

points, is only a tyro when we look at some of the past actions of Liberal-Country Party Governments in this State.

I thought the member for Swan may have mentioned in the House this evening that on two occasions he complained vociferously during the felicitations that are offered at the conclusion of every session. He had to complain that the Bills he had introduced into the House as a private member, which were still on the notice paper, were among the slaughtered innocents, and that the Government of the day did not have the decency to tell him it did not intend to proceed with them. That is the kind of treatment that has been meted out by Liberal-Country Party Governments in the past.

If we care to look up the records we will find that last week a great deal of hypocrisy and humbug was practised by members of the Opposition. Therefore I thought that into the record should be written some of the dealings and actions of the Liberal Party Government—or whatever its political colour happened to be at that time—in previous years.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Harman.

House adjourned at 10.32 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 4th April, 1973

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: NINTH DAY

Motion, as amended

Debate resumed, from the 3rd April, on the following motion by The Hon. R. F. Claughton, as amended—

That the following address be presented to His Excellency—

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

However, this House is of the opinion that the best interests of the State and the people would be better served if the Government were to

concentrate on improving its administration of the affairs of the State, instead of endeavouring to denigrate the Legislative Council (an integral part of the bicameral system of Government in this State) in an effort to cover up its own shortcomings.

THE HON. L. D. ELLIOTT (North-East Metropolitan) [4.36 p.m.]: Before addressing myself to the motion before the Chair I would like to add a few remarks in support of those already made by other members in congratulating Mr. Dolan on his appointment as Leader of the House and Mr. Ron Thompson on his appointment as a Minister of the Crown.

I would also like to say how sorry I am that, because of ill-health, Mr. Willesee was forced to relinquish his portfolio and his position as Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council. No-one appreciates more than I do the kindness shown and assistance given by Mr. Willesee. I was particularly appreciative because I am a new and very green member. I wish him well for the future.

I find myself in a rather difficult position because I must speak to a motion which I neither wholeheartedly support nor oppose. Consequently with reservations I will support the motion.

I wish to speak firstly about consumer protection. People will stand just so much for so long, but when they finally realise they are being exploited they will take action to defend themselves. Just as the working people of Australia found it necessary many years ago to form themselves into unions and seek legislative reforms to protect their rights, so, too, are the consumers now beginning to realise they must marshal themselves into some kind of organisation and seek legislative protection against exploitation.

It is all very well for people to say that no-one is forced to buy anything and that people should carefully examine the price, quality, and so on of commodities before they buy them. The average shopper, particularly the normal housewife who has several small children in tow, has neither the time nor the skill to investigate everything she buys. A person would have to be an expert in nutrition, chemical analysis, motor mechanics, and mathematics—just to mention a few—to understand the ingredients, quality, and pricing of goods, not to mention the psychological implications of advertising.

We have in this State an organisation called the Consumer Action Movement which is very fortunate in having as its Secretary an energetic person who devotes a great deal of her time, in an honorary way, to fighting for consumer rights and endeavouring to educate people on their

rights. I refer to Mrs. Ruth Coleman. However, a voluntary organisation can achieve only so much. The real power lies in legislative action. This is why our present Government should be commended on the action it has already taken in respect of consumer protection and also on projected legislation, recently announced, to cover the fields of excessive prices, misleading advertising, door-to-door sales, used-car sales, and pyramid selling.

The Consumer Protection Bureau, which was set up last year, has more than justified its establishment. As its existence is becoming more widely known its work is building up. The bureau now deals with something like 50 complaints a week. This number does not include many of the telephone calls which the staff of the bureau handle and which are not followed up by written submissions. As members would know, the bureau only handles written submissions. In addition to the 50 complaints dealt with each week the bureau, nevertheless, receives many telephone inquiries. They may not be followed up but they are still time consuming.

To give members an idea of the work being done by the bureau I will quote a few figures which I recently obtained from it. I have the complaint analysis from the 11th August, 1972 to the 16th February this year. Up until the 16th February a total of 651 complaints had been received by the bureau. At that time 305 had been finalised and 346 were still in progress. Of the 305 finalised, 97 were assessed as having provided a full measure of redress to the consumer. In 23 cases some adjustment was secured as distinct from a full measure of redress. In 128 cases the situation was clarified and the consumer advised. It was decided that 47 were incapable of resolution by the bureau and, in six cases, the complainant was advised to seek legal counsel. Two complaints were referred to other departments and statutory bodies. One was referred to the Parliamentary Commissioner and one was considered to be outside the bureau's jurisdiction.

I would like to give members an idea of the range of complaints received. In all, 10 related to advertising; 46, to building and real estate; 24, to clothing and footwear; three, to dry cleaning and laundering; 25, to swimming pools; one, to education, health and fitness; 51, to appliances; 47, to furniture and floor coverings; 12, to insurance; 260, to motor vehicles; 16, to servicing; and 156 came under the heading of "miscellaneous".

From these figures members will appreciate that the motor vehicle industry is by far the greatest offender. Worked out in percentages, it means that 40 per cent. of all complaints received by the bureau related, mainly, to the purchase of

used motor vehicles and, in some cases, to the purchase of new vehicles, and motor vehicle repairs.

The bureau was so concerned about this that it has recently issued its first information bulletin which contains some helpful hints to car buyers, telling them what to look for when buying a used or new car. Altogether 40,000 bulletins have been printed and they have been widely distributed.

Some of the tricks which the used-car dealers get up to are quite interesting. For example, they try to put it over the purchaser by quoting the wrong year of manufacture; in other words, a 1966 model has been sold as a 1968 model. In one case the bureau was able to obtain a refund of \$600 for a country person who had been quoted the wrong year of manufacture.

Another trick is to talk the customer into signing a blank hire-purchase form. They say, "It will take too long to fill it in now; just sign here, and we will send out a copy." When the customer receives his copy of the form he finds that the cost of the car he has bought has gone up and his trade-in price has gone down.

Next, there is the offer-to-purchase form. A person may drive into a used-car yard in his own car and say that he wants to purchase a vehicle. He may see one which appeals to him and ask the salesman whether he can take it out for a drive. The salesman agrees but also says that the company would like the person to sign a receipt. In actual fact it is not a receipt but an offer-to-purchase form. The individual signs what he has been led to believe is a receipt. He is not told that on the back of the form a clause states that, in the event of his not buying the vehicle which he has just driven out of the yard, he shall forfeit his deposit. Sometimes his deposit is his own car which he has left in the yard. A case was quoted recently of a person who came back to the yard to find that his own car had been sold while he was gone.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Sometimes he does not bother to come back.

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: Many complaints relate to repairs of vehicles for which the customer has been overcharged. I know a case personally of a friend of mine who is a woman driver. She was having trouble with the brakes of her car and, because she is not knowledgeable about motor mechanics, she went to a well-known brake repair firm in town. The company quoted her \$119 to repair her brakes. She thought this sounded rather high and also she discovered that the wheels had not been removed, even though a quote had been given. I do not understand this very well myself, but apparently the wheels would have had to be removed for the mechanic, or the firm, to know

what work needed to be done and to quote accordingly. When the wheels were examined there was no evidence that they had ever been removed; the dust on the wheels had not been disturbed. She went to another firm and the job was done for \$51—a difference of \$68.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: She may not have had mechanical sense but she had money sense.

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: That is right. The first firm she went to was well known and many people would have thought that the quote must be right and that they would have to have the job done. My friend had the good sense to obtain another quote. This is an area where consumers need protection.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I do not argue the point about that, but there is certainly room for giving consideration to the fact that the two jobs could have been entirely different.

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: I have the details of the two quotes and they are for exactly the same work.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: You win!

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: Household repairs is the next item which is high on the list of complaints. Some people advertise themselves as being capable of doing plumbing work and general household repairs. Their services are engaged but it is subsequently found that their work is faulty. Perhaps it is condemned by the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department and has to be done again.

The householder is left with two bills. Recently the bureau was approached by a woman who had some roofing work performed by one of these people. She received an account for \$95. After investigation by the bureau and representation to the Master Plumbers Association, the account was adjusted to \$30. It was decided that this was the maximum which could be charged for the work done. Cases such as these are being successfully taken up by the bureau.

Many questionable practices spring up from time to time, and I quote the recent example of pyramid selling. I am very pleased to know the Government is considering action against this practice. Thousands of Australians have been caught up in the iniquitous practice of pyramid selling and they have paid pretty dearly for the experience. Some people have lost their life savings and many are now thousands of dollars in debt.

In the *Sunday Telegraph* of the 25th March, an article appeared about pyramid selling. It quoted a few cases of people who have lost money in Victoria. A married couple had borrowed \$3,000 from a finance company and are now paying this money back at 18 per cent. interest. Another case

was that of a man who had been convicted of armed holdup. He said he was driven to desperation because of a \$20,000 debt incurred through his involvement in pyramid selling.

These organisations play on the emotions of gullible people. They promise very attractive get-rich-quick schemes. People are lured to promotional meetings by various means; perhaps by advertising or by cards slipped into letterboxes or under windscreen wipers. A card was put into my letterbox recently asking me whether I wanted to make some money. I did not follow it up; I assumed it was some type of pyramid selling.

The article I mentioned in the *Sunday Telegraph* explains very clearly what happens at the promotional meetings to which interested people are invited. It says—

At recruitment meetings, it is one great big hard sell. Zipping speeches are made. Potential earnings are chalked on a blackboard. Jazzy films are shown. All the accent is on making lots of money—quickly.

People at so-called opportunity meetings have been prompted to chant, almost evangelistically: "Money! What do we want? Money! Money! Money!"

A pyramid company operates by selling the right to sell a product or the right to sell the rights to sell a product.

But a pyramid company does not necessarily have to have a product to sell.

The practice of pyramid selling has been banned in 30 States of America, in Canada, France, and a number of other countries. I am pleased to see that Australia will follow suit. Any organisation which seeks to promote in people an almost pathological desire to make money by preying on their fellow human beings is a very unhealthy element in the community and should be banned.

We must also step up our efforts in our educational system to teach children to evaluate and to more intelligently analyse propositions which are put before them. It is rather frightening when we realise the thousands of people who have fallen for the slick sales talk of such organisations. I repeat my earlier comments: the Government is to be commended for the steps it has taken to protect consumers.

I now want to turn to the question of price control. I can think of no other question that is concerning people in the community more at the moment than that of rising prices. I am pleased to see the Federal Government is taking action. It has moved for a parliamentary standing committee on prices and also a prices justification tribunal. I feel this issue can be handled effectively only on a national basis,

but because of our constitutional setup it is also necessary for the States to take action themselves.

I am sure I do not need to remind members of what happened in 1948 when the conservative forces of this country successfully convinced the people that price control was against their best interests. I feel it is well overdue that the sellers of goods and services—including professional people—should have to justify increases in their charges and fees. In recent times approximately 700 grocery lines have been increased, and in some cases the increases have been as high as 20 per cent.

Why should the manufacturers be allowed to increase prices by the stroke of a pen without having to justify the increases in any way? Price increases have a drastic effect on our economy, and the manufacturers should be under some restraint in this regard.

As an example I would like to refer to a favourite commodity of the community—beer. In last night's *Daily News*, an article appeared on the business page under the heading, "Swan Brewery payout up after peak profit". It commences—

The Swan Brewery Co Ltd has lifted dividend from 14 per cent to 15 per cent—after earning a record profit in the latest year.

Last year the company raised dividend from 13 per cent to 14 per cent after profit topped \$4 million for the first time.

On the 18th July, 1972, an article appeared in the *Daily News* under the heading, "Beer in the bar will cost more from Friday". The article commences as follows—

All bar prices for beer will rise from Friday.

A middy will cost 1 cent more. Big pots will rise by 2 cents.

A bottle of beer will cost 2 cents more.

On Friday the Swan Brewery announced that the wholesale price of bottled beer would rise by 20c a dozen 26 oz bottles in the metropolitan area.

Then on the 1st February of this year appears an article headed, "Hotels will explain price rise". This is another rise in the price of beer, imposed on this occasion by the hotels themselves. It may be that the hotels could justify the increase because of increased wages, but the point I am making is that somewhere along the line there should be an investigation into the pricing of this commodity.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Do you realise the percentage increase is lower than that in State services?

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: I am not interested in that. I am talking about an increase in the price of a commodity without any justification.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: What about electricity?

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: I am pointing out that the dividend paid by the brewery has risen. If the dividend had dropped, there may have been some justification for an increase in the price of beer, but regard must be had for the dividend such companies are paying.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Has not the profit of the State Electricity Commission risen?

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: Electricity charges may have to be investigated too. However, members must have regard for the tremendous capital outlay which faced the incoming Labor Government—it was something like \$56,000,000.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Gracious me!

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: I have cited the example of beer, but that is just one example.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You ought to be interested in the other things as well.

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: A company may increase its prices without any justification. Then at the end of the financial year it states that its dividend has gone up. The Swan Brewery is just one company which is playing a part in the inflationary trends in Australia.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: I have not seen any evidence of the Consumer Protection Bureau talking about a march on Parliament House because of the price of beer.

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: As the honourable member is aware, there is no legislation at the moment under which the Consumer Protection Bureau can take action on the price of beer.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: There is certainly no legislation in connection with the price of meat.

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: Moves taken to introduce excessive prices legislation last session were unsuccessful, but the position may be different during this one. Following the defeat of the prices referendum in 1948, when, as I have already said, the conservative forces in this country were able to convince the people that price control was not in their best interests and therefore they should vote "No" in the referendum, the Institute of Public Affairs had this to say in its Journal *The I.P.A. Review* of May, 1948—

Now that the lid has been lifted from some 3,000 commodity items there will be a tendency on the part of the sellers of goods to push the price to whatever the market can stand.

It will be in the best interests of the Australian economy if such a temptation is resisted.

Over the years, of course, the consuming public has been made painfully aware that the temptation was not resisted. From

1949 to 1972, under successive Liberal-Country Party Governments, no action was taken to control prices. From time to time attempts were made to dampen inflation by means of credit squeezes, higher taxation, and the creation of unemployment, but prices continued to rise unchecked, and to my knowledge no attempts were ever made by the then Commonwealth Government to devise any system whereby prices would be controlled.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Have you proof that where there has been price control anywhere in the world it has worked?

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: Has the honourable member proof that it has not?

The Hon. W. R. Withers: You are making the speech, you supply the proof.

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: References are usually made by opponents of price control to the years following the cessation of the World War when conditions were very different. It took strong action by the Australian Council of Trade Unions to stop the iniquitous resale price maintenance practice.

For example, Bourke's store in Melbourne was able to show that it could still make a profit by selling a Kodak 35 mm film of 36 transparencies for \$5.50 instead of \$6.45; a Wiltshire "Stay Sharp" knife for \$4.99 instead of \$6.99, and a G.E. automatic toaster for \$11.95 instead of \$16.95. Up until that time the Commonwealth Government was quite content to allow the manufacturers to do as they liked.

Now we have metric conversion which gives manufacturers another wonderful opportunity to raise prices. No objection would be taken if the increase in price were related to an increase in the quantity or the volume of the article, but instead there is a decrease in quantity and an increase in the price. I know of an instance that was quoted only recently of a 2 oz. bottle of oil which was converted to 50 millilitres which is seven millilitres less than the original weight of 2 oz. However, instead of the price being reduced or at least remaining the same as it was before the metric conversion, it was increased by 5c. The Metric Conversion Board was reported as appealing to manufacturers not to raise their prices. It is of no use appealing to those people. There has to be some form of control exercised over prices, or some justification shown for the increase by the manufacturers.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Only by unscrupulous people; not by honest traders.

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: There are unscrupulous people in any section of society but, in making that statement I am implying there is a section of the society which is definitely increasing its prices without justification. The honourable

member used the word "unscrupulous", perhaps "greedy" would be better. It seems to me unfair that these people are not under any restraint whatsoever, whereas the trade unions have to justify their claims for any rise in the wages of their members.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: But in any case there would have to be some losses and some gains in metric conversion.

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: I realise that. But the manufacturers cannot have it both ways. The 2 oz. bottle of oil I mentioned under metric conversion became 50 millilitres instead of 57 millilitres, which is roughly equal to 2 oz. Not only was there a reduction in quantity of that bottle of oil, but also an increase in price.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: This could have happened for some reason other than metric conversion.

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: The attitude of the Labor Party on prices is shared not only by the leading economists, but also by some Commonwealth Liberal members of Parliament. Mr. John Gorton, a former Prime Minister, was reported in *The West Australian* of the 16th March, 1972, as saying—

The former Prime Minister, Mr. Gorton, today advocated the creation of a prices justification tribunal.

In a hard-hitting speech on the economy, Mr. Gorton made a number of points that were in direct conflict with Liberal policy.

He said that price rises for basic commodities should be put to the justification tribunal for consideration before being introduced.

On the 1st March, 1972, Mr. T. E. F. Hughes, a former Attorney-General, attacked the then Government for putting all the blame for Australia's existing inflationary problems on the trade unions. In *The West Australian* of that date, he was reported as follows—

"I just can't go along with this," he said.

He was speaking in a debate on a statement on the economy by the Treasurer, Mr. Snedden.

A prices justification tribunal would be able to vet price rises for basic commodities produced by big corporations, Mr. Hughes said.

Some of the economists I can refer to are members of The Institute of Applied Economics and Social Research attached to the Melbourne University. That institute can boast as having as its members people such as Professor Ronald Henderson, Professor R. I. Downing, Dr. D. S. Ironmonger, Professor J. O. N. Perkins, and Professor

A. G. Lloyd. In *The Australian* of Wednesday, the 20th December, 1972, the institute was reported as having made a statement as follows—

Proposing a Prices Notification Board the institute says: "the Government should make it clear it will use its tax and tariff powers, its position as a customer and as an influence on public opinion against any companies allowing excessive price rises and that, if necessary, it will implement stronger measures."

The director of that institute, Professor R. F. Henderson, only recently—as you are aware, Mr. Deputy President—has been appointed as the director of the national inquiry into poverty. In a recent Press conference he said it was estimated that about seven per cent. of this country's population is living below the poverty level of \$52 a week for a man, wife, and two children. He said that there are many people earning a wage only slightly above that income—people on wages of \$60 and \$70 a week.

I went to the trouble to obtain some award rates from the Industrial Commission the other day, and I found that the minimum wage at the moment in this State is \$53.50 a week. Bearing in mind that the poverty level has been set at \$52 a week, I would again stress that the minimum wage in this State is only \$53.50 a week. I am aware that some members may say that not many workers are on award rates in this State, but I can assure them that there are quite a few and many are on a wage just above the minimum.

For a motor mechanic, the award rate is \$70.90; for an electrician, \$70.90; for a shop assistant, \$64.85, and a pensioner has an income of \$21.50.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Have you read the announcement where the average take-home pay of an Australian worker is, I think, mentioned as \$104 a week?

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: I am aware of the average weekly wage, but it is not much consolation for the man on the minimum wage.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Of course it is not.

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: Last session when I knew that the question of price control was to be raised in this Chamber I asked a friend of mine who is a housewife with three children to draw up a budget of her weekly income and expenditure.

I have not asked her to make up a budget on her current rates of income and expenditure, because the one she supplied me with previously was quite detailed. However, I can give members some idea of what was contained in the budget she prepared for me last year and, having regard for the fact that prices have increased

considerably since that time, it will be realised that it can be quite difficult for some working people to try to manage on their incomes. This woman has three children, the eldest of whom is 12 years of age. She is married to a motor mechanic and last year he was designated as a foreman motor mechanic and his gross income at the time this budget was prepared was \$75 a week; that was his gross income, without tax being deducted. At that stage his wage was above the award rate for a motor mechanic, because in 1972 the award rate was \$65.45. Therefore, on his wage of \$75 a week, he was earning nearly \$10 above the award rate at that time.

I do not wish to weary members, but I think the information this lady provided is rather important, because it shows she is a very careful housekeeper and that no extravagance is shown in her budget. I therefore intend to read to the House her weekly expenses which were as follows—

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| | \$ |
| Foods | 27.00 |

Members can appreciate that she must have been a very frugal housekeeper to spend only \$27 on food. I wonder how many members' wives would be able to keep house on a food bill such as that. Her expenses continue—

| | |
|---|------|
| | \$ |
| Petrol | 1.00 |
| Extra Petrol (in company or family car) | 1.00 |
| Hospital Benefit Fund | 1.60 |
| Newspapers | .51 |
| Draper's Account | 1.00 |
| Holiday Bank Account | 1.00 |
| Cigarettes and incidentals for husband | 2.05 |
| Sherry and beer | 1.10 |

That is not exactly being extravagant. To continue—

| | |
|--|------|
| | \$ |
| Dancing lessons (1 child) | .85 |
| Chemist (According to last year's card kept for tax refund.) | .80 |
| Lunch and pocket money 2 children (once week) | .60 |
| Incidentals (Haircuts, gifts, stamps, cards, cosmetics, raffle tickets, dry cleaning, school requisites, watch repair, hardware items, ice creams, phone calls, entertaining, bus fares, parking fees) | 5.00 |
| Boans Account (for clothing, gifts, household goods) | 2.50 |
| T.V. Hire (This includes licence.) | 2.10 |
| No H.P. commitments. | |
| Use of company car (husband) (since September, 1971) | 2.00 |

Apparently the husband had the use of the company car and he had to pay \$2 a week to cover insurance. These figures give

a total of \$50.56. The second page contains details of the other expenses for the year not included in the list I have just read. My friend has divided the total on that page of \$1496.22 by 52 and arrived at a weekly figure of \$28.77 which, added to the total of \$50.56, gives a weekly expense figure of \$79.33.

I might point out that the list I have just read out did not include rent. The family concerned lives in a State Housing Commission home and pays a modest rent. This will be included in the list I am about to read.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What is the modest rent?

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: It is \$387.60 a year.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That is about \$7.50 a week.

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: Members will appreciate what the position of this family would be if its members were living in a house on which it was necessary for them to pay \$20 a week. The list continues—

\$

| | |
|---|--------|
| House maintenance and improvements approx. (Paint flyscreens, etc.) | 20.00 |
| Garden upkeep and improvements (minimal) | 20.00 |
| Rates City of Stirling | 65.41 |
| Rates Met. Water Supply | 30.23 |
| Excess Water (last year) | 7.75 |
| House Insurance | 8.26 |
| House Contents Insurance | 8.43 |
| Insurance policies for husband (personal) | 145.00 |
| Insurance policy for self | 12.00 |
| Insurance policy for children's accident | 3.10 |
| <i>Car</i> | |
| Car Insurance | 10.62 |
| Car maintenance (including oil change and lubes) | 20.00 |
| (This is minimal due to husband being mechanic) | |

The figure given for car maintenance is low because the woman's husband is a mechanic. To continue—

| | |
|--|--------|
| <i>Fuel</i> | |
| Electricity and Gas | 108.00 |
| Kerosene (5 months of year year for heater) | 20.00 |
| Education Expenses (year 1970-71) | 36.00 |
| (This includes uniforms as well as books and amenities fees) | |
| Music Fees for 1 child (4 x 10 week terms) | 60.00 |
| <i>Medical and Dental</i> | |
| Doctor's fees (last year's total) | 60.00 |

There is no amount included for visits to the dentist. The amount paid to the dentist in 1969-70 was \$62. The housewife concerned however, only quotes doctors' fees last year.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Obviously there is no hospital benefits. It would be to their advantage if they belonged to a hospital benefit fund.

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: I do not think this is important so far as the overall total is concerned. To continue—

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Licences | \$ |
| Car licence (and 3rd party insurance) | 62.44 |
| Broadcast listener's licence | 6.50 |
| Dog registration | 1.00 |
| Tools of Trade for husband | 10.00 |
| Overall hire and cleaning for husband | 25.00 |
| Taxation Paid in July 1971 | 368.88 |

This gives a total of \$1496.22. She has divided this by 52 which has given her the figure of \$28.77 a week. If to that figure we add \$50.56 we get a total of \$79.33 per week. We must bear in mind that the man's income at that stage was \$10 above the award rate. Last year his income was \$75. This means the family was spending on the things I have mentioned, \$4.33 a week more than the husband's actual income.

The only way it has been possible for them to make up the difference is because they receive \$3 a week as child endowment, in addition to which the husband worked, on an average, 3½ hours overtime each week. Apart from this there was also an incentive system in operation which gives them \$12 a month, or \$3 a week.

So it is no good anybody telling a family on such an economic tightrope as the one I have just quoted that they are responsible for inflation, because the husband's wages are too high. We must see what can be done to keep prices down.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I have heard nobody assert that sort of thing in regard to the man's wages. The housewife to whom you have referred seems to be a very good manager and I am sure nobody would assert that her husband's wages are too high.

The Hon. L. D. ELLIOTT: I would not like to mention the number of times I have read statements in the Press stating that the reason for rising prices is the increase in wages. No-one ever says that wages chase increased prices.

I would now like to refer to a study done in 1970 on inflation showing which sector of the economy might perhaps be contributing most towards it. Unfortunately the article from which I propose to quote is over two years old, but I imagine that the trend outlined in the statement would have continued and would be reflected in the economy of the present day. The article to which I refer is contained in the *Financial Review* of the 21st December, 1970. The article is headed, "Warning on Inflation Crisis". This article contains a

table which shows that in the 10-year period from 1959-60 to 1969-70 the wages and salaries share of the gross national product dropped from 63.2 per cent. to 61.7 per cent.; this in spite of the fact that the number of people employed in the work force increased and their actual wages also increased. As I have said, in spite of this the percentage of wages and salaries of the gross national product decreased. The article states—

Rapidly rising money wages bring no advantage to wage-earners. They are even likely to lose from them, since other sectors usually succeed in raising their incomes still more rapidly.

This fact is borne out by the figures in the table which show that in spite of an annual percentage increase in average earnings of 8.9 per cent during 1969-70 compared with only 5.1 per cent. per annum during the five years to 1960, the wages and salaries share of Gross National Product has decreased from 63.2 per cent to 61.7 per cent.

This decrease, moreover, occurred in spite of the increased estimated percentage of workforce classed as receiving wages and salaries.

So if the wages and salary earners are not getting any advantage, who is? I submit there is a section of the economy which is able to increase its prices without in any way having to justify these increases which are contributing far more to the inflationary spiral of this country than the income of wages and salary earners.

I hope therefore, that moves which are being initiated both by the Federal and the State Governments to introduce some form of price justification or control will be successful.

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South) [5.36 p.m.]: As a representative of primary producers, and as a primary producer myself, I cannot help but feel appalled at the changes and events which have taken place since this House rose for the recess before last Christmas.

We have seen a change of Government in Canberra and a vast change of policy. Our exporters and our allies have been left somewhat bewildered, dejected, and confused. The new Government has cut off all ties with Taiwan—a small independent State battling to survive as a token of democracy in an Asia standing on the brink of indecision, hovering between communism and democracy—the way of life we cherish in Australia. Instead of offering help and supporting that country we have bundled its representatives out of our State and out of Australia in what I

regard as a discourteous and irresponsible manner in a rush to embrace the true China.

Australia has taken this action in an effort to impress China which claims to be—and undoubtedly is—the power behind the spread of the Marxist, Leninist revolutionary policy all around the world.

It amazes me that one moment we have Australians willing to die in an attempt to keep down the spread of communism, but the next moment our country joins in the cry against American imperialism. Mr. Whitlam recently said that China was an amazingly docile country, and it is wrong to consider it aggressive. He said that more than any other country in the world the Chinese are satisfied to live in all senses within their own borders.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Does the honourable member support selling our primary products to Red China?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I do support the selling of our primary products to Red China.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Mainland China!

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Mainland China. I wonder what other countries think of this policy as they battle to survive. Many of those countries are not concerned with the Chinese taking them over with rifles, but rather through internal forces which are financed and indoctrinated by Chinese communism.

I wonder what Senator Murphy really found when he raided the headquarters of A.S.I.O.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: If you wait a couple of days you will find out.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Perhaps we will, but I wonder whether he will tell us what he really did find. I wonder whether all the evidence was right wing, or whether he found evidence of the left wing infiltrating into Australia.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Senator Murphy will tell us just what he wants us to know.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Senator Greenwood told us nothing.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I wonder whether the records will be intact when they are returned to A.S.I.O. It seems that the Labor Party has an ingrained suspicion of Australia's security forces. I do not know what it is that the Labor Party fears.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Does the honourable member believe that A.S.I.O. should be above ministerial control?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I believe A.S.I.O. is there to inform the Prime Minister, and our diplomatic corps, of what is occurring both in Australia and in countries overseas.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Evidently the organisation has not been doing that.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: It appears that it is somewhat frightened of the security risk.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The honourable member has the Government biting on this subject; members opposite do not like it.

The Hon. R. Thompson: We love it.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It sounds like it!

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I think Senator Murphy has done an excellent job.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I wonder whether Senator Murphy found China to be such a docile country, as a result of his investigation. It is most important that we have an intelligence organisation, and a counter-intelligence organisation. One might like to refer to such organisations as being set up for purposes of spying; but it is all part and parcel of the diplomacy of the world. At one time we used to rely on Great Britain to do this dirty work for us, and at a later stage we had the United States doing it in an effort to help us. However, it is obvious that with Australia's current rash of nationalism and pacifism, and complete confusion caused by the Defence Minister over the American bases in Australia, we are on our own.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Would you support Ustashi Nazism?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I would not support Ustashi Nazism.

The Hon. R. Thompson: That is what the Ustashi is; Nazism.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I am not sure what the honourable member is referring to. I am pointing out what Senator Murphy has done to show just how ridiculous we look in the eyes of the rest of the world.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The honourable member is about a month behind the times for national headlines.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: That may be so, but the facts cannot be hidden.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It is surprising how a matter can be a month behind when mentioned by somebody else, but Mr. Dans can quote incidents which occurred five years ago.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I am glad they were not mentioned when I was speaking.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I tried to mention them.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: In its short term of office the Labor Party has exposed what had been built up in places such as Singapore, and it has ridiculed our intelligence agency. There is talk of building a modern F.B.I. and I wonder whether such an organisation will really be able to serve our diplomatic purposes, and the Prime Minister as well.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The honourable member is not suggesting that we will have an F.B.I.?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I am really concerned with the effect such policies would have on our trading partners. Undoubtedly, Japan is Australia's largest trading partner, but we have never been willing to grant to that nation favourable trading privileges. We have always kept Japan at arm's length and undoubtedly this has been one of the effects of the World War. Nevertheless, we cannot deny that Japan is the bastion of private enterprise and democracy in Asia and the Pacific, and it has at least demonstrated to the rest of the world that what we in Australia believe in does work, and it is not necessary to be communistic to survive or develop.

We find that a trade mission is going to China, a country with which we do very little trade, and which is generally self-sufficient except in times of drought. We have discarded Taiwan completely and, incidentally, that country is the largest purchaser of barley from Australia. Barley is a very important export from Western Australia.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Does the honourable member think we should ban representatives of the Wheat Board from going to China?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: No. I have said we could trade with both China and Taiwan.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Perhaps Mr. Dans should be banned so that the honourable member can get on with his speech.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Apart from the effect of our actions on Japan there is the effect of our trade with the United States. The United States envoy, Mr. Rice, recently warned us of the dangers of disrupting relations with that country.

Great Britain has joined the European Common Market, which will undoubtedly have an effect on our exports in the long term. The policy which the new Federal Government seems to have evolved can only be described as unwise at any time but with the present monetary difficulties throughout the world I fear that policy could be disastrous.

As members fully appreciate, America devalued to achieve better parity with the rest of the world; and Australia, rather than follow suit, decided to go in reverse. One does not have to be a great student of economics to realise that both West Germany and Japan were forced by the world monetary powers and the World Bank to revalue upwards when the pressure of their currencies became embarrassing; but Australia seems to have revalued upwards in a voluntary manner long before

it was necessary to do so. Mr. Whitlam and Dr. Cairns carried out these very precarious manoeuvres.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Dr. Cairns did not agree with it. It was Mr. Crean.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I am sorry; it was Mr. Crean. It seems an effort is being made to reduce overseas investment in Australia. Undoubtedly the manoeuvres of Mr. Whitlam and Mr. Crean succeeded in doing that, because large sums of money went out of this country. However, I notice in today's paper that Australia is once again receiving an inflow of capital, and I wonder how much of that capital is Australian money which went out of the country on a gamble that Australia might revalue and the money could be brought back in on more favourable terms. It looks as though the overseas investor who put his money into Australia could take it out and make a quick quid, but I do not agree with Mr. Dans when he says this "hot" money was building office blocks in the Terrace. I do not agree that overseas money can be blamed for that.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I quoted from *The Australian Financial Review*.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: The fact is that money seems to have gone out of Australia—at one stage a figure of \$500,000,000 was quoted—but I have not noticed any of the office buildings disappearing from the Terrace.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I said there was a surplus of office space.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Money was taken out before revaluation and it has now been brought in.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: That is right. What is more important, as Mr. Withers told us, revaluation has cost the mineral exporters in the north \$130,000,000 a year. Mr. Whitlam made the ridiculous statement that the contracts should not have been made in U.S. dollars. We had Mr. Dans agreeing with that, too.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I wish you would stop misquoting me.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: What choice did these people have but to make their contracts in U.S. dollars?

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I distinctly remember Mr. Dans saying he could not understand why the contracts were made in American dollars.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I said there was probably a good reason for it.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Read your speech.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I remind Mr. Dans that at one stage negotiations were carried out in sterling, but with the unfortunate collapse of Great Britain as the major world power, and the United States taking its place, other countries had

little choice but to make their future contracts in U.S. dollars. I do not know whether Mr. Dans thought the contracts should have been made on the basis of gold or something like that. I thought that nowadays people were trying to break away from the use of gold as a suitable currency.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Do you know what caused the economic crisis in the world?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: The Labor Party.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You might as well blame us. It was a little thing called gold.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Let us look at the rural situation. Perhaps most people have been blinded by the very high rise in wool prices and a more realistic price is being offered at the present time for mutton. Looking at the matter in retrospect, and comparing the recent high prices with post-war prices, I do not think the recent prices are abnormal. They appeared to be abnormal because most people had given up hope of wool recovering in the future, but it suddenly rose to a reasonable price, which amazed everyone. On looking at the matter in retrospect, people wonder at the price of wool, but I do not think it will be maintained at that price. We have already seen a drop of 20 per cent. in the last few days.

I think in the future we will begin to appreciate the significance of revaluation in relation to the wool industry, as we have already done in relation to the wheat industry. It definitely looks as though there are unlimited markets for wheat at present and a higher first advance has been offered, but that will not make the industry any more profitable.

I would like to quote from *The Countryman* of the 15th March, which contained a report by Mr. Ken McDougall, a member of the W.A. Wheat Board. With reference to the last wheat pool, he said—

This particular pool was insulated from recent revaluations because of the guaranteed quantity of 200 million bushels. For the three earlier pools, however, which had not been finalised there was an excess of \$28 million loss by revaluation.

That is a very high loss for the wheat industry to sustain because of revaluation.

There are other industries which have not experienced a rise in prices, and I am thinking particularly of the dairying industry and the apple and pear industry. The Government seems to be very keen to introduce legislation to help those industries but it did not consider them very much when it came to revaluation.

There is undoubtedly a world shortage of some primary products, but at the same time it is very frightening for the producers of those products to see some of the

other indicators in the economy. The Federal Government has obviously embarked on an ambitious spending programme, and the anticipated deficit in the Budget is \$1,000,000,000. What effect will this have on cost-push inflation?

The Federal Government is supporting wage increases, and the previous speaker (The Hon. L. D. Elliott) told us what effect they would have on the gross national product. She told us the share of wages on the gross national product had fallen from something like 63 per cent. to 62½ per cent. She will be happy to know the rise that has been recommended by the Federal Government will add one per cent. to the gross national product.

We have yet to feel the effect of the 35-hour week and the extra week's leave which are to be granted to public servants.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: What about maternity leave?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Yes, maternity leave as well. I agree with some of the economics we have been given in regard to the Budget of the low-income earner, but if there are so many people in dire straits trying to balance their budgets, why go for a 35-hour week and an extra week's holiday? Under these circumstances, surely they are luxuries. Perhaps employees could have accepted a higher wage instead. I fear we will experience a lot of inflation when these trends percolate through the economy.

At the same time, the Federal Government made statements to the effect that the economy could absorb wage increases without undue inflation. Quite frankly, I am amazed at these statements. I certainly cannot subscribe to them, nor can those who rely upon exports for their living. I agree we must be more vigilant as regards all forms of inflation, but it appears the Labor Party is conducting a witch hunt at this stage and is mainly attacking business as being the cause of inflation.

The Federal Government is pegging the price of steel, attacking doctors for charging higher fees, blaming builders and sub-dividers for the high cost of housing, and, of course, blaming farmers for the high cost of meat and other foodstuffs. No doubt those accusations appeal to the general public but we, as legislators, must look a little deeper into some of these matters.

It is very easy to say, "Let us peg prices and this will solve all our difficulties", but I wonder what long-term repercussions such a course will have on the industries concerned. I wonder whether pegging the price of steel will force B.H.P. to invest its funds in oil, which could well mean a shortage of steel in the near future. We already find that the shortage of farm machinery has been attributed to the unavailability of certain lines of steel.

I wonder whether we will have fewer doctors. In Esperance we are experiencing very grave medical problems, largely brought about by criticism of those who are endeavouring to service the community to the best of their ability. Esperance has been short of doctors for some time. There were previously three doctors practising in the town but, because of the criticism they received recently, instead of attracting a fourth and a fifth doctor Esperance now has only one *locum*, and I fear his stay will be temporary.

There is a lesson to be learnt from all these matters. Before being too critical we should make sure of all the facts involved. The Government should not seek popular support by attacking people in industry.

I have mentioned the price of wool. I would like to remind members that probably the main reason for the rise in the price of wool is that we have reduced production from 5,000,000 to 4,000,000 bales. There is still something in the law of supply and demand.

I wonder what effect the present administration of the Lamb Marketing Board will have on the lamb industry. The State Government is taking a great interest in the prices which boards charge for their products. I was amazed to find interstate buyers coming to Esperance and offering probably twice as much for lambs as is being offered by the Lamb Marketing Board.

Now we see mutton selling at the same price as lamb. Thus it appears quite obvious that the price of lamb has been kept down. I wonder what effect that will have on the overall production, and whether farmers will continue to produce fat lambs or turn to more profitable lines. I wonder whether those who finance the farmers will encourage them to look to other fields in which prices are not pegged by the consumer. Undoubtedly farmers are supporting, and will continue to support, the Lamb Marketing Board, because they feel there is a need for it and it will be of benefit to them. However, they are horrified at what is happening. I think we have a place for the board, but obviously it should be controlled by the producers and not influenced by the Government.

I think a fair indication of what I am saying was given in an article which appeared in *The Countryman* on the 15th March, under the heading, "Egg-producers demonstrate". In the article the Chairman of the Egg Marketing Board (Mr. J. C. Shovelton) said—

... the State Government had taken the ability to vary the price of eggs out of the hands of the board.

He claimed that the Minister for Consumer Protection, Mr. A. D. Taylor, had said there could be no price rise without his approval.

Of course, later Mr. Taylor denied that and said the egg board is a statutory body and he cannot direct it. However, in the same article, and perhaps without the knowledge of Mr. Taylor, the Minister for Agriculture (Mr. H. D. Evans) said—

... the Egg Board was at present studying a cost of production submission to justify a price increase. It had been asked to forward its recommendations to him and he would study it in conjunction with Mr. Taylor.

Obviously the State Government is already influencing the price of some products.

One wonders whether the Government can have it both ways, because at the same time we have people who want to produce eggs but cannot do so.

Sitting suspended from 6.04 to 7.30 p.m.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Before tea I was explaining that we cannot have it both ways. If we want to reduce the cost of foodstuffs to the general public then we should not impose quotas on production. I was giving as an example the situation of an egg producer in Esperance, and I was referring to a report in *The Esperance Express* of the 29th March. In it the following appears—

Esperance couple battle for quota

"I fought in the last war to stop the very thing that is now happening to me," Esperance egg producer, Horace Knox said at his poultry farm on Monday.

Mr. Knox and his wife Christina have been issued with a summons, to appear in a Perth Court for running more than 20 fowls for the sale of eggs.

The couple have been trying to obtain a permit to run a poultry farm since 1971.

"It appears to me that we in Esperance are being treated like a foreign country, by the authorities in Perth," Mr. Knox said.

I shall not go into the details other than to point out that Mr. Knox was a Battle of Britain pilot who unfortunately was admitted to the Repatriation Hospital at the time when egg quotas were issued. After his discharge from hospital he built up a very good business in selling eggs to the Esperance supermarket. However, he has now received a summons.

The Hon. R. Thompson: In what year were egg quotas fixed?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: It was in 1969-70, when he had to close his poultry farm. At that time Esperance did not come under the control of the Egg Marketing Board. An embarrassing situation has arisen whereby this person is to be prosecuted, and his way of life will be ruined. It seems that he will have to give up his poultry farm.

According to the newspaper report I have referred to this person has been endeavouring to buy an egg quota, and he has been asked to pay a price based on \$6 per hen.

The Hon. J. Heitman: I did not know that egg quotas were negotiable.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I do not think they are.

The Hon. R. Thompson: They are not.

The Hon. J. Heitman: How then can people offer to sell egg quotas based on \$6 per hen?

The Hon. R. Thompson: I think any sale is subject to ministerial approval.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Once a quota system is adopted we give the quotas a monetary value. This egg producer at Esperance has not been granted an egg quota, and he cannot buy one. At the same time I should point out that the supply of eggs to Esperance is made all the way from Perth. Often by the time the eggs arrive at Esperance they are somewhat stale. The eggs have to be transported by rail, and some of them become broken in the cardboard holders. That is understandable.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Have any egg quotas been issued to producers at Esperance?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Yes, two small quotas of less than 1,000 hens each. That is inadequate for the town.

Members will recall that I have been asking some questions in respect of wheat quotas. We realise that at present Western Australia has an unlimited opportunity to produce wheat. In my questions I asked for information relating to the size of the wheat quotas that have been issued. I asked how many persons had been refused wheat quotas, and the answer was that 185 growers had been refused quotas. The fact that wheat quotas will be increased by 20 per cent. will not help these producers at all.

I have claimed that producers who have been granted small wheat quotas have been placed at a disadvantage. It is interesting to see from the answer given by the Minister that 336 producers have been granted quotas of less than 1,000 bushels; 759 producers have been granted quotas of less than 2,000 bushels; 1,230 producers have been granted quotas of less than 3,000 bushels; and 1,757 producers have been granted quotas of less than 4,000 bushels. So, there are about 5,000 producers who have been issued with quotas of less than 4,000 bushels.

I should point out that it is possible for 4,000 bushels of wheat to be produced on 200 acres, and this is a very small paddock. None of these producers will be able to grow more than 20 per cent. above their existing quotas.

Turning to the attachments to the debt reconstruction and farm adjustment report prepared by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, it is pointed out there are 8,000 established wheat farmers and 1,500 new land farmers in Western Australia, making a total of less than 10,000. Yet 5,000 of them have been allocated quotas which will prevent them from producing wheat on more than 200 acres of land. Where people desire to produce and there is a ready market, it is ridiculous to refuse them permission. At the same time, the Government is trying to control the price of foodstuffs.

Another problem has arisen. An inquiry is being conducted into the price of meat. It has been claimed that housewives have had to pay drastically higher prices for meat in the last few months; yet at Esperance land is available to be thrown open for production, but the Government will not allow agricultural pursuits to be carried on on that land. There are literally hundreds of applicants for this land which should be thrown open under conditional purchase conditions.

The Hon. J. Heitman: Of course, people who are allocated this land will not be able to get a wheat quota.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I am aware of that, but they will be able to produce meat.

The Hon. J. Heitman: The fact is we cannot grow enough wheat to meet the needs of the markets of the world.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: That is correct, yet we are preventing 5,000 farmers who have the ability to grow more wheat from doing so. Those who have been granted small wheat quotas can probably double their crop and be able to produce on 400 acres, instead of 200 acres, without any trouble; whereas a grower who is now planting 1,000 acres would have trouble in planting 2,000 acres of wheat.

The Hon. J. Heitman: Do you think that wheat quotas should be abolished this year?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Certainly; if not abolished this year then the small producers should be given the chance to grow much more than they are permitted to grow. I thought the small producers were the very people the Labor Government was out to protect, but that does not seem to be the case. It is not helping the small farmer at all.

I want to refer to the headlines in today's issue of the *Daily News*, "Inquiry on our meat prices". This is a report on complaints made against the spectacular rise in the price of meat. However, when we turn to page 6 of the same issue of that newspaper we find a comparison of the price of meat applicable to other countries of the world. From that table one will see that Australia is placed in a very fortunate

position. Here the housewife has enjoyed cheap meat, and in fact there has often been a glut of meat. That is the reason the housewife in Australia has been accustomed to getting meat so cheaply.

The Hon. L. D. Elliott: It is not cheap in Australia when we take into consideration the price per pound compared with the wages received; it is not as cheap as in the U.S.A. in comparison with the wages.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Is that the fault of the producer?

The Hon. L. D. Elliott: You are saying that the price of meat is cheaper in Australia.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Per pound it is cheaper here, yet some people want to keep the price payable to the farmer at a low level. This is not fair to the producers, especially in cases where they have a market overseas for this meat. Instead, we find that the waterside workers are deciding not to load the meat onto ships, because they claim, to use their term, the cow cookies are having a good run.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Do the waterside workers work any harder when the price payable to the producer drops?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: That is an interesting point. I now refer to a report which appeared in *The West Australian* of the 25th June, 1971, under the heading, "Butcher gives away chops to customers". The report states—

Lamb prices fell this week with most cuts being about 10c per lb. cheaper and sides down about 5c per lb.

One leading retailer will give away four chump chops with each leg of lamb.

This shows the supply of meat to consumers in Australia, and particularly in Western Australia, has been very satisfactory. In fact they have been spoilt. Now when the farmer looks like getting a higher price for meat, all hell seems to be let loose.

In the report which appeared in today's *Daily News* there is a comparison of the price of meat, and of the wages that are paid in the various countries mentioned. For example, in Britain, where the average wage is \$62, compared with \$100 in Australia, steak costs \$3.50 a kilo as against \$2.63 in Australia.

The Hon. L. D. Elliott: Have you seen the *Press* report which shows that the male wage earner in Washington works 27 minutes to buy a pound of steak, whereas the same worker in Australia works 33 minutes to buy that quantity of steak?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Perhaps the people in Washington work harder.

The Hon. L. D. Elliott: I am referring to the average wage.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: That has nothing to do with this matter at all. I consider that the producer in Australia should be allowed to enjoy the benefits of a good world market, without being interfered with. In my view the price of meat has not risen as spectacularly as has been claimed, because I have before me the figures relating to the price of lamb at Midland Junction for the years 1967 to 1970. In 1967 the price of lamb at Midland rose to 31.5c per lb.; in 1968 it was 25c per lb.; in 1969 it rose to 26.5c per lb.; and in 1970 it rose further to 27.6c per lb.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: And I bought a side of lamb this morning for 26c a pound.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: This illustrates that the price has not gone up; once again we find people trying to play upon the general public. The following appeared in the *Daily News* last Thursday, the 29th March, in an article obviously written by the paper's buyer concerning the best buys of produce, meat, and other food in Perth. Portion of the article reads—

On the subject of meat, if you think mutton is still the poor man's food, you had better think again. One chain of butchers which regularly features sides of lamb and mutton among their weekly specials is selling them for the same price as from this week.

Sides of lamb and mutton are selling for 26c lb. In fact, the mutton will cost you more because there are obviously more pounds in a side of mutton than a side of lamb.

That endorses what Mr. Logan just said and demonstrates that it is possible to buy lamb at 26c a pound.

The Hon. J. Heitman: Is that retail lamb?

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: Where did you buy it?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: The woman who wrote the article for the *Daily News* was able to buy it. One interesting aspect is that everyone says they will eat fish instead of meat. The article further states—

Best buys in fish are snapper fillets at \$1.20 lb., cobbler fillets at \$1.10-\$1.50 lb., flounder fillets at 80c lb., whole taller at 60c lb., herring at 35-40c lb. and skipjack at 50c lb.

Fish do not have to be grown or manufactured. The fisherman merely have to catch them.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: They must be manufactured!

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: On the other hand, the farmer who must raise lambs from birth onwards and use fertilisers in his pastures is criticised because he gets 26c a pound for his produce. I do

not think that Western Australians realise how lucky they are in connection with the cost of meat. I hope the fact is recognised by those who intend to march to Parliament House on Monday. That march is nothing more than a political stunt.

The Hon. L. D. Elliott: Fish is too dear, as well.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: March down to the sea and growl.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I feel I could not conclude my speech on this debate without mentioning the ministerial changes which have occurred in the Chamber. I would like to wish Mr. Willesee all the very best. I have appreciated the help he has given as Leader to members during the two years I have been here, and I admire him for the manner in which he has conducted the business of the House. He has perhaps had a difficult time, with his Party in the minority, but with his gentlemanly manner, courtesy, and respect, he has been able to get the business through the House. In the two years we have been under his guidance he has had a profound effect on the legislation with which we have dealt.

In the same way I must congratulate Mr. Dolan and Mr. Ron Thompson. I feel sure they will continue in the footsteps of their predecessor and that this House will continue to play an integral part in the government of this State.

On behalf of the people of the south coast I would like to wish the Governor and Lady Kendrew a happy retirement from their arduous task. Sir Douglas Kendrew has been Governor of this State and the Queen's representative, and by the example of Sir Douglas and Lady Kendrew Western Australia has greatly benefited.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Hear, hear!

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I think it will probably not be until we destroy the position of Governor or reduce its importance to insignificance—

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I hope we do not.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: —that we will appreciate the part played by the Queen's appointee who is one of her countrymen. I have much pleasure in endorsing the Address-in-Reply and the amendment.

THE HON. F. R. WHITE (West) [7.50 p.m.]: Like other members I rise to support the amended motion and at the same time I would like to briefly extend my congratulations to Mr. Dolan and Mr. Ron Thompson on their recent appointments in the Ministry. They have proved themselves worthy of the task and I am sure they will do a good job during the current session. Also like others, I would like to extend my best wishes to Mr. Willesee, who, in my opinion, has proved himself to be a tower

of strength for the Government in the Chamber by virtue of his courtesy and gentlemanliness.

I do not wish to delay the House more than I can help, but the motion before us gives members an opportunity to speak on matters pertaining to their provinces. We have in this Chamber members who represent metropolitan provinces and members who represent country provinces. Some metropolitan provinces are full of urban development and some country provinces are almost all devoted to primary production. Mr. Abbey and I represent the West province which encompasses a fairly even balance of both urban and rural areas and as a result it faces the problems of both the metropolitan area and the country.

The shires of, for instance, Rockingham, Armadale-Kelmscott, Kalamunda, Mundaring, and Swan, all of which lie in my province, are undergoing a tremendous amount of development, so much so that the population increase would be in the vicinity of 15 per cent. per annum whereas the population increase in the metropolitan region is only slightly in excess of 4 per cent. per annum. This tremendous increase in my province has created numerous problems, particularly for the local authorities. It has created administrative problems for them, and also economic problems for the residents.

The Shire of Wanneroo, further round to the north of the city and represented by Mr. Logan and Mr. Heitman, as we know is also experiencing a tremendous amount of impetus from development.

Some of the problems which beset the ratepayers in these rapidly-developing areas involve rating and taxing of properties. I have spoken on a number of occasions in this Chamber on this question; and fortunately a great deal has been done to alleviate the burden of taxes and rates. Even though we passed legislation to assist one particular section of the community, it has not worked as it was intended to work. I am referring to the legislation dealing with the rating of urban farmland.

As members will appreciate, urban farmland is close to urban, industrial, or other types of development and as a result the unimproved capital value of the farmland increased so much that some rural zoned land is valued at \$2,000, \$3,000, \$4,000, and \$5,000 an acre even on today's low valuations. The valuation is utilised for the purpose of striking rates.

We amended the Local Government Act by inserting new sections 531A and 533A to allow a local authority to strike a special rate for land being used for primary production but which had such a high unimproved capital value that the owners were suffering economic hardship as a result of the rates they had to pay.

The amendments provided for a landowner, who was engaged in primary production, to make application to the local authority to have the property zoned as urban farmland. The legislation stipulates that such a person must earn a substantial portion of his income or the whole of it from his particular pursuit on the land. If a person could meet these requirements, then after making application to the local authority the local authority could at its discretion declare the land to be urban farmland. Once land had been declared in such a category the local authority had the opportunity and power, if it so desired, to strike a special rate in the dollar, a rate lower than the normal rate applied to other land classified urban or rural land, but not used for a rural pursuit within the local authority.

During the last debate in 1970 when we were dealing with the Local Government Act Amendment Bill No. 6 which provided for an amendment to section 531A to enable a person's property to be declared urban farmland if the owner obtained the whole or a substantial part of his income from the property, I made certain comments to the then Minister for Local Government as did other members in the Chamber. On page 2120 of *Hansard* No. 3 of 1970, I am reported as follows—

I wish to reiterate that the purpose of introducing legislation to deal with urban farm land was to allow concessions to the owners of land genuinely held for farming purposes. People in the near metropolitan area could hold land for that purpose, but they could be making no income whatever from it. For many years they must sink their money into the land without any hope of a return, and if we stipulate that such people must obtain a substantial return from that land then we are debarring all the genuine people from being given a concession.

A little later I said—

I sincerely request the Minister to have a closer look at this case because this provision will debar not the odd few who will be at an unfair advantage, but many people who should be entitled to a concession.

I was referring there to particular instances where land was being used wholly for primary production. I quoted a case of a property on which the owner had commenced planting fruit trees in 1966; but it takes seven years for an orchard to commence to bear and give a return.

Even though the whole of the property was planted with fruit trees in 1970, not one dollar of income was being derived from that property. Hence the appeal to the Minister that these people should be given consideration if the land was genuinely being used for this purpose. The

Minister replied and I quote from page 2121 in the same volume of *Hansard*. He said—

I am not too sure that the shire would not classify the land to which Mr. White referred as urban farm land for the purpose of this rate. I think it could quite easily do so because practically the whole of the area concerned is under orchard and the man is using the whole of the area for the purpose for which he purchased it. Consequently I can see no reason why the council should not under those circumstances include it under the urban farm land rate.

During the debate, I agreed with the Minister's philosophy and desire, but I disagreed that the Act, as it exists, would allow the council to do this.

Since then many councils in my province have been adversely affected. I know this position also applies in Mr. Clive Griffiths' province and in Gosnells which is part of the area represented by the Minister for Police. In fact I have had considerable contact with people in the Gosnells area, many of whom have been adversely affected.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I'll say they have!

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: I will give an indication of how the relevant sections of the Act have been interpreted. Before doing so I draw to the attention of members that this problem has received little or no publicity at all, so much so that even some local councils are not aware of what is provided in the Act and people who are eligible to apply are not aware of the provision open to them to allow them to obtain concessions.

A great deal of the difficulty in interpreting the relevant sections of the Act is the question of what constitutes a substantial portion of a person's income. Some local authorities say it must exceed 80 per cent. of a person's income; some say, 50 per cent.; some say, 25 per cent.; others say 20 per cent.; and the legal opinion is that 10 per cent. could be considered as a substantial portion of a person's income.

Let us look at some of the local authorities which I have contacted in order to ascertain their policies. Let us see just what they do in regard to urban farm land and what the end result is as far as my electors are concerned as well as the electors in Mr. Clive Griffiths' province and others.

I shall deal firstly with the Shire of Kalamunda which, in the current year, has a general rate of 1.25c in the dollar. The Shire of Kalamunda declares some properties to be urban farm land because the owners of the properties derive more than 80 per cent. of their income from their properties and are considered *bona*

fide urban farm land producers. Under these circumstances, the Shire of Kalamunda gives a 4 per cent. reduction in rates. It makes a special concession and allows the urban farm land owner to pay 1.2c in the dollar in rates instead of 1.25c in the dollar, which results in a 4 per cent. reduction. Some of these properties are valued at tremendously high figures—\$3,000 an acre and more.

There is one particular property which I cannot mention. It is at present—and has been for the last 18 months—the subject of a court case on this very question. The property covers an area of 18 acres and the current valuation is \$69,700. The resultant rates are such that the owner pays \$46.50 per acre. He is earning the whole of his income from that orchard.

The Shire of Gosnells has a current rate this year of 1.32c in the dollar. It gives a fairly substantial reduction to people who are declared urban farm land producers. The shire charges them only .99c in the dollar, which is a reduction of 25 per cent. One property in particular covers an area of 15 acres and has an unimproved capital valuation of \$50,000. As members will see, the owner has to pay \$500 in rates per year on the 15 acres from which he earns his income. This works out at \$33.30 per acre in rates. This is a much lower figure than that paid by the person in Kalamunda, but it is still a rather killing situation.

We find that the Shire of Gosnells does not insist that a substantial part of the person's income shall be derived from the property. It ignores the provisions in the Act which state the whole or a substantial part of the income shall be derived from primary production. I support what the shire does and I think it is an excellent idea. What the shire does is to contact the State Taxation Department and ask that department whether a particular producer is entitled to exemption of land tax under section 101 (g) of the Land Tax Assessment Act. If he is entitled to that exemption, the shire then declares the property urban farm land.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: The shire is doing what I suggested.

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: The shire is doing what was suggested in 1970 as being a possible way to enable genuine primary producers who are not earning any great part of their income from the property to benefit from a lower rate because they are *bona fide* primary producers. The Act does not state that the shire can do this but it is utilising a method with which I agree.

The Shire of Swan, which is a rapidly developing area, has differential rating. It has a particular rating for built-up areas and a special rating for rural areas. The rural rating for nonurban farm land is .8c in the dollar but, for urban farm land,

which is being used for primary production, the shire charges only .4c in the dollar, which is a 50 per cent. reduction. The unimproved capital value of properties throughout that area would be in the vicinity of \$600 per acre. This means that a person who owns an urban farm land property in the Shire of Swan would only pay approximately \$2.40 per acre in rates. This is a reasonable and quite acceptable figure. A rating of \$2.40 per acre in the Shire of Swan is far lower than the amount of \$33.30 paid in Gosnells and \$46.50 paid in Kalamunda.

A person may apply, under existing provisions, to a local authority to have his property declared urban farm land. If his application is refused by the local authority there is provision for an appeal to what is called the Local Valuation Appeal Court. It has come to my notice that in two shires at least the Local Valuation Appeal Court, when considering appeals, has denied them for one fundamental reason; if the person was not resident on the property his appeal was rejected. Nothing in our legislation allows the Local Valuation Appeal Court to adopt this attitude. Nothing in our legislation indicates that a person must live on the property from which he obtains his income.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: It was never intended.

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: It was never intended and it is not written into the Act. Nevertheless, a court of law, set up by parliamentary procedure, has carried a judgment such as this in two local authorities of which I am aware. Perhaps justice seems to have been done but in my opinion justice has not been done. I will have more to say about Local Valuation Appeal Courts at a later stage. For the moment, I will continue dealing with local authorities.

Mundaring Shire has a policy concerning urban farm land. It gives a reduction in rates from 1.1c in the dollar to .09c in the dollar. The shire has not had a great number of applications because the rating is so low.

The Shire of Wanneroo at the moment does not have urban farm land rating. I cannot understand the reason, because there are people in that area who desperately require some relief. I think the Act has been further misinterpreted. The title "urban farm land" has led some to believe that the only land eligible for such a declaration must be land zoned urban and used for primary production. As I have said, there has been no publicity given to this subject.

Genuine people occupying rural-zoned land and pursuing some form of primary production have not made an application even though they are eligible in every way. They have not applied because of their ignorance. They have not been advised by

anybody. They have not been advised by the local authority or, if they have, they have not read the information. They have not been advised by the Press. Consequently many people are suffering economic hardship because of their ignorance.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Other councils will not adopt the differential rate.

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: This is quite true. As I said, the legislation leaves the matter entirely to the local authorities.

The Hon. R. Thompson: This is what I objected to at the time.

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: Some local authorities go out of their way to send application forms to people involved in primary production. These people are advised of the legislation and of their rights. They are asked to fill in the application form if they think they may be eligible. Such local authorities are concerned about the welfare of their ratepayers.

On the other hand some local authorities do not want to grant the concession and the Act does not say they shall grant the concession. If for any reason a local authority does not want to grant the owner of urban farm land a concession, it can simply do nothing about it because most of the ratepayers do not know they have this right of appeal to the appeal board. As I explained a few moments ago, the board may or may not, rightly or wrongly, uphold or reject the appeal. The legislation is at fault. I have explained the difficulties experienced in interpreting the word "substantial". Some authorities interpret it as being 80 per cent. and others as 20 per cent. of the ratepayer's income. Some seem to feel that a substantial part of the income must be the whole of the income. In my opinion this word in the legislation must be clarified by discussion with the legal fraternity. I believe each particular situation must be looked at and decided on its merits. On one occasion 10 per cent. of the income may be substantial, whereas in another case it may have to be 90 per cent.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: How does the land tax work?

The Hon. R. Thompson: In exactly the same way.

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: That is correct! However, another section of the Land Tax Assessment Act was brought in for a different purpose. It deals with properties of less than one acre in area which have been revalued as a result of rezoning to a higher classification. Under this section the original valuation may stand if the owners were resident on the property prior to the reclassification.

Earlier I drew attention to another aspect. A person may utilise only part of his land for primary production but he

could be classified as an urban farmer. Another person may use the whole of his land for primary production but because a substantial portion of his income is not derived from the land, he could be denied this right. Something must be done to clarify this.

I have spoken to many local authorities and they all say, "Please tell us what to do. If we are told we must do this, then we will do it." I suggest that the procedure adopted by the Shire of Gosnells in relation to section 10G of the Land Tax Assessment Act would allow plenty of opportunity for *bona fide* people to be granted this right. Of course there is a risk, and it is a wonder I have not been taken to task before about this by some of the knowledgeable members in the House. It could happen that weekend farmers—St. George's Terrace doctors for example—could benefit.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: All the doctors have left St. George's Terrace now.

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: There is a risk, but I am concerned for the little people. If some of the weekend farmers gain a little advantage, it will only be very little. I believe it is worth the risk because of the hardship being suffered by many of the little people.

We have had a lot of squabbling and hullabaloo in this House about the control of traffic and the road toll. Different groups in the community are putting forward various ideas and trying to get on the bandwagon. The Police Department says, "If we had control of all traffic things would be different. There would be a great improvement." Other people are suggesting different methods to solve the problem.

As any sensible person realises, the road toll and accidents are not caused by one single factor, or even by a small number of factors. The reasons for our road toll are many and varied. However, as I have stated here before, I believe one major reason for many of our accidents is inefficient highway engineering.

I travel home along the Great Eastern Highway. To drive between Rivervale and the Belmont shire offices in peak periods can be a very frightening experience. Two narrow lanes of traffic pour out from Perth and two narrow lanes pour into Perth. While I am driving I get the impression that the lanes are only about seven or eight feet wide. I have thought of stopping to measure them, but I have never done so. The only thing separating the two opposing lines of traffic is a double white line on the road—approximately eight inches wide. If anything should go wrong with a vehicle or a driver's attention be distracted, the result would be a head-on collision. I believe we would greatly reduce the number of head-on

collisions with more one-way streets and traffic islands to separate traffic moving in opposite directions.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Have you seen the figures for the 1972 report of the Main Roads Department?

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: No I have not.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: You will be interested in them.

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: What do they say?

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: I cannot tell you offhand.

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

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: I apologise, Mr. President. It has been suggested recently that the pedestrians must be separated from traffic. I also believe we must separate traffic from traffic and try to eliminate traffic moving both ways in the same street.

I have been very pleased with the result of a recent innovation to the east of the Causeway. Traffic is now diverted from Shepparton Road south onto the Albany Highway and then west onto the Causeway. In effect this small section is now completely made up of one-way streets and it has reduced a bad traffic hazard and the possibility of accidents. This is one simple solution, and members will see that it involves highway engineering.

Let us look at some other hazards which could be obviated with better engineering. Frequently busy streets have right-angled driveways abutting them. We may be travelling behind a car and the driver of that car will suddenly slam on his brakes in order to turn into a narrow right-angled driveway. This creates traffic congestion and nervous reaction in the drivers of following cars and these drivers may swerve out into oncoming traffic. This is a completely unnecessary hazard. These driveways could enter properties at a gradual angle and the hazard would be greatly reduced. This is a simple little thing but all part of highway engineering. We see these right-angled driveways on Government properties as well as private properties.

I have also found that some of the existing policies and legislation are difficult to comprehend. Young people are permitted to drive a motorcar at 17 years of age, but they are not allowed to drive a truck until they are 20. However, we will allow an inexperienced 17-year-old driver to get into a car and tow a 30-foot caravan at fairly high speeds. I suppose many members in this Chamber have towed caravans and they know that a caravan is much more difficult to control than a truck. This may be only a small item, but it is an anomaly in our law which, if corrected, may save a few accidents.

We hear much about inexperienced drivers, drunk drivers, insufficient patrols, and unsafe vehicles. We have many unsafe vehicles on the road. Just a few days ago I was following a car coming in towards Perth. Although it was a fairly modern car, the back wheel was almost off and it had developed a tremendous wobble. The lady driver was apparently unaware of this. An experienced driver would have known something was wrong and would have pulled up.

We see many cars on the road with faulty headlights, and no doubt there are many with faulty brakes. This should not be allowed. Occasionally I see a policeman stop a driver in the metropolitan area to check his car, but usually no policeman is around to apprehend such people. Obviously the Traffic Branch is grossly understaffed.

I mentioned highway engineering, but I am sure members will agree that we also have many unsafe roads. I do not think we have many of these in the city, but once we drive into the suburbs and the country we see many hazards. The truncation of some streets is so sharp that a driver going from one street to the other will cut the corner and spill gravel over the intersection. An experienced driver does not expect to find gravel on a corner. He applies his brakes and he believes he has a certain period of time and a certain distance in which to manoeuvre. He drives around corners automatically. If he comes to a corner which has gravel thrown over it, the car keeps going when he applies the brakes. I am sure many members in this Chamber have experienced this. Policing and maintenance of the roads will ensure that such hazards do not arise.

We find that most of the action taken to reduce the road toll is through the enforcement of the law and not by accident prevention. In my opinion only one worthwhile exercise has been made in the field of accident prevention; that is the publication of the articles on driver education by the *Daily News*. Apart from some publications by the National Safety Council driver education and accident prevention have been sadly neglected. In the whole system of traffic control there is too much fragmentation and not sufficient co-ordination.

I am not one to shoot arrows, because I have always believed in dealing with facts and not in personalities and politics, but we now have a set-up in this State where we have one Minister handling the portfolio of Police and another with the portfolio of Traffic Safety. To my way of thinking this is incomprehensible, because both matters should be closely controlled by the Police Department which is responsible for traffic control in the metropolitan area.

Recently we heard a great deal about the takeover of traffic control throughout the State by the police, and we have also heard

much about a proposal for the establishment of one State-wide traffic authority which would control traffic throughout Western Australia. On the 12th March last a meeting of representatives of local authorities in the metropolitan area and the country was held in the Perth Town Hall and they carried a motion which stated that they did not support the police takeover of traffic control throughout the State, but did support the establishment of a single statutory authority to control traffic throughout Western Australia.

What does the passing of that motion really mean? Under the present Government, as with the previous Government, police control in the metropolitan area has not been relinquished. Therefore if this control will not be relinquished by the present Government there is no hope for the introduction of legislation to establish a single State-wide authority for traffic control, because the Government is the only body that can introduce such legislation. What happens in the meantime? The control of traffic is dealt with under the system that is in existence at the present time, and we have stagnation until there is a change of Government.

Some people hope this change will occur early next year, but there is no guarantee of that. It may be 1977, 1980, or at some other time in the future. In my opinion the resolution carried at the meeting held in the Perth Town Hall last March by metropolitan and country local authorities must create stagnation in trying to achieve road safety by traffic control. The position is that there are too many cooks in the kitchen and, as a result, there is not sufficient activity.

A short time ago, when dealing with farmland, I said I would refer to valuation appeal courts once again. In the metropolitan area the valuation appeals court consists of a magistrate who, in addition to his other duties, hears appeals lodged by ratepayers against their property valuations. I have mentioned how some of these appeals have been refused where they relate to urban farmland, because the magistrate has ruled that the owners must reside on the property in dispute.

Many appellants are ordinary people who have migrated to Western Australia from a foreign country. They have gone through the procedure of lodging an appeal, but when in court they cannot express themselves properly, because they are not used to court procedure. These people have been sincerely trying to relieve themselves of what they consider to be an economic burden. When they go to a valuation appeals court with what are they confronted? The first question put to them is: Is your land worth the amount that has been assessed as the valuation of your property? Would you sell your land for that amount? Invariably the answer is: No, I would not sell the land. Then, with a

few words from the magistrate the appellant is shattered and he either withdraws his appeal or it is disallowed.

The purpose of property valuation for the assessment of rates is to enable the shire to obtain an equitable collection of rates from the people within its area. The question should be: Is that valuation equitable compared with the valuations of the properties of other people?

Many people, with a sincere desire to have their grievances rectified, have failed in their appeals because of the questions put to them by the magistrate. Some sections in the relevant Act entitle people to appeal against the valuation made. Section 681 will allow a ratepayer to make an appeal in the public interest, if he considers that a valuation has not been correctly made and properly entered in the shire's rate book. It is necessary that the appellant should lodge the appeal within 140 days of the striking of the rate. However, the appeal cannot be made to the valuation appeals court but must be made to a court of summary jurisdiction.

Section 559 (3) of the Act provides that appeals to a local valuation appeals court should be determined not later than the 1st December of the year in which they are lodged. However, let us look at the true position. Local authorities must strike their rates by the end of August in any year. They then have to send out the rate assessments which generally takes another month. This means that a ratepayer will receive his assessment by the end of September. Allowing one month to elapse during which time an appellant can lodge an appeal, the end of October would be reached, which would leave the valuation appeals court one month to consider the appeal. A section of the Act provides that an appeal should be heard not later than the 1st December of that year, if practicable.

Before we had a boom in land prices I venture to say it would have been practicable for an appeal to have been heard by the 1st December in any year, because there would have been few appeals against valuations. However, following the land boom, and with the revaluation of complete shires in the vicinity of the metropolitan urban core, many appeals have been lodged which make it practically impossible for a magistrate, working full time, to hear all these cases.

If a person appealed against his valuation under the provisions of the Act that enabled him to appeal to the valuation appeals court, and if that appeal is not heard, say, until the following February, March, or April—and this often is the case—and if somebody, as a result of that appeal wishes to take action under section 681 of the Act, he is compelled to take the matter to a court of summary jurisdiction. As a result he is faced with considerable

expense. So I suggest that even though section 681 of the Local Government Act is rarely used, provision should be made that a local valuation appeals court should be held first before a person is compelled to take an appeal, under section 681, to a court of summary jurisdiction.

That is a weakness in the Act, but if a section is obsolete—such as this one is—and provides that if practicable, a local valuation appeals court should be held before the 1st December, and it is found this is not practicable at the time, why should we leave that provision in the Act? Obviously it is obsolete, and it is made doubly obsolete because the valuation appeals courts rarely hear many cases in the year in which the appeals are lodged. I mentioned the action of a particular magistrate a while ago. Taking 1971 as an example, prior to the 1st December of that year the magistrate concerned sat on six days and dealt with the valuations in seven districts. During December he sat on eight days. Therefore his duties in these courts were very light. I would have thought that if appeals required to be dealt with expeditiously a far greater number of sitting days would be set aside for the holding of the valuation appeals court during each month.

So I asked myself this question: Does the magistrate concerned have other duties? I found, on making inquiries, that he does have many other duties. The valuation appeals court is only a minor part of his functions. The magistrate is chairman of a number of important boards. He sits on courts and performs other duties and, whenever possible, he hears appeals against valuations. To my mind, this is not very desirable.

I feel there should be a reorganisation in connection with appeals for valuations. Some other system should be set up under which these cases could be heard quicker and much more efficiently.

Recently a report was lodged by the Honorary Royal Commission of inquiry into the corridor plan. Before I deal with the report and subsequent events, I should first like to express my sincere appreciation to the other two members of that commission—The Hon. R. F. Claughton and The Hon. Clive Griffiths.

The three members of that commission spent literally hundreds of hours on work and on studying many publications; they listened to a great deal of verbal evidence and finally wrote what has been described as a very perceptive and readable report. I would like to stress that during these hundreds of hours of application there was absolute harmony between the members of the commission; there was no political friction at all. The members of the commission made an unbiased, intelligent approach to the question they were studying. I do sincerely mean what I say; every word

of it is true. No politics entered our deliberations which were quite unbiased and impartial.

The final report which was presented had been checked, double-checked, triple-checked, and checked again in every single detail for fear that a mistake of fact may have occurred, and in the knowledge that many people would read the report and some of them would try to pick holes in it and be very critical.

Accordingly a great deal of care resulted in what we called "The Report of the Corridor Plan for Perth." This is only one of many printed documents that have been presented over the past 2 or 2½ years. We have had the corridor plan itself, together with a four-page bulletin. In its report the Honorary Royal Commission referred to the corridor plan for Perth as being a 68-page booklet, plus a four-page bulletin.

The Honorary Royal Commission studied the whole of the contents of that document. In addition to that publication we had an analytical study of the plan presented by a private consultant. I am not too sure but I have a vague recollection that this cost about \$5,000 to print; but, as I have said, I am not sure whether that figure is correct. Anyway, it was a very substantial amount of money.

Still based on the same subject we have had the report of the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority for the year 1972. Members may say, "What has that to do with the corridor plan?" The bulk of the report consists of a report by the M.R.P.A. upon its own corridor plan which subsequently, and after the Honorary Royal Commission had studied all the evidence and commenced writing its own report, was presented in a separate shiny blue booklet.

We have had a report upon the analytical study that was made. We have had numerous other reports but I will not go into that aspect any further.

I had hoped that when the Honorary Royal Commission came out with its report that this would be the end of the matter, that it would close the deal. But we find, firstly, the M.R.P.A. produced another booklet entitled, "Comments on the Honorary Royal Commission's Report on the Corridor Plan for Perth"; and not to be left out I, personally, received another report upon the Honorary Royal Commission's report and upon the analytical study from the gentleman who had been engaged to prepare the analytical study.

There was one very satisfying aspect about this latter report and about the report upon the report produced by the M.R.P.A. It appeared that the Honorary Royal Commission had satisfied both these parties. I feel this is a tremendous achievement. Both parties agreed with the bulk of the recommendations, but both parties tended to disagree on some of the things that were contained in the report.

I should like to pay particular attention to the M.R.P.A.'s comments upon the Honorary Royal Commission's report. This consists of 14 pages and is divided into three sections—the first section being the foreword, the second section being the comments on the contents of the report of the Honorary Royal Commission, and the third section being comments on the recommendations contained in the report.

It is very pleasing to find, as has been published in the Press, that the regional authority agreed with 17 of the recommendations made by the Honorary Royal Commission. In addition, it agreed in principle, but with certain reservations, to another seven; and it disagreed with one.

Let us have a look at the one with which it disagreed. We find on the 21st March when the report and the comments were tabled in this House that *The West Australian* newspaper came out with a headline on page 5 which stated that the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority had rejected out of hand only one of the 25 recommendations made by the Honorary Royal Commission. The report went on to say that the one it had rejected out of hand was a particular recommendation.

We find, however, on the following day—on the 22nd March—that the recommendation referred to in the previous article had been accepted with reservations; that it was another recommendation which had been disagreed with. This article which appeared on page 42 of *The West Australian* of the 22nd March, 1973, states—

The recommendation opposed by the authority was the establishment of a joint standing committee of members of all parties in both Houses of Parliament to consider town planning.

This refers to recommendation 12.24. I will read recommendation 12.24 of the Honorary Royal Commission's report. It states—

That a Joint Standing Committee on Town Planning be appointed. Such Committee to have representatives of each political party from both Houses of Parliament.

The comments made by the M.R.P.A. when dealing with this recommendation and printed in another booklet states—

Recommendation 12.24. The M.R.P.A. notes that the Royal Commission has produced no submission in support of this proposal nor any explanation as to how it would operate. Under its present Act, the M.R.P.A. is responsible to Parliament and the Planning Authority to guide the development of the Perth Region. The M.R.P.A. considers this to be the most satisfactory relationship between the planning process and political decision-making.

The M.R.P.A. opposed and rejected out of hand this particular recommendation and in doing so it obviously showed a great lack of understanding as to how Parliament works.

Parliament is supposed to be the controlling body and Parliament set up an Honorary Royal Commission which, in itself, acted in the same manner as it would if it were a Standing Committee. It investigated, it considered; the members educated themselves and, as a result, are now in a position to consider intelligently and knowledgeably any proposals that come forward.

This would be the function of a Joint Standing Committee. It would enable members of each political party from each House of Parliament to consider town planning proposals; to understand them, and to be able to speak intelligently in this Chamber, especially when things like regulations or amendments to the regional scheme Act are proposed.

Why should the M.R.P.A. oppose this? I cannot understand why it should oppose such a recommendation. Is it because that body is totally ignorant of how Parliament functions, or is it for some other reason? I will leave this to the imagination of members.

I was pleased with the manner in which that body received the Commission's recommendations but was very disappointed in the comments on the Honorary Royal Commission's report produced by the M.R.P.A.

However, I was rather displeased and disappointed with their comments. I found that, in my opinion, a defensive attitude was expressed towards the report. I found that, in my opinion, it tended to discredit the work that had been done by the Honorary Royal Commission. But, with the knowledge that I had obtained, and with the tremendous amount of study which had been put in by the members of the commission, I came to the conclusion that the M.R.P.A. had discredited itself.

I have drawn attention to just one recommendation which showed, apparently, a profound lack of knowledge of the working of Parliament. I will just briefly go through some of the comments. On page 5 under 2 (a) it is stated—

The M.R.P.A. acknowledges the affirmative support given in paragraph 7.17 to the concept of the Corridor Plan. It would appear, however, that certain facts with regard to the Plan are not clear.

They did not say, "not clear" to whom. The inference to be drawn would be that they are not clear to the members of the

commission. If we look at chapter 7, paragraph 7.17, in the report, we find that the first words which appear are—

Those witnesses supporting the principles of the Corridor concept did so mainly for the following reasons:

Those witnesses support it! This report was very carefully written. If we have a look at 7.16 we find it commences with the words—

Witnesses comments upon the Corridor Plan for Perth.

The commencing words of 7.18 are—

The main criticisms of the Corridor Plan expressed by witnesses were as follows:—

The commencing words of 7.19 are—

M.R.P.A. comments on the Corridor Plan.

Yet, this report makes quite a number of references not only to 7.17, but also to 7.18, 7.23, 7.16 and 7.20 where there are references to items contained in the report which were factual statements of what witnesses thought, and the opinions expressed by witnesses. They were not opinions expressed by the commission itself.

To me this shows a lack of understanding; a lack of perusal. To peruse means to study very closely, not to skim over. A careful reading would have shown these were not the opinions of the members of the commission.

A little further in the report, on page 7, we find the comments of the writer of the booklet. I stress the point "writer", because I wonder who really did write the book. Did the person who signed the report write it, or did some other person write it and then the chairman of the authority sign it? I can vouch that the three members of the Honorary Royal Commission wrote their report, and they know what is in it. However, I question who wrote these comments on the report because the following statement appears on page 7—

The reference to "clusters" in para. 11.11 is confusing. No urban clusters are mentioned in The Corridor Plan, the reference occurring in the 1968 MRPA publication "Perth—Region and People".

The 1968 publication, commonly referred to as "the Black Book", does make reference to clusters at page 80. I will extract a few of the statements. One reads—

However, it is most probable that its expansion—

Meaning, the Corridor Plan. To continue—in an orderly, logical way would be on the basis of one of two major concepts: the urban corridor, or the urban cluster.

If we look at the Corridor Plan—contained in a yellow book of 68 pages and a four-page bulletin—and if we turn to page 2 of the plan the following words appear—

The Corridor Plan extends beyond the Region Scheme boundary to cover the coastal plain as far south as Buntingford because it is recognised that the expected growth within the Metropolitan Region will also have a significant influence outside its boundaries.

The next paragraph reads—

What has emerged from all these studies is a combination of the two concepts which will provide urban corridors within which clusters—or sub-regional centres—will be created.

The word “clusters” meaning southern regional centres appears in the Corridor Plan. Yet, one of the criticisms of the report by the commission is that no reference to clusters appeared in the Corridor Plan.

On the same subject, on page 9, the comments state—

There seems to be some confusion of nomenclature in paras 11.30 and 11.31 which the MRPA would take to be read as “Urban Units” or Urban Townships” rather than Sub-Regional Centres. Sub-Regional Centres are, of course, the concentrated core of service activities which would serve between 100,000 and 250,000 population, and are not those population totals themselves.

That is in conflict with the Corridor Plan which said that urban clusters were sub-regional centres. That reference is on page 2. I appreciate fair criticism, but I do not like unfair criticism. It shows a profound ignorance by the writer of this booklet of the Corridor Plan proposal itself.

During evidence one particular witness made a great deal of reference to peripheral freeways and peripheral pathways—these being freeways down the outside of urban development, and not within the urban development. The comments on the Honorary Royal Commission report at page 8 are as follows—

The Royal Commission considers that peripheral freeways offer advantages over spine freeways (para 3.7.1 but whether this is so can be questioned. Both are technically acceptable. Although peripheral freeways may be cheaper from the land acquisition point of view, they are less effective as potential rapid transit routes (a facility which can be incorporated in the median) due to catchment areas being located on one side of the freeway only.

The writer of the comments on the report is obviously advocating spinal freeways through the centre of urban corridors, and

is opposing peripheral freeways. Yet evidence indicated that both were to be used. It was rather interesting to see in the *Weekend News* of Saturday, the 31st March, 1973, a full-page article under the title, “The Narrows: ‘Octopus ending in a bottleneck’”. The article gives the views of Professor Gordon Stephenson who is, in my opinion, a great town planner. He was the man responsible for our original plan as it exists. In the article to which I have referred Professor Stephenson states that theoretically public transport and freeways do not mix. He said that public transport should go through the centres of great activities for obvious reasons. Freeways, as far as possible, should be in open country in parklike strips because they demand a lot of space.

In other words, he was referring to peripheral freeways. I would accept the opinion of a person such as Professor Gordon Stephenson rather than the opinion of the writer of the comments on the report of the Honorary Royal Commission. There is a conflict between knowledge and evidence received. I could go through every single item and discuss the comments on the report.

My purpose this evening is to endeavour to get members in this House to question some of the statements and actions of the alleged experts and the bureaucrats.

The Honorary Royal Commission was very careful in its work. Some of that work has been unjustly criticised by a member or members of the M.R.P.A. and by the writer of the booklet, whoever he might be. I will quote an extract from page 11 of the booklet—

Again in para. 9.2.2 the Royal Commission considers that “a serious lack of co-ordination” exists between the Town Planning Department and the Departments controlling the provision of public utilities. The fact that certain urban zoned areas are difficult to service with sewerage should not be construed as evidence that the respective departments are not aware of the difficulties and that liaison does not take place. The M.R.P.A. has as one of its members the Chief Engineer of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Board and through him liaison is maintained at a technical and policy level.

Three members of this Chamber listened to evidence from many sources. It was amazing how people who apparently worked in co-ordination should have been very critical of each other's activities. They stated that desirable co-ordination and co-operation were severely lacking. They did not say co-ordination and co-operation did not exist—after all, co-operation must exist—after all, co-operation must exist to a degree—but that they were seriously lacking. The extract I have just read

mentions the co-operation of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department.

The Honorary Royal Commission was the first body to come forward with specific details about underground water supplies and the desirability of protecting those underground water supplies. The Mines Department knew about them. That department works in close liaison with the P.W.D., the M.W.S.S.D., the M.R.P.A., etc. But apart from the Mines Department, nobody knew the extent of those underground water supplies. Co-operation and co-ordination my eye! It is severely lacking.

I could deal with a number of other matters. One item in the report of the Honorary Royal Commission received some publicity. As usual, anything that tends to rubbish something or someone else is pounced upon by the Press and given headlines. The report of the Honorary Royal Commission contained reference to the fact that certain activities which had taken place appeared, in the opinion of the Honorary Royal Commission, to be in contempt not only of the Honorary Royal Commission but also of Parliament itself. Naturally, this drew the attention of the Press and the M.R.P.A.

On page 6 of the comments on the report of the Honorary Royal Commission it is stated—

The Royal Commission Report states in paras 7.26 and 10.9 that the planning 'commitments' made in the North-West Corridor are in contempt of Parliament and the Royal Commission. It is unfortunate that the only publicity given to the Commission's Report lead to headlines implying that the MRPA had acted in contempt. However it is clear from the Report that this was not stated. Recognition has to be given to the fact that despite lack of decision on the regional strategy to be adopted in the Metropolitan Region, a situation which placed the MRPA in a somewhat difficult position—

I think the Ministers would be well advised to listen to me from here on because I will start throwing a few brickbats in a moment, which I am sure they would hate to miss.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You have a captive audience.

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: The comments continue—

—the Government itself has been actively promoting the need to bring forward planning proposals in the North-West Corridor. The MRPA has acted throughout the period since the publication of its Corridor Plan within the limits of its statutory powers and has only proposed rezoning of areas in

the Sorrento-Mullaloo district which was recently subject to public exhibition for objection.

Anybody who has read the report will be aware that very firm commitments appear to have been entered into by somebody, thereby committing the corridor plan for the north-west corridor, in part, without the approval of Parliament. The Royal Commission did not blame anybody. It did not name anybody. It did not name the M.R.P.A. or anybody else. It stated a fact.

Section 33 of the Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act makes certain statements. It allows the M.R.P.A. to recommend the amendment of the region scheme if the proposed amendment is of a minor nature. However, certain procedures must be followed.

The report of the Honorary Royal Commission referred to the fact that if something is to be presented to Parliament it should be presented in much the same manner as the Armadale corridor plan was presented. There was a proposal to rezone an area of between 5,000 and 7,000 acres. Parliament approved it before any rezoning or other commitments were entered into.

The Act also states that the proposals must be published in the *Government Gazette*. They must be available for public objection and, finally, they must be presented to Parliament—in much the same way as the Armadale corridor plan was presented. They must be presented to Parliament within six sitting days.

Today is the sixth sitting day, and today a proposal concerning the north-west corridor was tabled for the benefit of members of this Chamber. The proposal consists of two maps showing alterations to the metropolitan region scheme. They are fairly considerable alterations which extend northwards of the city and eastwards away from the coast and away from the land which is already zoned under the metropolitan region scheme.

I commend these two maps to members for study. I commend the report of the Honorary Royal Commission to members for study, and I commend to members the written report that was tabled in conjunction with the maps wherein it will be seen that firm commitments have been entered into by somebody, which commit large areas of land for development, and which commit them before the matter is brought to Parliament.

Today we are in April. One of the maps was signed on the 15th August, 1972. It shows a considerable increase in the area of land it is proposed to rezone. At the foot of the map there is a note reading—

This is not a statutory plan, but is intended to illustrate the proposed amendment to the M.R.S. Map, sheet 10.

That is the metropolitan region scheme map for the area outside the corridor. It contains a series of sheets depicting various parts of the metropolitan area and the various zones. Sheet 10 is amongst those sheets. The footnote continues—

The amendments illustrated are subject to adoption by the authority, public inspection and objection, and acceptance by Parliament.

On page 2 of the tabled report reference is made to a number of areas of land which come under the existing zoning of the region. A fairly large area was designated as deferred urban and it is proposed to upgrade it to urban. No alteration is proposed to the region scheme as it exists. The land was deferred urban and it is proposed to upgrade it. That is fair enough.

In addition to that, there is an area of approximately 1,760 acres. Apart from this, it is proposed to upgrade 2,140 acres. It appears from my very brief glance at it that it is also proposed to upgrade the zoning of another 2,840 acres. But the interesting point is in paragraph 6 at the top of page 2, where, referring to the first area of land I mentioned, it is stated—

In consequence of the agreements it is apparent that the whole of the 1,585 hectares/acres has been committed for urban use and as a result of development it is also clear that the community has accepted this fact.

Land has been committed and the proposal is now presented to Parliament for the attachment of its rubber stamp. They are firm, irrevocable commitments. Any member of this Chamber has the right to stand up and move for the disallowance of the proposals. But who would do so? If something is irrevocably committed, it would be rather ridiculous to suggest it should be disallowed. Better still, those who, in my opinion, have been in contempt of Parliament should be severely chastised and prevented from ever doing this sort of thing again.

The rather amazing thing is that even though the maps were signed by the Chairman of the M.R.P.A.—and a quick study of them shows that the proposed areas will intrude on the underground water supply, as was clearly referred to in the report of the commission—the M.R.P.A. agreed that those areas should not be encroached upon until adequate studies had been made. In spite of that the maps show there is to be encroachment upon the underground water. What in the blazes is the use of having Mr. Clive Griffiths, Mr. Cloughton, myself, Mr. Hoff, *Hansard*, and witnesses by the dozen all going to a lot of trouble, and having a report printed at some expense, only to find it is ignored? Certainly it appears to have been ignored in the maps and papers tabled in the House today.

I have drawn the matter to the attention of members. I hope they will look carefully at the information. After having looked at it they may not agree with my opinion. That is fair enough; I have expressed my opinion and I am sincere. If I am correct in my opinion then what the Royal Commission stated in its report with regard to contempt is well and truly justified, as are many of the other statements made. After reading the comments in the report I am of the opinion that the members of the commission, even though not town planners, could fill some of the positions in some Government departments and authorities more adequately than the people who occupy them at the moment. I support the motion as amended.

THE HON. S. T. J. THOMPSON (Lower Central) [9.33 p.m.]: I do not intend to hold up the House for very long, but I would like to take the opportunity to address myself for a few moments to the debate on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply as amended. Firstly, I would like to associate myself with the sentiments expressed by other speakers so far as the new Leader of the House and the new Minister for Community Welfare are concerned. I also express my regret that Mr. Bill Willesee has forgone the position he held for the past two years.

We have heard a considerable number of speakers cover a very wide range of topics. We have heard talk of votes for trees and sheep, and a great many other comments made by members. I feel one cannot say much more on those subjects. However, I would like to take the opportunity to say a few words on the question of traffic, although I am aware we will have a further opportunity to speak on this subject.

I can only express the hope that Superintendent Monck will be in office if ever we have a central authority controlling traffic throughout the State. In recent months he has waged a continuous war against traffic control by local authorities. I think he has done so in order to cover up his impotent inability to do something about the road toll. Frankly, I am convinced that police control of traffic, or the control of traffic by a central authority, will not provide the solution to the problem of the road toll. One has only to study what is happening in the other States to substantiate this. Last weekend I happened to notice in a weekend newspaper the headline, "Vic. weekend of horror". The article stated—

MELBOURNE, Sunday: Twenty people died on Victoria's roads during the weekend—one of the worst weekends for road accidents in the State's history.

The deaths bring the Victorian road toll to 221—33 more than for the same time last year.

In Victoria traffic is controlled by the police; so I do not think police control of traffic will provide the answer. The solution rests with the drivers themselves.

Perhaps improved driver education would assist, but that is not necessarily the answer. I think when one studies the majority of accidents which occur on our roads, particularly those involving young people, one finds that probably they cannot be prevented. I quote for example the double fatality that occurred between Woodanilling and Katanning just before Christmas. At three o'clock in the morning two lads ran into about the only tree within many chains along a perfectly clear road. Had the car careered off the road a yard before or a yard further along it would have finished up in a clear paddock, with very little damage. I do not care what kind of traffic control we have; we still will not avoid accidents such as that.

Probably they are caused through overtiredness, or a momentary lack of concentration. Rarely are they caused by faulty vehicles, as Mr. White mentioned in his speech. I feel we have a long way to go and many examinations to make before we find the answer to this problem. I am certain the answer lies with the individual drivers.

I recall seeing another article in the Press which mentioned the number of fatal accidents in which alcohol was involved. That could be one of the factors. Perhaps the introduction of spot checks would help to alleviate that problem.

I agree with the remarks made by Mr. Logan regarding policemen chasing speedsters. An article appeared in yesterday's edition of the *Daily News* which described how the police chased a young chap at speeds of up to 90 miles per hour. The young man apparently went through a radar trap at 49 m.p.h. and as at that stage he had committed only a minor offence I feel it would have been sufficient for the police to have taken his number. I venture to suggest that two witnesses would have been present at the time and it should have been necessary only to take his number and issue a summons in due course. I think that would be more effective than chasing speedsters because one would get a shock if one received a summons out of the blue. If that were done many people—including we older people—might start to wonder whether or not we have been booked for an offence without our knowledge.

In the case to which I referred the young man drove through 42 intersections at speeds of up to 90 m.p.h. Surely that must create a hazard for many other motorists. I agree with the proposition that the police should have the authority to charge such offenders without chasing them and issuing them with a notice. I

know in a few cases it would be difficult to prove who was the driver at the time, but I think that could be overcome. The matter is quite serious when the police are chasing offenders at speeds of 90 m.p.h.

I cannot agree with the system of pimping which was introduced recently. We saw a great deal about it in the Press for the first few days and we read that a number of phone calls were made to the police, but we have not seen much of it since. I think Mr. Baxter gave us the classic reason why we do not need such a scheme; that is, if everyone participated in it the police would spend all their time investigating the reports. As we will have a further opportunity to discuss traffic control I shall not deal with the matter further at the moment.

I am very concerned about the state of the wool industry. I know we have had remarkable prices for wool in recent months, and the situation in that respect is really good. Mr. Dans made an interesting speech last night about the economy. He mentioned the economists who know all about the effect currency revaluation will have on the country. However, those economists certainly did not know two years ago that wool would bring the price for which it is selling at present because they wrote it off as a thing of the past.

But today we see headlines stating that wool men are trying to avoid taxation. My word, they will pay plenty of tax! It is rather astounding to think that this year wool will be the greatest earner of foreign exchange for Australia; yet 18 months ago the economists did not know that.

My concern now is that the price of wool has reached such heights. The price is very good for the farmers, and particularly good for the Federal Government because it will receive plenty of taxation. But I am not so sure that the prices will hold in the long run. Only yesterday the price of wool dropped 20 per cent. That fluctuation might not sound much, but I spoke to a farmer today who had 500 bales in the latest sale, and that 20 per cent. drop means that 100 bales of his clip were wiped out. That represents a lot of money. Admittedly he has not received better prices in the last few years, but I think it would be far preferable to have the price stabilised at a satisfactory level.

I am astounded that the Federal Labor Government appears to be doing nothing whatsoever about the matter, although last year when in Opposition it moved urgency motions on it. At present the indications are that the Federal Government intends to do nothing. I think that is most regrettable. Perhaps the drop of 20 per cent. yesterday might be only a flash in the pan, but on the other hand the price could continue to drop.

The Hon. R. Thompson: If the Federal Government took action to stabilise prices, would that action be readily accepted by the woolgrowers?

The Hon. S. T. J. THOMPSON: It would have been accepted last year.

The Hon. R. Thompson: The present Federal Government was not in office last year.

The Hon. S. T. J. THOMPSON: No, but as the Opposition in October of last year it moved urgency motions requesting the authorities to present a plan within six months.

The Hon. R. Thompson: But wool has risen to the present peak during the period of office of the Federal Labor Government. If it took action, would it be accepted by the farming community?

The Hon. S. T. J. THOMPSON: I think it would be accepted.

The Hon. R. Thompson: What, last week, or now that it has dropped 20 per cent.?

The Hon. S. T. J. THOMPSON: I have yet to find a woolgrower who is not thinking in the manner I am thinking; that is, perhaps the prices have gone too far too fast.

We all have memories of what happened after the last wool boom, and of the hardship that was suffered by the wool producers. I am not being pessimistic about this. I hope that the existing high wool prices will continue. That will benefit not only the farmers but also the Government, because the farmers will be paying heavy taxes.

The high prices for wool have made a big difference to country districts. The saying that if we have a prosperous rural community we have a prosperous State is very true. A remarkable change has taken place in the last 12 months, and this has resulted mainly from increased spending by those engaged in this industry.

I am very concerned about a situation which exists in a town in my province, and I support the plea that has been put forward by a member in another place. I refer to job prospects in Collie. Whilst the town of Collie has benefited greatly since this Government has been in office as a result of huge amounts spent on Government buildings, it has not resulted in one additional job being provided. In this respect I refer to a report which appeared in the *Collie Mail* of the 29th March, as follows—

Jobs prospects are bleak.

Employment prospects in Collie are still bleak for the immediate future.

There are no prospects of additional employment being provided in the Collie area. I hope the Government will make some extensions to the Muja power station.

During this debate Mr. Dans addressed us at length on the trade unions. My only association with trade unions has been with the Collie miners' union. I found its members to be a humane bunch of men, who are doing very much the same as other groups of men; they are fighting for their town. Many of these people have lived all their lives in the district, and their only assets comprise the house and land in which they live.

The Hon. R. Thompson: There is not much difference between trade unionists and farmers; they are all a good bunch of men.

The Hon. S. T. J. THOMPSON: That is correct. In his address Mr. Leeson made reference to compulsory unionism amongst farmers. Such a move had been attempted previously. I remember 30 years ago attending a meeting of farmers at Kojonup. The purpose of the meeting was to counteract a strike which was going on at the time. The farmers were organised into a union and proposed holding up all produce going into the city.

The Hon. R. Thompson: There were no strikes on the waterfront 30 years ago because it was war time. There may have been strikes 40 years ago.

The Hon. S. T. J. THOMPSON: About 600 people attended that meeting of farmers and it was decided unanimously that they would hold up all supplies to the city. The scheme did not work, because these people were individualists. Some said they had friends in the city and did not want to see them being deprived of meat. Nothing came of the decision.

Eventually the farmers may organise themselves into one union, but I doubt that very much, because there are too many individuals involved. Today the problem in many country centres is the decrease in population. We find towns like Mt. Barker without a resident lawyer. Mt. Barker is a big town about 30 miles from Albany. The position applies generally throughout country districts. The farmers are producing more and more as a result of better management and modern methods but this brings about the need for fewer employees, and so the population is reduced.

During this debate one member referred to excessive rates that are being paid. In many country towns facilities such as sewerage are provided. In my town the people pay 15c in the dollar in sewerage rates but they do not get any water allowance for that rate. The people also pay a local authority rate of 25c in the dollar in addition to the 15c for sewerage, as well as over 6c in the dollar for water. On this basis it is very difficult for people to retire in country towns.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Only farmers can afford to live in country towns in view of those high rates.

The Hon. S. T. J. THOMPSON: If the price of wool falls many people will not be able to continue living in country towns. I realise that if people are to be provided with these amenities they will have to pay for them, but the point that must be borne in mind is that the country people are not getting their amenities cheap.

Collie is a town which has many amenities, including schools and a hospital, but it does not have many job opportunities. If we can foster the establishment of industry in towns like Collie it will be a great help. I shall not delay the House any further because there will be many opportunities during this session for me to deal with other matters.

THE HON. R. THOMPSON (South Metropolitan—Minister for Community Welfare) (9.52 p.m.): First of all I would like to thank members who have spoken in this debate and wished me well in my new position. Likewise I wish my colleague, Mr. Dolan, great success as the Leader of the House. I also hope that my friend, Mr. Bill Willesee, who has retired from the Ministry and whose place I have taken, will remain in this House for a long time. I took over the portfolio held by Mr. Bill Willesee with a great deal of regret, because he has been a friend of mine for a long time. When one counts his real and true friends one often finds that one does not have many. However, Mr. Bill Willesee has been a good friend to me at all times, and I have the utmost respect for him. It is good to see him making a quick recovery, and I am sure that by the end of the present session we will see him back to his old self again.

I want to deal with several matters in replying to some comments which have been raised by members touching on the portfolio of Community Welfare which I have the responsibility of administering. Mr. Withers was the first to speak on Aboriginal affairs and the conditions under which the Aboriginal people live, particularly those in the north-west. The honourable member made some rather amusing statements. If one reads his speech one finds that he started off by complimenting the Government and all members who passed a particular piece of legislation in this House, which was brought into operation on the 1st July, 1972.

This legislation abolishes class and racial discrimination, but in it there is no mention of an Aboriginal as against a white person. It merely refers to disadvantaged persons. Mr. Withers gave full marks to the Government for introducing that type of legislation, but then he claimed that welfare relief should be available to all the people.

We cannot have this welfare relief being made available on the one hand to disadvantaged people, and then say it should be available to all the people. He said the legislation was good and did not discriminate against anybody. He said it benefited the disadvantaged people. However, subsequently in three instances he claimed that welfare relief should be available to all classes of people. I could not understand his viewpoint.

I want to comment briefly on two points made by Mr. Withers. Firstly, I refer to the question of discrimination. It is true as the honourable member points out that no mention was made of different racial groups of people in the Community Welfare Bill which passed through this House. I believe that the spirit underlying that piece of legislation allowed for individuals, families, and groups to be assisted within the limitations imposed by financial resources. Assistance therefore should be granted on the basis of need. If the need is established, the colour, race, or creed of the individuals, families, or groups should be irrelevant.

On this basis if it can be established that Aboriginal children as a total group need additional education assistance—and apparently it has been established to the satisfaction of the past and present Federal Government—then that assistance should be provided.

In my view any argument that these provisions are discriminating against others should be resolved not by withdrawing the assistance from Aboriginal children, but by extending it to areas where the need is also established.

I believe that the recent Commonwealth scheme to provide financial assistance to families in isolated areas to help with educational costs for their children is a good example. It has equal application to white as well as Aboriginal children.

Secondly I wish to comment on pensioners in remote areas. At the outset I would like to say that I am glad that the honourable member agrees with me that this is an area of Commonwealth responsibility. Here again I believe is another example of the principle I previously mentioned—that the provision of assistance should be based on an established need. If pensioners in remote areas can establish the need for additional assistance—and I believe that the need is established—then assistance should be forthcoming.

On Monday of this week I made personal representations to the Federal Minister for Social Security on this very basis, and I urged him to accept responsibility in this matter. I must point out that he was rather receptive. All we can do is to wait. I understand a Federal committee will look into this matter and we hope something will be forthcoming.

The Hon. J. L. Hunt: It is more than the previous Federal Government did. Mr. Collard has battled this one for years but has got nowhere.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: We now have a Minister who is receptive to our comments.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You are doing fine between the two of you!

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I believe that, for many years, there has been discrimination against Aboriginal children, from the point of view of education.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Did you say "Aboriginal" or "non-Aboriginal"?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I said "Aboriginal".

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I wanted to be quite clear.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: When efforts are made to compensate for that discrimination and to bring the educational level to the standard which is generally enjoyed by other children immediately there is a hue and cry that there is discrimination against white children.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Correct.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I cannot accept this argument any more than I would accept the argument that the provision of allowances for pensioners in remote areas discriminates against other pensioners. This was the point I was trying to make as Mr. Withers walked into the Chamber. I do not want to pick his speech to pieces or to quote it out of context, but I find that he argued against himself.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: You have not proved that.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If he analyses his speech he will see it for himself. He said—

It is not right to have discrimination. We must have policies that give equality to all people.

Education seems to be what is hurting the honourable member more than anything else.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Education, and housing subsidies.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: We all realise that disadvantaged people need more assistance than people who enjoy a higher standard of living and who are on a higher income. Aboriginal children have not had equal opportunities in the past. Many of them are not within cooee of a school. Facilities must be made available so that they have the opportunity to be educated.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: You are referring to all children and not separating them?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am definitely referring to all children. I have never in all my life discriminated against anybody. In another part of his speech Mr. Withers tried to imply that people in receipt of social service benefits enjoy some sort of advantage over people who work. He recommended that there should be a pool of unemployed. I will refer to his speech so that I get my facts right.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: You should start again, if that is the case.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I do not need to start again. I know what the honourable member said. His exact words were—

Surely we could have a labour pool for the unemployed, so that if they refused to work they would not receive relief.

The same situation applies now as applied under the previous Liberal-Country Party Government. A person has to be out of work for seven days before he qualifies for social service, or unemployment, benefits.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I am not shooting at political parties but trying to ensure that new legislation is brought forward.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am not shooting at political parties either. I am stating the policy and saying how it would be impracticable to put such a suggestion into operation. Perhaps the honourable member by "a pool of unemployed" means relief workers, or sustenance workers, as they were known during the depression. If so, his thinking is 30 years behind the times. No modern country in the world accepts this principle. Approximately eight or 10 years ago America scrapped sustenance payments and lifted social service payments to such a degree that the economy was stimulated. This is the only way to create a buoyant economy.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: To keep it in context, would you like to refer to the work-shy people?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I could speak for an hour without stopping on unemployment figures and people in receipt of unemployment benefits.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Go for your life.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: This would be a good exercise to undertake. I was at the point of answering comments made in the debate. If time permits I will entertain the honourable member for half an hour or so on the unemployment question.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I do not want to be entertained. I simply want some facts.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: In a kindly manner, I say to the honourable member that I suppose I have asked fewer questions than any other member in the years I have been in this Chamber. Irrespective of what Government has been in office, I have always gone to the departments to find out what I wanted to know. I think the Leader of the Opposition would agree that this is so. I first went to the departments and, if I could not obtain a satisfactory answer, I then asked a question. On the whole I have asked few questions because I usually obtained the information I required direct from the departments.

I think the question Mr. Withers asked about the girl from Port Hedland was in extremely poor taste. In my experience in Parliament I have never heard any member refer to a particular person from a particular town. In any event, he was a month out.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I did not mention any names.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I know that. However, the honourable member referred to a coloured girl and everybody is asking which girl it is. This is not good.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: The Minister would be surprised to know the people who wanted that information.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If they wanted that information they should have supplied the honourable member with the facts. Certainly, the honourable member's question was not factual. The girl was not brought down last month but the previous month.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: If you stick to your word, why did you not say this to me in the corridor?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I thought it right the honourable member should be given this information in the Parliament because this is where he asked the question. I go further and say that any member who wants information from my department will be able to go there and obtain it. If at any time it is refused all he has to do is let me know and I will obtain the information for him. I believe in giving full answers to questions and I do not intend to withhold anything.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Are you implying that no more questions should be asked of you in the House?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I did not say that.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: The inference can be drawn.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I think that questions of that nature are quite extraordinary. I cannot imagine how anybody could think it fair play. I certainly do not.

We heard the speech made by Mr. Withers in which he said that, in his opinion, racism is being stirred up in the north-west. We also heard the speech made by Mr. Hunt who denied that he has ever seen or heard any evidence of this.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: He must be blind.

The Hon. J. L. Hunt: I am not blind.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am not taking sides. It makes me wonder exactly what is going on in the north-west. Unfortunately, time has not yet permitted me to go up and look for myself.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: You will wonder for a long time if you do not pay a visit and find out.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The first opportunity I will have to undertake a comprehensive visit will be in early June. My other commitments will keep me away until then.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Are you referring to the parliamentary tour?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: No, to a completely different tour. As members know, Mr. Bill Willesee and Mr. Gordon Bryant, the Federal Minister, together with some departmental officers, toured the north-west in February.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: You would not find a better man than Mr. Willesee to show you around.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am not misguided in any shape or form by the advice I am receiving about the north-west. However, up to date I have not been able to make time to visit the area.

A member in another place made a pointed speech about certain conditions which I believe exist in the area. However, I searched the files to see whether or not representation had been made by that same honourable member. Only one letter, dated the 20th February this year, is on the files, although he claimed that the situation has been like this for several years. Surely if it has been like this for a long period of time members from that area would have made representations to the previous Minister (Mr. Willesee), to his predecessor, or to me.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Can you give an indication of the special subject? Are you referring to racial prejudice?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am talking about Mr. Ridge's statement which appeared in the paper. The only letter which I could see on the files is dated the 20th February this year.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Mr. Ridge is a truthful and courageous man.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I like Mr. Ridge as much as the honourable member does. I am not criticising him but I think he should have at least given the department a go.

As members know, a changeover was made in July last year and two new departments were created. By no stretch of the imagination are the departments yet in top gear. Members realise the size of our State and it will certainly take time to reorganise the whole of the State. Our planning will be on an overall basis. I say to Aboriginal groups and statutory committees in the same way as I say to members in this House that it is useless to get our priorities out of order. Our priorities must be right before a programme can be carried out on the basis of those priorities. It is pointless for people to jump up and down saying that they want something for a particular area. The highest priority will be served first and the greatest needs met.

Whilst I am in this frame of mind, I do not know whether to say I have had pleasure or displeasure in visiting several shires up to date. My first visit was to the Gnowangerup Shire Council. I had heard that Gnowangerup was a racist town and that the council was difficult. I found the complete opposite and I compliment the Gnowangerup Shire Council for this. Up to date it is the only shire council which has made suggestions to me and is prepared to help the Aborigines and provide them with work. I think the council is to be commended for this. We find that other towns are quite happy to have Aborigines in the centre but they want them 15 miles out of town. This is not good enough. Shire councils in the country or the city can stop telling me this from right now.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: You will find they are referring to untrained Aborigines—untrained in our ways and in hygiene.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: This is quite true. When I took on this portfolio I did so with an open mind. I did not intend to be placed in the position of taking sides with blacks or whites. I found myself on the defensive but, very quickly, I changed to the offensive. Storekeepers and other business people in the towns are happy to have trade from the Aborigines but, in the main, they do not want to see them housed. With them it is a question of, "Out of sight out of mind." That will not happen as far as I am concerned.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I want to see the Aborigines trained and housed accordingly to the degree of training.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: This is where we will apply the priorities. We will be able to do this.

The Hon. S. T. J. Thompson: I hope the Minister is not saying this will be the general rule.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: In what respect?

The Hon. S. T. J. Thompson: I am referring to your expression, "Fifteen miles out of town."

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I would say that the people who have written to me, telephoned me, and spoken to me in the country do not want the Aborigines within their town areas. As I have said, I commend and compliment the Gnowangerup Shire Council on its attitude. In the past I believe some discrimination occurred in the town, but at least Gnowangerup is doing the right thing now.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Are the Gnowangerup Aborigines still hunting with spears?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: No.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: They still do this in the Kimberley and other places.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I appreciate the point. This is where we must educate them, and hygiene is one of the important areas of education. It was rather interesting to hear Mr. Syd Thompson say tonight that the country towns are decreasing in population. Such places would only need to welcome the Aborigines and the empty houses would soon be filled. This is where we have the opportunity to educate and integrate the natives.

The homemaker service is being expanded greatly throughout Western Australia. As fast as we can train people, we are getting them out into the homes and assisting the Aborigines. Over a period of time it is hoped that the Aborigines will be brought up to acceptable standards.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I agree this is a very good system.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: From my short experience of this system, I would say it is very good. However, let me be completely honest; it will be a long-term process. If we can educate the young children, they will be able to integrate with the community.

The Hon. S. T. J. Thompson: If we can educate them and give them employment opportunities.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes, they will then fit into the community.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: The pre-school education scheme, as previously mentioned in the House, will assist also.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I really should not jump the gun on this topic. We will probably talk about it later in the session.

I again make the point that the shire councils have a responsibility. They are told, and quite rightly so on many occasions, that they are the second arm of government. I agree with this, but if they are the second arm of government they

have to start acting like a government and playing their part in the integration of natives into the towns.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Which shires are not playing their part in the North Province?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I did not mention any; I was speaking in general terms. I commended Gnowangerup because I have seen a practical demonstration of what it is doing.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: If any shires in the North Province are not co-operating I would like to visit them and assist with any problems.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I did not name any. I said that shire councils are regarded as the second arm of government. They have a responsibility and must live up to it, as must the Aboriginal who moves to the town. He must live up to his responsibility. It is only through co-operation that we will find any solution to the problem.

If racial tendencies continue they may grow to dangerous levels. I do not for one moment accept the suggestion that we, in Western Australia, have any concern in relation to black power, militancy, or anything like that. The Aborigines as a race are peaceful, but racism could build up and we may find that we have another "Wounded Knee" in Western Australia in the next 10 or 15 years.

I believe everyone must show a little more tolerance and a little more understanding. The Aboriginal has to be taught to respect the understanding and tolerance which is afforded to him. Whilst he is shunned he will not crawl, and I do not blame him. No-one should have to crawl to gain recognition.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: You will meet some very decent Aboriginal people.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I have met many of them up to date. Mr. Baxter mentioned the drinking problem, and I commend him for his contribution to the debate. The blame for this problem cannot be laid at the door of any political party. We had to remove the discrimination, although we may not have agreed with its removal in regard to drinking. Under the Bill of Rights of the United Nations it was most necessary to remove all such discrimination.

I believe the mistake we made was in not educating the Aborigines beforehand. An Aboriginal could apply for a permit until a certain day and he was then granted citizenship which allowed him to enter a hotel and buy alcohol. This requirement was gradually abolished in certain areas of the State and everyone had a wide-open go. As the Leader of the Opposition said last night, we can all be very wise with hindsight, and I am probably being wise after the event now. If we had

the time over again, I am sure we would institute an educational programme in regard to alcohol.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: That would have been a good idea.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: On Friday I will attend a Ministers' Conference on Aboriginal affairs in Adelaide with that in mind. If the Commonwealth is kind to us, we may be able to open up licensed premises in one area at least.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What do you mean by that?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Licensed premises in order to educate the Aborigines about drink. I do not mean that we should allow them to get drunk.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Did you say, "open up licensed premises for the purpose of educating them in alcohol"?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Educate them in its use and teach them how to drink.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Do you mean open up a new set of premises?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Good lord—haven't we enough licensed premises now?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: These would be in country areas. As Mr. Withers knows, the Aborigines come into the country towns from the desert or back country. They have no experience of alcohol and they could be properly educated in such licensed premises.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: So you will open up licensed premises and say, "Come on boys. We will teach you how to drink."

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: It would not be like that. I am putting this forward sincerely as an educational programme.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It does not make sense to me.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: It may not make sense to the Leader of the Opposition, but then a lot of things do not make sense to him.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: There is no need to try that.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: We made the mistake of not educating people in the past. Are we just to let this problem drift along willy-nilly and see these people accused of being drunkards and no-hopers? Or do we institute an educational programme?

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I think an educational programme using films and TV to show what happens when they get drunk is a good idea.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The honourable member will not find many TV sets out in the desert.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: This is possible with batteries.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I do not think we will get many people to sit in front of a TV set to be taught the evils of drink. These people would not be interested, and many of them would not know what we were talking about.

The Aborigines can be taught, "This is how you drink. You have now had enough. You must be clean when you come onto licensed premises." I believe this would be a start. It may not be completely successful, but it may be the answer to the problem. It has not been tried before; this is the thing.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Will you look at the TV cassette principle because it is very popular with Aboriginal children and could be also popular with the adults?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: There are many ideas we can look at. We do not know all the answers yet.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It occurs to me, rather than try to teach people who do not know how to drink to drink, it may be better to teach them how not to drink.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: This could be a good idea. However, we must bear in mind the present situation. If we look at some of the goldfields towns, and I am not referring to any particular town, the natives come into the towns sometimes in their hundreds. Usually they are not very clean because of the conditions under which they are living. They are not welcome in the hotels, but there is nothing to stop them going to the drive-in bottle department and buying all the liquor they want. They then take the liquor out under the trees and get drunk. I cannot accept that this situation must continue. I have looked for a solution, and I believe that somewhere we must start an educational programme.

The programme must include more than just education in drinking. The Aborigines need advice on food, hygiene, and many of the other things we take for granted.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I think they need to have their pride rebuilt. That is very important.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is right. It will be a slow process. I do not make the claim that it will be a short-term successful venture. It may be, but at least it is an idea we have not tried before and I think we should try it.

I believe I have covered all the points raised by members. I do not want to mention another matter. I do not usually knock the Press because I believe it is entitled to free license. However, I do not think a reporter should be allowed to put a headline on the front page as one did on the 14th February of this year. This heading read, "Riverside shanties are home for hundreds".

I will refer to the context of this article later. I would like to say now that I believe the Press has a responsibility to the community, and to the people who purchase the newspapers. Probably an inexperienced journalist may go out, look at certain conditions and draw an incorrect conclusion. Perhaps this one had not been in the State for a long period of time, but no-one should be able to say that hundreds of Aborigines are living on the banks of the Swan River between East Perth and Guildford without a knowledge of the whole situation.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Surely you know it is not the reporter who puts that on the front page; it is the editor.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The reporter has her name on it.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The reporter's name can only be there if the editor puts it there.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Did I not mention the editor? I said that the editor was responsible to those who buy the newspaper.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: No, you said the reporter was responsible.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: No, I said the editor has a responsibility for allowing people to visit the area mentioned without knowing a great deal about the conditions that existed there, thus causing an uproar which was completely unjustified, because the number of Aborigines residing in that area at that time was the lowest for many years. This only harks back to the points raised this evening by those members who represent farming communities. Because of the increased price of wool many Aborigines did not come to the city. They found it lucrative to travel around the farming communities and obtain permission to pick up dead wool which previously was not profitable. Those members who have spoken may correct me if I am wrong in making such a statement.

After investigating the statement that hundreds of Aborigines were supposed to be living in adverse conditions in the area referred to, the officer of the Department for Community Welfare, who has been closely associated with these groups of people for the past seven years, carried out a complete survey of all the people who were residing there. As a result she reported a grand total of 33 permanent residents and 12 other residents. The Press reported that these people, in the main, had nowhere to live; that they were without a decent house in which to reside. When an official check was made of the position, it was found that of the 12 temporary residents in the area some of them had houses in Coolbellup which is within my province, and others had homes in Balga. However, because they

were employed on grape picking at the time, they did not find it convenient to return to their homes in the evening and report to their place of employment the following morning and so they decided to camp by the river.

It is rather unfair that those people should have been taken to task. We may as well say, "Let us go out to the Main Roads Department camps which house itinerant workers employed by that department". The position would be the same everywhere in regard to those who do not have permanent accommodation.

Taking the matter a step further, I point out that these people were employed on grape picking and a number of them were living under good conditions on the vigneron's property and in accommodation which he had provided for the family groups working for him. It was with that thought in mind that I considered that the editor of the newspaper which published the articles should accept a certain responsibility. This incident, which was blown up in the newspaper for several days, cost the Department for Community Welfare \$800 to \$1,000. The department was completely disrupted because of the many requests that were made for statements on this, that, and the other. The cause of the Aborigines is not improved when a newspaper report is found to be virtually baseless. I did not give any credit to the reporter or the editor of that newspaper for publishing those articles. The reporter said to me, "Let us look at the position. I will go out with you to the area at 5.00 a.m." I said that I would meet her at 4.00 a.m., but this offer was not taken up and we could never find where these hundreds of Aborigines were supposed to be living.

I do not think I need add anything further to this debate. I support the motion moved by Mr. Cloughton, because I do not agree with the amendment. Unfortunately the amendment has been passed by the House—

The Hon. W. R. Withers: And democracy prevails.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes, the honourable member's kind of democracy prevails. I know a great deal of criticism has been levelled against the Governor's Speech because of its brevity and for other reasons. I therefore hope that when the Address-in-Reply is presented to the Governor that the people who criticised his Speech will accompany the President when he waits on the Governor to present the Address-in-Reply.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Can I give you the promise that I will be there?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Will the Leader of the Opposition also promise that he will ask the Governor what he thinks of the Address-in-Reply as amended?

THE HON. J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) (10.36 p.m.): First of all, I thank the Leader of the Opposition and other members of the House for the kind references they have made to our former leader in the Legislative Council and my colleague, The Hon. W. F. Willesee. I have been extremely fortunate during my parliamentary career and during my experience with my party to have as my first leader a man who was respected and esteemed by everybody in the community; namely, The Hon. F. J. S. Wise. Then, of course, it was my good fortune to have the pleasure of serving as Deputy Leader under Mr. Bill Willesee. He was kindness personified and was a great diplomat. He had to be diplomatic because of the state of the parties in this House. He seldom became upset, and he could debate the most delicate questions. I miss him dreadfully as my leader and I would much rather have served the remainder of my time in this House as his deputy, and to see him remain as the Leader of the Legislative Council. He served this House and the State of Western Australia extremely well and I would have liked him to enjoy the health I have always enjoyed so that he may have carried on as Leader of this House.

I also offer my congratulations to my deputy on his elevation to the ministry. I am aware of his sincerity, his keenness, and willingness to work, and I feel sure he will prove to be a worthy successor to my former leader.

I would be pleased if the Leader of the Opposition would convey not only my personal regards, but also those of all members of my party in this Parliament to Sir David Brand and tell him that we hope he is restored to good health as soon as possible in the same way as we have expressed our regards to The Hon. W. F. Willesee. We certainly hope that he will soon be restored to good health to enjoy his remaining years in the Parliament and during his subsequent life. He is an excellent citizen and we have the utmost respect for him, in the same way as I have the utmost respect for all men who serve any party and the State in the high office of Premier.

I also thank the Leader of the Opposition for his offer of co-operation and I accept it in the spirit in which it is given. I know the state of the House at present and I am aware that debates can become rugged. However, I can assure the House that I will not shirk anything, nor do I lack sincerity.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You often make the debates rugged.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: The Leader of the Opposition can also make them rugged. However, I accept what he has said in the spirit in which he has made that statement. The honourable member referred to the fireworks display at South Perth on the opening of Parliament. He did

not think much of the display or the expense involved. He was of the opinion that the money could have been spent on a better cause. The purpose of the fireworks display, of course, was to lend to the ceremony associated with the opening of Parliament the usual touch engendered by such a display. It replaces what we have been accustomed to over the years; that is, the 21-gun salute. So far as costs are concerned there would be very little difference, and both costs would be comparable. I do not think we lost anything by dispensing with the 21-gun salute, and introducing fireworks in its place.

On inquiry as to what people thought of the evening opening of Parliament generally speaking I found that this won approval from the public. It gave the ladies an opportunity to come out in their evening dresses and they lent the occasion a bit of glamour and this had a pleasing impact on the prosaic, everyday facets of parliamentary life we know so well.

The honourable member referred to what he called the provocative statement of the mover of the motion. He indicated it was traditional not to interject, or to make the party rough. I agree with him that this practice has been traditional, but I also say that in my experience it is also traditional for members not to debate questions, particularly questions without notice, on opening day. It is also traditional that members do not spend a long period in asking questions on opening day. It is always customary to ask a few, and to throw in one or two political questions. That is part of the game. However, on this occasion 24 questions were put on the notice paper, and three questions without notice were asked.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What is wrong with that?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I am pointing out how things have changed. I wonder whether we are sticking to tradition or starting something new. If this is something new that is all right. In the four pre-election years of the previous Government—in 1961, 1964, 1967, and 1971—the Opposition gave notice of a total of 18 questions in the four years and asked two questions without notice. In my experience at the opening of Parliament this year a greater number of questions were placed on the notice paper or asked without notice than on any previous opening day.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: This indicates the standards of the Government and the Opposition.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I was obliged to ask three questions without notice, because of the very unsatisfactory answer I received to the first question.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I do not know whether the Leader of the Opposition was being facetious when he referred to the

fact that when certain matters were discussed on one occasion at Labor Caucus meetings he would have liked to be a fly on the wall.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I was being facetious.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: What I am saying is in a serious vein. I suppose we are unique in this respect. The Labor Party makes its minutes available to the State archives so that anyone who desires to look into the history of the State A.L.P. can get the permission of the party to inspect the records of the minutes. In so doing a person will not be attempting anything new; he will have the same experience as any university student who seeks permission to inspect the minutes for the purpose of studying the history of Western Australia from the parliamentary and caucus points of view. I have not known any student who has made an application to the A.L.P. for permission to read these minutes being refused. It is good that these matters should be brought into the open.

I am pleased to note that a new-look seems to be coming into the Liberal Party. Generally it is to be found in the Federal sphere. I know that a decision has been taken by that party to elect its future Cabinet members through the votes of the members of the party, instead of leaving such appointments to the leader, as has been done in the past.

I feel the new procedure is more democratic. This will make it obligatory for members to vote on the appointment of a person who has ambitions and the ability to become a Minister. In the past very often such a person was denied the opportunity to be elected, merely because he stood out of line with the leader. In other words, if such a person did not do as Big Father said he was on the outer. The new method is more democratic, and I am glad the Liberal Party is following the procedure adopted by the Labor Party.

The Labor Party has taken a lot of criticism on matters in the Federal sphere and on matters in the State sphere. I am sure members of the Opposition cannot take much comfort—this would be as welcome and appetising as cold porridge—in some of the events which have happened recently. For example, in the *Week-end News* of the 31st March appears a report headed, "Peak support for A.L.P. in Gallup Poll". The report states—

Fifty-three per cent. of the electors interviewed by the Gallup Poll this month said they would vote A.L.P. "at a Federal election today".

That is 3 per cent. more than at the election four months ago, and equal to the vote which gave the Chifley A.L.P. Government a big majority of seats in 1946.

In view of the comments which I have heard being expressed in this House since we have been the Government, this report does not line up.

Perhaps it would give the Liberal Party less comfort to know that the local government elections in Brisbane last Saturday produced an amazing result. I refer to a report which appeared in *The Australian* which stated that the Liberal-Country Party Government reduced the number of wards for the election from 28 to 21 in a bid to oust Labor from power. With 21 wards contested, the result was that Labor won 20 wards, and the Liberal-Country Party representative won the remaining one.

The Liberal-Country Party representative is in an unfortunate position because if he moves a motion he will have to rely on the generosity of another member to second it, otherwise it lapses. If that member comes forward with a good motion or a good proposition he will have little difficulty in having it seconded.

The Hon. J. Heltman: The member seconding it must be big-hearted.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I was hoping that I would get that reaction, because I am sure that both the Leader of the Opposition and Mr. Heltman realise the frustration which must have been felt by the Labor Government and the Labor Opposition of previous years, because never in the history of this Chamber has Labor really been in Government.

It is impossible tonight for me to refer to every matter that has been raised in this debate. Those to which I do not make reference tonight will be examined by the departments concerned, so that the questions which have been asked may be answered and the information sought may be supplied.

However, some matters must be dealt with now for the sake of the record in *Hansard*. While the items are still fresh in my mind I will commence by referring to some of the remarks made last evening by Mr. Clive Griffiths. What I will say to the honourable member is not intended to be critical. If he is prepared to take a word of advice he will realise that although he might have been inclined to have a shot at me, I am not having a shot back at him; I am merely correcting some of his statements which were out of line.

He referred to a letter he wrote to me on the 20th June, but then he realised that he wrote the letter on the 16th June and received a reply from me on the 20th June. Surely any member would agree that that was pretty good going. I can assure everyone that I am kept busy, but I have made a feature of replying as soon as possible to all correspondence I receive, whether it be from members of Parliament, the public, or organisations. It is for this

reason I am generally in my office before 8.00 a.m. I get a lot of the paper work out of the way before dealing with deputations and other work associated with a portfolio. Of course, I know I am not the only Minister to do this.

In his letter Mr. Clive Griffiths referred to the need for "Stop" signs at intersections in Oats Street, Carlisle. The fact that he referred to Carlisle gives me the impression that the part of Oats Street to which he referred is on the other side of the railway line. Oats Street commences at Albany Highway and there are two intersections before the railway line is reached. From then on a number of intersections are encountered. I would like to point out that the railway line is an electoral boundary. The portion closest to Albany Highway is in the province of Mr. Clive Griffiths and myself, while the area on the other side of the railway line is represented by Miss Elliott and Mr. Willesee, and Mr. Jamieson, a member in another place.

I acknowledged the letter from Mr. Clive Griffiths and told him the position was already being examined because I had received a few weeks before from Mr. Jamieson a letter on the same subject. The file can be examined at any time to substantiate what I am saying, but I do not tell lies. The Minister opposite is sceptical of course.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You are the only Minister, so I do not know what you are talking about.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: The Leader of the Opposition is always like that. I made a statement which is absolutely true. I do not tell lies.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I turned around and you said that the Minister is sceptical. You are talking about yourself. I was not even talking to you!

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I am keen to hear what the Minister has to say.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Mr. Clive Griffiths received acknowledgement of his letter and was told that the matter was already being examined and in due course a reply would be given. I was upset to learn yesterday that the honourable member did not receive a reply, and a letter is already in the post to explain what occurred. All I do is sign routine correspondence because clerical matters are attended to in the office. I am giving the facts now so that the honourable member will know that his request was dealt with.

I immediately had my officers contact the Main Roads Department which is responsible for the erection of signs, and early in July, which was only just a week or so after I received the request concerning the "Stop" signs, they were erected in the whole of Oats Street. Now I do not

think it is too bad for a Minister to receive a request for something to be done, have investigations made, and then within a fortnight or three weeks for the approval to be given and the signs to be erected. For the information of members a "Stop" sign was erected at Hubert Street, Bank Street, Tucker Street, Jupiter Street, Raleigh Street, and Harrison Street on the 12th July. I am sure the honourable member must have seen the signs since then or he would have written again repeating the request that action be taken. However, when the honourable member receives the letter he will fully understand the situation.

The same honourable member referred to truck operators transporting goods to the north-west. One of his queries concerned whether or not the permit fees had been increased. I have given an explanation which I think is perfectly fair and reasonable.

The Act provides that administrative costs are to be paid from the Transport Commission Fund which is made up of license and permit fees. I want to explain that the fees paid by the operators in the north are lower today than they were when this Government took office. That is the first point I wish to make and it is an important one. On the 1st July, 1971, there was a reduction from \$3.80 to \$3.30, and on the 1st January, 1972, a further reduction of 50c was made. This action was taken because the fund had in it more than sufficient to cover the administrative costs and it was felt that this was one way to pass the surplus on to the operators. At the beginning of this year the fees were increased, but they are still not as high as they were when this Government took office.

I believe truck operators are hard workers. They must work long and difficult hours and they experience all kinds of trouble. One of the weaknesses of some, however, is that they are not good businessmen. Because of the contracts they had made they were vulnerable when the position deteriorated. They were all right during the boom in the north because at that time anything which was capable of moving was used to transport loads to and from the north and it was possible to make money out of the venture. The operators were then tempted, as I suppose everyone is when things are going well, to spend money. They bought new trucks, and for a while things went well. Then suddenly a recession occurred in the north and the truck operators were in trouble. During the boom period they were able to get loads to and from the north, but when the loads were no longer available, they were in trouble. They could not meet their payments on their trucks and, of course, something else had to go. They started to dodge permit fees, they could not pay their road maintenance tax, and they got into more trouble.

Arising out of those difficulties quite a number of operators were prosecuted and fined. Of course, they got into a hopeless financial mess. I think that many of them were in that type of mess before the previous Government went out of office and a large number of them had gone to gaol because they could not meet their commitments.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What is a large number?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: They estimated it was something over 40.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Who are "they"?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: My officers, who advise me. They said it was very difficult to get all the records because sometimes a fellow would be arrested and spend only one night in gaol. On the next day he would pay his commitments, and be out again.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Did they find out the answer to the question concerning how many people were put in gaol for not paying their permit fees?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I have already told the honourable member and it is recorded in his speech that the two matters are interlocked.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Will the Leader of the House please address the Chair?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I am sorry, Mr. Deputy President. The Premier promised, in his policy speech, that when we became the Government the road maintenance tax would be repealed. However that tax was not repealed and members know why. It was not because the Premier did not try, but because his proposal was rejected. That meant the law still existed and the road maintenance tax was still in force. Certain procedures had to be followed.

To state the situation clearly, the Government was worried and eventually it formed a special committee to consider the whole road maintenance tax problem. I think all members know the composition of that committee. First of all, the chairman was a representative of the Treasury. He knew what was wrong from the financial side. Another member was the Commissioner of Transport—the man responsible for the collection of the tax and for the operation of the Act. Of course, the secretary of the commission was a man who could get all the details necessary from his officers. Another member was Mr. Colin Campbell who was associated with the other side of the picture and who knew what happened when these men were sent to gaol.

We saw that putting men in gaol was no solution. They were not criminal types, although they had broken the laws. When they were put in gaol they cost the State about \$70 a week, and on top of that their

wives had to receive social service benefits, and their children had to be cared for. It was obvious that any humanitarian Government, or Minister, should do something to cure the situation. The decision was left to the committee to come up with a recommendation to the Government.

It came up with the proposition which leads me to the point I wish to make for the benefit of Mr. Clive Griffiths. The first condition was that if an operator got into trouble, so far as his commitments were concerned, the first thing he had to do was approach the commission and fill out a special form which indicated his assets and liabilities. Such a person discussed his troubles freely, but confidentially, with officers of the commission and arising out of that discussion a decision was made.

If such a person had sufficient assets to do something worth while to solve his problems he would often make a promise to pay a certain amount per month, and he would be allowed to continue to operate. Some operators paid \$100 or \$200 a month, and others could afford only \$10 a month. The fact that an operator still owed some thousands of dollars made no difference to his getting a permit if he was allowed to continue to operate. If an agreement was reached between the operator and the commission he was able to get a permit and continue in business. So it is not correct to say that if an operator owed money he could not get a permit.

I suggest that the person who told Mr. Clive Griffiths that this happened was not stating the facts.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: It was more than one person.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Well, persons. I know some of them because I have interviewed them in my office. I am not a gambling man but I could almost bet on who they were.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Can the Minister tell me?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I will tell the honourable member privately, to satisfy ourselves about this particular matter.

Some operators, of course, were able to pay the full amount involved. However, others were able to come to terms and continue operating. The bad businessman was going from bad to worse and was usually so far in debt that he had no chance of getting out of it. In those cases the debts were suspended—not wiped out—on condition that the operator concerned went out of the industry. He had to sell his truck, clean up his liabilities, and get another job where he would probably be much happier and where he would be able to get somewhere.

The Hon. J. Heitman: Does the Minister think that their troubles might have been caused by not tendering correctly?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I think they were badly organised. They started to cut each other's throats by reducing rates, and they were at the mercy of the persons who used the unfortunate situation to their own advantage. Being bad businessmen they got into worse trouble. However, provided they went out of the industry their debts were suspended. They were not to be allowed back into the industry unless they could indicate to the committee that they were financially viable. If there were a sudden resurgence of business in the north, and they could show through a bank statement that they were financially stable, they would be allowed back into the industry, but they would not be absolved from paying their debts and they would still be responsible for them.

That is the position and I have tried to explain it as fairly and sincerely as I possibly could. A large number of operators have gone out of the industry.

Now let me refer to some of those people mentioned by Mr. Clive Griffiths. They are the fellows who have not paid their tax and permit fees, and who have not got permits to operate. They are operating without them.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: They are still operating.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: That is right, and they are well known. I could tell members some stories which have made me lose a little bit of faith in human nature. I know that we all have weaknesses, and that sort of thing, but some of the operators—and I would perhaps include those referred to by Mr. Clive Griffiths—still have a number of charges to face in the courts for nonpayment of their debts.

The Transport Commission is limited in the number of inspectors it can employ. There are approximately a dozen on the road and generally they concentrate on the main highways. In the north, it is customary for them to put what might be called a road block on the Murchison River which the trucks must cross to come south. People who do not have permits are generally picked up at that point. The only alternative open to the drivers is to go 200 miles further to cross the waterways at other points. Some do this to dodge the inspectors. However, the inspectors are not on duty continually at the Murchison River. The news travels on the grapevine that the inspectors are not there during a certain week or that they have left. It is marvellous how quickly news like this travels. Some operators without permits have got through.

I want members to know that it is not necessary for an individual to go to the Transport Commission to obtain a permit. A person in Carnarvon may want a permit to bring a load down and to take one back.

He can ring the office, give his name and details, and promise to pick up a permit when he comes down. This happens and invariably the commission tells him to go ahead. If such a person is stopped on the way he can say that he has rung the office and obtained permission to come down. The inspectors can check on this.

However, one particular operator used to send a telegram to say that he was on his way with a load and would call to pick up his permit. If he was not picked up by an inspector on the way down and asked to present his credentials he never went to the office to obtain his permit. He simply picked up his load and went back. He used the telegram as an excuse if he was picked up. He would say to the inspectors that he had sent a telegram and had been given the O.K. to collect and pay for his permit when he arrived. He got away with this repeatedly.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Would the department allow him to do that repeatedly?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Yes, until the department eventually caught up with him.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I would have thought that if he pulled this once that would have been the end of it instead of sending telegrams repeatedly and getting the same result.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: He did it on a number of occasions. The same situation can apply with people who ring up. The big disadvantage is that these things cannot be tendered as evidence in a court of law.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Which things?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: A telegram, for example. Anybody who wanted to put someone else in could send a telegram stating that a certain person was bringing down a load and could put the other man's name to the telegram. It would never hold water in a court. I will not go into the legal difficulties.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I do not think you should.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I could make available to the honourable member a prepared statement which, I think, would convince him in respect of this matter.

I now come to the freezer operators. Mr. Clive Griffiths told us a story but I could have told it myself in almost the same words, because I listened, in all probability, to the same operator who went to him. I will tell Mr. Clive Griffiths his name in confidence and he can tell me whether I am right or wrong. If it is not the same person, his twin brother operates the same sort of truck.

Mr. Clive Griffiths referred to two operators. Members who represent the area will know the story. Originally, Gas-

coyne Traders operated the freezer trucks. Doubtless members have seen their trucks on the road on many occasions.

The Hon. J. L. Hunt: There were operators before them.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Gascoyne Traders are the ones which have been mentioned. Gascoyne Traders were established originally for the main purpose of bringing growers' produce from Carnarvon to the market. After a long period of time, as sometimes happens with a monopoly, it was thought that the service was not as good as it should have been. The growers thought the prices were not right and they approached the Transport Commission and the Transport Advisory Committee.

Eventually it was decided to call tenders to bring another operator in. The previous Government did this and I think it was the correct approach. I am certainly not criticising what was done. Bell Brothers were the successful tenderers.

This is how there came to be two operators. Their main purpose was to provide a freezer truck service for growers in Carnarvon. They provide an excellent service. Recently complaints were lodged by a group of people pushing their own barrow. I sent an excellent officer to make inquiries in Carnarvon to find out what the marketing position was not only in Perth but also in Adelaide. As a result of his inquiries it was decided the two operators should continue and that no further operator should be allowed in until February of next year when the contracts which have been let expire.

It was said that the two operators do not compete and that they go to different towns. I do not suppose there has been such keen competition between any two companies, not only in Western Australia but in any other part of Australia. Anybody in Carnarvon will tell us this. The operators cut prices to obtain business. Eventually the price-cutting became such that it was pointless for either operator to go into the same places in the hope of receiving custom because there was none to be had. This is why the operators started to go to different places.

It has also been said that those who operate the freezer services sometimes go from Perth to Carnarvon, from Perth to Port Hedland, from Perth to Dampier, or from Perth to Tom Price with a through service. Mr. Clive Griffiths said in his speech that the operators told people in places which rely on freezer carting, "We want to cart the ordinary goods. If we do not get the ordinary goods' carting, up will go the charges of the other." That is simply not the position. I realise that Mr. Clive Griffiths may have been told this, but I am stating what the position is.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Cut it out.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: The freezer operators were told that they could only engage in ordinary carting if they obtained permits in the same way as any other operator in the north. They can receive a permit to cart ordinary goods from one point to another.

Only in the last couple of months applications have been received to cart freezer goods and general goods in the one cargo. Permission was refused by the Transport Advisory Committee. The committee said that if these operators wanted to engage in carting ordinary goods they had to apply for a permit in the same way as everybody else in the north and that if the permit were granted they could cart ordinary goods.

That is the position with the freezer operators, and it is one which will continue to exist until next February. The freezer operators are doing an excellent job and are providing a service for the north. They were established to do just this and they are still not working at anywhere near full capacity. To allow extra operators to go in would spoil the existing situation for everybody. A lesson has been learnt from experience. There can be too many operators when there is simply not enough cargo for them to handle at a profit.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Before you leave the subject, in case you think your Government has been the only one to give these fellows time to pay, let me assure you that the previous Government also gave them time to pay. Anybody who put up a proposition was given time to pay. I personally went to the lockup on a couple of occasions to release a few fellows.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I commend the previous Government for doing so.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I wanted you to know that.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I did not make any criticism to the effect that that was not done.

Mr. Leeson referred to the dust problem on the goldfields and said he hoped the committee would eradicate it. Many years ago the Forests Department began a green belt around Kalgoorlie. If members only knew Kalgoorlie as I knew it 30 or 40 years ago, when every green stick was chopped down! It is always said that the policy of Australians is, "If it moves shoot it; if it does not move chop it down; and if it is empty chuck it away." The people in Kalgoorlie chopped up anything for miles around that was good enough for firewood. Eventually, the country around Kalgoorlie was left in such a state that every time the winds blew there was a dust storm. I remember my mother cleaning the house out and suddenly a dust storm blowing up. She would sit down and cry at the hours of work she had put in to make the house

clean. The Forests Department did a wonderful job, and I was surprised to see forests growing again in areas where the forests I had known had been chopped down. There is now some wonderful timber around Kalgoorlie.

Mr. Leeson referred to Broken Hill. Perhaps members may not know that there is only one monument to a man in Broken Hill, and that is a monument to a great naturalist called Carl Morris. The people in Broken Hill were very concerned about dust storms, which had resulted in the houses in one section of the town being completely buried by sand. The first thing Carl Morris did was to put a fence around the town to block out the winds, and it was amazing how in a very short time, with very little rainfall—I am sorry members are not interested. This is one of the most interesting stories I have ever read or heard about.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Unless I look at you all the time you get some exaggerated idea that I am not interested. Grow up, man!

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I did not say anything about that.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I know what you were saying. Get on with it!

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Carl Morris had the co-operation of Essington Lewis, the General Manager of B.H.P., who was on a world tour at the time. From all the arid regions he visited he sent back shrubs, trees, and plants. As a result of his work, one can now find wonderful gardens, parks, and even lakes in Broken Hill, which are great picnic spots for the people. The desert has been transformed. Because of the dust storms, on some days one could not see from one side of the main street—Argent Street—to the other. That is how bad the dust storms were. Carl Morris is the only man in whose honour a monument has been erected in Broken Hill, and the park in which people enjoy themselves is known as Carl Morris Park.

Mr. Leeson also referred to the *Prospector*. The main purpose in instituting the *Prospector* was to give a service to the people in the towns between Perth and Kalgoorlie. It has performed a marvellous job and is one of the best trains of its type in the world. Just before last Christmas we had a visit from two senior officials of the Canadian Railways who came here to have a look at the *Prospector*. They were so impressed that I understand they went back with the intention of building a similar type of train to be put into operation on the Canadian Railways. The *Prospector* is losing money but it is providing a service which the people deserve.

I want to refer to some of the comments about traffic. In connection with the takeover of traffic control, from the beginning I have set my face against

debate, except in Parliament. Members will look in the Press in vain to find a letter or comment from me. One comment would lead to others and start a controversy which I do not think would serve any good purpose.

Mr. Baxter made some suggestions in regard to driver training. I feel perhaps this is the sphere in which we will find the solution to our road toll. The National Safety Council conducts driving courses for beginners and advanced drivers. It has excellent instructors and they turn out some of the best drivers on our roads today. When people go through that driving school and pass their tests, they know they will be good drivers. I mention this in case members do not know it. At the Children's Court there is a special magistrate—Mr. Hitchins. When juvenile traffic offenders come before his court he sends them out to the special drivers' school conducted by the National Safety Council. Of the 250 juveniles he has sent to the school, only seven have ever returned to the courts on other traffic offences.

A similar situation applies in Manjimup, where the high school has for many years been providing driving instruction for the higher grade pupils. None of those who have been through the driving course at the Manjimup High School has ever come before the court on a traffic offence. That is the kind of positive action that must be taken.

A news item in *The West Australian* of the 29th March reported the comments of Mr. Peter Brock, a driver for General Motors-Holden's who is well known in motor racing circles. The report reads, in part—

Mr. Brock addressed a driver education meeting at the National Safety Council in Perth yesterday.

He said that the right-hand rule in the Eastern States, the go-slow campaigns and pleas to drive safely were ineffectual.

He supported W.A.'s priority road systems and hoped it would be implemented in Victoria. He said that the essence of good driving was in training the driver, not in the power of the machine.

He congratulated the council on its beginner and advanced driving instruction courses. He approved the advanced courses for juvenile offenders who were threatened with automatic suspension of licences for traffic offences.

Imagine my surprise when in *The Australian* on the same day I read a news item which reported the Chief Secretary in Victoria (Mr. Meagher) as saying that Victoria would introduce the rules in regard to "Stop" signs which apply in Western Australia.

When a motorist stops he must also give way. That has been law here since 1971—over two years now. The article continues—

The new stop sign rule is part of the Government campaign to simplify road laws and step up the introduction of the priority roads plan.

Mr. Meagher said Victoria had decided to change the meaning of the stop sign before the other States made a move because Melbourne had more intersections than any other city.

This announcement was only made on the 29th March. Victoria claims it is to be the first State to bring this in—it is only two years behind us. If we look at what we have achieved here through co-operation, we will realise we are a long way ahead of some of the other States.

I would like to join issue with Mr. Baxter on a few of the matters he raised. I do not wish to delay members too long, but on one occasion he said—

Most patrolmen are too prone to apprehend drivers who commit some small offence. Instead they should be keeping their eyes on those who commit the more serious offences.

We are frequently asked questions about the co-operation between the Traffic Branch and local government bodies, and about the attitude of our patrolmen to minor offences. I can honestly say that the patrolmen are more anxious to give a caution than a ticket. I believe that Mr. Baxter will be convinced by the figures I have here.

The example was given of a heavily laden truck travelling at 50 miles per hour in a 40 mile per hour zone, and of a patrolman following the truck and completely ignoring its speed. I am afraid I cannot accept that statement. I do not deny that it may have happened and Mr. Baxter saw something like this, but I cannot fully accept this unless I see it myself. In that respect I may be called a doubting Thomas.

Of course I will refer to the subject of seat belts. I do not care what has been said about the road toll increasing, I state emphatically this does not mean that seat belts are a failure. I think Mr. Claughton interjected and said quite correctly that the people who have been killed on the roads were not wearing seat belts. It is correct to say that very few of those killed were wearing seat belts, and these people would not have lived no matter what they were wearing.

I did have a list of the organisations which approve of seat belts, but I appear to have mislaid it. However, I can say that every safety organisation, every traffic authority, every medical association, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, every paraplegic and quadriplegic association, and every professional motor driving

club have laws which insist that safety belts be worn at all times. All these people praise the use of safety belts. Every Minister in the Commonwealth who is responsible for traffic safety repeatedly says at every A.T.A.C. conference I have attended that seat belts are the greatest lifesaver this country has ever known. It is also stated that they considerably reduce the severity of injuries suffered in accidents.

I have here the annual report of The St. John Ambulance Association of the 30th June, 1972. I was present at the meeting of the association at which the report was presented. I hope that the figures are even better this year, because I believe this report demonstrates the value of the wearing of seat belts.

A seat belt will not prevent an accident; no-one could ever make such a claim. However, wearing a seat belt will minimise the effects of the trauma. I would like to read part of the report, as follows—

The demand for ambulance service continues to grow and in the year 1971-72, Headquarters Ambulances attended 17,020 calls transporting 21,005 cases.

Both these figures are considerably higher than the previous year. The report continues—

Whilst the overall figures constitute an increase of 540 calls and 928 cases on those for 1970-71, a breakdown shows the most dramatic aspect to be a reduction of accident cases by 687 (18.53%).

Although accidents are still occurring and the number of fatalities is going up, the number of people seriously injured is lower. This result is also noticeable at the paraplegic and quadriplegic centre at Shenton Park.

Mr. Logan and Mr. Syd Thompson referred to the chasing of speedsters. It is implied that if the speedsters are not chased they will not reach the very high speeds. The person who drives down side streets at very high speeds and through red lights must be accustomed to it. A motorist who usually drives within the speed limits does not suddenly accelerate to 90 miles an hour when he knows he is being pursued by the law.

The Hon. F. R. White: But they will go from 60 to 90 miles an hour.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I would like to make this statement for the record, and it is in answer to a query by Mr. Syd Thompson. He said that it should be sufficient to take the number of the car. I will explain the difficulty which then arises in this statement—

The first requirement in a traffic charge is being able to identify the person who committed the offence. Unless offending motorists are appre-

hended at the time the offence is committed this difficulty exists, particularly with young offenders who travel four, five or six to a car. Each may have a turn at driving the vehicle and therefore, no one is in a position to say who may have been the driver at a particular time. It is a problem experienced by police forces throughout Australia—

I particularly made this inquiry of all the main Police Forces in Australia. It continues—

—and it is essential to ascertain this information at the earliest possible time.

That is, to find out who was driving the car. To continue—

Another reason for apprehending "speedsters" at the time is that some people by the very nature of the way they drive, need to be stopped. Surely reckless, dangerous, careless and drinking drivers should be put off the road at the earliest opportunity. Many of these people are arrested immediately because the way in which they were driving was considered to be an outright threat to the safety of others. There have been many instances, some quite recently, of drivers speeding at close to 100 miles per hour in suburban streets.

And one case of this type was referred to yesterday. To continue—

Are these people to be permitted free access to the City to behave in such an irresponsible manner? Have we no thought for the safety of the community, least of all to ourselves? Unless these types of drivers are shown that speed and other regulations must be observed, they will just continue on a mad rampage. Many responsible drivers behave themselves on the road because of the thought of being caught, to relieve them of this anxiety would only increase the numbers of drivers whose behaviour leaves a lot to be desired.

I would like to interpolate here: If it were generally known that the police were under instructions to call off the chase once the speedster travels at over 60 m.p.h., one could well imagine what our roads would be like. I ask members to think about this earnestly and sincerely.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: All it would need is a radio message to every police car in the metropolitan area.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: That is right, but I will continue with this statement—

Police have an obligation to stop an offending motorist as soon as possible and advise him of the nature of the offence he is alleged to have committed. It does little to substantiate a charge in Court to have to interview

a driver two days after an alleged speeding offence and say, "The night before last you were seen to drive at sixty miles per hour in such and such a street". It is unsatisfactory evidence to the Court, irritating to the driver and embarrassing to the police officer or inspector to make a belated accusation in that way.

Would it not become generally known that law enforcement officers would not chase speeders over, say, sixty miles per hour? Drivers exceeding the speed limit at speeds less than sixty miles per hour would be inclined to increase speed to make a getaway. Don't think it wouldn't happen, and it would end up making a mockery of the traffic laws.

Until such time as some successful alternative way is found of bringing these people to Court, police and traffic inspectors are committed to apprehending them in this way.

There will be isolated instances similar to the tragedy which occurred only recently at a suburban intersection but, thankfully, they are isolated. It goes without saying that when offenders are chased the pursuit is taken up with safety for all concerned being the uppermost thought in mind. On many occasions a chase has been discontinued for this very reason.

It is not factual to say that the police are instructed, like the Canadian Mounties, "to get their man". They receive no such instruction and it is not unusual for them, more particularly when they are in a motorcar, to call off the chase because they realise it is dangerous.

Some time ago I asked permission to make a statement regarding the apple and pear industry legislation. The Leader of the Opposition raised an objection and said that I should refer to the matter when I replied to the debate. I agree with him, and I will refer to it now. I realise that what I am about to say may be provocative, but members must appreciate that my view conflicts with the views of others. However, these are what I would call the facts of the matter—

1. The introduction of the Apple Export Marketing Bill into Parliament at the end of 1972 was made at the request of the industry in the form sought by the industry.

The Bill was prepared after the request had been passed at the 1971 and 1972 Fruit Growers' conferences. The Bill, as prepared, was discussed in detail with the Executive of the Fruit Growers' Association and agreed to by them. The Government's move to introduce the legislation reflected its assurance to the industry that the measure would be introduced

in the terms sought by the industry and was consistent throughout the debate.

2. Prior to the drafting of the Bill the Government had available to it preliminary recommendations from the Fruit Handling and Transport Committee which it had set up to examine the whole question of export apple and pear marketing. This Committee had carried out a year's intensive research, including the commissioning of a report by the P.A. Management Consultants on the United Kingdom market for Western Australian apples. The Fruit Handling Committee also had access to a survey compiled by officers of the Department of Agriculture on production costs and the findings of a senior officer of the Horticulture Section of the Department of Agriculture who, during this period, associated with P.A. Consultants in the preparation of their report.
3. Despite approval by the Executive of the Fruit Growers' Association there was adverse comment on one section of the Bill—

I think that was the section relating to cool storage. To continue—

—and, as a result, the Government deleted the section at the later request of the Association.

4. The Legislative Council therefore received the Bill which was consistent with the industry's requirements and requests. It was aware from the second reading speech of the background to the legislation and of the urgent need for the legislation. It was aware that time was critically short to set up the Board in time for the 1973 season. Despite this the Opposition insisted on a number of amendments which were not acceptable to the Government, including a requirement for a Referendum prior to the implementation of the measure, knowing that such a proposal would result in a delay of proclamation which would mean the provisions could not be implemented for the 1973 season for which it was anticipated they would be urgently needed.

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: That has been proved to be incorrect.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: To continue—

By its imposition of the Referendum requirement, its failure to recognise the Fruit Growers' Association as representative of the industry, and its willingness to pander to the vested interests of the minority,—

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: What nonsense.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I told members that my view would differ from theirs. I accepted the view of members opposite without comment when they presented it. To continue—

—the Opposition rejected the Bill which had been requested by the Industry and prepared in the terms which had been indicated by the industry.

The Government could not compromise its understanding with the industry, yet the Legislative Council was insistent on amendments.

To suggest that amending a Bill into an unacceptable form, and to insist on the unacceptable amendments is not tantamount to rejecting it, is hedging the question. It is pedantic quibbling, deserving of condemnation.

The letter contained in the *Warren Blackwood Times* of 6th December, 1972, which was quoted by Mr. Ferry, should be viewed in its proper perspective. It was after all, contributed by a former Liberal speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

The Hon. N. McNeill: What does that mean?

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: What has that to do with it?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: The next matter to which I wish to refer was raised by Mr. Heitman. He spoke at some length about the efficiency of local authorities in the examination and licensing of vehicles. I do not want to start a debate on that matter; I will merely state my views, and the honourable member may obtain a copy of my speech and examine it. He related a story about taking a vehicle, with dealers' plates attached, from Carnamah to Morawa, after he purchased it. If I am wrong the honourable member may say so. Then Mr. Heitman became a little hazy because he said—

The traffic inspector came straight out, gave the vehicle the once-over, examined it thoroughly right through, and said it was safe to be licensed...

However, he then said the authority would not license the vehicle until it was serviced—whatever that means.

The Hon. J. Heitman: No, I didn't say that. You should read the proof of *Hansard*.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I am reading a copy of the honourable member's speech.

The Hon. J. Heitman: They got the story wrong. You should read the corrected proof. It was licensed immediately.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I would like to draw Mr. Heitman's attention to regulation 26 (3) of the Traffic (Licensing Authorities) Regulations, which imposes conditions on the use of dealers' plates.

The Hon. J. Heitman: I knew you would pick on that.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Well, the honourable member did it.

The Hon. J. Heitman: Yes, I know.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: One of the conditions is that—

... the vehicle bearing general (or dealers') identification tablets is to comply with the Vehicle Standards Regulations, 1965.

Apparently the vehicle did not comply with the regulations, otherwise one would assume the Morawa Shire would have licensed it.

I would also like to give Mr. Heitman some advice about the use of dealers' plates. He informed the House that, and I quote his words, "I borrowed dealer plates in order to go over to Morawa." I wonder if he is aware of a further requirement regarding the use of dealers' plates. This is, and I quote regulation 26 (3) (c) as follows—

The conditions applying to the use of an unlicensed vehicle bearing general identification tablets are that—

(c) the vehicle is driven by, or in the presence of, the registered holder of the tablets or his servant only;

I would like to refer to a few other matters, but the time is late, and I will direct just a few remarks to Mr. Withers. He raised the question of freight rates. He picked out only one instance and built his case around it although dozens of other aspects are involved. He said it is no good going to the State Shipping Service and asking it about freight rates because one will not get the true story. This reminded me of the occasion when he referred to corn-flakes or Weetles. He mentioned shipping a ton of Weetles and paying freight on the cubic capacity of the product. Members know how great is the volume of Weetles in a packet, and how small is the weight. Of course, using an example like that does not get Mr. Withers to first base. It is merely taking something out of context and trying to build a case out of it.

The Hon. R. Thompson: It is a comparison of 12 ounces with 12 hundredweight.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I thank those members who have contributed to the debate on the Address-in-Reply. Naturally we do not share the views they hold on many questions. I was even a little perturbed with the amendment, because I felt that it was undeserved. I do not agree

with the criticism that has been levelled against Mr. Roy Cloughton because I think he gave what was, in his view, a worthwhile interpretation of what the Government is doing, and his comments about his leader (The Hon. J. T. Tonkin) are those which I endorse. The Premier is an excellent servant of this State.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That is indisputable, but when you hear statements such as "He is the only man that can do this", that is bunkum, because there are many who could do it; even you could do it.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I thank the Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That ought to send you home quite happy.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Yes, I will go home quite happy, and as long as the Leader of the Opposition goes home contented we will both be happy. I do commend the statements made by Mr. Roy Cloughton in the same manner as I have commended the motion.

I conclude by expressing, on behalf of all Government members, and the members of this House, my best respects to the Governor and his lady. I was in his company this morning at a meeting of the Executive Council. I have been in his company quite often and I have always found him to be a delightful English gentleman. I use the term "English" advisedly, because very often I do not feel the same about others to whom the term "English" may be applied. His Excellency is an excellent worker for this State and an inspiration to the community. Both he and his good lady have encouraged all worth-while projects and causes. The State has been the better for having him and it will be the worse when it loses him.

It is on that note that I conclude my remarks. I will have an interesting comment to make later.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: But you do support the motion?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Yes, I do support the motion that was moved by The Hon. R. F. Cloughton.

Question put and passed; the Address-in-Reply thus adopted.

Presentation to Governor

THE HON. J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [11.52 p.m.]: I move—

That the Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor by the President and such members as may desire to accompany him.

Question put and passed.

QUESTIONS (12): ON NOTICE

1. PETROLEUM ACT

Amending Legislation

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth for the Hon. G. W. BERRY, to the Leader of the House:

Referring to Section 24 of the Petroleum Act, does the Minister for Mines anticipate legislation to correct the matters referred to by the Hon. I. G. Medcalf in the second reading debate on the Loan Bill on Friday, the 24th November, 1972 (refer pages 5809/5810 inclusive *Hansard* Proof Number 24)?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

The compensation provisions contained in sections 21-24 of the Petroleum Act, 1967, are considered adequate and no amendment is contemplated.

At page 5810 of Proof Number 24 of the 1972 *Hansard* reports, section 24 of the Petroleum Act has not been quoted in full. It purports to be a quote of subsection (1) of that section, but the commencing lines of that subsection have been omitted. They are, "Except where and then only to the extent agreed to by the parties or authorised by the Court . . .".

Correspondence on departmental files shows that Mr. Dempster was paid compensation by one oil exploration company in September, 1972.

2. ABORIGINES

Pastoral Leases: Purchase

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

In view of the pastoral leases being purchased for Aboriginal Advancement Groups—

- (a) will such properties be classified as reserves for Aborigines;
- (b) will the properties pay rates;
- (c) how will the rates be assessed;
- (d) what concessions will be allowed in respect of rentals and rates;
- (e) what are the arrangements for the servicing of loans and working capital;
- (f) will the existing gentlemen's agreements for the recovery of straying stock from adjoining properties be modified in any way?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON replied:

The only such purchases that I am aware of are those made by the Commonwealth Government on behalf of specific Aboriginal groups and I assume that it is these to which the Hon. Member refers. On this assumption the answers to his questions are—

- (a) No.
- (b) Yes.
- (c) Presumably on the same basis as before their acquisition for the Aboriginal group.
- (d) This is unknown. The matter has never been raised.
- (e) Each project is negotiated between the Commonwealth authority and the Aboriginal group concerned and details of financial arrangements are not known.
- (f) The properties will be conducted as pastoral enterprises in accordance with relevant legislative requirements.

3.

PENSIONERS

Travel Concessions

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams for the Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Is the concession which permits pensioners in Western Australia to travel free on Metropolitan Transport Trust buses, available to pensioners from other States?
- (2) If not, why is this the position?
- (3) Does the same concession apply to pensioners in other States, and if so, does the concession apply to visiting pensioners from Western Australia?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Because of lack of funds and due to the fact that agreement between the States on this matter has not yet been achieved.
- (3) Pensioners resident in all States receive some form of travel concession within their own State. This is not available to visiting pensioners from Western Australia.

4.

SPORTS

Coaches: Country Towns

The Hon. F. R. White for the Hon. J. M. THOMSON, to the Leader of the House:

To further encourage our young people to participate in fields of organised sport, and to help a

more equitable standard of competition, would the Minister for Recreation give serious and favourable consideration to the appointment of professional coaches who could be available to spend a stipulated time in country towns where—

- (a) little Athletic Clubs are now established, or may be established in the future;
- (b) there is any other field of sporting activity which may desire such services?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

Yes. The suggestion will be referred to the Youth, Community Recreation and National Fitness Council for consideration.

It is understood the Associated Sporting Committee of Western Australia, which it is expected will work in conjunction with the Council, has already declared a favourable attitude towards this policy.

5.

TOWN PLANNING

Land Acquisition

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

In view of the Minister for the Capital Territory, the Hon. K. E. Enderby's statement as reported in *The West Australian* of Monday, the 2nd April, 1973, on pages 1 and 12, and particularly the paragraph on page 12 which stated *inter alia* "The Federal and State Land Commission would be established to buy land in new areas in all States"—will the Government give a guarantee that there will be no departure from the Metropolitan Region Scheme or the Statutory Town Planning Schemes of Local Authorities?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

Discussions are continuing with the Australian Government on this matter. There will be no departure from the Metropolitan Region Scheme or its evolution as represented in The Corridor Plan for Perth, now approved by Cabinet, nor the statutory town planning schemes of Local Authorities.

6.

LANGBEINITE

Use in Fertiliser

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

- (1) (a) Has the Department of Agriculture made a suitability study of langbeinite to Western Australian agriculture; and

- (b) if so, will a copy be laid on the Table of the House?
- (2) Will the langbeinite proposed to be produced by Texada Mines Pty. Limited reduce the cost of potash to Western Australian primary producers?
- (3) What are the—
 - (a) uses in agriculture;
 - (b) types;
 - (c) quantities;
 - (d) prices;
 of potash in this State?
- (4) (a) Is it possible to further refine the potash deposits held by Texada to a more suitable product for agriculture; and
 - (b) if so,—
 - (i) is it proposed to further process them; and
 - (ii) when?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) The Department of Agriculture has not made a suitability study of langbeinite but it has verbally informed inquirers that langbeinite would be a suitable form of potash from the point of view of availability to pastures and crops.
- (2) This is not known.
- (3) (a) Potash is principally used for south west pastures plus some use for intensive crops.
- (b) Potassium chloride (muriate) Potassium sulphate.
- (c) In 1967, 10,000 tons of potash were used in W.A. mainly as muriate, and 6,500 tons of this were used on pastures. Usage is somewhat higher now, probably over 16,000 tons, but no precise figures are available.
- (d) Muriate of potash (60% K_2O) \$71 per ton bagged; Sulphate of potash (50% K_2O) \$110 per ton bagged.
- (4) (a) Langbeinite can be further refined to a more concentrated potash source, but this would depend on economics.
- (b) (i) and (ii) This is not known.

7. FITZGERALD RIVER RESERVE

Mining Applications

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

- (1) What authority did the Government use to reject applications for coalmining areas in the Fitzgerald River National Park?

- (2) What price did the Government pay for the area of 400 acres adjoining the Park which it has purchased?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) The report of the Environmental Protection Authority which recommended that in view of the small size and low grade of the montan wax deposits at Fitzgerald River indicated by the exploration and analysis undertaken by the Mines Department and the considerable scientific and tourist value of the Fitzgerald River Reserve, the current applications for coal prospecting areas in the Reserve should be refused.
- (2) As already stated by the Premier, it is not intended at this stage to disclose the price paid for the land within the external boundaries of this reserve because such disclosure could prejudice other possible purchases within this area.

8.

TRAFFIC

City Block

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

- (1) Is any action proposed to be taken concerning the traffic bottlenecks which occur daily in Howard Street, Sherwood Court and the Esplanade since William Street and Barrack Street became one way streets?
- (2) Does the Minister appreciate that it can now take 10 to 15 minutes to proceed from the bottom of Sherwood Court to the top of Sherwood Court via the Esplanade, Barrack Street and St. George's Terrace for persons using the car parks off Sherwood Court, a journey which was formerly unnecessary when Sherwood Court was a two way street?
- (3) Is the Minister aware of the dangerous traffic hazard which exists at the top of Sherwood Court when vehicles are attempting to turn into Sherwood Court as a result of—
 - (a) buses moving off along St. George's Terrace from the bus stop on the corner;
 - (b) buses which formerly left the city via Barrack Street, now leaving St. George's Terrace via Sherwood Court;
 - (c) pedestrians crossing St. George's Terrace;
 - (d) pedestrians crossing Sherwood Court; and

- (e) eastbound traffic in St. George's Terrace turning right to proceed along Sherwood Court?
- (4) Does the Minister appreciate that Howard Street is more or less continuously occupied by cars trying to get into St. George's Terrace?
- (5) As a matter of traffic engineering, is it considered desirable for a narrow street such as Howard Street to be used as a one way street uphill with other through traffic blocking St. George's Terrace?
- (6) Have any tests been made of the increased pollution level suffered by pedestrians and premises in Howard Street caused by vehicles in a more or less stationary position with their engines running for long periods and having their brakes and clutches engaged and disengaged in short bursts for a few feet at a time?
- (7) If not, will the Minister arrange for such tests to be carried out forthwith?
- (8) Is the present unsatisfactory situation which many motorists refer to as a "chamozzle", likely to last indefinitely, or if not, how long does the public have to put up with it?
- (9) Alternatively, is the Minister satisfied with the present situation?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) The system is under constant evaluation and adjustment by a committee comprising the Police Department, Perth City Council, Metropolitan (Perth) Passenger Transport Trust and the Main Roads Department. However, a period of time is necessary before traffic patterns stabilise.
- (2) For the reasons stated in (1), it is appreciated that there is some delay in negotiating this route. However, it is necessary for Sherwood Court to be one-way southward to be compatible with the Barrack/William Street one way system and to facilitate public transport routing.
- (3) (a) There are problems created by the necessity to re-locate bus stands during building construction which can be expected to be overcome when building is completed.
- (b) and (d) It is not considered that there is any undue hazard.
- (c) and (e) Remedial action is under investigation.

- (4) It is expected that traffic will re-distribute as experience is gained with the new system.
- (5) Yes. To be compatible with the one way William/Barrack Street system.
- (6) No.
- (7) This will be taken up with the Department of Environmental Protection.
- (8) Answered by (1).
- (9) Yes. Subject to any modifications which are necessary in the light of experience.

9.

DOG RACING *Commencement*

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) In view of the answer to my question concerning the announcement of a date for the first greyhound meeting in Western Australia, and the Minister's reply that it was not possible to announce a concrete date before the 30th June, 1973, does the Minister realise that if greyhound breeders heed the previous advice of the Minister and do not establish breeding kennels until announcements are made, then we would not have greyhound racing with dogs bred in Western Australia until early in 1976?
- (2) Because of those breeders who anticipated an early announcement, and have subsequently suffered financial loss, will the Minister announce an approximate commencement date for racing so that breeding kennels may be established without further financial loss due to the lack of forward Government planning, and also to allow arrangements for financing of the industry?

The Hon. R. Thompson for the Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS, replied:

- (1) No. If breeders had commenced operation when legislation passed both houses of Parliament, locally bred greyhounds could race in May, 1974.
- (2) No. Breeders were repeatedly warned not to anticipate any announcements.

10.

TOWN PLANNING

Wanneroo-Gingin Industrial Area

The Hon. J. HEITMAN, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) How soon will development start on the coastal strip of land recently excised by the Government from the Wanneroo and Gingin Shire Councils?

- (2) If the development is to take place in stages, what will be the first and subsequent stages?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) and (2) No land has yet been excised from the Shires of Wanneroo and Gingin. This will require legislation and I am therefore not in a position to make any statement at present on development plans.

11. EDUCATION

Sporting Facilities: Use by Public

The Hon. F. R. White for the Hon. J. M. THOMSON, to the Leader of the House:

With reference to the Albany High School playing fields—

- (1) Can the Minister advise when these areas will be available for full-time use for—
 (a) physical education activities;
 (b) sporting activities?
- (2) Is it the Government's desire that all such playing grounds financed from Treasury funds and established at senior high schools should be available to youth sporting associations over weekend periods?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) It is anticipated that the grounds will be available for full use at the beginning of next summer.
- (2) It is the Government's desire that school facilities should be made available to community groups through negotiation between the group concerned, the Education Department and the school authorities. Applications from youth sporting authorities would be considered on their merits within this policy.

12. BENBULLEN GRAZIERS AND PRODUCERS PTY. LTD.

Investigation

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

- (1) Has an investigation been carried out by officers of the Companies' Registration Office into a company known as Benbullen Graziers and Producers Pty. Ltd.?
- (2) If the answer to (1) is "Yes"—
 (a) when was the report completed;
 (b) to whom was the report made;
 (c) was the report referred to the Crown Law Department;

- (d) if so, what is the present situation in the handling of the matter; and
 (e) when will the report be available to the public?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) Preliminary inquiries were carried out by officers of the Companies Registration Office.
 The company was declared under section 172 of the Companies Act and an inspector appointed to investigate the affairs of the company on 1st July, 1970.
- (2) (a) 8th October, 1971.
 (b) The Honourable the Attorney-General.
 (c) Yes.
 (d) Still under consideration by Crown Law officers who have been requested to expedite the matter.
 (e) Consideration will be given to this matter when Crown Law advice has been received.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

THE HON. J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [11.53 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, the 10th April.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That is the best speech you have made tonight.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 11.54 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 4th April, 1973

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

QUESTIONS (64): ON NOTICE

1. SCHOOLS

Glen Forrest and Darlington

Mr. MOILER, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Are there any proposals to build a new school, half-cluster or otherwise, at Glen Forrest?
- (2) Is it proposed to make improvements and additions to the Darlington primary school, and if so, would he provide particulars?
- (3) What, in his department's view, is the optimum enrolment figure for primary schools?