

Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 24th October, 1978

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

BILLS (6): ASSENT

Messages from the Deputy Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills—

1. Real Estate and Business Agents Bill.
2. Honey Pool Bill.
3. Valuation of Land Bill.
4. Land Valuation Tribunals Bill.
5. Acts Amendment and Repeal (Valuation of Land) Bill.
6. Securities Industry Act Amendment Bill.

THE HON. R. J. L. WILLIAMS

Illness: Statement by President

THE PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths): I wish to advise all honourable members that the Hon. John Williams, who as members are aware suffered a heart attack recently, has now recovered to the extent that he is permitted to have visitors. I visited him at the hospital and he indicated he would be discharged from the hospital probably at the end of this week. Obviously he will not be able to return to the House during the remainder of this session. He will, however, be quite able to be with us at the beginning of the next session.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

EDUCATION ACT

Disallowance of Regulations: Motion

THE HON. R. HETHERINGTON (East Metropolitan) [4.44 p.m.]: I move—

That the amendments to Regulations 171 and 193, and new Regulations 174A and 192A relating to the school year, made under the Education Act, 1928-1977, published in the *Government Gazette* dated 29th September, 1978, and laid on the Table of the House on Tuesday, 3rd October, 1978, be and are hereby disallowed.

The motion I am moving is to disallow regulations recently gazetted by the Minister for Education.

The four regulations which my motion concerns are regulations 171, 174A, 192A and 193. Regulations 171 and 193 fix the times for the end of the third term vacation for both primary and secondary schools. The amendments will change the beginning of the summer vacation at the end of the third term from the third Friday in December to the third Thursday. Then follows the summer vacation of seven weeks, which means that the first term begins on a Thursday, seven weeks later.

Proposed new regulations 174A and 192A state that there will be no teaching on the first two days of the first term. This means that the first term of the school year is now to begin on a Thursday whereas it began on a Monday previously. There will be no teaching on the first two days, so the students are not expected to turn up. There is *quid pro quo* in that the holidays will begin on the third Thursday, instead of the third Saturday, in December.

I hope that members who enter this debate do not bring the debate down to the level which some people have at various times. I hope we will not assume that because school teachers apparently disagree with the Minister, and have struck for some reason, they have done so because no longer are school teachers professional, and one can tell a professional teacher from a non-professional teacher because the professional teachers do not go on strike, as has been suggested at various times at various places.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I have not heard that description previously.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I have heard it, and I am suggesting I do not want people to do this.

If school teachers go on strike it is symptomatic of the deep dissatisfaction among the teaching fraternity. It seems to me that if the school teachers last struck 50 years ago—and I remember they threatened to strike I think in 1967 when they disagreed with the then Minister, the Hon. E. H. M. Lewis, but did not carry out their threat at that time as they managed to reach some form of agreement with the Minister—and the school teachers actually have taken this action, because they are highly professional, it is symptomatic of something that should not have been. It is quite clear to me that this, for some reason, is the last straw. Members cannot argue that school teachers are just striking because they are losing two days' holidays. That would be ridiculous.

As far as I can see, those who are opposed to the new regulations are equally opposed to the

extension of the vacation backwards, because it will disrupt the last week of the term, as will the requirement that they attend two days before the new term begins. This is the first point I want to make; this is symptomatic of something that is not well as far as the relationship between the school teachers and the Minister, and the teachers and the department, is concerned.

Here I do not want to make any personal accusations against the Minister. The Minister, I think, is quite clearly carrying out Government policy. It is Cabinet policy he is carrying out. I do not want to claim that he would or would not do anything else if he was not directed by Cabinet. That would be foolish. All I want to do is look at the statements by, and the actions and reactions of, the Teachers' Union, because this is what we must concern ourselves with.

One other thing we should not do is to think that because only X per cent of people have, in fact, stopped work—I think it is around 45 per cent in the secondary schools and less in the primary schools—this does not mean that the union does not have strong support. I have received a copy of a letter from 14 teachers who teach at the Dalkeith Primary School. They say that, although they do not think they can strike, the union has their full support in what it is trying to do.

I am informed by a reputable member of the union, whose word I accept unequivocally, that the union has received letters of support from primary school teachers who feel that they cannot absent themselves, because they feel they should stay at school to look after those children whose parents both work, but at the same time they are supporting the union in its attitude to the change in holidays.

I think I should remind the House of just what all the fuss is about, and this can best be done by reading to the House a letter written by the Minister for Education to all teachers. This letter explains the Government's case well, clearly, and adequately, and I then want to comment on it to show the reason that I do not accept what the Minister is saying. In this letter, dated the 14th July, 1978, the Minister for Education had this to say—

On Friday, 30th June, I participated in a meeting of principals and teachers called by the Executive of the Teachers' Union to consider the holiday changes announced for next year.

I must say that the tone of the meeting and the reception that I received both surprised and disappointed me. More importantly, the

resolutions carried after I left the meeting, have aroused my deepest concern. The implications of some of these resolutions, copies of which have been distributed by the Union, would if implemented, seriously complicate the functioning of our schools, and the operations of the Department. For this reason, but also to ensure that the Government's decision is more accurately presented to teachers, I have decided to write to you personally on the subject.

The changes in the holiday structure were not entered into lightly or hastily. They are the outcomes of overtures from Principals and parents made over a number of years to my predecessor as well as to me, and are designed to balance interests and to deal fairly with all concerned parties—pupils, parents and teachers.

The value of teachers' meetings undertaken at the beginning of the school year without the students being present has been demonstrated in a variety of ways, such as the voluntary pre school attendance of large numbers of teachers, the high school practice of dismissing classes during the first school week, and the desire of primary principals to follow this practice. Henceforth, the Staffing Directorate will make certain that staff lists are available in advance, and, the Department will implement an advertising campaign to ensure that parents co-operate to make enrolment information available early.

Under these circumstances, I am satisfied that educational advantages will flow from the two days of staff and subject meetings held before the attendance of pupils. The addition of two days vacation at the close of the year is fair compensation, bearing in mind that many teachers have been in the habit of attending before school opening without taking any time off in lieu. In respect of the Show Holidays, the initiatives also came from parents and Principals who considered that the two holidays were not warranted under present conditions, especially as this period of the year is of critical importance for senior pupils preparing for examination. For teachers in country schools no more than a rearrangement of holidays is involved; for metropolitan teachers the Easter Tuesday is provided.

One must take into account the point of view of parents when changes to school holidays are considered. This is an age in

which, increasingly, the pattern is for both parents of school children to go out to work and any reduction of school attendance has an impact upon them. I believe that they would more readily accept school closure in December than in February after the Monday commencement. Clear indications to this effect have reached me from parents.

I must repeat that the change was not instituted hastily. Indeed, I first approached the Union President on this subject in May 1977. This allowed plenty of time for consideration and deliberation by the Union as well as a year's deferment of the introduction of the new scheme. In the course of the lengthy negotiations with the Union Executive early this year, the original proposal to close schools on the last Friday was liberalised to include the final Thursday as well.

My main concern is that a serious confrontation might be promoted over this question.

At my request the matter has been reviewed, and the Government has reaffirmed its intention to implement the proposed changes for 1979.

This means that new regulations will be promulgated. The Department is already applying long service leave arrangements for next year on the basis of the Thursday as the first attendance day for teachers. Individual teachers who refuse to comply with the Thursday attendance, therefore will jeopardize holiday pay, and temporary teachers may jeopardize continuity of employment. Widespread compliance with a Union direction not to attend on the scheduled days will seriously complicate school opening to the obvious detriment of the pupils.

In reviewing the question once more, I am satisfied that, on the balance, a reasonable pattern for the future has been devised.

One real weakness only, I believe, has emerged. That is that in the forthcoming summer vacation, which will constitute the transition from one pattern to a new one, teachers will be losers as this vacation would be reduced by two days.

Accordingly, as a further attempt to deal equitably with teachers' legitimate interests, I am prepared to authorise the closure of schools two days earlier this year, that is to commence the new structure in December 1978 rather than February 1979.

I trust that parents generally will agree with me in this final attempt of mine to satisfy teacher objection and to avoid disruption to schools.

The letter is signed by Peter Jones, Minister for Education.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: It is well written.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: It is certainly well written and, as I said, it puts the Government's case straightforwardly and clearly. It is for that reason I wanted to read it to the House so that I could not be accused of not putting the Government's case. I want to comment on the letter, because this will serve my purposes adequately.

I would like to refer to one of the Minister's last sentences which stated—

Accordingly,.....to deal equitably with teachers' legitimate interests, I am prepared to authorise the closure of schools two days earlier this year.....

If we believe that these two days are important for the students, then the students will suffer a further two days' reduction of their school year this year in order to look after the legitimate interests of the teachers. I would have thought this may well have been forgone if it were so all-important, and if it were important that students do not lose their two days.

I received a copy of a letter sent by the Minister to the principals of small schools in the country. This letter says that if the principals consult with their superintendents, they may start on the Monday, and there has been a statement in the Press from the Minister—which I presume is accurate—to say that the Minister is doing this in order to introduce flexibility. One of the criticisms of the proposal by teachers is that the new regulations are, in fact, getting rid of desirable flexibility; flexibility which is desirable in the interests of the educational needs of students.

From the very beginning the union criticised this compulsory attendance of teachers two days before term began without the students being present as impracticable for many schools. In fact, the Minister in his letter points out that many schools were sending students home after they had been at school for several days to a week, and that many primary school headmasters wanted to do this. Why did they want to do it?

They want to do it and they do it, because in the large schools it is useful, as far as organisation is concerned and in the interests of both the teachers and the students—or should I put it the

other way around, because it is primarily in the interests of the students—that they find out what are to be their staff and what number of students turn up; have a look at the staff and students; and arrive at some idea of the people they will have, before those schools are organised.

It is all very well for the Minister to say that in future they will make sure that the staff will be appointed to the schools before the beginning of the school year. If the department manages to achieve this, it looks as though we might be in a miracle business, because we have not achieved it yet, as far as my information goes, in respect of any school year in living memory.

It is said that parents will be encouraged to enrol students. What we encourage people to do, and what the people actually do, are different.

As I found in tertiary institutions, whatever the enrolment may indicate, one does not know what one will have in one's class until usually after a fortnight has gone by, and even then one might find people wandering in and out. I can be pretty sure that the numbers given at a certain stage would be about the final numbers, because some people will be added and others will be subtracted.

As members will realise, in the university which is not like a school, students walk into a lecture and look at the lecturer; they may walk out and decide that is not for them. I have had that happening to me, and I think other lecturers at the university have had the same thing happening to them. I am not claiming that I have experienced this more or less than anybody else.

It is very difficult to organise university tutorial classes before the end of the first week; even then a considerable number of adjustments have been made. That is what the teachers and the Teachers' Union are asking for: that the principals of schools should have the discretion to do what the principals of small schools will now be allowed to do, because they will be allowed to use their discretion—to decide which half day, which day, or which two days are in the best interests of the school and the students, so that the classes can be organised properly. To me this seems to be a simple and straightforward request.

I know that parents sometimes resent this. In fact, I have been resentful as a parent when my own children were attending school. The parents have had the children on their hands for seven weeks, and they have sent them back to school. In a case where both parents are working, difficulties are encountered. In my own case, in the last years of my children's schooling both I and my wife were working, but we had jobs which were

flexible in hours and we could work at home, so that it was possible to make sure that one of us was at home after school when normally the children arrived home.

Sometimes parents send their children to school, and then find they are sent home by the school. I am not saying this is desirable; of course, it is not. I think the parents should be informed, and a simple instruction to the schools would make sure that this is done. The principal of any school who fails to do this ought to be reprimanded by the department and the Minister, because it is essential for parents to have some way of predicting where their children ought to be at any given time.

One of the things the Minister said in his letter, to which I have not received a satisfactory reply when I asked questions, was this: He said the changes in the holiday structure were not entered into lightly or hastily, and that they were the outcome of overtures from principals and parents made over a number of years.

I am concerned with the parents. I wonder how many parents have made those overtures. Was it a matter of individual, aggrieved parents making the overtures? Is it a case of parents sending in representations; if so, how many parents?

Members who attack the Teachers' Union can and do say correctly that there are some teachers who do not agree with the stand of the Teachers' Union. I have met one. I do not say they represent 6 per cent of the total number, but there is this kind of teacher. I do not know how many, but this does not mean if representations are made by teachers that necessarily very many teachers have made them.

I do not know how many parents have made representations to the Ministers and what were the considerations. Nobody here has told me; and nobody else in the other place has revealed this, although questions have been asked, and the matter has been probed and mentioned in debate.

Overtures from principals and parents made over a number of years are contrasted with the attitude of the elected executive of the Teachers' Union, which after all must be expected to represent the majority of the school teachers, otherwise they would hardly have been elected.

I think we should recognise the fact that the Teachers' Union is not a radical body. I have said in this House before that I was surprised at the support the union had received from the teachers, because I did not believe many of them would go out on strike. In fact, I believed the teachers tended not to support the union on issues such as the withholding of their labour. This is nothing I

have regarded with any great joy. I have always believed and still believe that if the Teachers' Union were a more militant body we would have a better department and a better education system. By more militant, I would point out to Mr Masters that I do not necessarily mean very militant. I mean more militant than it is.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Would you elaborate more on that?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: No, I would not like to elaborate more.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Mr Cooley gets worked up when you talk about militancy.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I was not aware I was getting worked up. I was more interested in the issue as to whether we should disallow these regulations. I hope that the "Independents" on the other side of the House, or at least one or two of them will, on this occasion, cross the floor of the House to vote, so that these regulations are disallowed, and so that the Minister and the Teachers' Union can start again and have more fruitful discussions on the whole issue.

We hear a lot about the educational value of the two days when the teachers will turn up at school. At some schools the teachers do turn up beforehand, but many of them are sent home again. At that stage the senior staff are carrying out the preparations and do not require discussions with the rest of the staff, until they are aware of the number of students.

This seems to me to be one of the key issues of the debate: that the interests of the large schools are such that they need to know who are the staff, and what are the numbers of students, before they can organise the schools properly. The people who are capable of knowing the best time are the principals and staffs of the schools. This applies equally to large metropolitan schools as it does to the small country schools. I think it would be a good idea if the Minister were to allow the same flexibility to the teachers at the metropolitan schools as he does to the small country schools.

Let us not line up the teachers. I have met many of them. If one looks for a certain kind of teacher one can find them; I refer to those who turn up right at the ringing of the bell in the morning, who leave as fast as they can in the afternoon, and who do the minimum amount of preparation and marking and thereby live a good life. This is not typical of the teachers in our schools; as a matter of fact, I think it is very atypical. I think the average teacher is a person who spends a great deal of time after school with the students, and in preparation and marking.

As a person who was once a school teacher—maybe not a very good one—I know that a great deal of my time at the job was spent at home on reading, preparing, and marking. Of course, this was true when I was a tertiary teacher. The actual time at school—I will not say it is the tip of the iceberg, because it is a sizeable part of the day, but is not all of the teacher's day—is only part of the teacher's day. When people tour the schools, as I have done recently, and talk to the teachers, the teachers will tell them on the side—not boasting about what they do—about the programmes they organise, about going away at weekends with the children, and about the various other things they do outside school hours. The teachers will say this in conversation, because they discuss their work enthusiastically. In talking with them one realises that the formal hours are just part of the teacher's job. One would realise this as one meets and talks with them.

I think we have a better group of more dedicated and professional teachers now than we had before. Perhaps this is one of the reasons they are feeling so hurt and so outraged, because many of them have said this to me time and time again, "The thing that annoys me is that we are not being treated as professionals, and we are being put into straitjackets by the regulations in regard to holidays.

I do not want to say very much more about this matter, because it does seem to me the arguments have been canvassed and recanvassed all over the place.

I have read the Minister's statements very carefully. Let me state here publicly that I do not regard the Minister either as a fool or a knave. I think he is intelligent; and if he does not write his own letters he has some intelligent individual to write them for him. I think he is a person of some humanity, but on this occasion I think he is wrong.

It would be a good idea if this House were to put him right gently. All we have to do is to rescind these few regulations to wipe the slate clean and start again. This would be highly desirable. It is something which the teachers obviously are taking seriously. If people speak to those who are on strike and withholding their labour they will find that they are acting responsibly. If one decides by governmental fiat that certain things which the teachers find undesirable are to be done—I have not found any evidence that WACSSO is fully behind this proposal—then people that one says are less than responsible often carry out actions which one thinks are less than responsible.

I am not saying that striking is irresponsible. Sometimes it is essential to withhold one's labour. I have always defended the right of any group of people, who have nothing to sell but their labour, to withhold that labour if they think the issue is important enough.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: By the same token, of course, people have the right to go to work. Do you not agree?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I would like to point out to the Hon. Gordon Masters, Mr President, that I believe in people having the right to work. There are 500 school teachers at present who have not the right to go to work. That is in spite of the fact, as I pointed out in my speech on the Estimates, that the vote for salaries was underspent by \$5.1 million. It ill behoves a member of the Government—a supporter of this Government—to talk about the right of a school teacher, or anybody else, to work when there are unemployed school teachers and there are primary schools which have classes of over 35 children. Those teachers cannot obtain jobs, yet the Government underspent its vote for salaries. The Government went back on its promise. The Treasurer made a specific promise in the Budget speech before the last one; but the Government employed fewer teachers than it said it would.

Yes, I do agree with work. I think that is a good word. I approve of work. I do believe that people should have the right to work. I would be glad if more people in this State were given the opportunity to work. That particularly applies to unemployed school teachers.

I believe it would be a good thing if some of the pressures were taken from primary school teachers by having 10 per cent of their time at school freed of teaching duties. They could devote that time to other duties. This would be to the benefit of our school system, to the benefit of the teachers, to the benefit of parents who wished to interview teachers during school time, and to the benefit of the students. I believe there are all sorts of things—

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Do you think we should spend more than 25 per cent of our Budget on education, or do you think we are doing quite well?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I will resist the temptation, Mr President, to make yet another speech on how much money we should spend on education. I would have thought it would be quite clear that I have indicated we are not spending enough, particularly under our so-called system of new federalism. I would suggest that it is not for the State to spend more, but for

the Federal Government to make more money available in grants. I do not wish to deploy again my arguments on the changing nature of our society and the urgency to develop education—

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You made that speech the other day.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Yes, I have made my speech on that. I will no doubt make it again and again, until people hear my voice crying in the wilderness and do something about the matter. Mr President, I would much rather make that cry to the Federal Government from the benches opposite—and that may happen one day. Then perhaps we may receive a bit of joy from the Federal Government. Then perhaps we may have some sort of consultation with teachers. Then certainly we will expand the powers of the Government School Teachers Tribunal so that it may mediate and arbitrate on a whole range of issues on which it cannot mediate and arbitrate now.

I hope nobody asks the question he has asked before, "Would you arbitrate on this issue?" Had I been the Minister, the issue would not have arisen, because it would have been discussed out. I am quite sure that we would have reached some meaningful agreement between the Government, the department, the Teachers' Union, and the parents.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: This is purely hypothetical.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Purely hypothetical; but I am just saying it first in case somebody asks me this hypothetical question. I am glad that the honourable gentleman indicated that it was hypothetical.

I am sure that the changes in the holiday structure were not entered into lightly. I fail to see the educational benefits to be derived from them. The arguments for not introducing the changes are greater than the arguments for introducing the changes. I believe the Minister when he says that he did not want to have a confrontation with the union. I think the confrontation was made inevitable by his stand. However, I do not believe that the leader of this Government does not want confrontation with the Teachers' Union or with other unions. I believe that when the Minister made submissions to Cabinet and Cabinet gave certain directions to him, confrontation was in fact intended. I may be wrong. However, we have achieved confrontation.

That confrontation is not doing anybody very much good. It would be a good idea if these regulations were dropped and the whole matter were started again.

I should point out—I may have pointed this out before—that representations have been made to me by teachers who are most upset at the thought of school ending on the Wednesday before the Friday on which it now ends. Those teachers have said it is difficult enough to keep children at school during that week, anyway. If there will only be three days of school, a great number of the children will not go to school. This will be bad for the children and bad for the school. It will be more disruptive than anything else which might happen.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Were you not just telling us we are depriving the children of two days' education in that last week? How does that add up with what you have just said?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Mr President, I will tell the honourable member again that the people who have made representations to me—and I am sorry he does not follow what I am saying—have said that children are more likely to lose more time than when school concludes on Friday. Sometimes the children will not go on the last day. However, if the school week finishes on a Wednesday, the teachers who have spoken to me say that this will ruin the whole week and will result in the loss of an effective week's teaching, not two days' teaching.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Have they explained to you why it is difficult to keep them at school in the last week?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: There are all sorts of reasons there may be difficulties. If I am to go into explanations of why it is difficult to keep children at school, I would be giving one of my sociological lectures which the honourable Leader of the House does not like very much, because he thinks they are all nonsense. Of course, the difficulties derive from all kinds of things in our modern, complex society. We are only exacerbating the difficulties by changing the regulations in this way.

I make an appeal to members. I suppose, Mr President, my appeal will fall on stony ground, because that seems to be the case every time. However, I would appeal to members to consider seriously disallowing these regulations. I appeal to members to join with me and such other members who wish to vote with me in disallowing these regulations so that we can return to a situation without confrontation, so that the department and the schools might work more smoothly as they adapt their behaviour as far as the beginning of the school year is concerned to the needs of each particular school, instead of having blanket regulations which cover all schools.

Therefore, Mr President, I commend my motion to the House.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I second the motion.

THE HON. A. A. LEWIS (Lower Central) [5.24 p.m.]: I will not take much of the time of the House, because I realise that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has stated the Government's case extremely well. He read the letter from the Minister, which letter set out quite fairly and in simple terms why the move was being made.

Mr Hetherington skirted several points which I would like to mention. The first point I wish to mention is that in no other enterprise does the person being employed lay down the times of his holidays. Nowhere else in arbitration is the actual time of holidays laid down. Mr Cooley may wish to comment on this. He may be able to tell me of actual cases where this happens. There are agreements made in certain industries, but nowhere in arbitration is it laid down when holidays will be taken. I think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition missed this point completely. That may be because he felt that it would not help his case.

Let us go though some of the matters discussed by Mr Hetherington. At the outset I would say, Sir, that school teachers comprise a highly professional group of people. I have some very good friends who are school teachers. I have taken a great deal of interest in education in the past. I have found my interest to be of great benefit to myself.

I regret to say that some years ago I could have been considered a "knock-the-school-teacher" type of person. However, when I came into this House—and you will remember the time, Sir—after contact with the Education Department and with school teachers I very quickly changed my mind. I have made some very close friends throughout that period.

Mr Hetherington talks about the fact that there has been no consultation. I would think that from the time the Leader of this House took on the Education portfolio both Mr MacKinnon and Mr Jones have consulted more with all sections of the industry than in the previous history of education in Western Australia. Not only have they consulted with teachers, but they have consulted with parents and parent bodies, with independent schools, and with public schools. The consultations have been extremely frequent and extremely soul-searching. To say that the Minister has not done any consultation seems to me—

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I did not say he had not done any consultation.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: That seems to me to be unfair. He said that if he were the Minister there would have been longer and better consultations.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Just more effective.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: They would have to be a dashed sight better than his speech. His speech was not at all effective in persuading members to disallow the regulations.

I believe the Government has shown that the regulations have some advantages. I do not say that they are great advantages.

As a country member, I tend to travel around during the last few weeks of school. I can say that on the Thursdays and Fridays at the end of the school year there is not very much of an educational nature being done. I am also an ex-school bus owner and driver. It always appeared to me in that last week of school—particularly on Wednesdays and Thursdays—that if there was a swimming pool nearby, that would be used by the children. The school bus would be hired and the children would be taken to the swimming pool. It seemed to me that the school year, as an instructional period, had finished at that time.

Many of us have experienced the problems encountered in implementing a new school year. We have experienced the problem Mr Hetherington referred to of sending children home during the last week. I do not say that these problems will not continue; but under the new system they will not be as prevalent. There is flexibility in the new scheme.

Another aspect of Mr Hetherington's speech which worried me was that although we as a Government should listen to the Teachers' Union, we are not to give the same credence to the Western Australian Council of State Schools Organisations. WACSSO has said that it would like this scheme tried for a two-year period. The Government has agreed to that.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: As I was saying, very fleetingly Mr Hetherington dealt with the parents and the parents' body. However, what they wanted and what the unions wanted would be of equal importance in the Government's mind; and it should be thus.

I have heard that education is meant to be dealt with at the school and in the home, and if we are to involve parents in education their wishes should be considered. People with opposing views on the question have spoken to me, but I will not take

the cynical opinion thrown at me by one irate teacher who said that there were more parents, so politically it was better for me to take their point of view. That is an opinion which could be upheld, but in relation to WACSSO this is not the case, because WACSSO is a responsible body.

I welcome the fact that the Minister has stated that staff lists will be available. Every member in the House would welcome it. All of us have been approached by teachers who have been appointed to a country school on the Sunday night before the school starts.

Anyone who has watched the situation will know that year by year the staffing position is becoming fairer and more efficient, but this is only as a result of a great deal of hard work in the department. The situation could be better, and this is just the challenge which will make the department achieve this objective, and members will not then receive the complaints they received in the past.

The views of WACSSO should be considered. The system should be given a trial for two years and, if it does not work, it can be reappraised. As I am a country member I know how devotedly teachers in one and two-teacher schools work and any time given to them in which to do their pre-Christmas shopping and prepare for the Christmas period is of great benefit to them. I concede to Mr Hetherington that some problems are experienced in metropolitan schools, but they are not insurmountable and they do not make the situation untenable. In addition, the benefits to country teachers are such that the whole situation is worth while.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Not all country teachers agree with you.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Not all, but most.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I would not think there was much evidence of that, either.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: You never support metropolitan area people.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Yes I do. I support everyone in the metropolitan area. They eat the food we produce and I support every one of them as long as they keep buying that food.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: When I pointed out that trade unionists made the machines that you use, everyone on your side laughed!

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I do not mind talking about trade unions with Mr Cooley, because he understands the subject and he has been a trade unionist. So have I.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Bully for you!

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Mr Hetherington is in a different class. He is an academic and maybe he does not understand what Mr Cooley and I are talking about.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I understand it perfectly well. That is a very foolish statement.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I do not think Mr Hetherington does. I am glad he thinks the staff lists will be a miracle and at the beginning of next year I will be pleased to hear him congratulate the Education Department on the miracle it has wrought, because that is what will happen.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I will be glad to do that.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I do not like the way Mr Hetherington says that small schools will be allowed to disobey the regulations. As I understand the situation, the small school principals and staff will talk to the regional superintendent, and this is a fair and equitable way to deal with it. If the same two teachers are returning to a school, and they have five students leaving and five enrolling, why all the fuss, and why not have the flexibility which obviously Mr Hetherington does not want?

The Hon. R. Hetherington: You have reversed my argument. I wish you would be fair. I suggest we should have flexibility both ways. I am trying to get rid of the regulations, after all.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: If we could get the union to agree to the two years' trial we would ascertain whether or not the system would work. We should consider the concessions which have been made in this affair by the Government as against the concessions made by the unions. If we did so we would realise that the Government has gone all out to meet the union's requests. The final one has not been met and so rolling strikes have been held.

While talking about strikes—and I do not like them—I understood that in order to conduct a strike, the union had first of all to hold a referendum. I inquired into the matter and ascertained that for a general strike a referendum had to be held, but the decision with regard to rolling strikes could be taken by the executive—

The Hon. R. Hetherington: And by the teachers, of course.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: —and the conference. As the consultations had been going on for such a long time—and Mr Hetherington referred to the time when they commenced, which was, I think, May of last year—I wonder why the union did not have time to hold a referendum which would

have been a far better way to ascertain the views of all teachers.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: It was decided at a general conference.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I understand the constitution of the union states that if there is to be a general strike, a referendum must be held. I may have read the constitution wrongly. I did not go to the Attorney General.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: No doubt you have.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The rolling strikes can be continued without a referendum being held. If the union were dinkum and wanted to indicate what a beastly Government we have, a referendum could have been held in the time which has elapsed since negotiations commenced. Referendums have been held before with regard to pre-primary schools and other matters, and they did not take very long to organise. When Mr Hetherington replies to the debate, I wonder whether he will tell me why a referendum was not held on this occasion. I am quite fascinated with the matter.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I presume it allowed for some flexibility, and you would approve of that, I thought.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I did not hear the honourable member's comment, and it is probably better that I did not.

I can understand why the union would like student-free days and I can understand that as the teachers are professionals they would not want to disadvantage the students. Therefore, the days on which students must attend should be the same in all schools. Mr Hetherington indicated that this year they will not be, but this is a one-off situation and, to put the system into operation, it was a concession made by the Government.

We have been told that the system will be detrimental to the students, but this has not been proved. We have not been told in reasonable terms, which people who are not as bright as Mr Hetherington and I can understand, what the detrimental effect on students will be. That has not been pointed out in any argument from a loud hailer at a demonstration under my office, or in the House, or in the Press. No clear case has been presented concerning the detrimental effect the system will have on children.

Mr Hetherington must be drawing the long bow when he says that if teachers were more militant we would get a better department. I do not believe this would be so. It may make a more unbalanced department, because the teachers would have more say than they have at the

moment. Many people in the world and in this State believe that teachers have too much say in Education Department affairs. Whether this is right or wrong is not for me to debate; but many people believe this to be a fact.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: They have a fair interest in it, don't they? They should have a say.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: All parents and students should have a say also. If Mr Cooley had been fighting this case for the Opposition he would have at least dealt with the prime people involved, because he has always done this in any debate he has entered into. He has always referred to the worker who is the person most affected. There is no doubt in my mind that the person who is most affected in the education system is the student, and his or her interests should be paramount.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: You believe the students should run the school system do you?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: No, I do not.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: Woken up, has he?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I do not think that comment was necessary. Mr Cloughton is trying to take words out of context. I said that the student was of paramount importance in the education system of this State. Does the honourable member agree?

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: You were talking about the workers in the system and about who should have the most say.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Wait a minute. I was talking about who should be paramount in the education system. Does the honourable member agree with me that the student should be of paramount importance?

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: You have changed your argument.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The honourable member should direct his comments to the Chair.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Certainly, Sir.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: You had better be careful with that big finger, too!

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I will not deal with very much more of Mr Hetherington's speech, because it did not contain very much worthy of comment.

He referred to the necessity for more money and more Federal grants. I wonder whether the public feel we should have more accountability for the money already spent. As I travel around my electorate and those of other members, I find that accountability in education spending is of importance to the people, because they are

worried about how the money is being spent. I am not against the expenditure of money on education, but I am against waste.

Not one member here would have gone to schools and not seen some examples of waste in the education system. About the only aspect on which Mr Cloughton and I agreed when we were discussing education was that in many cases a watchdog would enable money to be spent by the department in wiser areas. I do not want more money for education. I want what we have to be spent in a wiser manner. We have had a proliferation of bodies such as the Schools Commission's advisory committees, and so on, which, in my humble opinion, have been of no use whatever—and I sat on one which met too infrequently. We had no decision-making powers. All our decision-making powers were taken away by Canberra.

Turning to the matter of arbitration, where does arbitration start? Where does the Teachers' Union expect arbitration on holidays to start? Does the union expect to start from the gains it has already made—in other words, the situation which existed as of last year? Or does it wish any arbitration to start where the general public start, working 37½ hours a week at the school and having four weeks' annual leave? Is that where the arbitration starts, or is it an unending affair which starts off with the seven weeks' leave over Christmas and builds up from there?

Free advice is not very good advice, I know, but I think the Teachers' Union should be very careful when it starts talking about arbitration, because the arbitration about which Mr Cooley talks and the arbitration which I believe the teachers are after are totally different things. The Teachers' Union could get its members in a bit of a mess if it pushes arbitration too hard.

I believe arbitration is a little red herring which was drawn across the trail to take away what some may call the odium of teachers virtually saying, "We are not getting enough holidays or we are getting them at the wrong time." I am all for teachers but I do not believe the general public or the parents will wear that argument, and I do not believe a great number of teachers will wear it.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: How many?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: If Mr Hetherington wants a rough figure off the cuff, I would say about 60 per cent of the teachers will be happy with the new system.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: The question was about parents.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I would say 95 to 98 per cent of parents will be happy, and I would say whatever holidays children have they will never be happy because they will always want more.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I do not think that follows, either.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: They always seem to want more.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Some children like going to school.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: They must be just off the ones I know.

The Government has spent a great deal of time discussing this matter with the union and has made many concessions to the union in an endeavour to find the solution. I believe the rolling strikes have done nobody any good, neither the department, the teachers, nor the community. It distresses me that this should have happened, but it has happened, and I believe the last of the strikes will take place this week. For the sake of the students, I hope that is so.

Neither Mr Hetherington nor the Teachers' Union has advanced an argument in respect of holidays for the Government to answer. Therefore, in no way could the Government accept the disallowance of these regulations. I oppose the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. I. G. Pratt.

BILLS (3): THIRD READING

1. Shipping and Pilotage Act Amendment Bill.

Bill read a third time, on motion by the Hon. I. G. Medcalf (Attorney General), and returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

2. Road Traffic Act Amendment Bill.

Bill read a third time, on motion by the Hon. I. G. Medcalf (Attorney General), and returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

3. Consumer Affairs Act Amendment Bill.

Bill read a third time, on motion by the Hon. I. G. Medcalf (Attorney General), and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

APPROPRIATION BILL (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND)

Consideration of Tabled Paper

Debate resumed from the 19th October.

THE HON. N. F. MOORE (Lower North) [5.52 p.m.]: In August last year when I was making my maiden speech in this House I outlined the problems faced by the people who live in Lower North Province. Although at the time conditions there were depressed I expressed the opinion then that I believed the region was on the threshold of a new developmental era.

I would like to use this debate to explain to members some of the more encouraging events which have occurred in my province since last year. I still believe, as I did then, that the major impetus for development in the region rests with the mining industry and it is pleasing to note that during the last year a great deal of planning and exploration has been carried out.

The most significant development in the past 12 months has been the Agnew Mining Company's nickel deposits at Leinster. On the 4th November the Premier will officially open the new Agnew mine which commenced production recently. The nickel concentrate is conveyed by road from Leinster to Leonora and then by rail to Kalgoorlie.

I believe the Agnew Mining Company should be congratulated on the development of a magnificent new town at Leinster, which is Western Australia's newest town. Considerable effort has been made to ensure that the town blends in very well with the environment. Members who are aware of that particular part of Western Australia will realise that it is a very arid type of environment. The company adopted very strict rules because of the fragile ecology of the region. These rules are so strict that fines are imposed on anyone chopping down trees of any description at all. When the town was actually built no blocks were able to be cleared, and houses were lowered by crane onto the uncleared blocks.

So we now have in the north-eastern goldfields a brand new beautiful little town, magnificently set up and developed. I believe it is well worth the time for members to take a look at what has been achieved by the company in this remote area. Approximately 1 000 people enjoy some of the best facilities to be found anywhere in this State. The town is on a par with the towns in the Pilbara and is considered to be one of the best in the area south of the Pilbara, in terms of mining company towns.

Agnew Mining has shown its faith in the future of Western Australia by investing many millions of dollars in a nickel project which could be described as possibly being only just viable, if it is at all.

As we know, the future of the nickel industry can be regarded as being very bleak, yet at this time Agnew Mining has spent millions of dollars in developing this new project. The development does, however, emphasise one of the ironies of the mining industry. On the one hand in the area north of Leonora we have the Agnew deposit being developed and on the other hand east of Leonora we have an unfortunate situation of a similar deposit of nickel closing down. I refer to the Windarra project which is now on a care and maintenance basis. There is the irony of the situation: on one hand a company starting up and developing a new project, and on the other hand a company which because of the depressed market has had to close down its project and put it on a care and maintenance basis.

The problems experienced by the Windarra nickel mine have caused me a great deal of concern over the last few months. In terms of population and activity Laverton has declined considerably. Until February this year the town of Laverton was developing into a very stable community, but suddenly with the decision to halt mining it was stopped in its tracks. This is very unfortunate, because we need towns such as Laverton and the development which had taken place there to maintain our thrust towards decentralisation. It is fortunate that the people who are still there have an air of optimism about the future. People feel that the mine will eventually get going again on full production and I certainly hope the Government will take all steps possible to ensure that this does happen.

I congratulate the people who are in Laverton now—the people on the shire council, the people in the school, the people who own the shops, and the people who work there—for continuing to have faith in the town and for staying there to keep things going in the hope that the town will eventually get back on its feet.

Another mineral deposit which I discussed in a previous speech and which I hope will develop in the near future is the Golden Grove copper deposit, which is located near Yalgoo. At the present time the partners in the project—Amax and EZ Industries—are seeking a further partner to assist in the development of their deposit. They have a deposit of 13.5 million tonnes of 3.5 per cent copper, which by world standards is a very good deposit; but unfortunately the depressed world prices for copper have meant the company has had to leave the deposit on a care and maintenance basis since the middle of 1977. The company is seeking a new partner to contribute finance in the hope that it can get this project off the ground, and the area around Yalgoo will

receive a tremendous boost from this very big copper mine.

Northern Mining is still interested in developing its Weld Range iron ore find. Weld Range is located north-west of Cue and the iron ore deposit is quite substantial. Northern Mining has based its studies on developing the Weld Range iron ore mine, sending the ore to Geraldton by rail, and developing a steel processing plant in the Geraldton area. Many difficulties have been experienced in developing this particular deposit and carrying out the programme to its ultimate conclusion; but I think every encouragement should be given to Northern Mining because, as we know, the area around Geraldton has experienced very difficult times in the last couple of years as a result of droughts and the fall-off in demand for mineral sands, etc. For the sake of the Geraldton and Murchison areas, I hope the Weld Range iron ore deposit will eventually get going.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 p.m.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: Before the tea suspension I was talking about the hoped for development of various mineral deposits within the Murchison area, and I expressed the opinion that there seems to be a degree of optimism that some of these developments may eventually get off the ground. The one I think is most likely to become a reality in the very near future is the Yeelirrie uranium deposit. This deposit has been the subject of an environmental impact study by Western Mining Corporation, which has done a great deal of work and research into its proposed programme. As I said before the tea suspension, should this project ever get off the ground it will provide an enormous boost to a region which is in a depressed state.

I have mentioned the figures of a town of 2 000 people, 800 jobs, and \$200 million to \$300 million worth of investment—an enormous development at a time when we need these sorts of developments to take place.

It disturbs me when I read that environmental groups around the place believe we can afford not to have this sort of development. When we consider the current unemployment situation and the current lack of overseas investment, and the effects that overseas investment can have on our economy, I find it most hard to understand the rationale of people who say, "We don't want this sort of development."

In addition, another area in my province may be on the verge of a large strike. I refer to the Exmouth plateau. Large areas of the Exmouth plateau have been provided to oil exploration companies.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: Did you say your province?

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: It is partly Mr Tozer's province, and partly mine. We will not argue, so long as it gets going, and I certainly hope it will.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: When you said "strike", did you mean a mineral or oil strike or an industrial strike?

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: We do not want any industrial strikes! I referred to an oil strike on the Exmouth plateau which, if it occurred, and combined with the North-West Shelf gas, would provide enormous benefits to the State. It is pleasing to see that companies such as Esso are setting up some infrastructure for use of helicopters at Exmouth at the present time; and they are also building homes in which to house employees at Exmouth.

Also, within the last few months a great resurgence in gold exploration has occurred throughout the goldmining area. It is pleasing to see in today's issue of the *Daily News* an article about a particular prospector who has found quite a number of nuggets around the Leonora-Laverton area. The increase in the price of gold has caused this upsurge in gold prospecting, and it is pleasing to see that a number of people who had previously left it are coming back into this industry. It is good to see in places like Leonora and Laverton a new pegging boom going on in respect of gold prospecting.

On a previous occasion I argued that one way in which we could assist in the development of mineral deposits was to enable the Government to borrow funds to provide the infrastructure. On that occasion whilst I was speaking Mr Dans said that no Federal Government would ever allow that to occur. I think the Premier has achieved a degree of success in convincing the Federal Government of the need for this to occur. I know he has not achieved all he would like to achieve in the sense that the Federal Government still retains the power of veto; however, we can see from the number of projects put forward to the Federal Government by the States that the idea has been well accepted by all the States.

I was disturbed to hear on the news tonight that the Federal Government has now decided it will have the final say in negotiations for the sale or export of any minerals overseas. To me this is diabolical, and it smacks very much of the sort of policies we had when the late Rex Connor was the Labor Minister in Canberra.

The Hon. R. T. Leeson: It is worse.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: I do not know that the situation is worse, but I am most disturbed to feel we are heading in the same direction.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: If you go back to 1958 you will find the same situation occurred under Menzies.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: We have a bad situation under our present Liberal Government in Canberra, and I do not approve of the actions it is currently taking. I think we should express in the strongest terms possible our opposition to any grab by the Federal Government in the field of exports of minerals from Australia.

Whilst I believe the mining industry is the only industry in the Lower North Province with sufficient capital to develop the area, it is still of considerable importance that we maintain a viable pastoral industry. The pastoral industry has for many, many years provided the stability which has been necessary to maintain the population centres of the Murchison and Gascoyne areas. The different mining companies and activities have come and gone, but the pastoral industry has remained and has provided the stability to enable towns such as Yalgoo, Cue, Meekatharra, Mt. Magnet, Sandstone, and Wiluna to remain viable.

From that point of view the pastoral industry is particularly important, because without it these towns would have come and gone as did towns such as Mt. Morgan and, to a lesser extent, Bullfinch, and so on.

In a previous speech I mentioned that the pastoral industry was facing many difficulties, and it still is. Fortunately reasonably good rains have fallen in some areas in recent times, and this has alleviated the drought difficulty which has beset the area for the past three or four years.

The State Government is to be congratulated for having taken the initiative to work out what can be done for the pastoral industry. It has appointed a committee known as the Jennings committee to study the industry as a whole. Some of the interim proposals put forward by this committee have been implemented by the Government, and these have been of great assistance to pastoralists.

The measure which has been of greatest assistance to pastoralists is that they can now borrow up to \$40 000 to assist with drought relief. The loans are at 4 per cent interest and have been of great benefit to many of the struggling pastoralists throughout the drought.

The Jennings committee expects to make its report at the end of this year, and the pastoral industry is looking forward with a great deal of

interest to the final recommendations which will be contained in it.

I do note, however, a degree of cautious optimism returning throughout the pastoral areas. The industry has gone through very good and very bad times and I believe it is now emerging from a very bad time. It is good to see this degree of optimism slowly returning today. Hopefully, with good rains this summer we may even find positive enthusiasm in the pastoral industry in the next few years. It is an industry which has made a tremendous contribution to the economy of Western Australia over many, many years, and it is an industry we should support.

I would like now to make some comments about Carnarvon, which is the largest town in the Lower North Province. The State Government has adopted several initiatives for the Carnarvon area over the last several years, particularly in relation to the plantation industry and the fishing industry. The groundwater supply scheme, which was an initiative of the present Government, has provided a reasonably assured water supply for the plantations along the Gascoyne River.

It is quite significant that during the recent drought in Carnarvon the plantations were able to draw sufficient water from the water supply, without having to worry about their supplies being inadequate.

The Hon. R. T. Leeson: Have they got a dam on the river yet?

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: No, there is no dam, but there is sufficient water in the aquifers to provide water for the plantations.

The Hon. R. T. Leeson: I thought Mr Berry had the dam built 10 years ago.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: Mr Berry has tried hard to have a dam built, and he has been successful in that the State Government has spent \$4 million in recent years on water supplies in the area. In fact, a further amount of \$569 000 has been allocated for the present financial year. Unfortunately, as a result of the money that has been spent it has been necessary for the Government to increase water charges. However, because some \$4 million has already been spent there is some justification for these increases.

The fishing industry in Carnarvon has also benefited from recent Government expenditure. On the 3rd November the Minister for Works (Mr MacKinnon) will officially open the new slipway at the new fishing boat harbour. Some \$127 000 has been allocated this financial year for further development of the slipway, and \$90 000 has been allocated for the fishing boat harbour. These are tremendous benefits to the

town of Carnarvon. This expenditure is of great assistance to the fishing industry in Carnarvon and with the extension of fishing limits to 200 miles it means the area can look forward to an assured and prosperous future in respect of fishing.

I was very interested to hear Mr McKenzie in his speech the other night attempting to criticise the new transport arrangements to the Murchison. I would have thought that had he done some homework he would have found this is really a non-issue and, in fact, the system is working very well indeed.

When Bellway first took over the provision of transport to the Murchison the firm was particularly dedicated to ensuring that any teething problems that might have arisen were quickly dealt with and overcome. I admit there were some teething problems, but we find these whenever an existing situation is changed.

In my opinion the system has met with a great deal of approval throughout the Murchison and most people are particularly satisfied with the service provided by Bellway.

Mr McKenzie also stated last week that the cost of transporting 40 kilograms of fruit would be much cheaper by Westrail than by Bellway. I interjected as he was speaking and said I thought he was wrong and that I would find out, anyway. I did find out, and as it turns out Mr McKenzie was wrong. To transport 44 kilograms of fruit to Meekatharra by Westrail would cost \$3.52, whereas by Bellway it costs \$2.80.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Are you sure you are right?

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: I am positive. I do accept that one can send one apple or a bag of apples by Westrail.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: I did my homework, too. I agree that between 40 and 50 kilograms it is a moot point. However, 40 kilograms costs \$2.65 by Westrail.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: It is actually higher; it costs \$2.95 by Westrail.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: The figure given to me was \$2.65. I will go further. If you want to send half a tonne by Westrail it costs \$18.75, whereas with Bellway it costs \$31.50.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: Mr McKenzie was speaking about a particular quantity of fruit. I said I thought he was wrong and from my research it turns out he was. However, I have pointed out that if one wishes to send a smaller quantity of goods, the freight rate of Westrail is cheaper. The idea of charging \$2.80 for 44

kilograms of fruit by road is to enable local businesses to provide a service to their towns. If everybody in small towns was able to purchase daily fruit and vegetables carted by Westrail at a low freight rate, then businesses in small towns would find it hard to operate. I believe it is important to provide a transport system with a freight rate which will assist local businesses, rather than encouraging them to rip off people.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: Can you explain why it costs \$18.75 for half a tonne by Westrail and \$31.50 by Bellway?

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: I cannot, but I have explained to the member where he was wrong in the remarks he made in his speech last week. I was right on that particular point.

I have always been of the opinion that people in country towns need to support their local businesses; if they do not they will not have the basis for a town. The new freight system in the Murchison has been of benefit in getting people to buy within their own towns.

I am disappointed that in some respects these freight savings have not been passed on to consumers; and beer is an example. Freight savings were made by businessmen on beer but these have not been passed on to consumers.

I am concerned at the condition of the Great Northern Highway between Wubin and Meekatharra. Since the closure of the Meekatharra-Mullewa railway line there has been a large increase in road trains and semi-trailers using the road. Members may be aware that this is only a single lane bitumen road. The Main Roads Department has been particularly conscientious in keeping the verges in good condition. I have travelled the road on several occasions and seen that this is the case. The department is doing a very good job. However, it still remains a single lane road. With large road trains and semi-trailers using it we must consider upgrading this part of the highway to a double lane bitumen road.

There are enormous demands on the State's road funds and enormous amounts of money are being spent in the north—justifiably so. When this commitment in the north has been finished, the Wubin-Meekatharra part of the Great Northern Highway will have to be given top priority by the Government.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: I am glad you are acknowledging there are problems.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: There are problems.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: I suppose you saw in the paper that there was a publican in

Meekatharra offering free accommodation to travellers, because he was concerned at the hazards facing people.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: He may be offering free accommodation for reasons other than safety.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: Be charitable.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: I am being charitable; I said he may be doing it for other reasons.

Finally, I would like to express disappointment that \$100 000 only has been allocated in the Budget for the Leonora Hospital. I spoke last year when no money was allocated and I was more disappointed then than now. I notice that \$38 million has been allocated for hospitals in this year's Budget and \$153 000 of that is going to country hospitals, of which Leonora will receive \$100 000. So in one respect I am happy; but \$153 000 out of \$38 million is not very much at all for country hospitals.

I am aware of the restraints placed on the State Government by the Federal Government and, in general, considering the constraints applied by Canberra, the Premier is to be congratulated. Next year I hope we see some sanity returning to Canberra, particularly in relation to funds for hospitals and also in regard to the export of minerals, as I mentioned earlier. Perhaps then we will see projects like the Leonora Hospital proceeding.

I support the motion.

THE HON. D. W. COOLEY (North-East Metropolitan) [7.49 p.m.]: I appreciate the opportunity of being able to join in this debate tonight as it enables me to speak on a range of subjects. I do not want members opposite to think I am being critical, nor do I want them to take umbrage, but it seems unfair that Opposition members are expected to speak one for one with Government members in this debate.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You are not required to do that at all.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: To keep the House going we are somewhat obliged to do that. Over the last few weeks it would seem that this House of Review would have closed down had it not been for the Opposition.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: If you look at the *Hansard* you will see how wrong you are.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You are reflecting on your Whip.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: If we go on in this way and speak one for one it must be remembered that the Government has 21 members, and the Labor Party nine—

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You are wrong again.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: There are 32 members. The Speaker does not have an opportunity to speak—

The Hon. W. R. Withers: He is not the Speaker.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Of course, I mean the President. Be that as it may, we could run out of speakers and the Government would then have the opportunity to have 10 or 12 speakers in a row. I do not consider that to be altogether fair. We want to play our part in this House and I think Government members ought to respond likewise.

I am surprised, after hearing the few members from the Government side, that little reference has been made to the documents issued to us when the Minister presented his speech. One is headed "The Western Australian Economy" and the other is "Financial Statement".

While this debate gives members the opportunity to talk on subjects affecting their electorates, which is a good thing—we have just heard a good speech from Mr Moore, who highlighted problems associated with his area—we should take time out to consider these documents. I realise we cannot go through them word for word, but if all members make a contribution we should be able to glean some facts from them.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: There have been only four Government speakers and two have mentioned the documents.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: There needs to be a greater examination of the documents, particularly by Government members, to justify points contained in them. If it were possible to have the people who prepared the documents charged under the Trade Descriptions and False Advertisements Act I am sure they would be found guilty in respect of many things contained in the documents.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: Be specific.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: The documents include items concerning unemployment. The documents state that at the 30th June, 1978, civilian unemployment was 1.5 per cent higher than in the year previous, an increase which is in contrast with the small reduction of 0.2 per cent in Australia as a whole. It was deemed necessary to emphasise that we are doing better than Australia as a whole in respect of overall employment, disguising the fact that unemployment is getting worse and worse.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: We are not disguising the fact.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Yes, the Government is.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: It is all clearly set out in the documents.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: The documents state that the Government of Western Australia has fared better than most other States in regard to the problem of unemployment. They stated the number of persons unemployed increased during the year to a total of 34 433 persons at the 30th June, 1978. If that is not gobbledygook, I do not know what is. Why does not the Government say it has been unable to beat unemployment?

I realise it is not all the responsibility of the State Government; it is a national matter also. We were told the Government was going to beat unemployment in this State! That promise was made when the Court Government succeeded the Tonkin Government, but unemployment has risen, in round figures, from 7 000 to 34 000. That is not a very good situation. The information in the documents is misleading.

Another misleading statement is that a balanced Budget is a good Budget. I realise the Liberal Party does not have a cohesive policy, but I heard a member of that party say that the Federal Government's \$2 500 million deficit was good management. However, in this State we have a balanced Budget which is also said to be good management. Can members opposite tell me if, in fact, a good Budget is a balanced one, or one which has a deficit?

The Hon. Neil McNeill: You will remember that I commented on that very thing.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I know the member did, but the real fact is that the Federal Government is actually budgeting for a surplus, because it is pulling the deficit down from something like \$3 000 million last year to \$2 500 million this year.

I do not hold any pretensions of being an economist. I am like about 99 per cent of all Australians, who have little knowledge of economics. However, one can understand what one reads in documents such as these. The stated policies of the two Governments, which profess the same philosophy, are quite contradictory.

Reference is made to unemployment, and this is a very sore point with me. I think Government members should get onto their Federal counterparts. The documents indicate that over the year Government employment grew by 3 per cent, while private employment increased by a

little under 1 per cent. This is the investment-led recovery we heard so much about when Fraser came to office. The documents state this happened despite the many millions of dollars that had been invested in the private sector. So the investment-led recovery has failed miserably in regard to the Federal Government's policy of promoting private enterprise.

The Government is feeding thousands of millions of dollars into private companies to buy automated computer machinery, which is casting thousands of workers out of work. It is about time the Government had a look at this. I thought investment allowances were given to private industry for the purpose of stimulating the economy and so get the private sector moving to meet the unemployment situation. However, the problem is getting worse and worse and the Government is not helping the situation by providing these massive funds to buy this automated machinery.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: How do you supply these massive funds?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: If the member understands the situation he would know there are a number of firms in this country which will not pay tax this year; they have been relieved of doing so because of this investment allowance. One does not have to look far to find some of these companies.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Do you think a lot of overseas countries rather than local companies gain from that? To my knowledge more overseas companies and workers gain jobs out of it than do local people.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: That is one aspect of the matter. There are many country members in this House. I have no antipathy towards country members. I like them very much. However, their main concern appears to be cattle and sheep. Not one word has been mentioned so far in this House about the fact that the number of registered unemployed in the rural sector has increased from 823 in 1977 to a figure of 1 275. That is an increase of 54.9 per cent.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: That is because of the drought, surely.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: We hear about the great problems farmers are facing.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: The drought finished last year.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: We have not heard one word about the high number of unemployed in rural areas. It is an alarming situation. The overall increase in unemployment is 37.4 per cent,

according to this document, and the percentage increase in unemployment in the rural sector in the last year has been 54.9 per cent. Members who represent country areas, and in particular National Country Party members, ought to have a look at the causes for the increase in unemployment. They should try to make some contribution in this place which will help the unemployed. Hundreds of people on low incomes are affected by the downturn in rural areas.

The Government ought to be able to improve the situation and it should find ways and means of solving the continuing problems we have been facing in respect of rural unemployment.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: The very members you are talking about have made references constantly to this and so has the Government.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I spend a great deal of time in this House, but I have not heard country members speaking about unemployment. They are more interested in wheat, sheep, cows, and whether or not the farmers are making a profit, than they are in people.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: You were saying how much they love the farmers and now you are saying they do not care about people.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Nobody can work miracles; but rural members should be concentrating their attention on this particular aspect.

There is another misrepresentation in the Budget in respect of building and construction. The Budget says that activity in the home building industry is down on the high levels in previous years and the number of completions is lower than the figure for 1976-77. A great deal has been glossed over. The fact of the matter is that the increase in unemployment in the building industry has been far worse than in the rural sector. The number of registered unemployed in the building industry has increased from 832 to 1 683, an increase of 102 per cent. That is a situation about which we should be very concerned.

When we come to the matter of the manufacturing industry we have the question of the investment allowance. The Budget speech says that an indication of the general position prevailing in the manufacturing industry is given by the fact that civilian employment within the sector fell by 2 per cent between June, 1977, and June, 1978, and that this was due to insufficient orders and similar matters. The number of wage and salary earners fell by 1 300. A theory has been bandied about that industry is working to about 75 per cent or 80 per cent capacity.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: It is 75 per cent.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: With a little effort on our part and on the part of Government members and people who have the ear of the Federal Government, employment opportunities generally could be increased.

The situation is not very encouraging when one reads the figures. So far there has not been one reference—and I doubt whether many references will be forthcoming—to the course being followed by the Federal Government as far as the money allocated to this State and its fiscal policy generally are concerned.

I am referring to the silence of Government members in regard to the recent attack by the Federal Government on low and moderate income earners, under-privileged people, and in particular on pensioners. I think we all know this, but it is worth repeating: the principal item of revenue gain for the Federal Government is taxation. I have referred previously to the poor suckers who fell for the promises made by Fraser in 1975.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: That was not a very kind thing to say.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: The poor misguided people fell for the promises made at that time and the chickens are coming home to roost, because those promises have been repudiated by the Federal Government. The price of beer has increased by 3½c a glass. That increase affects people on low incomes. We in this House for instance are not affected as badly as a person on a low income or a pensioner who likes his glass of beer. He must now pay 3½c more for every glass. I will not refer to spirits, because I do not believe people on low incomes can afford to buy them.

A number of people like to smoke from time to time. Cigarettes have increased in price by 10c a packet. Petrol has increased by 16c a gallon. It is not a luxury to own a motorcar. The people most affected by that particularly savage increase in petrol prices are the people to whom I have just referred. They are affected not only directly, but indirectly also in many ways.

Of course, the most bitter blow of all was the increase in the rate of personal income tax. It went up by 1½ per cent. The Liberal Party won the election by promising people a reduction in income tax as from the 1st February. The Labor Party put up a counter-proposal. That was the reason the conservatives gained such a considerable majority in the Federal House of Representatives. The people counted on the promise made by the Liberal Party that they

would receive an increase in their pay packets on the 1st February.

Six months have passed and the very concession which the people gained has been removed. It has been taken away to the disadvantage of people on low incomes. I have the exact figures here. For a person on a weekly wage of \$175, the total tax increase is 25 per cent. A middle income earner on \$300 has a total tax increase of 11.7 per cent. On Malcolm Fraser's salary of \$80 000 a year the total tax increase is 3.9 per cent. That gives an indication of how savage these tax increases are in respect of people on low incomes. Of course, the tax deductibility of home loan interest payments was abolished altogether after it was introduced in 1975. At that time we were told the new scheme would be better than the previous one which was the home owners' saving fund.

In addition to this, the final, crowning insult was the Government's decision to ask the Arbitration Commission to disregard the CPI increases when calculating wage increases. The real wage of workers will be reduced. I do not object to that if we start at a certain level of, say, \$250 or \$300 a week. But I do not believe such a policy should affect people on incomes below \$250 a week. It should not affect people who are on the minimum wage or just above it. It is a savage insult to a man who is earning \$200 a week. These people cannot afford it. Their wages must move at the very least with the increases in the Consumer Price Index so that they may maintain their standard of living.

The Government has now persuaded the Arbitration Commission to adjust the wages of Australian workers on a six-monthly basis instead of on a three-monthly basis. Pensions will be reviewed annually instead of six-monthly. I believe people in Government circles should look at this matter very closely. Mention should be made of these matters in Parliament, because members of this Chamber and of the other place could have an effect on the thinking of the Government in this regard.

Mr Howard's reaction to the situation was to say that real wages are still too high and company profits are too low. Is that not a typical Liberal Party philosophy? In this day and age real wages are too high and company profits are too low, according to Mr Howard. He does not say to what kind of wages he is referring. He refers only to real wages. He does not say whether the real wage is \$150 a week or \$250 a week. The time has come for a change of policy in regard to the thinking of the Government in Canberra. Perhaps the Government of this State may be able to assist in getting the economy moving again. Mention is

made in the Financial Statement of the fact that \$13.1 million less than was budgeted for was expended on wages. Since the Court Government came to power it has harped continually on the fact that trade unions have not been playing their part by moderating their demands in respect of wages.

We have had a system of indexation since 1975 which, in effect, saved this Government approximately \$13 million last year. However, we have not heard one word about that from members opposite. Not one word of praise have we heard for the responsible role played by the trade unions in respect to curbing inflation.

I attended a congress in 1975 and the Prime Minister of the day attended also. He begged the union movement to accept indexation. At that time the union movement responded by saying that indexation would be accepted as a minimum, but it still wanted the right to bargain collectively. But there was a change of Government. After 1975 a different policy was introduced and full indexation as was promised to the unions by the then Prime Minister, who was a Labor Prime Minister—and promised again by the caretaker Prime Minister at the time, who eventually became the legitimate Prime Minister—was in a modified form and became partial indexation.

It is due to a very responsible attitude by the trade union movement that inflation has been kept down. I have noted that people in this Chamber have been silent in that respect. That is some sort of proof and some form of indication that what I am saying is right. At least it could be admitted by some people on the other side of this House that the trade union movement has applied itself in the battle to bring down prices, despite the fact that its membership has suffered considerably as a result of the uncontrolled unemployment which is taking place at the present time. There are still members in this place who criticise the unions, and they were joined the other night by members of the National Country Party when the Public Service Bill was before us. I will not comment further on that aspect, because one member who took an anti-union stand is not here now.

I must quote one aspect of the thinking of people with regard to the unions, and some of those people are in this Chamber at the present time. I do not intend to be personal in this regard. I will refer to a newspaper article which appeared on Wednesday, the 27th September, 1978. It is headed, "MPs believe tax plan will kill incentive". Apparently the Liberal Party set up a committee of back-benchers who strongly attacked the Federal Government's tax proposals. They

claimed that the plan would destroy initiative and productivity, and the independence of self-employed people. The newspaper article set out the members of the committee as follows—

The committee is headed by Mr R. G. Pike (Lib., North Metropolitan Province). It includes four MLAs—Mr J. Sibson (Lib., Bunbury), Mr T. A. A. Herzfeld (Lib., Mundaring), Mr B. J. MacKinnon (Lib., Murdoch) and Mr A. V. Crane (NCP, Moore)—and two other MLCs—Mr N. Oliver (Lib., West Province) and Mr W. R. Withers (Lib., North Province).

The article goes on to talk about the Government's tax proposals, which is in accordance with one's thinking in some respects. Unfortunately, it is still not the thinking of members in this Chamber. The article continues—

The committee told Mr Howard that the proposals could have wide implications for workers' compensation, union membership and industrial awards if every person was a potential employer and a conscripted unpaid tax-gatherer.

Massive sections of the community would be forced to join unions. It would be an effective method of forcing subcontractors into unions.

"The subcontractors of Australia represent almost the last refuge against the abuses of the trade union system in Australia," the committee said.

I suppose it was a unanimous viewpoint; I do not see any minority opinions.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: We know what the bricklayers association found.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Yes, that is so. I believe the unions do play their part with regard to bringing down inflation. Unemployment is out of the unions' hands, but they have played their part. We still have irresponsible people in our community who resent workers belonging to unions.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: The words you used were to the effect of forcing people to be members of unions.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: We do not resent people being in unions, provided it is not compulsory.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Members of the Liberal Party do not mind people being members of unions, as long as they do what the Liberal Party thinks they ought to do. They cannot have any independence. So long as they suit the Liberal

Party they are all right. I think it was Chifley who referred to "tame cat unions". I suppose that would satisfy the Liberal Party.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Was that when he talked about the "mouse-hole theory of taxation?" Was that why he had "tame cat unions"?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: To be honest, I have not heard the expression. The opinion of the Government was exemplified by the Government action with regard to the Flour Bill last year. I asked a question, because I wanted to know the number of trucks used to shift flour, and for how many hours the trucks were used. I was told that five trucks were used to shift the flour, but because of an undertaking the Government would not divulge where the trucks came from.

We all know the scab organisation—a strike breaking organisation. Each truck was used for approximately six hours, but the arrangement was that they would be available until a total of 300 tons of flour was moved. They were on standby for a much longer period of time. However, for six hours' work the illicit organisation—and I know the Government has disowned it since—received over \$1 815, or approximately \$400 a truck for six hours' actual work.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: What do you mean by an illicit organisation?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: The Government has said that, not I. I refer to the assistance and security organisation.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Which Government representative referred to the organisation as being illicit? I think you are a little wrong.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Let us say that the Premier has disowned it. He would not have anything to do with it.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Actually you have no foundation for using that term.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: The trucks were used for six hours, and the sum of \$1 815 was paid for them. They were engaged without any check as to whether anybody else could have done the job cheaper. I believe there were some volunteers available, but they were not used. I suppose that is commendable. It seems to me that quite a number of questions are unanswered with respect to the very shady deal which occurred with that organisation.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: There was nothing shady about it.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I will pass on to the question of automation and technological change, and its effect on industry. A policy has

been enunciated by the Australian Council of Trade Unions which, of course, would be well known to most people who recognise that technological change will result in changes for the Australian work force by increasing productivity and worsening the conditions of employees. Technology ought not to be damaging.

There are many things in that policy which need to be given consideration by the Federal Government. I am not talking about this State Government. It is high time that some policy was enunciated, and it is time there was a tripartite conference between employers, the unions, and the Government for the purpose of trying to soften the effect of automation and technological changes which are occurring very fast with detrimental results on a large number of people.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: I thought the Federal Government had already undertaken an inquiry and a study.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I know nothing about it.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: I think you will find there has certainly been an announcement to that effect.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I will quote from the *IPA Review* which is not a union-orientated document. Most of us receive the publication and I will quote an extract from it as follows—

One vital step in the adjustment process is the need to establish lines of communication which promote the use of innovative technology without being inhibited by industrial disputation.

This technology has been brought in without proper planning and without consultation with the union movement. There is bound to be industrial disputation. To continue—

Never before was there a greater need for all sections of industry to work together towards improving productivity and adjusting to changes in the nature of employment. A growing atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding which could now emerge through the embryonic concepts of worker participation would aid this development.

This booklet is advocating worker participation. The article concludes—

If we are to keep pace with the rapid changes in our life styles associated with technological advances, then we urgently need to uproot outdated thinking by debating new ideas in order to extract such germs of truth and practicality as they may hold.

It does not appear, from the point of view expressed there, that any person or any Government in particular is doing very much to help the situation. There should be some means of softening the impact of automation on people who are likely to be affected by it. I do not think the Government has regard for the view enunciated in the very good policy I have quoted.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Well, it does.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: There is one other matter I will refer to before I conclude, and it is something I hope two other members in the Chamber will not take umbrage at. I think it is well known I have a small interest in Augusta—I am a ratepayer—and I apologise to Mr MacKinnon and Mr Ferry for raising this matter. It was my intention to ask a question tomorrow, but if I can receive a reply by way of comment that would be so much better.

In recent times the Westrail freezer transport service has ceased to operate beyond Busselton. It used to operate through to Margaret River. Mr McKenzie has told me the reason is Westrail does not like to handle small goods. As a consequence, the freezer truck has been taken off the run and since then the price of margarine, for instance, has increased by something like 20c a pack. I could be corrected, but that is an alarming increase.

It might be reasonable for Westrail not to handle frozen goods, because they may be too finicky. However, the point is a freighter goes south with a freezer unit attached. At Busselton, the freezer motor is turned off and the unit then carries non-perishable goods. The shopkeepers south of Busselton cannot understand why, once each fortnight, or each three weeks, the freezer motor cannot be kept going so that butter, margarine, and other perishables could be delivered to the area at cheaper prices.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: It seems crazy, does it not?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: It does. The problem relates to specials which can be bought at Foodland stores and others. I was asked to raise the matter and I hope somebody will have due regard for it.

In conclusion I will refer again to the fact that the Federal Government has failed miserably to "put things right", to "turn on the lights", or to fulfil whatever catch-cry promise it developed to gain office. It is the Federal Government's responsibility to tackle the unemployment problem. Despite our Premier's pledge before he came to office that unemployment and inflation could be beaten State by State, the problem is

still with us. However, it is a national one and I state again that I do not altogether blame the State Government for Western Australia's unemployment situation.

At the recent election the people of New South Wales clearly told the Federal Government that it is on the wrong track. I believe the New South Wales citizens spoke for all Australians.

The obvious thing to do is to inject more money into consumer spending. Instead of attacking the boys who sell newspapers and the pensioners, or restricting the spending power of low and moderate income earners, the trend should be in the opposite direction. Control of the price structure will allow us to purchase more consumer goods in order to utilise our unused productive capacity. As I said previously, that is around 20 per cent. In short, the Government should do what most economists, businessmen, workers, legal men, and indeed even the Federal backbenchers say it should do. The obvious answer is for the Government to relax its grip on finance, because this is restricting the spending power of ordinary working people in our community.

I hope that in the Federal sphere some such action will be taken before the end of the year because, as I have indicated, most people agree consumers should be encouraged to spend more money and to so improve our unemployment position.

I support the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. A. A. Lewis.

PUBLIC SERVICE BILL

Assembly's Message

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Council.

TAXI-CARS (CO-ORDINATION AND CONTROL) ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. G. E. Masters, read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. G. E. MASTERS (West) [8.33 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to provide an additional source of revenue to meet increasing costs due to inflation and a reduction in income from the sale of taxi-car licences.

The Taxi Control Board is required to raise sufficient funds from within the industry to provide its working capital and to meet operating costs.

Until recently, a major source of revenue to the board has been the issue of taxi-car licences at a premium but, due to the economic state of the industry and the policy encouraged by the board for taxi-car owners to "double shift" their vehicles, no issue has been made since 1974.

This has meant that as operators have paid out their indentures, revenue from this source has declined.

Whilst in 1974-75 the board received \$58 641 from instalments for premium plates, it is estimated that by 1980-81 it will receive only \$19 716. This figure will reduce even further in future years.

Given the present state of the industry, it is most unlikely that there will be additional licences issued at a premium in the foreseeable future.

In 1976, in an attempt to correct the board's deteriorating financial position, Parliament increased the drivers' registration fee from \$5 a year to \$35 a year. This resulted in a temporary improvement when the board's surplus increased from \$6 533 in 1975-76 to \$26 552 in 1976-77.

However, in 1977-78 it fell again to \$18 633, and on the present basis of income, a deficit for the current year of the order of \$11 000 is expected. This deficit will increase to \$51 000 for 1979-80 unless remedial action is taken.

While taking every care to ensure that a satisfactory service to the public is maintained, the board has continued to meet fluctuations in traffic demand by closely monitoring the influx of drivers into the industry, in an endeavour to ensure a reasonable livelihood for the present operators. This could result in a further downturn in funds by reducing the revenue raised from the driver registration fees.

In order to provide sufficient funds for its future operations, the board has examined alternative sources of revenue and has concluded that the owner of the taxi-car should be required to meet a greater share of the costs of the administration of the board, one of the effects of

which is to provide protection for his capital investment.

To effect this, it is proposed to replace the present nominal transfer fee of \$2, which incidentally does not even cover the cost of administration, by a fee not exceeding 10 per cent of the market value of the taxi-car licence.

The market value would be assessed by the board by calculating the average "goodwill" value of taxi licences sold during the past 12 months.

It is anticipated that initially the fee will be based on 5 per cent of the market value and will be reassessed at the beginning of each year. It has been estimated that a 5 per cent transfer fee would raise approximately \$55 000 in a full year.

Section 22B(2) of the Act provides for a driver's registration fee of from \$35 to \$50 a year—the actual amount to be prescribed from time to time. The Bill seeks to amend this section to provide for a fee of up to \$50 as approved by the Minister, as concurrently with the introduction of the transfer fee it is proposed to reduce the present driver registration fee of \$35 a year to \$20 a year. This would cost the board \$27 500 in loss of revenue and would result in an overall net increase in revenue to the board of \$27 500.

The proposals contained in the Bill have the written support of the Western Australian Taxi Operators' Association.

It is also worth noting that New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia already have a similar type of fee.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. F. E. McKenzie.

ACTS AMENDMENT (PUBLIC SERVICE) BILL

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Leader of the House), and passed.

House adjourned at 8.40 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FISHERIES

Prawns, Wet Fish, and Crabs

374. The Hon. J. C. TOZER, to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

- (1) What was the cash value of the prawn catch in the Nickol Bay area in the last prawning season?

- (2) What was the value of wet fish, crabs and other marine products landed in the Point Samson area last year?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) \$160 000 (estimated).
(2) \$200 000 (estimated).

STATE FINANCE: BUDGET

Appealathon and Telethon

375. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Leader of the House:

With reference to the Consolidated Revenue Fund Estimates, and in particular to Grants to Charitable and other Bodies, wherein Appealathon is in receipt of \$17 500 and Telethon \$18 000—

- (1) (a) Is the variation due to viewer ratings; or
(b) is Channel 7's charitable appeal considered to be more financially worthy than that of Channel 9?
(2) If the answer to (1) is "No" what is the reason for the variation?

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf (for the Hon. G. C. MacKINNON) replied:

- (1) and (2) It is difficult to see the object of the question or what purpose can possibly be served by seeking to draw distinctions between these two fine charitable appeals.

As Telethon was established before Appealathon, the reason for the difference in the size of the Government donations is simply historical.

If the honourable member looks up the amounts provided in each case over the years, he will note that the difference has been progressively reduced.

The amounts shown in the Estimates for 1978-79 are the same as were provided last financial year. This is normal practice as decisions on the amounts actually donated by the Government are not made until the time the appeals are conducted.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Perth Institute of Film and Television

376. The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Minister for Lands representing the Minister for Cultural Affairs:

- (1) What grant has been made to The Perth Institute of Film and Television for this financial year?
(2) What is the purpose of the grant?

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf (for the Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH) replied:

- (1) As the Hon. R. F. Cloughton is associated with The Perth Institute of Film and Television, he would be aware that The Perth Institute of Film and Television receives funding from the Western Australian Arts Council for a calendar year.

1978	\$
General Grant	23 000
Guarantee Against Loss for travelling film festival in November, 1978	1 465

1979
Offer of general grant

- 31 500
(2) Annual grant is towards the full year's programme of activities. Additional funds are received by The Perth Institute of Film and Television from the Australian Film Commission.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOLS

Carine and Craigie

377. The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Minister for Lands representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it a fact that funds have not been allocated for Stage 4 construction at—
(a) Carine High School; and
(b) Craigie High School?
(2) Will students be accommodated in temporary classrooms as a result of this delay?

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf (for the Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH) replied:

- (1) (a) Stage 4 at Carine High School was completed on 2nd May, 1976.
(b) Stage 4 at Craigie High School is expected to go to tender in mid November.

- (2) Temporary accommodation may be necessary at Craigie for a period at the beginning of the 1979 school year.

In addition to the foregoing, the Minister for Labour and Industry had written to the TLC requesting a meeting to further discuss this matter. No reply has been received to date.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Retraining Scheme

378. The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:

In reference to the Government's proposed scheme to retrain more than 7 000 unemployed as publicised in *The West Australian* of the 11th September, 1978, would the Minister advise—

- (1) What has been the Australian Government response to the proposal?
- (2) (a) What discussions have been held with State trade union leaders and
(b) what has been the outcome of these discussions?

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf (for the Hon. G. C. MacKINNON) replied:

- (1) The proposal was discussed with the Federal Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations at the Conference of Commonwealth and State Labour Ministers in Brisbane, last month, and was well received by him.
- (2) (a) and (b) Government Ministers have met with the Trades and Labor Council and union representatives when the problem of meeting the State's future skilled needs was discussed in broad terms. There have also been other discussions at State and Federal level, where union and employer representatives have been present.
There will certainly be further detailed discussions as soon as a favourable response on funding is received from the Commonwealth Government.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

LAND

Wexcombe

I. The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Works:

With respect to the negotiations for the disposal of the 200 acres of land at Wexcombe which is presently vested in Westrail and which his department has been requested to handle—

- (1) (a) Have any decisions been arrived at;
(b) have any transactions been completed concerning the fate of this land?
- (2) If so, what are they?
- (3) If not, as this land would be ideal for Aboriginal housing, will the Government give serious consideration to using it for this purpose?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

In answer to the question, for which the Minister is indebted for having been notified of the details—

- (1) (a) No;
(b) no.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Consideration is currently being given to the sale of the land to either the State Housing Commission or the Urban Lands Council.

"HANSARD"*Delay in Production*

2. The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON (Leader of the House):

Last week the Hon. R. F. Claughton asked why some copies of *Hansard* had been delayed just recently. I understand that the Government Printer is still having problems with the new method of computerised production of *Hansard*.

This new technology is causing some difficulties in its initial stages.

In the week to which Mr Claughton referred when he asked the question, *Hansard* was delayed for one day due to a public holiday on the Monday. The minutes of last Thursday did not arrive prior to the commencement of the sitting of the House at 2.30 p.m. This is usual on a Thursday as the minutes do not arrive until later in the afternoon.

