

consequently, prices have risen and the cost of living seems to be increasing all the time. It is obvious that the Government which occupies the Treasury Bench today is not making any effort to control the spiralling prices. It adopts a laissez faire attitude; that is, that things will take their own course and finally resolve themselves. But I do not know whether they will.

The Federal Leader of the Country Party visited this State recently. His statement to the Country Party conference on the question of increased prices and costs gave their members great concern. He pointed out that the Commonwealth Government disclaimed possession of any power to deal with increases in prices but said the State Governments had the power. What did we find here? In the last session of Parliament the Government repealed the only law which made an attempt to control prices. It got a majority and hurriedly passed a Bill in this House and in another place, repealing the only legislation which could restrain the people who exploited this State. There is considerable exploitation not only of consumers but of the business community generally.

This question of the increase in prices is getting out of hand in Australia, but there is no attempt by the Government to deal with it. Side by side is the question of cartels and combines, which are growing; and more and more wealth is being concentrated in their hands. They are getting control of many producing establishments in this country. In time they will have considerably more power, and that will have a bad effect on the country. The amendment to the Address-in-Reply is well justified. The Government is deserving of censure for not tackling these problems as they should be tackled.

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

Ayes—23.

Mr. Bickerton
Mr. Brady
Mr. Curran
Mr. Evans
Mr. Fletcher
Mr. Graham
Mr. Hall
Mr. Hawke
Mr. Heal
Mr. J. Hegney
Mr. W. Hegney
Mr. Jamieson

Mr. Kelly
Mr. Molr
Mr. Norton
Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Rowberry
Mr. Sewell
Mr. Toms
Mr. Tonkin
Mr. May

(Teller.)

Noes—24.

Mr. Bovell
Mr. Brand
Mr. Burt
Mr. Cornell
Mr. Court
Mr. Craig
Mr. Crommelin
Mr. Grayden
Mr. Guthrie
Dr. Henn
Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Lewis

Mr. W. A. Manning
Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Nalder
Mr. Nimmo
Mr. O'Connor
Mr. O'Neill
Mr. Owen
Mr. Perkins
Mr. Roberts
Mr. Watts
Mr. Wild
Mr. I. W. Manning

(Teller.)

Pair.

No.

Mr. Andrew

Mr. Mann

Majority against—1.

Amendment thus negatived.

On motion by Mr. Evans, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.37 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 10th August, 1960

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

INFLATION

Measures to Halt Trend

1. The Hon. N. E. BAXTER asked the Minister for Mines:
 - (1) Is the Government concerned about the inflationary trend and its effect upon production costs?
 - (2) Would the Premier be prepared when attending the next Premiers' Conference to raise the question of the inflationary trend and request that all State Premiers and the Prime Minister agree on a policy to introduce complementary measures to endeavour to halt the

trend followed by a gradual process of deflation brought about by—

- (a) pegging of all prices, charges, salaries, wages, etc. as at a certain date;
 - (b) providing for a small equitable percentage all round reduction, in prices, charges, salaries, wages, etc. progressively every quarter as from the date of pegging;
 - (c) taking any other measures in conjunction thought to be necessary?
- (3) Would the Government regard the suggestions contained in the previous questions as socialistic; if so, why?
- (4) If the suggestions are not feasible, can the Premier or the Government suggest any other way of dealing with the inflationary trend?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) In certain kinds of national emergency, the pegging of prices and wages may be necessary, but even if the present circumstances could be so described and if it were possible to reach agreement between the Commonwealth and the States on the measures to be taken, this method would seem inappropriate for the following reasons:—
 - (a) The setting up of the necessary machinery would take too long to be effective in sufficient time.
 - (b) The present inflationary trend cannot be attributed solely to wage and cost rises. It is due also to high demand, especially for certain kinds of investment and consumption.
- (3) Not necessarily.
- (4) Rigid fiscal and monetary control on the part of the Commonwealth Government and the Reserve Bank of Australia.

HOUSING AT FREMANTLE

Erection of One-Unit Flats

2. The Hon. E. M. DAVIES asked the Minister for Mines:

Will the Minister state when it is expected that one-unit flats will be erected in the Fremantle district?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

At present there is no programme for the erection of one-unit flats in the Fremantle district. I might add that the one-unit flats for

widows are in the course of construction at South Perth, and that it is the first time that anything of this nature has been attempted. This first occasion is in the nature of an experiment, and if the experiment turns out satisfactorily other flats will follow.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT TRUST

Employees, Revenue, and Passengers

3. The Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Minister for Mines:

With relation to the Metropolitan (Perth) Passenger Transport Trust will the Minister advise regarding the financial years ended 30th June, 1959 and 1960—

- (a) how many persons were employed;
- (b) the amount of revenue received;
- (c) the number of passengers carried?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

(a) Persons employed—		
1959*	....	532
1960	....	553
(b) Revenue received—		
1959*	....	£709,861
1960	....	£916,782
(c) Passengers carried—		
1959*	....	13,466,171
1960	....	16,550,056

*As the Trust commenced to operate services on the 31st August, 1958 the 1959 figures are for ten months only.

SEWERAGE

Extension in Edward Street, Bedford

4. The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON asked the Minister for Mines:

Could the Minister give any approximate date of the intention to extend deep sewerage in the area of Edward Street, Bedford?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

No. I might say, by way of illustration, the area is outside the scope of the present scheme.

SOUTH KALGOORLIE STATE SCHOOL

Additional Classrooms

5. The Hon. J. J. GARRIGAN asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Is it the intention of the Government to build two additional classrooms at the South Kalgoorlie State School this financial year?

- (2) If they are to be built during the current financial year would the Government give consideration to having the construction of these classrooms put on a high priority list?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) and (2) South Kalgoolie is listed for two classrooms, but it is not known as yet whether there will be sufficient funds available for their erection.

BROOME BORE WATER

Salinity and Pumping Tests

6. The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Is it a fact that good potable water has been secured at what is known as No. 1 Bore out of Broome?
- (2) Have any salinity tests been made under continuous pumping?
- (3) What are such salinity readings?
- (4) What pumping tests have been made and with what results?
- (5) What is the estimated gallonage output of the bore per hour?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) Potable water was located in six exploratory bores approximately eight miles from Broome.
- (2) Salinity tests have not been made under "continuous" pumping. Limited tests were made on the exploratory bores after limited pumping of up to eight hours at approximately 2,000 gallons per hour, which was the limit of the pump used. Salinity tests of this water were 14 grains per gallon.
- (3) Answered by No. (2).
- (4) Answered by No. (2).
- (5) Production bores are being drilled at present and continuous pumping tests will commence at an early date. See also answer to No. (2).

GUILDFORD MENTAL HOSPITAL

Commencement of Construction

7. The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON asked the Minister for Mines:

Will he inform the House—

- (a) when construction of the new mental hospital buildings at Guildford will begin; and
- (b) will the present Government carry out the intention of the Hawke Government to build the children's section first?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (a) and (b) This and other mental health matters are now under review by a special committee, and also the State Health Council. Action will follow as early as possible after the report has been finalised.

GARRATT ROAD BRIDGE

Widening

8. The Hon. G. E. JEFFERY asked the Minister for Mines:

In view of the ever increasing volume of heavy-duty traffic using the Garratt Road Bridge, will the Minister inform the House if it is the intention of the Government to widen this bridge in the near future; if so, when will the work be commenced?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

A sum of £12,000 has been provided on the Main Roads Department's programme of works for widening of the Garratt Road Bridge. It is expected that the work will be put in hand in December.

STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE

Premiums and Fire Brigade Contributions

9. The Hon. H. K. WATSON asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) What was the gross amount of—
 - (a) Fire insurance premiums;
 - (b) Householders insurance premiums;

received by the State Government Insurance Office (Government Fund, General Revenue Account) during each of the years ended the 30th June, 1959 and 1960?

- (2) What were the amounts, if any, paid out by the State Government Insurance Office as fire brigade contributions in respect to each of the abovementioned classes of premiums for each of the years referred to above?

- (3) How much of the premiums mentioned in question No. (1) were in respect of—

(a) property owned by the Government;

(b) property in which the Government has a financial interest?

- (4) What amount, if any, was paid out by the State Government Insurance Office by way of fire brigade contributions in respect of its premiums received during each of the years ended the 30th June, 1959 and 1960, for motor vehicle comprehensive insurance?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) The gross premiums received by the Government Fire, Marine and General Insurance Fund were:—

1958-59 1959-60

	£	£
Fire	76,517	76,261
Householders	28,426	29,435

- (2) Nil. The State Government Insurance Office administers the Government Fire, Marine and General Insurance Fund on behalf of the State Treasury which already pays 2/9ths of the total contributions to the Fire Brigades Board. Approximately 70 per cent. of the gross premiums mentioned in No. (1) above is paid out as reinsurance premiums to insurance companies which are contributors to the Fire Brigades Board.

- (3) Separate records are not kept.

- (4) Nil. No motor vehicle comprehensive insurance is effected under the Government Fire, Marine and General Insurance Fund.

GOLDFIELDS ROADS

Improvements

10. The Hon. E. M. HEENAN asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) How much money has been set aside for this financial year by the Main Roads Department for improvements to the Kalgoorlie-Leonora-Laverton road?
- (2) On which sections of the above road is it intended to carry out improvements?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) £108,320.

- (2) Kalgoorlie-Leonora Road:

Kalgoorlie Road Board—

Construct and prime, 12 ft. wide, 23.8 miles (23.4 miles to 47.2 miles from Kalgoorlie)—£75,000.

Widen and prime 1 mile, 4 ft. wide, and 4 miles, 10 ft. wide (1 mile to 6 miles from Kalgoorlie)—£10,350.

Construction of bridge, 22 ft. wide, at 44.2 miles from Kalgoorlie—£6,000.

Single-coat seal 1 mile, 4 ft. wide, and 4 miles, 10 ft. wide (1 mile to 6 miles from Kalgoorlie)—£3,750.

Menzies Road Board—

Gravel and prime, 12 ft. wide, 1 mile (47.2 miles to 48.2 miles from Kalgoorlie)—£3,650.

Improvements formation, culverts and motor passes over 80.8 miles (48.2 miles to 129 miles from Kalgoorlie)—£5,000.

Leonora Road Board—

Improvements and creek crossings (129 miles to 146.25 miles from Leonora)—£770.

Leonora-Laverton Road:

Leonora Road Board—

Improvements over 38.5 miles—£1,500.

Laverton Road Board—

Improvements over 38.5 miles—£1,500.

Total amount—£107,520.

In addition, the sum of £800 has been provided for maintenance of the section from Kalgoorlie to Leonora.

ROADS

Improvements between Yalgoo, Mt. Magnet, Meekatharra and Wiluna.

11. The Hon. E. M. HEENAN asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) How much money has been set aside for this financial year by the Main Roads Department for improvements to the main road between Yalgoo, Mt. Magnet, Meekatharra and Wiluna?

- (2) On which sections of the above road is it intended to carry out improvements?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) £66,210.

- (2) Yalgoo-Mt. Magnet Road:

Yalgoo Road Board—

Improvements—£2,400.

Construct traffic passes, 12 ft. wide—£360.

Mt. Magnet Road Board—

Construct and prime, 12 ft. wide, 2 miles (210 to 212 miles)—£7,000.

Improve creek crossings (175 to 205 miles)—£2,500.

Construct traffic passes, 12 ft. wide—£450.

Mt. Magnet-Meekatharra Road:

Mt. Magnet Road Board—

Construct and prime, 12 ft. wide, 1 mile (352.3 miles to 353.3 miles)—£4,000.

Improvements—£2,000.

Cue Road Board—

Formation and crossings—£2,000.

Widen, prime and seal, 24 ft. wide, 4 mile at Cue—£3,200.

Construct, prime and seal, 12 ft. wide, .75 mile (427 miles to 427.75 miles, Tuckanarra)—£4,100.

Construct and prime, 12 ft. wide, 1 mile (403.5 miles to 404.5 miles)—£5,000.

Meekatharra Road Board—

Improvements—£5,000.

Widen, prime and seal, 24 ft. and 6 ft. wide, .7 mile (475.05 miles to 475.75 miles)—£4,300.

Meekatharra-Wiluna Road;

Meekatharra Road Board—

Formation and sheeting — £10,000.

Construct traffic passes, 12 ft. wide—£900.

Wiluna Road Board—

Improvements, 34 miles, Wiluna-Rabbit-proof Fence—£5,000.

Total amount—£58,210.

In addition, the sum of £8,000 has been provided for maintenance of the road between Yalgoo and Wiluna.

EASTERN GOLDFIELDS

Miner's Rights.

12. The Hon. E. M. HEENAN asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) How many miner's rights have been issued on the Eastern Goldfields since the beginning of 1960?
- (2) How many prospectors on the Eastern Goldfields are now in receipt of financial assistance under the Government prospecting scheme?
- (3) Approximately how many full-time prospectors, is it estimated, are now operating on the Eastern Goldfields?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) 876 to the 31st July, 1960.
- (2) 38.
- (3) Prospectors operating with their own funds or with private assistance do not register with the department, and thus the numbers are not recorded.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Fourth Day

Debate resumed from the 3rd August.

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [4.50]: In making my contribution to the debate, I would first like to compliment the Government on its land settlement policy. I suppose there are some members who would say it is not often I compliment the Government, but in this case I feel that the throwing open of 1,500,000 acres of land for conditional purchase, as mentioned in the Governor's Speech, is quite a big step. I believe that the throwing open of such large areas of land is the greatest means we have of increasing our population. I have the firm belief

that every additional decent sized farm in the State can cater for the employment of up to another ten people. If we carry on at a reasonable rate and obtain markets for our products, then something that the State has been trying to do for some time will come into being; namely, the establishment of secondary industries.

We must realise that with a population of only 700,000 it is almost impossible to maintain secondary industries in the State. That is because we have not a consumer population, and because we are too far from other markets under our present cost structure, to make secondary industries pay; that is, the larger types of industries. But one factor that enters into the whole matter is something that we are very much affected by at present—the inflationary trend; and this, I believe, will not cease unless some very stern measures are taken in the near future.

I will be told that no-one appears to have the solution to the question, but there must be some way of dealing with it. Over the years, with wages and price rises following one another just as surely as the sun follows the moon, we have failed dismally in trying to solve this problem. There seems to be no end to it. We can go back many years to the depression. What caused the depression? It came about because the bottom fell out of the market for primary products. Let that happen again today, with our present cost structure, and we will be in a fine old pickle. At the present time we are receiving, for some of our primary products, a lot less overseas than we are on the home market, in order to equalise the price to the primary producer so that he will receive a return over and above the cost of production. How far can we maintain such schemes if we are going to let our cost structure rise and do nothing about it?

I wish now to refer to some questions I asked and the replies I received tonight. In answer to my first question, the Government said it was concerned about the inflationary trend and the increase in production costs. Then I asked whether the Premier would be prepared, when attending the next Premiers' Conference, to raise the question of the inflationary trend and request that all State Premiers and the Prime Minister agree on a policy to introduce complementary measures to endeavour to halt the trend followed by a gradual process of deflation. The reply was—

In certain kinds of national emergency the pegging of prices and wages may be necessary.

That is a little vague. I believe this is a national emergency, but whether it is of a certain kind or not, I do not know; but it is a very grave national emergency, and one about which every member of this Parliament should be greatly concerned. The Government says that in the case of certain kinds of national emergency, the

pegging of wages and prices may be necessary; it does not say it is not necessary. The Government has doubts about any agreement being reached between the States and the Commonwealth. I say that there is no reason why, in a matter like this, the States and the Commonwealth should not reach agreement. In many minor matters the States have reached agreement and have introduced complementary legislation. We have had to do that with our wheat-marketing scheme and other matters; and there has been very little difficulty in reaching a measure of agreement.

Surely in a matter like this the question of agreement between the States and the Commonwealth should not be a difficult one, because it is just as much a Commonwealth matter as it is one for the States. The answer to the next part of my question is—

The setting up of the necessary machinery would take too long to be effective in sufficient time.

I admit it is a gigantic task to set up machinery of the nature required, and that it will take some time. But even so, if it can be done, why not go ahead and do it? If we take the attitude that it is too much trouble or that it is impossible, we will never get anywhere. No-one has ever got anywhere by not trying. If we try to do something, we will achieve some measure of success.

I am pleased that the Government said the suggestions were not necessarily socialistic, because I do not believe they are. I believe such suggestions are in the interests of Australia, and, perhaps, of other countries. No suggestion which will provide a benefit for the people of any State or the Commonwealth should be socialistic, or be called socialistic. In the last part of the question I asked—

If the suggestions are not feasible, can the Premier or the Government suggest any other way of dealing with the inflationary trend?

The answer was—

Rigid fiscal and monetary control on the part of the Commonwealth Government and the Reserve Bank of Australia.

I am going to be critical of this reply because I believe that outside of certain factors there is pretty rigid fiscal and monetary control today by the Commonwealth Government and the Reserve Bank. I say this because of a discussion I had in recent times with my bank manager. He gave me the figures of the amount of the deposits it was necessary for the banks to lodge with the Reserve Bank. The information he gave me—and it was written on paper—is that 41 per cent. of the deposits go into the Reserve Bank, and the other 59 per cent. are retained by the trading bank.

That appears to me to be a pretty rigid fiscal and monetary control. I do not know how much more rigid either Parliament or anybody else would want the control to be. But is the control exercised in other avenues? In answer to paragraph (b) of the previous question the Government said—

The present inflationary trend cannot be attributed solely to wage and cost rises. It is due also to high demand, especially for certain kinds of investment and consumption.

Let us examine what these certain kinds of investments might be. Perhaps they include hire-purchase finance, one of the greatest finance set-ups in Australia today. How much control has been exercised there? There has been very little indeed. Recently we had legislation to enforce the hire-purchase companies to do certain things. But up to the present time has there been any effort made to control the hire-purchase interests which, I think, are one of the biggest factors involved?

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The banks have found it so profitable that they themselves have entered the business.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: We have control over the banks, but we have let other moneylending businesses set their own rate, more or less; and what a rate it is! It is no wonder that people who have money to invest say that there is a demand for this type of investment; it is because of the high interest rates that are paid. Naturally, many people are not willing to invest their money in Commonwealth bonds at the present ruling interest rate if they can get 12½ per cent. from hire-purchase investment companies, nor are they going to invest their money in any other type of investment that offers a rate of interest at a lower rate. They are concerned only about making money for themselves, or making capital out of the money they have.

It is high time that some rigid fiscal control was exercised in this particular finance field. I am not saying that the hire-purchase companies' rate of interest should be reduced to the same level as the bank interest rate, because those companies have high overhead administration expenses and losses which banks normally do not have or, if they do, they do not have them to the same extent. At the same time I believe that some rigid fiscal control should be practised in this field, and some rigid legislation introduced to govern it.

I believe there is a great need in the Commonwealth for the constitution of some authority to deal with this matter. The Commonwealth Government has economists who make recommendations to it. To date, to my knowledge and probably to the knowledge of everybody else, no

worth-while suggestion has emanated from those economists with a view to controlling the inflationary trend. Perhaps it might be wiser if the State Government recommended to the Commonwealth Government that it search for a panel of capable businessmen to take control of the position and set up an economic council, should that be considered necessary. If such men were paid £10,000 a year each, that would be cheap if they solved the problem that exists at present.

If something is not done, we are going to be in the position in the very near future where we will find ourselves on the brink of another depression. I am not being pessimistic when I say that, but the receding price for wool and other primary products suggests that it is a possibility; and we cannot afford to let the position drift too far. In the reply to my question referring to cost and wage rises, I would like to comment on the cost-of-living index which has been a continual factor taken into consideration in this State every quarter to effect the rises in the basic wage with a consequent rise in prices; and often the price rises are, comparatively, a little above the wage rises. As a result, the wages or salaried man is a little out of pocket each time.

The recent rise in the basic wage of 5s. 11d., issued last quarter, will cost a wage-earner more than he receives. By the time he pays the additional taxation on the increase in income, and meets the increases in the prices for goods and commodities, he will definitely be out of pocket. I can assure the House that there are many wage-earners who do not welcome these rises in the basic wage. They would much rather be without them, and have the basic wage remain static. They know what these rises in the basic wage are costing them today.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Whom do you blame for that?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It is hard to blame anybody except that, to a degree, some people are asking for too much. One could even blame a section of our business community if we are seeking to lay the blame somewhere. I think it is a definite fact that very often when a rise in the basic wage brings about a rise in the cost of an article by one-eighth of a penny or one-quarter of a penny, the increase in the price of that article is one halfpenny. Would it not be better if the price were left as it was until the increase in the basic wage reached one halfpenny? However, business people are not prone to do that. Every time the basic wage is increased, they seek a little extra margin. There must always be some increase in the actual cost to keep the dog chasing its tail, or the tail chasing the dog, and this trend apparently will continue for some years if something is not done to prevent it.

I hope this matter will be followed up and not left to rest. It is one of the most important matters the Government should take up with the Commonwealth Government in an attempt, in some way, to solve the present position. I know that we are told that there are other factors, outside Australia, which affect our economic position. We realise that, and it is something we have to cushion. The fact that the inflationary trend is continuing with no apparent check being made will not help to solve our problem. The sooner people get to work to find some solution, the better it will be for all of us.

In these questions I have suggested one way by which it could be done. I admit it is not easy, but I believe that my proposal has some merit; and it is at least an earnest endeavour to raise the issue in an attempt to get somewhere in this matter. I will leave that thought with the Government and the Ministers in this House, and hope that some move will be made in the next few months in an endeavour to do something to solve this problem.

I now wish to deal with education. This is a big and difficult problem, and one which involves a terrific amount of expenditure each year—expenditure from which there is no return, as stated by Mr. Wise in the Chamber last night. In my opinion the problem is one regarding which, in this State particularly, there does not appear to be sufficient co-ordination within the Education Department itself; there appears to be insufficient attention paid to the capabilities of the teachers available. There also appear to be insufficient records kept of their qualifications and their postings.

At the beginning of each year, in the main, and particularly in the primary schools, the allocation of teachers to the various classes is left to the headmaster of each school. The result is that often teachers who have not passed through the present method of infant school teaching are allocated to an infants' class or some other class where the teacher has to struggle to give the teaching that is required for the particular class. If, in the department itself, there was a full record of classified infant teachers and teachers who were suitable for various grades, and a proper allocation was made to each school, according to the grades that should be taught by the teachers, I think the position would be greatly improved.

Take the position of a headmaster who has several teachers allotted to him for the year. On many occasions when he sorts the teachers out he discovers he is short of one for a certain grade and, as a result, he has to makeshift. That is not a good thing for the proper education of our children. Therefore I believe there should be more co-ordination practised,

and more attention paid to this procedure in the Education Department than is being paid to it at the present time. Today, the accentuation in the department seems to be on new methods and on specialisation, particularly in regard to subjects such as arts and drama. There are all sorts of specialists who are teaching these subjects today, which were unheard of in the schools several years ago. These teachers are conducting primary classes and teaching the children arts, crafts, and allied subjects.

Even physical education training is entirely different today from what it used to be. Today, a child is not given drill, taught to march, or come to attention. He is taken out on the playground and taught to hop around like a kangaroo, or to leap in the air like some other wild animal. Those are antics which are natural to all children and which they indulge in during their playtime. So why have organised physical education classes to teach them these things that they normally do? Why not teach them to stand correctly and to walk correctly? When one looks around at the city today at the majority of our young people, do we see them walking correctly or standing correctly?

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: Some of the young people attract me.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Yes, if they stand in a correct way. The incorrect stance of our young people today is very evident. Many young people in these times do not get the necessary training in posture in their physical education classes as they used to get. I would advise the honourable member who interjected to observe the stance of some of our young people and, if he does so, I am sure he will agree with me that what I am saying is correct.

On the question of education, I would like to quote from *The W.A. Teachers' Journal* of June, 1960, an article on education generally. The article is headed, "Disabilities in High Schools." It does not deal only with high schools, but also with primary schools. The article reads as follows:—

Leaving Examiners in reviewing the results of the 1959 candidates drew attention to the decline in standards and the appearance of a group so obviously unprepared that they ought not have been permitted to sit for the examination at all. This latter phenomenon is one that will become increasingly apparent and that is symptomatic of the modern crisis in education.

That statement speaks for itself and apparently it was written by a member of the teaching profession who is well informed.

The Hon. A. L. Loton: Who was it?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The name is not given. The article continues—

This crisis is due not merely to the overall increase in numbers, as is frequently stated, but also to the fact that more children are staying at school for a longer time—a product partly of the growing public recognition of the value of education, and partly to declining employment opportunities for juveniles.

The number of students staying on after junior level has greatly increased, bringing very real problems to Senior High Schools, and underlining the entire inadequacy of provisions made, for Secondary Education. Not much longer will Governments be able to get away with the meagre equipment and staffing of the past. Unless drastic steps are taken, the crisis in Secondary Education is going to become a public scandal.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The world has not been so badly off with the education system of the past.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: I wish that as a boy I had had the same opportunity as the children have today.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The point is whether opportunities are being given as they should be given. It depends on what the honourable member means by opportunity. Is it the opportunity to be educated properly, or the opportunity for the children to do what they want? The article continues—

High standards, including a high level of passes at Leaving Certificate, have been achieved in the past, due partly to the fact that only highly selected students attempted the Leaving, and partly to the high skill and self-sacrificing work of teachers.

We all recognise that in the past only a selected number came up to the highest standard. I think that position will always obtain, but the opportunity is not always given to the not-so-brilliant child to attain higher qualifications under the existing system. The article goes on—

Increasing numbers have brought a much poorer type of student into larger classes. Many such students are tragically ill-equipped for Leaving work, due to a number of factors—the low standard of pass permitted at Junior level, the size of classes in Three-year High Schools and Primary schools which prevents adequate remedial work in due time, too much emphasis in primary schools on frills rather than skills, laxity in discipline consequent on slavish imitation of American methods, declining requirements as to standards on the part of Educational authorities generally, inadequacy of staffing and equipment.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Who is the author of the article?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That is not shown.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: How do you know whether he is an authority on the subject?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The honourable member can judge for himself. I would suggest that the author is the editor of *The Teachers' Journal*. I refer to the statement that there is too much emphasis on frills rather than skills. That is exemplified by the introduction of specialised teachers. I quote from the July edition of the same journal which contains a letter dated the 10th March from the Director of Education, who had this to say—

On the question of size of classes, I would point out that the Department is fully aware of the desirability of effecting a reduction, and this is being done as rapidly as circumstances will allow. However, it should be borne in mind that simply reducing the size of class does not of itself ensure that better teaching results. What is needed more than this is the adaptation of teaching methods and teaching aids for more effective and meaningful teaching. In this respect the Department is already providing considerable assistance to teachers as the following summary shows:

In Primary schools the Department has produced the Primary Reading Scheme which has been issued as free stock to all Class I, Class II and some Class III schools—250 in all. The results of this scheme have been checked experimentally and reports in the circular indicate its marked effectiveness. Teachers have received the scheme enthusiastically.

The following comments in the same journal illustrate the feelings of the teachers on this matter:—

The Primary Reading Scheme. No one acquainted with the box, the system and the score sheets will doubt its value, but is it not singularly unfortunate that one of the largest booklets is the table of printing errors and their corrections, which teachers apparently must pursue through the whole range of books? Some "effective and meaningful" proof reading might have assisted somewhat to have provided all the score sheets, instead of one sample, and not saddled the class teacher with the necessity of entering the printing industry himself, without equipment or paper, to get the scheme working. It is regretted that when asked a simple, polite question "How many extra pupils can you teach adequately because you have this wonderful scheme?," no teacher gave a printable reply.

That was one method tried out to cope with large classes, but apparently it was not very successful. The next comments of the teachers are as follows:—

The Secondary Reading Laboratory is finding a welcome because the mammoth High Schools now contain many pupils who have spent their whole primary careers in heavily over-loaded classrooms, and in consequence have never reached High School levels at all. The laboratory reading undoubtedly provides them with something they can do while the months roll by to Emancipation Day—their fourteenth birthday. This chronological certainty does more to reduce class sizes than a whole wilderness of reading schemes.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: In the case of our children, the law of gravity operates. The cream of them gets to the top in spite of the system.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I agree. What I read out were suggestions to assist in coping with the large-sized classes which exist in our schools at present. Those suggestions were not designed to bring the children in the lower intelligence group to the highest group; they were introduced to assist the teachers to cope with classes of 50 pupils, where previously they could cope only with 40.

I am aware that a terrific amount of money is required to provide extra classrooms and equipment, and that at present it is not possible to provide all the classrooms and equipment that are needed. I contend that if primary schools were given assistance in other forms than the new-fangled ideas to which I have referred, the position might be entirely different.

Relating to the portion of the article dealing with the laxity in discipline consequent on slavish imitation of American methods, I want to quote an article published in *The West Australian* recently concerning Mr. Peter Moyes, headmaster of Christ Church Grammar School. This article states—

His tour of 25 U.K. and two European schools had left him with these impressions:

W.A. schools need to introduce competition, in all its forms, into school activities.

The examination system should stay, also caning, if sometimes necessary.

He deplored changes in the secondary school curriculum forecast this week by Education Department special services superintendent, Dr. W. D. Neal.

Dr. Neal said the program aimed at a broad, basic secondary education for the first two or three years, with the student choosing specialised subjects at 15.

The system also hopes to abolish the 50-year-old Junior Certificate examination.

Mr. Moyes said: "It seems the tendency in W.A. is to try something that has been already tried in the United States and found wanting.

I don't like the U.S. system of no hard work and no examinations.

That article answers the question of the desirability of introducing some of these new-fangled ideas into education in Western Australia. Often the officers in the Education Department in this State or in the other States go overseas and come into contact with new ideas on education. They return to Australia and try out those ideas, although the very same ideas may have already been tried and abandoned elsewhere.

The introduction of one simple method could, perhaps, overcome the need for all this specialising in education, and for these new ideas; that is, to provide remedial teachers for the purpose of assisting teachers who conduct overcrowded classes. An additional teacher or two could be appointed to do remedial work in teaching. Often a teacher finds a small number of the students cannot keep up to the standard of the rest of the class and are lagging in various subjects. That is where the remedial teacher could step in and play his part by bringing those children up to standard in the subjects in which they are lagging.

Such teachers could do a great deal for our school children, particularly those in the primary schools; they could do more good than all the new schemes in regard to primary readers, reading laboratories, and other high-faluting ideas, the implementation of which do not leave the teachers enough time for marking the school work or for determining how the students are progressing.

By adopting these new ideas there is insufficient time left for checking, for marking, and for ensuring that the students are up to standard. The teachers are denied the opportunity to sort the students out so that the backward ones can be passed on to remedial teachers. Much more consideration should be given to the suggestion of appointing remedial teachers than to the implementation of new ideas such as the ones I have referred to.

These new ideas were not introduced in the last 12 months or so; they were started a few years ago in the department and have been built up gradually, with the result that there is specialisation in this and that subject. It is all very well to have these new-fangled ideas if they have been tried and proved successful; but they should not be adopted if they have been tried overseas and found wanting.

There is one small matter I want to touch upon finally, and it is a matter which I partly referred to last evening. It deals with the Children's Court in relation to traffic charges. I do not know whether any member of this Chamber has visited that court and seen the antics which are practised there, or the sausage-machine type of justice which is meted out. I call it sausage-machine justice because the parents have to go with the children who are being charged with traffic offences. They present themselves in the court by 10 a.m. If the magistrate appears at that time, the cases proceed; if he arrives at 10.30, the parents and the children have to wait.

Then the name of a particular child is called out and its parent proceeds with the child into the court room, which is a court room of a style. Then a couple more names are called out, and the children and their parents enter the room. Benches are placed here and there in the courtroom, and upon these the parents and the children sit.

There are a couple of clerks to assist in the court work, and one of them reads out the charge. The magistrate says to the offenders, who are mostly boys, "What have you to say?" He does not ask them if they are guilty or not guilty. The offender may have something to say. If the magistrate is gracious, he may ask the parent of the child concerned whether he has anything to say. Whether or not the parent has, in most cases the magistrate looks at the papers before him and pronounces the penalty, "£3 fine; 10s. costs," despite what may have been said. There is no chance of a defence being made, for the simple reason that the officer who has apprehended the defendant never appears in the court.

I maintain that if that is the system of justice, even in our Children's Court, it is high time we amended it because if that sort of thing is allowed to go on we are not likely to make good citizens of our young people. They will have nothing but a feeling of distaste for justice.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: When was the last time you saw this happening?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: A couple of months ago.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: Mrs. Hutchison will give you a good outline of the situation.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Other members also know something of the position.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: No child is taken into the court without an officer of the Child Welfare Department giving to the magistrate the background of the child.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I can hardly believe that one.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: It is a fact.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am not talking about child delinquents; I am talking about—

The Hon. L. A. Logan: The Children's Court.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: —the youngsters in the Children's Traffic Court. I do not see how the magistrate could be given the background of a child apprehended for the first time. There would be no background.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Yes, there would; there is the family background.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I do not know of any case—there could be cases—where a Child Welfare officer has made any inquiries. On the particular day I was there, no officer appeared in court and therefore no officer made any statements regarding the background of any child. The magistrate may have had the information in writing. But even then, think of the position of a youngster between 17 and 18 years going into the court. How would he feel if he had been charged with something that he felt he should not have been charged with? In his own estimation he is not guilty, but he has no proof of his innocence, and he has no chance to say so because the word of the officer who apprehended him is taken before his own. He is not there to be questioned.

If we are going to make a farce of the law, let us do it completely. Let us just summarily fine these youths immediately without any appearance in court. Why bother to take a child and his parents to a court to summarily fine them irrespective of what plea they may desire to make to the magistrate?

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You are suggesting that the officer who lays the charge is not there in the court?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am. He is not there to substantiate any charge. There is no officer there. There is an officer of the Police Department who reads the charge, but he is not the patrol officer who apprehends the persons concerned.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Who gives the evidence of the offence?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: There is no evidence given whatsoever. It is given in the style of a sausage machine, to which I have already referred. The defendant is asked, "Are you so-and-so living at such-and-such an address?" The charge is then read out by a man from the Police Department. All the charges are read by the one man. I suppose he would be more or less a glorified constable-clerk or sergeant-clerk, but the actual patrol officers who first instigate the charges are not in court to be questioned or to verify their allegations.

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: But there might be 10 or 12 policemen involved in the one morning.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That may be so. If the authorities are not prepared to allow the patrol officers in court, why not give the persons charged—even though they be juveniles—the right to plead guilty or not guilty when they receive their summons. An adult has that right, so why should it be denied to a juvenile. Irrespective of whether or not these youths plead guilty, they still have to appear in court. I do not like the method, and I feel that it is not British justice. It is high time the system was changed.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: That is not the position.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The Minister can make inquiries for himself. He can go down to the court.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: I sat on the bench one morning.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: In the Children's Traffic Court?

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Yes.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I would like to ask the Minister, through you, Sir, whether the officer who laid the charge against the child concerned appeared in the court.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Yes; the morning I was there, every officer who was concerned in the cases to be heard were present, together with a solicitor from the Crown Law Department who was there to answer any questions that might have arisen.

The PRESIDENT: I might suggest that the Minister will have an opportunity to answer the question when the honourable member has finished.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: I have answered it, Sir.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I have raised that matter because I think it is important; and I would like the Minister to answer that query because on the occasion I was there, there was no solicitor from the Crown Law Department, or anywhere else; nor were there any patrol officers. I saw a number of charges dealt with, and I can assure the Minister that from my point of view, and from the point of view of the public present that day, it was a very bad system and we were unhappy about it.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Why don't you tell the House about the attitude of the magistrate. That is important, too.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I have already mentioned to the House the attitude of the magistrate. He just looks at his list, and when he has asked the person charged whether he has anything to say—and perhaps the parents also—he fines him.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: He mows them down like a lawn-mower!

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That is all I desire to say in connection with this matter. I conclude by saying that I support the motion.

On motion by the Hon. E. M. Davies, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT: SPECIAL

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Mines): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 16th August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.38 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 10th August, 1960

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

SUPPLY BILL, £23,500,000

Returned

Returned from the Council without amendment.