a Joint Select Committee of both Houses to inquire into the corridor plan; it merely requests the Legislative Assembly to appoint a Select Committee—not a Joint Select Committee—to inquire into the corridor plan.

Standing Order 376 governs the appointment of joint committees, but the motion before us is not in accord with that Standing Order which states—

> In every Message proposing to the Assembly the appointment of a Joint Committee, the Council shall state the number of Members to serve on such Committee.

The latter part of the motion states—

> . . . and requesting the Legislative Assembly to appoint a Select Committee with the same number of members with power to confer with the Committee of the Legislative Council.

If we take into account other Standing Orders we will find that if the Legislative Assembly does appoint a Select Committee it could not sit as a joint committee, but it could confer with the Select Committee appointed by this House. The Select Committee appointed by the Assembly would have to make a separate report to that House, just as the Select Committee of the Council would have to make a report to the Council.

Members should realise what would happen if the message were transmitted to the Assembly. The motion requests the Assembly to appoint a Select Committee with power to confer with our committee. Under the motion moved by Mr. White the Select Committee appointed by us has not been given the power to confer with any committee appointed by the Assembly.

Although in the message it is suggested that the Assembly elects the same number of members to its committee, as we in this House have elected to our committee, the Assembly has the power to elect the number it chooses. I understand that normally a Select Committee appointed by the Assembly comprises five members, and not three as suggested in the motion before us.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: You know perfectly well that the reference to three members was added in deference to the suggestion of Mr. White.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am aware that was done at the time. I am not blaming the Minister that this request is to go forward to the Assembly; but I point out it does not bind the Assembly to appoint three members. That House might appoint five members.

In view of the fact that a Select Committee has been appointed by us it would not be possible to have this question referred to a joint committee. As we have appointed a Select Committee and the members of it, I would draw attention to Standing Order 377 which states—

> On receipt of a Message from the Assembly agreeing to appoint the same number of Members of that House to serve on the proposed Joint Committee, the Council may proceed to appoint such number of Members to serve on such Committee.

If the motion before us calls for the appointment of a joint committee—and I would point out that it does not—then under Standing Order 377 the Council may proceed to appoint such number of members to serve on such committee. We have already appointed the members of our Select Committee, and under our Standing Orders it cannot be a joint committee of both Houses.

Members should realise what they are voting for in this request to the Assembly to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into the corridor plan, and to restrict the committee to three members.

I oppose the motion.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [3.36 p.m.]: I feel I should make one or two comments arising from the debate which has ensued, and because of the turn the debate has taken. I agree substantially with the remarks of Mr. Baxter, despite the fact that we have precedent in

this House for the appointment of Joint Select Committees and for the manner in which they are appointed.

The motion of the Leader of the House does not ask for the appointment of a Joint Select Committee, as was pointed out by Mr. Baxter. The latter part of the motion states—

> . . . and requesting the Legislative Assembly to appoint a Select Committee with the same number of members with power to confer with the Committee of the Legislative Council.

The Standing Orders of this House do provide for the appointment of Joint Select Committees. What happened on this occasion was that Mr. White moved a motion seeking the appointment of a Select Committee of this House, because the Standing Orders provide that can be done. I take exception to some of the words that were used in a prepared statement read out by the Leader of the House—obviously it was not prepared by him, but for him by somebody else. These are the words—

> A further point which I put to members in support of this move is the fact that for some curious reason this motion has been moved in this Chamber, which is thus deprived of the opportunity to receive a reply from the Minister concerned. Liberal-Country Party Governments would not allow Select Committees, but on a change of Government they use their majority not in the popular House where Governments are made and unmade but in this Chamber where, conveniently, the responsible Minister cannot participate.
>
> It is amazing how the honourable member has found such new virtue in Select Committees only since the change of Government, and in all sincerity I submit to the House that the right and proper thing to do now is to accord to members in another place those advantages which Mr. White has stated will accrue to parliamentary members of the Legislative Council.

I think that is very close indeed—closer than close. It is reflecting on this Chamber because the Standing Orders of this House provide for the appointment of Select Committees. I do not care a Continental hoot what the participation is, so far as members of this House are concerned. That makes no difference. The Standing Orders of the Legislative Council provide for the appointment of a Select Committee if the majority of members vote for the appointment of such Select Committee.

I, personally, in my political life in this House have been unsuccessful in a move, at one time, to have a Select Committee appointed, despite the fact that the majority of the members of the House were not members of the Labor Party. This House was made up of a majority of Liberal Party members and Country Party members. However, I lost out on my move because when the vote was taken after the bells had been rung there were a greater number of members who said "No" to the appointment of the Select Committee for which I moved than those who supported me. It is interesting to note that this happened a good many years ago.

I simply say on this point that I defend the right of the Legislative Council to move for the appointment of a Select Committee if any member of the Council thinks he should so move. It is unbecoming of the person who prepared the words for the Leader of the House to include the words of criticism which I have just read to the House.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: The Leader of the Opposition must accept that I read them with my eyes open.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Nevertheless, I am not criticising the Leader of the House. I simply say that if the words had been a little more favourably chosen they might not have reflected on this House to the extent they did. To me the Standing Orders are perfectly clear, despite the fact that there is precedent for our doing this another way. I may be wrong in my interpretation but I think when we move for a Select Committee we debate the subject, a vote is taken, and a decision reached. If the decision is in the affirmative, that a Select Committee be appointed, then the usual practice is for the mover for the Select Committee to nominate those persons with whom he wishes to serve.

That is put to the vote and the Council agrees to it in the normal circumstances. As far as I can see, the only impediment could then be in relation to Standing Order 336 upon which you, Mr. President, were asked to rule the other night. Standing Order 336 reads as follows:—

> No member shall sit on a Select Committee who is personally interested in the inquiry before such Committee.

At the point at which it is desired to have a Joint Select Committee, to my way of thinking, Standing Orders provide that a message shall be sent to the Legislative Assembly and that the Legislative Assembly will send a message back. Standing Order No. 377 reads as follows:—

> On receipt of a Message from the Assembly agreeing to appoint the same number of Members of that House to serve on the proposed Joint Committee. the Council may proceed to appoint such number of Members to serve on such Committee.

Now we did not do that. We have appointed our members of the committee and we have not had a message from the Legislative Assembly to the effect that the Legislative Assembly wants to have a

Joint Select Committee with the Legislative Council. No message to that effect—even if this motion were passed—would be transmitted because it is not asked for. The motion simply requests that the Legislative Assembly appoint a Select Committee with the same number of members with power to confer with the Select Committee of the Legislative Council.

I may be wrong here but I think when the Minister addressed himself to the original motion moved by Mr. White he mentioned the number of two persons that the Legislative Assembly might elect to serve. I repeat: I may not have heard the Leader of the House correctly but I think it was subsequent to that, when the Leader of the House read out his prepared statement, that he talked about three members.

Whether two members or three members are appointed, I agree with Mr. Baxter's point: there is no question here of a motion for the appointment of a Joint Select Committee being moved for, so the matter is, in effect, not before us.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.04 p.m.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: In the course of my remarks before the afternoon tea suspension I said at some stage that the Leader of the House had foreshadowed the appointment of two people from the Legislative Assembly. Out of respect for him, I should withdraw that remark, because I am not completely certain I am right. I could not find the reference in *Hansard* but I seem to remember having heard it. Accordingly I withdraw the remark and leave the assertion unmade, if I may put it that way.

When the Leader of the House talked on the appointment of the Select Committee before moving his motion he said—

> This to my mind is a stupendous undertaking, but I think, Mr. President, you will have gauged that my intention is not to oppose the motion. Yet, I believe it is unnecessarily restricted in its application within the precinct of the Legislative Council. I would mention, therefore, that should the motion succeed it would be my intention to move immediately a further motion that the committee allowed by the House be enlarged to encompass the Legislative Assembly; that a Joint Select Committee be appointed and that the other place be requested to move accordingly.

If it were our intention to move for a Joint Select Committee, we have not done this. We have not fulfilled the Standing Orders, as required. Had it been our intention to have a Joint Select Committee established, this House should have approved the motion, transmitted the contents of the motion to the Legislative Assembly, and the Legislative Assembly should have sent a message back to us. This is based on precedent and not on what is in the Legislative Assembly Standing Orders, because I understand that House does not have anything in its Standing Orders dealing with Joint Select Committees. Had this happened, at that point we should have appointed our members and we could then have proceeded. We have not done that.

I say again that I am not at all impressed by the statement that there are 30 members in the Legislative Council out of 81 members of Parliament. I do not know what that statement means. I do know however that each day when we sit we receive messages from the Legislative Assembly in connection with Bills that have been passed in another place asking for the concurrence of the Legislative Council. In many cases the legislation we receive has been carried in another place by only one vote; namely the casting vote of the Speaker.

It is perfectly in order for the Legislative Assembly to appoint a Select Committee if it so wishes.

The Hon. J. Dolan: No-one said it was not.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is what I am saying.

The Hon. J. Dolan: I was talking about Joint Select Committees. When we use the word "joint" 81 members become involved.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: If it is the intention to have a Joint Select Committee, it is necessary to go about it in the right way and we have not done this. As I said, there is nothing to stop the Legislative Assembly from appointing a Select Committee. Only the other evening it appointed such a committee to inquire into certain facets of hire-purchase. It is quite nebulous to talk about that aspect, because the Legislative Assembly has the authority. The Government has the numbers in that House. If a Select Committee appointed by another place is to confer with a Select Committee appointed by this House, we must order that this be the case. The Standing Orders provide us with the machinery for doing this.

When Mr. Willesee proposed that a committee appointed by the other House confer with our committee, Mr. White rose in his place and said, "All right. As far as I am concerned I will agree with that, but it is to be on my conditions. The conditions are that the committee must consist of a back-bencher from the Labor Party, the Liberal Party, and the Country Party."

Members will recollect that on that occasion I rose and explained the circumstances in which I found myself. I said that I did not think we had any right to lay down conditions to the Legislative Assembly as to the composition of such a committee. Now I am even more confirmed in my opinion that we do not have

that right any more than the Legislative Assembly has the right to say to us, "We want the Legislative Council to do so and so. We shall virtually pick out a section of members from your House whom we wish to serve on the committee." We cannot do this.

It is a fact that the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly provide for the appointment of the sort of committee that we have appointed; namely a Select Committee. Standing Orders also set out that the Legislative Assembly can ask us to confer with them. However, I do not think there is anything in the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly to provide for the appointment of a Joint Select Committee. However, this provision is in our Standing Orders. In fact, we have a precedent, as I have already mentioned. I am told that on a couple of occasions we have appointed a committee and asked the Legislative Assembly in the way I mentioned previously to join us to form a Joint Select Committee.

I repeat that to my way of thinking we are not in the position to lay down any terms with respect to members, or the composition of the committee, so far as the Legislative Assembly is concerned.

Finally, I would like to say that it would be a good idea at some stage for the Standing Orders Committee, when it has the opportunity, to look at the procedural steps required to be taken for the appointment of a Joint Select Committee. What has to be done is infinitely clearer under our Standing Orders than under those of the Legislative Assembly. To say the least, the situation is obscure under the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly. I do not cast any reflection whatsoever on that House but if Select Committees of a joint nature are to be appointed the procedure should be clearly laid down by both Houses.

I repeat there is nothing, to my knowledge, to prevent the Legislative Assembly from appointing a committee of its own. If the committee wants to confer with the committee of this House, we have the machinery, but this House cannot confer with the Select Committee from the Legislative Assembly without an order from this House; this is laid down under our Standing Orders.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes—8

Hon. R. F. Claughton	Hon. R. T. Leeson
Hon. S. J. Dellar	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Hon. Lyla Elliott	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. J. L. Hunt	Hon. D. K. Dans *(Teller)*

Noes—17

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. I. G. Medcalf
Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. S. T. J. Thompson
Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. V. J. Ferry	Hon. F. R. White
Hon. A. F. Griffith	Hon. R. J. L. Williams
Hon. Clive Griffiths	Hon. F. D. Willmott
Hon. J. Heitman	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. N. McNeill	*(Teller)*

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Hon. J. Dolan	Hon. G. C. MacKinnon
Hon. R. Thompson	Hon. T. O. Perry

Question thus negatived.

Motion defeated.

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 22nd September.

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [4.18 p.m.]: At the outset I would like to thank members for the reception they have given this legislation. I am indebted to the speakers who have supported the Bill whilst making some comments on it.

I was particularly pleased to hear Mr. Logan's remarks, because he is a previous Minister for Child Welfare and much of the work behind this Bill commenced during his term of office. He displayed his knowledge of the legislation during the course of his speech and in fact the amendments I have put on the notice paper are a result of the attention he drew to what might have been deficiencies in the legislation.

Mr. Medcalf also supported the measure and he raised some matters of a highly technical nature to which I have received a reply. I intend to read the reply to the House for the purposes of the record.

With regard to clause 13 and the proposed section 7 (1) (d) the reply reads as follows:—

> There cannot be, by a will, an appointment of a person as guardian until the death of the testator, when the will speaks. The proposed paragraph (d) deals *inter alia* with the situation of a person being guardian of a child by virtue of an appointment under the will of a deceased testator. When an order of adoption of that child is made the appointment under the will is cancelled by the operation of paragraph (d).
>
> Re Clause 14 and the proposed section 8(1).
>
> Paragraphs (a) and (b) of the proposed section 8(1) cover two different situations. In the case of persons already dead before the new provisions in section 7(1) come into operation it would not be fair to have dispositions made by those persons affected by the new provisions—so paragraph (a) covers that situation.
>
> Further, it would not be fair for the new provisions in section 7(1) to operate if a disposition was already completed by the persons in the class to benefit (children) having taken possession—that is covered by paragraph (b). The proposed section 8(3)

gives a further safeguard for the situations affected by the new provisions in section 7(1); in fairness, section 8(3) gives an opportunity to reconsider to a person, still living, who could not have anticipated the new provisions and has made a disposition that has not been completed by the persons in the class to benefit (children) having taken possession.

I am sure it will be appreciated that this is quite a legal answer and I hope it is satisfactory to the honourable member. Mr. Medcalf was in complete agreement with the rest of the Bill and supported it.

Miss Elliott also made a contribution to the debate on the Bill, for which I thank her. She dealt mainly with the problems associated with children and the department. We acknowledge, of course, the major problem in the department is lack of staff. This problem has been apparent for many years, and under the present climate of State finance I am aware it will continue for some years to come.

Mr. Claughton spoke to the Bill and raised many matters which are not essentially part and parcel of the legislation. He raised several questions of a general nature in connection with which, as a private member, he could have approached the department. However, as these issues were raised in the House I shall reply to them. I received these answers a short time ago and they are in some detail.

Mr. Claughton specifically expressed concern over the state of mind of the natural mother at the time of agreeing to the adoption of the child and the problems which may possibly handicap her in caring for the child herself.

I am advised that departmental officers always discuss the implications of adoption very thoroughly with the natural mother. We try not to persuade older persons one way or the other, as the choice must be theirs of their own free will. With younger persons, however, we do go into more detail concerning the realities of an unmarried mother attempting to care for her own child. Some young people are immature and naive about the full aspects of this responsibility and require a good deal of time and attention to help them make a proper decision.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: When you are referring to the young mother, I suppose statistically this goes down to the age of 12?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: I do not know that, but it is certainly a young age. Mr. Claughton also referred to the occasional hazards of foster care. He reported the overseas case of a child who had 20 foster parents. We must agree with Mr. Claughton's concern. Any break in a foster placement jeopardises a child's emotional health and feelings of being loved, wanted, and accepted. Breaks in foster placements are less likely to occur when the baby is placed at a very young age.

Mr. Claughton also referred to the shortage of staff in the department, making it difficult to liaise sufficiently with public hospitals and thereby intervene should an unmarried mother make a decision concerning keeping her child that is not in the child's best interests. I have already acknowledged that the shortage of staff causes difficulty, but this does not prevent liaison with hospitals. In many cases hospitals have social workers who are able to discuss with the natural mother the alternatives of keeping the child or having it adopted. Apart from this, a further check is made in regard to ex-nuptial children in that the department receives information concerning a birth from anywhere in the State and must satisfy itself if the parent has taken the child home, that satisfactory arrangements are made for its care.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: That is the child welfare officer, is it?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: No, this involves two people. There are people on the staff of the hospital who advise the Child Welfare Department when the child goes home and the department makes further investigations.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: That refers to births anywhere out in the State?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: I did not mention outside the State.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: No, anywhere out in the State apart from hospitals.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: Mr. Claughton also referred to departmental adoptions and those made by private adoption agencies and he made a comparison with the situation in New South Wales. The number of departmental adoptions has fallen in the last 12 months. However, the number of children actually placed for adoption but for whom orders have not yet been received, has not fallen. The decline in the orders granted is due to the inability to process applications any faster than is being done at present. Only additional staff can resolve these problems.

Mr. Claughton then referred to the undesirability of the adopting parents knowing the natural parents, and we agree with his concern. Wherever possible, arrangements are made to prevent this happening. This is one reason that adoption by relatives is not always encouraged as it involves an element of possible later interference.

Mr. Claughton then inquired concerning checks made by the private adoption agencies on the suitability of the applicants. The reply to this is as follows:—

All applicants, whether their application is arranged by the Department or by a private solicitor, are checked

by the Department with equal thoroughness. Indeed, such a check is the Department's principal responsibility when private adoptions are considered. The details that require checking and verification are specified in the Adoption of Children Act and no child may be placed with any person (whether the adoption is a private one or a departmental one) until the person is cleared by the Department as a suitable person to receive a child for the purpose of adoption.

With those explanations I again thank members for their support of the Bill and commend it to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (The Hon. R. F. Claughton) in the Chair; The Hon. W. F. Willesee (Leader of the House) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 5 put and passed.

Clause 6: Amendment to section 4A—

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: This clause seeks to amend section 4A of the principal Act, which deals with the consents of natural parents which are required in the case of a legitimate child, with the consent of a mother or guardian of an illegitimate child, and the consent of a previous adoptive parent of a child that has been previously adopted.

The last subsection of section 4A, which the clause seeks to amend reads as follows:—

> The consent of a person under this section is required if that person is the applicant or one of the applicants for the order of adoption.

In other words, no consent is required where the person who would normally have to consent is the applicant. At the end of the subsection the clause seeks to add that no consent is required by a person who has attained the age of 18 years. The new subsection would then read—

> The consent of a person under this section is required if that person is the applicant or one of the applicants for the order of adoption or if the child has attained the age of 18 years.

As I understand that, no consent is required in future, after this Bill is passed, where the person who is the subject of the adoption order is over the age of 18 years. I was wondering whether the Leader of the House would be prepared to make any comment.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: Mr. Medcalf has used almost the identical wording that appears in my explanatory notes. Briefly, the notes state that the amendments proposed in clause 3(a) and (b) permit a person over 18 years of age to be adopted, and, under this amendment, a person over 18 years of age—the subject of an adoption application—does not require the consent of parents or guardians. That is substantially what Mr. Medcalf has stated.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 7 to 10 put and passed.

Clause 11: Amendment to section 5—

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: The amendments set out on the notice paper in my name are as a result of remarks made by Mr. Logan. As the three proposed amendments are consequential, if I may, I will enumerate the reasons for them before moving each amendment separately. The first amendment seeks to add a paragraph to repeal paragraph (8a) of subsection (1) of section 5. Its effect will be to delete the requirement that a certificate must be produced to a judge certifying that within the last six months the applicant underwent an x-ray examination and was found to be free from tuberculosis. In general terms, the amendment means that the discretion will now move into the period of two years, except were there is a reasonable doubt in the minds of the people associated with the applicant.

The next amendment seeks to delete paragraph (c) and substitute another paragraph which will read—

> The results of any x-ray examinations of the applicant which the Director considers necessary or desirable;

The requirements of the results of an x-ray examination have now been added to those matters the director must consider when forming an opinion as to whether an applicant is a proper person to adopt a child. The results of the x-ray examination will now be considered with the same emphasis as the applicant's age, general health, financial situation, etc. In deciding what is "necessary or desirable" the director will have regard for existing legislation elsewhere relating to compulsory x-rays.

In regard to the third amendment to clause 11, which will be made on page 12, in lines 31 to 40 inclusive, and which seeks to delete paragraphs (a) and (b), the effect will be to save reporting to the judge on matters that have already been established by the director and furnished to the judge through the director's report in writing. Should the Bill not be amended as suggested here, the instruction contained in the amendment that the judge "shall consider" the matters referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b) may result in the judge calling for more affidavits to establish the matters.

When a desire regarding the religious up-bringing of the child is expressed by the mother, it is considered by the director, who also considers the religious conviction of the applicants before forming his opinion. Should a desire regarding religion

be expressed by the mother, this is conveyed to the judge by medium of the consent form, and if he wishes, the judge may consider the religious issues under the provisions of paragraph (d) of this subsection. I now move the first amendment—

Page 11, line 1—Insert the following new paragraph to stand as paragraph (c):—

(c) by repealing paragraph (8a) of subsection (1);

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I thank the Leader of the House for taking cognisance of the suggestions I made. This amendment certainly does away with the mandatory x-ray within a period of six months and gives the director power, if he thinks the x-ray is not warranted, to dispense with it. I think this is the best way to deal with the situation.

Amendment put and passed.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: I move an amendment—

Page 12—Delete paragraph (c) and substitute the following:—

(c) the results of any x-ray examinations of the applicant which the Director considers necessary or desirable;

Amendment put and passed.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: I now move the last amendment—

Page 12, lines 31 to 40—Delete paragraphs (a) and (b).

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 12 put and passed.

Clause 13: Repeal and re-enactment of section 7—

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: I merely wish to comment on the explanation which has been given by the Leader of the House on the point I raised during the second reading debate. I appreciate the opportunity the Leader of the House has given me to peruse in advance the notes made by the Senior Parliamentary Draftsman. I merely raised the point in order to achieve what I thought was better phrasing to cover a situation which I believe might occur.

I am not altogether satisfied that the explanation given does, in fact, deal in sufficient depth with the matter I raised. I will state the point I raised briefly once again so it is on the record. It can be left to be decided at some future date, because I do not believe it is of sufficient moment to delay the passage of the Bill.

The effect of the new section proposed by clause 13 is that, upon the making of an adoption order, any existing appointment of a person, by will or deed, as guardian of the adopted child, ceases to have effect. I raise the point: What about a will in which a person making it has appointed another person as guardian of his child in his will; that is, appoints him as guardian of the child he proposes to adopt? What happens when the adoption order is made? The effect of the order is that the appointment of that guardian ceases to have effect, and that means a new will might have to be executed.

The answer received from the Parliamentary Draftsman by courtesy of the Leader of the House, is to the effect that an appointment in an existing will is not an existing appointment. In other words, what the draftsman is saying is that although the will is existing the appointment is not existing, because it will not take effect until after the death of the person who made the will. This may be right, but, then again, it may not be right. I will not take that query any further, because a will does take effect after the date of death. The will is merely the indication of what is required after the person dies and it could be revoked during the person's lifetime.

On the basis of that proposition the answer is that this is an existing appointment. When I appoint someone a guardian of my child in my will it is not an existing appointment because it will not take effect until after I die. Nevertheless, I have an existing will. I felt there was sufficient doubt to raise the query. However, I am not taking the matter any further; I am simply recording my doubts.

I also want to mention that the section deals with a deed as well as a will. A deed does not speak after the date of death; a deed speaks immediately.

If I were to appoint someone the guardian of my child by deed—it might be my foster child—and I then adopted that child, the deed is revoked by the order of adoption. In other words, I make a deed and state that I have an illegitimate child. I make a deed and say that in the event of my being sick, overseas, or incapacitated or maimed in a traffic accident, Mr. John Smith is to be the guardian of my child, and then I adopt my illegitimate child lawfully. The minute I do that, the deed is revoked and my child does not have a guardian.

I am merely placing my remarks on record because I believe this point was not looked at in sufficient depth. I do not wish to say any more or to embarrass the Leader of the House by further discussing what is, after all, a technical point. Perhaps the Crown Law Department could study this matter and we could then deal with it on another occasion.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: I am indebted to Mr. Medcalf for his very lucid explanation of what he sees and reads into proposed section 7. I have been supplied with information by the departmental advisers and it might be a good idea if I supply this information now so

that we might have the two opinions side by side and any difference will be seen in its proper perspective.

I take the same line as Mr. Medcalf and I will do no more than endeavour to see if we can improve the situation in the future. The information given to me reads—

> The proposed amendment spells out the status of the adopted child, and also refers to the question of sexual offence. The question of property will be referred to in the next clause. This amendment spells out more clearly the general effect of adoption orders and it is consistent within existing legislation in other States.
>
> In subsection 7(1) a proviso is made relating to any existing law of the State that distinguishes between adopted children and children other than adopted children.
>
> Subsection 7(1)(a). This subclause spells out the relationship between the child and the adopting parents and *vice versa*, it gives the child the status as if born to the adopting parents in lawful wedlock.
>
> Subsection 7 (1) (b). Excludes any person who was the parent prior to the adoption order.
>
> Subsection 7 (1) (c). Establishes that the relationship between an adopted child and the adopting parents is to be based upon the two preceding subsections.
>
> Subsection 7 (1) (d). Excludes any existing guardian.

That is the only comment on proposed subsection 7 (1) (d). To continue—

> Subsection 7 (1) (e). Excludes any previous adoption.
>
> Subsection 7 (2). Refers to the situation regarding a sexual offence.

I do not think I need go any further.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: I merely wish to place on record that I believe the appropriate amendment at some future date—if others believe that something should be done, particularly in relation to the deed—would be to add the words "by any person other than the adopting parent or adopting parents" after the word "person" at the end of line 30.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 14: Repeal and re-enactment of section 8—

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: I merely wish to say I am entirely satisfied with the explanation the Leader of the House gave us in relation to this clause, which is a proper one to have in the Bill.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 15 to 30 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments.

PROPERTY LAW ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 16th September.

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [4.53 p.m.]: When introducing this Bill, I mentioned it had the support of the Law Reform Committee. I had to interpret the legal submissions the committee gave me and I found this very difficult. I am indebted once again to Mr. Medcalf for the illustration he gave and which he classed as a simple one. It dealt with the presumptive factor—which is the main one in the Bill—in that it is presumed a woman over the age of 55 years will not adopt a child. He also dealt with the same woman having the right to give away property.

I see no point in speaking at length to this measure, but I again express my appreciation to the honourable member for his lucid explanation of a rather intricate subject.

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.

RURAL RECONSTRUCTION SCHEME BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 22nd September.

THE HON. L. A. LOGAN (Upper West) [4.56 p.m.]: It is unfortunate that we must deal with legislation like this because it involves a tragedy to many people. This tragedy is certainly no fault of the majority of them. As in every walk of life a few misfits are engaged in the rural industries, and it would not matter what was done to help them, they would not make the grade. However, in the majority of cases, these people are facing problems through no fault of their own.

When the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act was introduced in 1930, during the last depression, it was hoped that no need would arise in the future for such further legislation.

Today farmers are in search of other business or employment. I have had experience on both sides. At the beginning of the depression, at the end of 1929, I was helping to run a business. The great percentage of the businesses relied upon the farming community. I left that management at the end of 1929 to try to rehabilitate a run-down farm. So I think I can speak with experience on both sides. It was very evident in those days that

the tightening up in the spending of the producer had an effect on our business, which was a delicatessen. This is exactly what is occurring today right throughout the community.

No other section of the community spends as much as the primary producer. We have the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and Mr. Hawke all concerned about the economy of the country; they worry why things do not work out. If they stopped for a moment and considered the state of the rural economy and the effect of the cost price squeeze—or whatever one would like to call it—which is being experienced throughout the Commonwealth, I feel sure they would not ask the stupid questions they are asking today.

It is unfortunate that there are some who do not stop to think. Press reports are issued and people write letters complaining about the amount of money going out of the taxpayers' pockets to assist primary producers. When we stop a moment and consider the matter, particularly as it relates to all the ramifications involved in the decline of the rural economy, I feel sure members will agree that the Federal Government should issue a white paper and follow the matter right through.

If this were done it would be most enlightening. We all know that reports will be received from here and there concerning the effects involved but I do believe there ought to be a complete report so that the people might understand and the taxpayer might have no objection to the Government using some of his funds to rehabilitate the industries concerned.

To obtain an appreciation of the position one only needs to consider the amount of money that is not now going into the economy itself. We must also view the situation and see what has happened in the past and what is likely to happen in the future.

I wonder how many people stop and think about the tremendous industrial development that has taken place in Western Australia particularly over the last 10 years. This could not have been possible had it not been for the value of the export of our primary production. Without that export value our overseas balance would certainly have been in the red—it would have been well and truly in the red—and accordingly we could not have traded, as a nation, to the extent that we did.

Industries that have been developed in the last 10 years could not have been developed without this overseas credit, and without it the number of jobs created would not have been so great. I think we can also say with certainty that the higher salaries that are enjoyed today would not have been possible had this credit not been available. One could continue for a long time in this strain in an endeavour to try to make people appreciate the situation.

To get a true picture of the position one only needs to consider the matter of tariffs, though I will not pursue that matter at any great length. I would, however, like to mention one point which concerns a machine I saw the other day. This particular machine is not available in Australia and it cost $3,000. Apart from this the tariff duty on the machine in question was $3,000. So, in actual fact, the machine cost $6,000. The producer is, of course, paying this extra cost.

In the particular case to which I have referred it happened to be a wool machine which is used to take the matting out of fleeces. As I have said, this machine is not available in Australia.

This sort of thing is, of course, magnified many times over. I feel people should appreciate the benefits they derived as a result of a good and stable wool economy in the past; they should not be too worried about giving a little of that money back for the future.

The measure before us, as we know, deals with an agreement between all the States and the Commonwealth and I think it is fair to say that the legislation contained in the Bill is fairly explicit. The notes that were presented at the second reading stage cover the situation, as it exists, reasonably well. If one reads the Bill together with the schedules one will have a pretty fair understanding of the position.

I do, however, agree with Mr. McNeill that all this is merely creating fringe benefits for a very few people. It certainly cannot go far enough under the terms and conditions of the Bill and the agreement.

I have had the privilege of talking to some of the officers on the authority that has been set up and I am satisfied they are doing a first class job to the extent that they are allowed within the provisions of the agreement and the Bill. At times they may be going a little beyond their authority by helping to assist and advise the people concerned because some of the applications received could quite easily be refused for non-compliance. The officers in question could say, "Your application does not comply with the terms and conditions" and leave it at that.

But the officers are not doing that. Where they have refused certain applicants and have later seen some hope they suggest that the person concerned discuss the matter and they indicate reasons as to how such applicants might overcome the problem. In this respect the committee is doing a very good job indeed. Quite a few applications which were previously refused have now been restored in a different form and they are now able to obtain some benefit and relief from the authority.

The authority has also enabled some farmers who paid a rather exorbitant price for their farms to return to the vendor and say, "The situation is such that I cannot pay you." Most of the original farmers do not want to go back; they have made other arrangements. In quite a few cases these people have been able to arrange a lower figure on the value of their farms than was contained in the original agreement. This is all brought about because of the functions of the authority and those who are operating in conjunction with it. Their activities are most laudable indeed.

We must appreciate, however, that the number of people who will be assisted under this scheme are few and far between and that is why I say the legislation is only playing with the problem. The other evening we were given a figure of 616 applicants and were told that at the moment the number has fallen off. I venture to say, however, that by February and March next the applications will really start rolling in again.

What does concern me is not only the assistance that is received by the people at the moment but to what extent this assistance will help them in the future. The value is based on wool sales at 66c a kilo and it is essential to work out a programme to see whether a particular farm is viable; we should work and budget for four or five years ahead.

If the price of wool were to fall—and I will talk about this later—and if the assistance coming from this or some other source were reduced, the amount of money put in will go down the drain. The Bill deals with those few people who are receiving assistance but what about those who have applied for and cannot obtain assistance? We were told that out of 616 applicants 230 have been refused and there was a total deficit of nearly $14,000,000.

What is to happen to the people concerned and the amount of money they owe? Nowhere is provision made for this contingency. If a person walks off his farm it is not possible for him to be rehabilitated and retrained. I think a limit has also been placed on this because of the growing unemployment which everyone is talking about at the moment. The further the unemployment situation deteriorates the less opportunity there will be to rehabilitate these farmers who must leave their properties.

The Bill has only dealt with the situation in a minor way and I wonder what will happen to the people I have mentioned. Members will realise, as I do, that some of these people—even though their situation looks hopeless—will battle on because they have been born and bred to it. They will find some solution.

I am concerned with only the few who are to be assisted because of the conditions laid down. This is no fault of the present State Government; it is the result of an agreement between the Commonwealth and the States. The Federal Government certainly cannot afford to let slip back because of circumstances those who are to be assisted. Some further assistance must be given at a future date. However, this will not overcome the problem of the man who is not to be granted any assistance. I appreciate that some of them may be misfits and possibly it might be wise for them to leave their properties.

Many of them, however, are not misfits; they are merely the victims of circumstances beyond their control. I know that some of them have been living in a fool's paradise. They thought the honeymoon would go on forever and have been spending accordingly. A number of them, however, have been spending their money by ploughing it back into the farm to ensure further development and to increase their efficiency and production. As a result of this they have increased their debt and they now find they cannot service it.

A provision in the Bill with which I think we ought to be happy concerns the protection which is given to the farmer who is likely to receive, and will receive, some assistance under this agreement. This provision not only protects the farmers, it also protects the authority and the money the Government is putting in.

My main concern is not merely for the future of those who are being assisted but for the future of the general economy; the whole economy of primary production in Australia. I do believe the growers consider that the key to the position lies in the price they will receive for their wool and the availability of markets. One is, of course, tied up with the other. At the moment the price of wheat is very static and reliable. This, of course, could vary in direct relation to the seasonal conditions of crops in other countries. The price could go up or down according to the seasons experienced. At the moment, however, the price of wheat is fairly stable.

I appreciate that the measure before us deals with all types of primary producer—the fruit grower, the dairy farmer, and everybody else. It does, however, lay emphasis on the wheat and the woolgrower and undoubtedly this is where the greatest debt and the greatest problems rest at the moment.

Accordingly it would be fair to say that should the price of wool collapse altogether, or to such an extent that it must be accepted at a low price, this legislation will not be worth the paper it is written on. I do not think that sufficient attention has been given to this aspect although a number of methods to improve the situation have been suggested.

In the last year alone over 500,000 bales were not exported out of Australia and this was also the case in the previous year. If this trend continues in the present year the figure could rise to over 1,000,000 bales.

Apart from that there is the question of wool being stockpiled by the wool commission, though I do not know how many bales are involved—it could possibly be half a million bales. If this stockpiling of wool continues in Australia it is likely that the entire wool market will collapse.

I am not certain that the present methods are right. There is justification for making sure the producer receives a certain price for his wool but I do not know whether the right way to do it is to allow the wool commission to put a reserve price on it and say, "You can't buy unless you pay it," which creates a stockpile. As far as I can see, if the commission buys in wool it must still rely upon overseas buyers to buy the wool. The commission itself has no marketing organisation overseas. It must still rely on the overseas buyers coming onto the auction floor, and I cannot see any overseas buyer paying more for his wool if his orders do not warrant it. That is the situation we are reaching and it worries me considerably.

A few years ago we had an opportunity to arrange a marriage between synthetics and wool, but unfortunately the opportunity was not taken. I have always advocated a combination of the two, and I have seen no reason to change my opinion in the last 20 years. If what I have been advocating had come to fruition and this marriage had taken place when it should have, we would not have this problem today.

In 1963 I was in Chicago and I spoke to the Australian Trade Commissioner. I admit I had only been in America for 17 days but I have some powers of observation and I noticed that practically every American businessman was dressed in a synthetic suit. My impressions and thoughts were that if those suits had been made of a combination of wool and synthetic yarn they would have been much better suits and American men would have been much better dressed.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: A sum of $29,000,000 has been spent on research.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That amount is only peanuts. I asked the Australian Trade Commissioner, "Why can't you induce American businessmen to wear suits containing even 5 per cent. of wool?" He said, "When you are prepared to pay as much for promotion as the synthetics manufacturers do, you might get somewhere." He told me synthetics manufacturers spent billions of dollars on promotion. Mr. Baxter said $29,000,000 had been spent in the whole of Australia. This is the aspect on which we have fallen down. As far as wool is concerned, it is to the end promotion that we should look because unless we can get orders from overseas and have the wool that is bought processed for consumption, the demand for wool will decrease still further.

I think it would be preferable to meet the market and for the Federal Government to pay a straight-out subsidy. Wool producers have deserved it and earned it. They would only be getting back some of the benefits they have given to the community over the years. Unless we can get wool back into production and consumption, we will only create problems for ourselves. I believe that sometimes meeting the market is the best way out of the difficulty. I may be wrong. I do not know whether sufficient investigation has been made into this matter, but I am perfectly satisfied that as far as the promotion of wool is concerned we have not done very much.

To a certain extent we have tried to promote wool through the International Wool Secretariat and the Wool Board, but we have tried to glamorise wool. It is all very well for people to go to the Royal Show and see the wool parades and the magnificient materials that are produced, but it is quite a different matter when they look at the price. This is due to the glamorisation of wool. The market we should have been in over the last five years is the teenage market because teenagers change their habits every week; they do not buy suits that last for two or three years. No attempt has been made to enter this market.

I have spoken about wool for longer than I should have done, but I come back to what I said earlier. As far as I am concerned, this is the crux of the whole situation in regard to reconstruction and rehabilitation of the rural industries. It is possible to change from wheat to barley to oats to rapeseed to linseed from season to season. but it is not possible to divert from wool from season to season. Considerably more thought must be given to this problem, otherwise all this money will go down the drain and we will have a complete breakdown as far as primary industry is concerned.

I do not want to be pessimistic because I think that is the wrong attitude to have. I think that has been one of the problems in the last few years, and the attitude has begun to creep into the minds of financiers and everybody else. I would like to see a return of confidence so that we could march back again, to a situation where all the wool will go into production and consumption at a reasonable price, and if the price is not sufficient to make the industry economic to the farmer, the community should subsidise him to that extent. If we can achieve that situation, I am certain this sum of money, small as it is, will not have been wasted but will have been used to good effect.

The funds available under this Bill are very meagre, and this measure is a very meagre attempt at reconstruction. I think we must go much further, and unless all Governments—State and Federal—are prepared to do so the whole of the economy of Australia will continue to decline and the Premiers and the Treasurers will have more problems in balancing their Budgets than they have today.

I do not think I need to go through this Bill. I mentioned earlier that it is rather well drafted. The schedule sets out sufficient guidelines regarding eligibility. The criteria of eligibility are that there should be a reasonable prospect of successful operation with the assistance available under the scheme, and ability to service commitments and reach a stage of commercial viability within a reasonable time.

When those criteria are considered in conjunction with the comments I have made, I think it will be appreciated why I made them and why I wonder. My concern about the future of those who comply with the criteria of eligibility will also then be understood. At the moment, some farms are being bought to assist the fellow next door; some are being divided. In the long run, such a course will not help very much. It helps a few but it certainly does not help the cause of decentralisation because every farmer who comes to the city reduces the ability of the storekeepers, the schools, the hospitals, and so on, to continue operating in the country.

A Government that had a policy of decentralisation would put much more money into rehabilitating the people concerned. This would give decentralisation some meaning and would give the country areas some prospects. Once a family is taken away from a district, the support facilities suffer, and so does everything else. People say, "What is the good of staying here when I can't have my children educated?"

The funds that have been allocated are to be spread over a period of four years. I know we cannot put too much into reconstruction at any one time, but I think we need a guarantee so that we can do something about really reconstructing and rehabilitating primary industries throughout Australia.

We cannot find fault with the Bill and the agreement as they stand. I cannot do other than support it and I hope and trust something better and greater will come out of the experience that will be gained from this measure.

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South) [5.26 p.m.]: I rise to support this Bill. I think in concept it is very good but I am very disappointed at the time it has taken to reach this House.

When this assistance was first mooted by the Federal Government over 12 months ago, the politicians told the farmers it would be the salvation of the farming community. I think the farmers knew that debt reconstruction would not necessarily be the answer and that the unprofitability of farming was the root of the evil. It is rather like keeping an ambulance at the foot of a cliff rather than fitting a fence at the top of it but, as usually happens, when one reaches the bottom of the cliff one begins to look back at the top. I am pleased that the Federal Government is introducing other measures—such as the 36c wool guarantee—in an endeavour to attack the problem of unprofitability.

If this Bill were the answer to the farmers' problems, half the community would have been hysterical at the Government's inactivity in not putting the Bill through. Now that it has arrived in this House we find it is sandwiched between a Bill on bingo and a Bill dealing with property law, and even the South Perth ferry seems to have achieved greater importance.

Needless to say, those who are waiting for this money are watching with a certain amount of anxiety the length of time it has taken to go through. One hundred and thirty-one people have been told they will receive money when the Bill goes through, but we wonder when that will be. Half the money available under the Bill is for the amalgamation of farms, and the comment has been made that very little of this money has been taken up. I wonder for what period one can get an option on a farm while waiting for this Government to put legislation through. One would need at least a six-months' option on it.

The Government has seen fit to add a protection order to this Bill over and above the provisions in the Federal Government's Bill. I can only presume the Government considers there is good need for it, but if there is a good need for it one wonders why the Bill has taken six months to reach this House. Personally, I do not think it shows a great deal of sincerity on the part of the Government. The Government has been so slow to give away someone else's money that I wonder how fast it will be when it comes to doing something with its own money.

I think in the matter of the economy of the State one is forced to presume that the country is in a state of total depression. I was talking to the head of an overseas trade mission to this country and he said he was staggered at the attitude of the people in this State. Nowhere else in Australia had he encountered such a depressed attitude.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: He was fortunate to meet you.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Yes he was. I think he was well and truly disgusted before he met me. In fact, he was rather pleased to hear me say that I did not think it was the end. One certainly tends to believe that the State has

been brought to its knees by the collapse of the rural industries; but I would like to assure members that it is not as bad as that. All is not lost down on the farm, although undoubtedly some sectors of the industry are in difficulties.

Over the past few years most have suffered as a result of inflation, rising costs, and difficult overseas markets; and more especially now that we see Britain joining the European Economic Community. The State has also been cursed with a shortage of abattoirs. However, like many other farmers, I feel that agriculture will overcome many of its problems, although it will require much help from the provisions in this Bill and, possibly, from other legislation. I think it will also require the support of the general public.

I do believe that agriculture is changing in order to fit in with changing conditions. As I mentioned earlier, many sections of agriculture are buoyant. I do not think anyone would consider that the beef industry, for example, is in trouble today. Many people in the wheat industry—particularly those who have good quotas and a guaranteed price of $1.10—are not facing bankruptcy, especially when one hears of blackmarket prices for wheat in other States of about 80c which indicates that the guaranteed price is quite reasonable. We have seen good sales of wheat overseas this year which, perhaps, might provide better quotas for our farmers next year. Also, it looks as though there might be reasonable prospects in the future for coarse grains, particularly barley.

Although we in Western Australia are not concerned with sugar, we have seen a rise in sugar sales, and even Russia has come back into the meat market. Undoubtedly our chief trouble is wool and, like Mr. Logan, I would like to look into this problem, particularly as it affects Western Australia. Australian sheep numbers have been rising at about 2½ per cent. per annum for the last 20 years. However, this rise has not taken place in all States; in fact, during the same period sheep numbers in Queensland dropped by some 30 per cent. I admit that drought perhaps has had a major effect in that State during the last few years. Members will observe that sheep numbers in Queensland will probably suffer as a result of the lack of support for "K" wools in the guaranteed price scheme, as these are a major feature of the poorer woolgrowing areas of that State.

I assure those who are worried about having to support the wool industry that the industry is adapting itself to changing conditions. I have mentioned that sheep numbers in Queensland have decreased. The position in New South Wales has remained much the same during the last 20 years, and a small rise—only 25 per cent.—occurred in Victoria during the same period. The numbers in Tasmania have risen by 31 per cent. and in South Australia by 41 per cent. The greatest rise in sheep numbers has occurred in Western Australia. The numbers of sheep in this State have risen by 105 per cent., and I think we are in the greatest difficulty because so much expansion has taken place in the sheep areas.

The numbers of sheep in the wheatbelt area of Western Australia have doubled, and they have tripled in the high rainfall area. This expansion has required a large amount of borrowed money, and much of it has taken place on conditional purchase country. This has brought about its own problems. I am well aware—perhaps more aware than most members of this House—of the problems of the conditional purchase holder because a large majority of the conditional purchase farms are in my electorate, which includes the area between Albany and Esperance and up to the lake country.

I am making these remarks because I believe there is a growing feeling, particularly amongst industry, that we should not be protecting the woolgrower. People are asking why the general public should be forced to back the woolgrowers in their battle with synthetics. Now that the price of wool has fallen many people can look back and say, "We told you so." However, I would like to present some statistics to point out that the wool industry is changing to meet the challenges of today.

In 1965 the proportion of merinos to crossbreeds—in other words, woolgrowing sheep to meat-producing sheep—was 3 : 1. Within the last six years that ratio has changed to 2 : 1. So we find there is a strong tendency towards meat production. The production of fat lambs has risen by some 50 per cent. since the mid-1960s, only some six years ago.

I presume members will realise that the average Australian eats some 50 lb. of lamb in a year and some 38 lb. of mutton. I think those who feel that we can do without the sheep industry should give serious thought to the fact that the average Australian eats a total of some 90 lb. of lamb and mutton each year which he is getting very cheaply. How can we suddenly replace that meat? Should we all eat beef at $1 a pound? I do not think so. If we tried to substitute other meats for lamb it would cost the average worker a week's wage per year to cover the extra expense. Apart from that, the Australian lamb and mutton meat industry is worth something like $200,000,000 a year.

Undoubtedy the farmers are endeavouring to change over to beef as quickly as possible, but the changeover has to be slow and it is most expensive. Perhaps I might give an example. It would take some 10 cows to replace 100 sheep and the cost of the cows would be between $1,000 and $2,000, whereas the value of the sheep probably would be not much more than

$100. So we are faced with the problem of the farmer who has to endeavour to get into cattle, and who has to find as much money again as he has invested in the land content of his farm. If he has a 50 per cent. debt—which is about typical —he has to treble his debt in order to switch over to beef production.

Members will see that it is almost impossible for a farmer to change his whole farm over to beef. Farmers are endeavouring to make the changeover, but it requires a great deal of money and that is why there is a need for legislation such as this Rural Reconstruction Scheme Bill.

I have quoted those figures because I think those who are not concerned with the industry might look with a little more favour upon this Bill when they realise that we cannot do without the sheep industry, no matter what the price of wool may be. People should realise that the industry is definitely endeavouring to change and to adjust to the times, and that the changeover to other industries is expensive and cannot be accelerated. Of course, most farmers are also investigating other crops such as oil seeds and these will alleviate the situation brought about by the price of wool.

I mentioned the effect of the lack of abattoirs and I would now like to mention that last month fat lambs were worth $11 in Tasmania, $9 in Melbourne, and about $5 in Western Australia. Obviously there is some reason for the price in this State not moving with that in the other States. I would like to suggest that it could be the result of a lack of killing space. However, the most interesting point is that the price of lamb—and I am referring to the wholesale rate—in America today is 65c a pound, and that is 10c above the price of beef. Other markets must be developed and will be developed, but in the meantime we must help the industry.

On the subject of rural reconstruction I think the first thing we have to remember is that the money will be made available by way of loans and it will not cost Australia $100,000,000 as so many people like to think. The money is made available by way of loans which will return interest, and that is something which is often forgotten.

This Bill aims to cover the situations of, firstly, those who have got themselves into difficulty through short-term finance; and, secondly, those whose farms are uneconomic as a result of their size. This is the result of falling prices, because previously these farms were quite profitable.

Firstly, to consider the problem of those in trouble through short-term finance, we must understand how the farmer raises loans with which to develop his farm. The first source of finance is the trading bank. Trading banks lend money on a first mortgage and take the farm as security. Usually they will lend about 50 per cent. of the value of the farm and they require it to be repaid over five years or thereabouts.

The second source of finance is the Development Bank which was established by the Federal Government and has been a great help to the farmers. One of the conditions of loans from the Development Bank is that the money must be used for development. A farmer will not receive a loan from this bank unless he has been refused a loan from his normal source of funds. I am glad to see that the Federal Government has allocated a further $10,000,000 to the Development Bank this year so that it will play an even bigger part than it has in the past.

The third form of finance available to farmers is hire purchase. Farmers usually confine their use of hire-purchase companies to the purchase of farm machinery. They are required to put down one-third and repay the balance over three years, and usually the interest rates are quite high.

The fourth method of finance is through the stock firms. This money is usually allocated to the purchase of stock, to the veterinary needs of the stock, and to the purchase of fertiliser. The difficulty with regard to money borrowed from a stock firm is that usually the farmer is required to make total repayment during the first year and so all the income from his stock is used to repay the debt during that year, leaving little over to satisfy other creditors.

I have outlined the four forms of finance because I think we must understand a little about them in order to appreciate how the farmer has got himself into financial difficulty and why it is necessary to have a scheme such as the Rural Reconstruction Scheme in order to rearrange the farmer's debts so that once again he is on a sound and equitable basis and can repay his loans over a longer term.

As prices of rural products have been falling, the farmer has been getting into more difficulties. In many instances he has had to borrow money to meet probate; often he has borrowed to establish a son on another farm, and often to provide a house for the retirement of older members of the family. All this has resulted in the farmer approaching the banks and other sources of finance to make further borrowings.

As prices have fallen there has been little hope of the farmer repaying these loans. Interest payments have been rising, and at the present time the average woolgrower is paying one-quarter of his income in interest charges on his loans.

Economists who have been looking into this rural reconstruction Bill are not, generally, in favour of the debt reconstruction aspect of the scheme. I think the $50,000,000 which the Commonwealth Government has

allocated to reconstruction debts will play a big part, provided it is followed up by more money at a later stage.

In Western Australia 131 farmers have been told they will be granted loans when this Bill is passed; and this will involve $2,500,000. The interesting aspect is that these farmers have total debts of over $7,000,000; and the $2,500,000 will go a lot further than has been indicated. These farmers have had to prove to the authority which grants this money that they can survive with wool at 30c a lb.

Apart from the help that this gives to the 131 farmers, the other important aspect is that these farms will not be placed on the market. Today we are facing a major problem with 230 applicants having been rejected, and their total debts amount to $14,000,000. It is considered that their financial position is irretrievable. Somehow or other something should be done for them. Mr. McNeill in this debate has referred to the golden handshake. I might point out that, perhaps without members realising its significance, I did ask a question in the House two days ago relating to the golden handshake, and from the reply it is evident that in this State there has not been any golden handshake. Let us not have any illusions about how many farmers are enjoying the benefit.

It is most important that the Government should be looking into the cases of farmers whose applications have been rejected; and it should do that for two reasons—firstly, because they are people; and, secondly, because of the farms that are involved. These people might be beyond financial help, but I do not think they are beyond physical help. Arrangements should be made for departmental officers to visit farming areas and to counsel these farmers, in order to see what can be done for them, and if their position is hopeless to show them how they can leave their farms and find a better way of life.

A lot of criticism has been levelled at the farmers, and it has been claimed that they have not accepted job retraining. I would like to ask this: How can anyone expect these farmers suddenly to undertake a retraining scheme? They are still working on their farms, for they are custodians of the sheep which belong to the stock firms, of the plant which belongs to the hire-purchase companies, and of the properties which belong to the banks.

These farmers still have a sense of responsibility. They admit that they have built up their debts, mostly when times were good and when the economics of farming were sound. I might add the Government encouraged them to do this. The farmers borrowed the money legitimately, and certainly they did not rob the banks as some people seem to think they did, now that they have fallen on hard times.

At the present time with the economics of farming being at such a depressed level in some sections of the industry, I suggest that it is in the field of the social worker that the most assistance could be given. I have seen the conditions on many conditional purchase blocks, and I know that many of these people are living in the end of tin sheds under harsh conditions and with little prospects for the future. For that reason everything possible should be done to find more suitable occupations for them.

The other section of the Bill deals with farm buildup. I understand that 13 loans have been granted for this purpose, involving an amount of $330,000. A sum of $2,750,000 has been allocated to farm buildup, and this amount is eight times greater than the amount that is being utilised. This is an indication that that part of the Rural Reconstruction Scheme is falling down.

I admit that one could not get an option on a farm while waiting for the Bill to be passed. Even so, there is a reluctance on the part of the farmers to make use of these funds. It could be that if they purchased a neighbouring farm they could not prove the combined farms to be more profitable. An applicant must demonstrate his ability to return the borrowed capital over 10 years with interest at the rate of 6¼ per cent. This means that an applicant must show that the farm can make a 12 per cent. margin of profit. With wool being at its existing price, this margin of profit is practically impossible to achieve. If farmers could make that margin of profit there would hardly be any need for a reconstruction scheme.

The Commonwealth Government has been generous in respect of the write-off terms in farm amalgamation. If one is interested in buying a neighbouring farming property, the Commonwealth Government is willing to write off the cost of the redundant buildings. However, there is a small catch; the write off value is based on the Taxation Department value, and those who have had experience with Taxation Department values know that they are not very high.

Some provision should be made in the Bill to enable uneconomic properties to be leased, for obviously at the present time they are not being bought by other farmers to make their present holdings economic. Unproductive farms should be taken over, and the only method of doing this on today's economics is to permit a neighbouring farmer to rent an unproductive farm or unprofitable farm at a reasonable rate. I urge that this aspect be considered.

The truth of the matter is that a number of farmers will have to leave the land. We must show them that jobs are available and houses can be found for them. This must be done without depriving these people of their dignity. To implement this proposal would cost money, but the amount

would be nowhere near the amount that is required to bring new migrants into this country. We seem to be satisfied with having to pay $4,000 to bring a migrant into Australia. I contend a certain amount of the money being used for that purpose should be expended on rehabilitating displaced farmers.

Mr. Logan thinks there will be a big run on rural reconstruction loans next year, and I agree. I recommend to farmers, who have been able to get through this year, that they make application early for their next year's needs. Most farmers did get through last year through normal channels of finance, but many of these will not have the money available for the coming year; so I urge farmers to get their applications in early.

I would like to compliment the economists who have investigated these applications. They have spent long and dedicated hours in this work on rural reconstruction, for they take the work very seriously and appreciate the grave difficulty of the applicants.

I conclude by saying that this Bill will not make agriculture profitable; far from it, but at least it will alleviate some part of the poverty and misery associated with farming today. I am sure that those who remain in the industry are endeavouring to diversify into more profitable fields, and are not just expecting to be carried by the rest of Australia. I repeat that I do not consider "all is lost down on the farm."

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. C. R. Abbey.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [5.55 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, the 5th October.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.56 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 23rd September, 1971

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

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Strike: Urgency Motion

THE SPEAKER (Mr. Toms): This morning I received a letter from the Leader of the Country Party (The Hon. C. D. Nalder), the member for Katanning, seeking a motion of urgency. Before I put this question to the House it is my intention to read Standing Orders 48 and 49 which deal with motions of urgency, because there are a number of new members and I would not like them to be ignorant of the particular Standing Orders involved.

Standing Order 48 reads as follows:—

> A Motion "That the House do now adjourn" for the purpose of debating some matter of urgency, can only be made after Petitions have been presented and Notices of Motions given, and before the business of the day is proceeded with; but only the matter in respect of which such Motion is made can be debated, and not more than one such Motion may be made upon the same day.

Standing Order 49 reads as follows:—

> A Member wishing to move "That the House do now adjourn" under Standing Order 48, shall first submit a written statement of the subject proposed to be discussed to the Speaker.

It is also my intention to refer to the motion which the Leader of the Country Party proposes to move. Had it not been for the fact that the House is not sitting next week, I might not have considered this matter to be one of urgency; but as the House will not be sitting next week and the position could deteriorate in the interim, I consider this to be a matter of urgency.

The letter from the Leader of the Country Party reads as follows:—

> I desire to seek your approval to move when the Legislative Assembly meets at 11 a.m. today for the adjournment of the House as a matter of urgency for the purpose of discussing the following:—
>
> (1) The strike situation within the S.E.C.
>
> (2) The public emergency that has arisen because of the strike and particularly the statement by the Secretary of the Trades and Labour Council, Mr. J. W. Coleman, that even emergency services will not be manned, and
>
> (3) Action that can be taken to either terminate the strike or minimize the impact of it.

Are there seven members who support the motion?

Seven members having risen in their places,

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [11.06 a.m.]: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

My purpose in moving the motion is to enable discussion to take place on a matter of urgency, as has been outlined by you, Mr. Speaker, and as indicated in my letter. I appreciate the points that you have raised in reference to the motion.