

The number of first-year students contacted was 1,407; second-year, 1,392; third-year, 1,295; fourth-year, 393; and fifth-year, 373.

Mr. Nalder: Is this the dropout rate?

Mr. E. H. M. LEWIS: No. Those are the numbers of students contacted about their views on indiscipline, whether it had interfered with their studies, and so on. It would be worth while for members to read the report. It is readily available and there is a wealth of detail at the back of it.

A number of recommendations were made, the main one, in my view, being that there should be greater communication between the school, the students, and the parents. Altogether, I think it is a very satisfactory report.

I noticed in the paper this morning or last night a statement that not many people had commented on the report. I thought I would make a comment. I do not know whether I have added anything that people did not already know, except perhaps that apparently indiscipline does not stem from university students. University students may be glad to know about that.

I should speak about water supplies because I asked a question on this matter today. While I commend the member for Avon in pushing the claims of his area—and I say “hear, hear” to that—I hope anyone who is in a dry area will be relieved of the water problem as quickly as possible. I will lend my support wherever it may be required.

I point out that when the boundaries of the comprehensive scheme were originally drawn, at least in the electorate of Moore the shire boundaries were followed. As everyone knows, shire boundaries zigzag around in an arbitrary fashion, so that a property which is completely dry could be just over the fence from a shire included in the scheme. That property would not be considered because it is outside the scheme, while some properties inside the boundaries which are well supplied with water could receive more water because they are within the boundaries of the scheme.

In any future consideration of the extension of water schemes, I hope the Minister and his department will give prior consideration to the places where water is needed, irrespective of whether or not they are within the original boundaries. The original boundaries have been departed from in what is known as the “modified” scheme. Certain parts of the Mt. Marshall area have now been supplied, whereas formerly they had no chance because they were outside the boundaries.

There is an area east of Pithara and Dalwallinu, and west of Ballidu, which is very dry and it is impossible to find water there in dams or bores. The farmers at Bindi Bindi have been forced to cart water

for a long time. Although the advisory committee has made loans available to them, dam sites cannot be found. Some dams have been put down, but it takes more than putting down a dam to obtain a water supply if the dam cannot be filled. There has not been sufficient rain to fill the dams for years, and the only thing that can be done is to hook that area up to the comprehensive water scheme. I suppose some of these dry areas will have to wait in the queue until the member for Avon is satisfied; but no button off his shirt—good luck to him! I will not be the one to say his area should stand aside. Let all dry areas, wherever they are, be supplied as soon as possible, but let us not confine our attention to the boundaries of the comprehensive water supply scheme.

Mr. Hutchinson: The pity is that part three of the comprehensive scheme will not start.

Mr. E. H. M. LEWIS: This is so, and it is no new experience. The Commonwealth Government can spend \$5,000,000 a year to buy sheep stations which are doubtful propositions for the benefit of Aborigines but when it comes to making loans on reasonable terms to the States for the reticulation of water the Commonwealth will not agree. When we were in Government the Commonwealth made us a loan but the terms were most severe. Had we not wanted the water so much we would have told the Commonwealth to keep its loan. In any event, we did receive a loan.

We now want more money from the Commonwealth. The Government should make another approach, particularly as the Commonwealth Government is in a generous, Father Christmas mood. I have an idea the Government could be successful in such an approach, particularly towards the end of the present calendar year. I wish the Minister luck in that one.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Hartrey.

*House adjourned at 6.01 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 27th March, 1973

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

### QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARIES

##### *Report of Commission*

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) On what date did the Local Government Boundaries Commission make its report to the Minister on metropolitan municipal boundaries, 1972?

- (2) When were the affected local authorities notified of the recommended boundary changes contained in the report?

The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS replied:

- (1) The 1st December, 1972.
- (2) After the Minister's return from overseas the plans of the proposed boundary changes were prepared and circulated on the 9th March, 1973. As soon as the printed copies of the report were received they were immediately made available to the councils concerned and all members of Parliament representing the areas.

### QUESTIONS (9): ON NOTICE

#### 1. EDUCATION

##### *Isolated Children: Allowances*

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

- (1) Has the matter of the terms of Commonwealth allowances for isolated children been clarified?
- (2) Is it the State Government's intention to continue State allowances and free student air travel for isolated children?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) Yes. The Commonwealth Department of Education has distributed information statements outlining the scheme and application forms are also being distributed.
- (2) The Commonwealth allowances will replace those previously provided by the State but the State will continue to provide free air travel for two visits home per year.

#### 2. MILK

##### *Licensed Vendors*

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) How many milk vendors are licensed by the Milk Board of Western Australia to operate in the metropolitan area?
- (2) Would the Minister provide a list of the names and addresses of these licensed milk vendors together with the area for which they are licensed?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) 230 milk vendors (milkmen) are licensed for districts in the metropolitan area.
- (2) A list of the above milkmen detailing the districts for which they are licensed will be Tabled (Paper No. 82).

### DAIRYING

#### *Production Control*

The Hon. N. McNEILL, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Would the Minister ascertain whether the Minister for Agriculture was correctly reported in *The West Australian* of the 14th March, 1973, in the statement that "the W.A. dairy industry had to argue its case more forcibly to obtain a better deal from proposed national dairy industry control schemes"?
- (2) If it is a correct report, will the Minister advise—
- (a) is it considered that the Western Australian case has not been forcibly argued in the past;
- (b) which are the organisations or bodies responsible for arguing the case?
- (3) Since 1970, on how many occasions has Agricultural Council discussed the question?
- (4) On each of those occasions, what has been the basis of the case, or proposals for production control, put forward by Western Australia?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) The Minister for Agriculture has advised that he was incorrectly reported.
- (2) Answered by (1).
- (3) 5 times.
- (4) Western Australia has supported production control because of the erosion of returns to Western Australian producers from increased production and export from Victoria and Tasmania. The major point of contention has been the level of each State's share of the high priced Australian market.

In supporting the claim for a high level of State quota, Western Australia has pressed the need to maintain a viable manufacturing industry and has drawn attention to its falling production, the importance of the industry in decentralisation and the fact that consumption of dairy products exceeds production. The need for a limit on the net contributions to equalisation has also been emphasised.

The W.A. view has been that the allocation of quotas within the State should be a State responsibility.

#### 4. GASCOYNE RESEARCH STATION

##### *Maintenance*

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

- (1) What funds were expended for maintenance at the Gascoyne Research Station during each of the five financial years up to the 30th June, 1972, on—
  - (a) motor vehicles;
  - (b) plant and equipment;
  - (c) staff accommodation;
  - (d) other buildings?
- (2) What funds have been allocated for the current financial year?
- (3) Are these amounts considered adequate to satisfactorily maintain the station?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) (a) and (b)\*

Expended by Department of Agriculture.

1967/68	\$958
1968/69	\$1,348
1969/70	\$723
1970/71	\$1,349
1971/72	\$784

- (c) and (d)\*

Expended by Department of Agriculture      Expended by Public Works Department

	\$	\$
1967/68	359	3,080
1968/69	522	245
1969/70	488	6,942
1970/71	77	5,089
1971/72	448	4,912

\*These items are not listed separately in Accounting Records.

- (2)

Allocated by Department of Agriculture      Allocated by Public Works Department

	\$	\$
Motor Vehicles; Plant and Equipment ....	750	....
Staff Accommodation; and other buildings ....	100	2,000

- (3) Yes.

#### 5. ROAD TRANSPORT *Onslow: Costs*

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

- (1) Has the Government made any arrangements to allow goods to be freighted to Onslow without increasing costs to the residents in view of the cancellation of the State Shipping Service?
- (2) Will road transport services be affected by the lack of all-weather roads?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) It is not anticipated that this will occur.

#### 6. APPLE AND PEAR BILL

##### *Press Release*

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

- (1) Did the Minister for Agriculture or his Department, or any other organisation, make a Press release at the closing period of the last session of this Parliament on the outcome of the Apple and Pear Bill?
- (2) Would the Minister Table any such releases?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) A copy is submitted for Tabling (Paper No. 83).

#### 7. DAIRYING

##### *Commonwealth Equalisation Scheme*

The Hon. N. MCNEILL, to the Leader of the House:

It has been reported that the Minister for Agriculture has claimed that Western Australian dairy farmers could be dealt with more equitably than at present under the Commonwealth Equalisation Scheme, and that returns could be improved by as much as 10 cents a pound butterfat for Western Australian dairy farmers.

- (1) Will the Minister confirm the correctness or otherwise of that report?
- (2) If the statement is not correct, will the Minister advise of the net financial benefits to Western Australian producers which could be obtained if a scheme for the rebate of equalisation payments was adopted, appropriate to—
  - (a) the extent to which Western Australia does not contribute to export surpluses of dairy produce; and/or
  - (b) the improved returns to the exporting States as a result of Western Australia—
    - (i) effecting sales at prices in excess of overseas export prices;
    - (ii) making a contribution to the cost of operating the Equalisation Fund by way

of payments for transport, storage, refrigeration and related services on imported produce.

- (3) Is the Minister aware that the Liberal Party policy prior to the last State General Election provided for a close investigation with the Federal and State Authorities of a possible rebate entitlement scheme?
- (4) Is he also aware that the broad outlines of those and other related proposals for the rehabilitation of the dairy industry were explained by me during the Address-in-Reply debate on the 26th August, 1970?
- (5) Will the Government advise the details of the present Commonwealth Government's proposals, if any, in regard to—
  - (a) the two price quota scheme endorsed by the previous Federal Government;
  - (b) the introduction and/or implementation of a national production control system for dairy products?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) The Hon. Minister for Agriculture has indicated that the report is essentially correct but it was not stated that returns to Western Australian producers could be improved by 10 cents per lb.
- (2) (a) It is not clear from the Hon. Member's question what precise information is required.
- (b) (i) The effect of Western Australian net contributions to equalisation on the average price received by dairy farmers in Australia depends on the level of export but is of the order of 0.1 cents per lb butterfat in butter and 0.09 cents per lb butterfat in cheese over the past three years.
- (ii) The cost of transport, storage, refrigeration and related services on imported produce is borne by the Equalisation Fund and is not met specifically from Western Australian contributions.
- (3) He is not familiar with details of Liberal Party policy on this matter.

- (4) He has read the *Hansard* report of the Hon. Member's speech in the Address-in-Reply debate on the 26th August, 1970.
- (5) Australian Agricultural Council, after considering the two price quota scheme and an alternative proposal, agreed in principle at its October 1972 meeting to a modified Dairy Products Entitlement Scheme and referred it for comment to the Australian Dairy Industry Council. At its February 1973 meeting, Australian Agricultural Council received a report from the Australian Dairy Industry Council but referred this back to the A.D.I.C. for further advice. This precise proposal has not been considered in detail by the Federal Government at this stage.

## 8. INSURANCE COMPANIES

*Inquiry: Premier's Statement*

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON, to the Leader of the House:

With reference to a statement made by the Hon. Premier which appeared in *The West Australian* on the 23rd January, 1973, relating to a suggested inquiry into insurance companies with particular reference to motor vehicle insurance, and in view of the fact that much interest has been aroused by the Premier's statement from many quarters of the public, indicating that such an inquiry is fully justified—

- (a) has an inquiry been held;
- (b) if not, does the Government intend to proceed with an inquiry;
- (c) if the reply to (b) is "Yes", can any indication be given as to the type of inquiry; and
- (d) when can it be expected to commence its deliberations?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (a) No.
- (b) Yes.
- (c) It is proposed to appoint a Royal Commission.
- (d) No decision has as yet been made.

## 9. BUSSELTON HOSPITAL

*Extensions, and New Structure*

The Hon. V. J. FERRY, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) As a contract has recently been let at a cost of \$10,000 for additions and alterations to the Busselton Hospital to house and service new X-ray equipment, what effect will

this work have on programming the building of a new hospital on a site known as "Lilly's Mill" at Busselton?

- (2) (a) At what stage is planning for the new hospital; and
- (b) what facilities will be incorporated in the new hospital, such as number of beds, accommodation for permanent care patients, community health facilities, and other features?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) This will have no effect on the programming of the building of a new hospital at the "Lilly's Mill" site.

The existing X-ray equipment required urgent replacement as it had reached the end of its economic and effective life. The housing of new equipment necessitated some structural alteration.

- (2) (a) Sketch plans have been prepared and are now being re-drafted in detail to incorporate suggested amendments.
- (b) The new hospital will incorporate—
  - (1) 44 beds to provide general, midwifery and children's accommodation.
  - (2) 16 bed permanent care unit.
  - (3) Nurse aide training school.
  - (4) Outpatient casualty facility to include Laboratory Service, Physiotherapy Service.
  - (5) The Service Block will contain Administration, Theatre, X-ray, Kitchen, Workshop and Staff Change facilities.
  - (6) The Department has indicated to the local Medical Practitioners and the local authority that an area can be made available for Community Health facilities to be provided by others.

#### MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

##### *Dress in Chamber: Amendment to Motion*

Debate resumed, from the 22nd March, on the following motion by The Hon. D. K. Dans—

That in the opinion of this House the rule which applies regarding members' dress in the Chamber should be altered to permit the removal of his coat should a member so desire.

*To which the Hon. A. F. Griffith (Leader of the Opposition) had moved the following amendment—*

Delete all words in the motion after the word "House" in line 1, and substitute the following—

the convention regarding Members' dress may be altered from time to time to permit Members, who desire to do so, to remove their coats during sitting hours should the atmospheric conditions, in the House, in the opinion of the President, warrant such modification of this convention.

**THE HON. J. HEITMAN** (Upper West) [4.56 p.m.]: A great deal of opinion has been expressed on both the motion and the amendment. In view of the fact that it is intended that Parliament open each year in March which is always a hot month, I consider some decision should be made concerning the type of dress to be worn by members.

I am not in favour of the decision being left to the individual member. As a matter of fact I thought Mr. MacKinnon made a good suggestion the other night when he said a committee comprising one member from each party could be appointed to discuss the pros and cons of the whole matter and decide the dress which should be allowed in the Chamber on hot or humid days. The decision of the committee so appointed could then be made known to the House so that all members would be aware of the type of dress to be worn.

The amendment places a lot of responsibility on your shoulders, Mr. President.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The President has that now.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I know that, but at the present time no departure is allowed from the traditional dress. I certainly believe in tradition, but only recently have we commenced sitting in March and, as I said earlier, this is one of the most humid and disagreeable months in the year. If the sittings of Parliament could be confined to April and May, or could start in June and continue through until November, no need would arise for any alteration of the traditional dress. However, the fact remains that we are sitting in March now and so some decision must be made on the matter. I give notice that I will move a further amendment to provide that a committee of three be appointed to decide the type of dress to be allowed.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You would have to move it now.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: Is it necessary for me to move the amendment now, Mr. President, or merely give notice of my intention to do so?

The PRESIDENT: I suggest we dispose of the existing amendment before we deal with another one.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That statement presupposes that the amendment before us will be rejected.

The PRESIDENT: Not necessarily.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: At this stage I give notice of my intention to move an amendment along the lines I have indicated.

**THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH** (South) [4.59 p.m.]: Although it may be claimed we are old-fashioned because we still wear coats in this Chamber, I must admit that I am a little bit of a traditionalist myself. When tradition does not interfere too much with common sense, I believe in sticking to it. The wearing of coats by members and the wearing of their gowns by the office bearers in the Chamber does add to the dignity of the House.

We are very fortunate in that nowadays clothing is manufactured in lightweight materials and even those who believe in wearing only wool can purchase very suitable summer-weight suits. The need to change this tradition is no more necessary now than previously.

Members have mentioned "Darwin rig". I admire the people in the Northern Territory for the way they dress. I do not believe they are relaxing their standards but, rather, maintaining them. Humidity in Darwin makes the conditions far worse than those which prevail in Perth. The people of Darwin have set a standard with their rig and they stick to it. This is commendable; otherwise, people would dress in open-neck shirts or singlets.

It has also been said that banks have relaxed their standards. I admit that some of the junior officers look neat when dressed in shorts and long socks. However, we must remember this dress is confined mainly to junior officers. I have yet to see my bank manager wearing shorts. He dresses according to his position and continues to wear a coat.

The Navy, too, has been mentioned. It was said that even admirals wear the rig of the day. I have never seen Navy personnel enter this Chamber in shorts; they are always properly dressed. I agree there may be a principle in "the rig of the day". One factor is quite definite; the admiral lays down the rig of the day. What is right for the Navy should be right for us. Mr. President, you should continue to lay down the rig of the day for members in this House.

We are fortunate to have a Chamber such as this. We are not crowded and only 30 members sit in the Chamber, the walls of which must be about 30 feet high. There is no question of our being crowded into a confined space.

It has been said it would be impossible—or at least difficult—to air-condition the Legislative Council.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I said "on cost".

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I think the statement is ridiculous. When we consider the amount of money which is spent to maintain the parliamentary system, it surely would not cost too much more to air-condition the House. After all, another switchboard was installed so that the lights would not fail on Opening Day. With the added load of TV lighting this was an added cost and I do not think the cost of air-conditioning would be much higher.

We should observe what happens in Canberra where members maintain a standard of dress. I understand that a summer-weight suit is seldom seen.

At times there is justification for wearing cooler clothing, particularly if the individual is working. Not many people would consider our task here an arduous one. We spend most of our time sitting when we are not making the occasional speech. Our mode of dress allows us a great deal of latitude. Members seem capable of expressing their feelings through their style of dress. Many members including the Opposition seem to be "with it" in their choice of outfits. The present standards are ideal. I am afraid that we may see members entering the Chamber in singlets if we relax our standards too greatly. One particular party has made a feature of singlets, it seems. We may even see members dressing according to the tastes of their constituents and wearing the garb favoured by some people in their electorate.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: What do you think about each party having a uniform?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: All joking aside, I am sure a precedent would be set and an exception made if any member is greatly inconvenienced by wearing a coat and produces a medical certificate to this effect.

For the reasons I have outlined I agree with the amendment to the motion which states that the President should be responsible for setting the standards of our dress.

**THE HON. F. R. WHITE** (West) [5.05 p.m.]: This is a rather difficult decision for members to make. Prior to the commencement of parliamentary sessions in the early part of the year, I rose during the closing hours of a previous session of Parliament and asked what would be done to make the Chamber more comfortable. The answer was: Everything is under control. Since then three fans have been put onto the ceiling. On most occasions these fans have rotated extremely slowly. I may be corrected if I am wrong, but I would say that they are rotating faster today than on any previous occasion.

If we were to enter the Legislative Assembly we would find that it has three similar fans but there is also a fan in each of the four corners of that Chamber. Members in another place also have the opportunity to remove their coats. Somebody is looking after the members in another place, because those fans have been provided by somebody.

With additional fans installed in the Legislative Council possibly we could be more comfortable. Like other members, I believe the dignity of this Chamber should be maintained but I also believe that members should have the opportunity to be comfortable. I consider it is a sorry state of affairs when it is necessary for a motion such as this to be brought forward so that people may recognise that members are sometimes uncomfortable. Possibly some good will come from the debate in that we may at least see installed additional fans or other equipment which will enable us to be cooler. The amendment before us proposes to leave the position precisely as it was previously.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That is not so.

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: It proposes that everything shall remain under the control of the President.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That is not so.

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: That is how I read it. I cannot see any difference in the proposed amendment to the motion from what has taken place previously in this Chamber.

Mr. Heitman has made a suggestion and has indicated that he will move a further amendment to the effect that a committee should meet with you, Mr. President, with the idea of making the Chamber more comfortable for members. In view of the further amendment that has been foreshadowed, I am prepared to support the amendment which is before the Chair at the moment. Had Mr. Heitman not made the suggestion, I would have proposed the amendment myself and would have opposed the present amendment and would have supported the motion in its original form.

**THE PRESIDENT** (The Hon. L. C. Diver): On this occasion I must break with tradition and say a few words, especially in the light of the remarks made by Mr. White about the lack of four corner fans in this Chamber. What he says is quite correct. However, only 30 members, apart from the staff, occupy the Legislative Council Chamber, whereas 51 members as well as staff sit in the Legislative Assembly which is no larger, in area, than this Chamber. This factor adds greatly to the discomfort of members in another place. Without splitting straws, the question as to whether they are any cooler than the members over whom I preside is quite doubtful.

During the debate it has also been said that I have not been prepared to allow members to remove their coats. From time to time I have been asked privately whether I would allow this to enable some members to be more comfortable. I said that for well over 60 years the same circumstances have prevailed in this Chamber as those which prevail at the present time. Never has a move been made previously for members to remove their coats.

As Mr. White has said, in recent times fans have been installed in the Chamber and perhaps members are far more at ease now than was previously the case.

Personally, I am not prepared to break with established practice. However, should this House, by motion, indicate that it is my duty to determine henceforth whether or not members will remove their coats, of course I will carry out such an instruction in the same way as I endeavour to carry out the Standing Orders of the Legislative Council—with impartiality and reasonableness.

I felt I should make these comments before the amendment is put.

Amendment put and passed.

Motion, as amended, put and passed.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FIFTH DAY

##### *Motion, as Amended*

Debate resumed, from the 22nd March, on the following motion by The Hon. R. F. Cloughton, 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. A. LOGAN** (Upper West) [5.13 p.m.]: Firstly, I would like to congratulate Mr. Dolan on his elevation to the position of Leader of the House. I know he is taking on a certain amount of responsibility, but I think he is big enough, in terms of stature and experience, to handle the situation well. I also

congratulate Mr. Ron Thompson on his elevation to the Ministry. He has taken over an important portfolio. I hope he derives as much pleasure from it as I did during my term as Minister. I am sure he will find the portfolio extremely interesting.

I sincerely regret that Mr. Willesee was unable to fulfil his first three years, at least, as Minister and Leader of this House. I know he was most anxious to see through this period in his capacity as Leader of the House and Minister for Community Welfare. However, circumstances were such that he was unable to do so. I commiserate with him because of the circumstances which forced him to withdraw.

I have been rather puzzled at certain remarks which have been made as a result of the Governor's Speech. On Friday, the 16th March, the day after the opening of Parliament at which the Governor delivered his address, the headline, "Government aims to protect consumer" appeared in the Press.

I wonder just what the Government means by the headline "Government aim to protect consumer?" Is it the Government's intention to divide the people of Western Australia into different classifications in which some are consumers and others are not? Is it the Government's intention to put these people into different brackets according to their work or economic circumstances in the belief that some members of the community need consumer protection while others do not?

As far as I am concerned every person in Western Australia is a consumer and, accordingly, this type of headline should not be permitted. We are all consumers. If it is the Government's intention to look after the consumer and also to deal with prices as is envisaged in the Governor's Speech—and as was also requested by the Minister for Prices Control (Mr. Taylor) in the headline on the 21st March which states "Taylor asks to peg prices"—why has the Government increased rates and charges?

In the same Governor's Speech we find that legislation will be introduced to provide improved long service leave conditions for members of the Western Australian work force, and also to provide improved compensation and other related benefits under the Workers' Compensation Act together with minimum sick leave provisions for all workers. The Government also proposes to bring down legislation to provide for four weeks annual leave for State public servants.

Each and everyone of those pieces of legislation will have a bearing on costs and prices; it will have a direct bearing on the consumers of Western Australia. The Leader of the Opposition (The Hon. A. F. Griffith) asked a series of questions

in regard to taxes and charges that have been increased since the present Government came into office. This information can be found in the following copies of *Hansard*—

No. 4 April 12th at pages 571-574.

No. 5 April 18th at page 701.

No. 5 April 19th at pages 778-779.

No. 11 August 8th at page 2281.

Apart from the information contained in the copies of *Hansard* to which I have just referred there were also two schedules giving increases in charges, but these were too lengthy to be included in *Hansard*; accordingly they were tabled in another place. It will be appreciated from these schedules just how much has been added to the cost of prices so far as the people of Western Australia are concerned. In spite of all this we have a plea from the Minister that we should peg prices.

How can we possibly expect the ordinary businessman to respect such a plea when the Government has done nothing whatever to assist the people of this State to peg prices? Accordingly it puzzles me why we should be faced with the two items which occurred after the Governor's Speech when he opened Parliament.

To appreciate the point I am making members only need to look at the Press report of Tuesday, the 20th March, which warned that if the national wage case went through as expected, it would add another \$650,000 a year to the wages bill for the Perth City Council's 1,125 employees.

It is difficult, therefore, to establish the sincerity of the Government when it says it is endeavouring to peg prices, particularly when it is doing all it can to increase costs of production and so on.

On many occasions it has been said both in this House and in another place that the Government has a mandate to do certain things to help it fulfil the promises it made at the last State election. The Government has no mandate at all to do anything, because it broke one of its promises in the first place. The Government said it would honour all its promises without raising taxes or charges. It said that specifically. The moment the Government broke that promise its right to a mandate went overboard. Accordingly we feel the Government has no mandate whatever to do anything particularly after it has increased rates and taxes when it specifically said it would not.

For a long while now all kinds of thoughts and ideas have been put forward in an attempt to safeguard the Avon Valley. The Avon Valley has been the subject of discussion and investigation particularly in regard to desnagging and so on, and in recent times its problems have been to the forefront. A few years ago



an investigation was held into salt encroachment. A conservation committee was set up in an endeavour to control the washing away of the soil. An attempt was made to desnag the river to prevent flooding and other steps were taken to safeguard this area.

In my opinion the Avon Valley, which is a large part of Western Australia, is far too important for such work to be carried out in a piecemeal fashion. An overall authority must be appointed to handle the situation and its endeavours must go right back to the beginning, to the clearing of land; its efforts must be directed at the headwaters of the Avon together with its tributaries. We must make sure that clearing is not done where it should not be done; that the farmers land should be contoured where necessary. If all this is done the flooding of the river will be overcome. As I have said, however, these actions should not be undertaken in a piecemeal fashion as is the case at the moment, where we have three or four departments trying to control the problems of the Avon Valley.

I do not know much about the Tennessee Valley authority but I feel that the Government should give serious consideration to the action which is being taken there. An overall authority should be appointed to handle this problem. At the moment action is being taken by the Public Works Department, by two or three sections of the Department of Agriculture, by the local authorities and by individual farmers who are endeavouring to control their particular areas.

The only way to overcome the problems with which we are faced in the Avon Valley is to set up an overall authority. We would then know where we were going.

Another important issue I would like to raise with the Leader of the House is in regard to the Hamelin Pool area. I am led to believe that negotiations have commenced with the Japanese for the export of shell for the purpose of cement making. At the moment this area has attracted world-wide interest. Members will appreciate the point I am trying to make if I read part of a telegram which was sent from the Harvard University, Cambridge, Ma. to the Department of Developmental Biology Research School in Canberra. If I read part of the telegram the Leader of the House will perhaps appreciate the point I am trying to make and later I will give further details of the significance of this area. The telegram in question reads as follows—

Shark Bay Hamelin Pool is unique biologically and geologically and should be conserved no comparable terrestrial area exists we earnestly request its preservation for further scientific research and perspectives suggest . . .

The reason for that telegram having been sent is that the Shark Bay landscape is the most primitive of any surviving landscape in the world. The reasons for the uniqueness of Hamelin Pool is that it contains great bolsters or domes of stone built up by blue-green algae. These are the structures referred to as Stromatolites. The blue-green algae consists of primitive organisms which like bacteria do not contain an organised nucleus. This is in contrast to the higher organisms in which the nucleus is a well defined structure. The whole ecological set-up at Shark Bay is thought to illustrate the conditions which prevailed very early in the evolution of life and of land and seascape.

Those are the comments made by some of the most important researchers in the world in the field of biology. Accordingly I hope the Leader of the House and the Minister concerned will have a look at the situation to ensure that no mining of the shell takes place at Hamelin Pool until such time as a thorough investigation is made. I understand the algae is evidently under the shell grit itself. We have all heard about houses being built with shell grit and we know that the shire offices at Shark Bay have been built with shell grit.

If too much of this shell grit is removed however then the algae underneath will be lost to scientific research and we will not be able to find the answer to the problem. Accordingly I hope the Minister will give some thought to the matter.

I was rather amazed to read a statement on the 21st March supposedly made by the Premier (Mr. Tonkin) in which he said there had not yet been any single instance of intrusion by the Federal Government into State rights. I am referring to the statement made in *The West Australian* which was dealing with State rights.

I know it has been said from time to time that ostriches are inclined to bury their heads in the sand, but I presume that occasionally they at least remove their heads from the sand. In contradistinction the Premier seems to have buried his head in the sand and left it there. I say this because he claims there has been no interference with the State rights. I do not know where the Premier has been, because we are all aware that one of the actions of the Federal Government was to curtail overseas funds which were coming into Australia. If this did not interfere with State rights and negotiations that might have been taking place, I do not know what did. It must have interfered with State rights, it could not have done otherwise; because every time we wanted to discuss something which required overseas capital we had to go cap in hand and beg the Prime Minister to allow foreign capital to come into the country.

How would we get on with the Pilbara scheme if we did not permit overseas capital to be used? It is difficult to see how we can encourage the flow of overseas capital to Australia if we insist on a 25 per cent. noninterest bearing deposit on major works.

The State Government was not even asked for an expression of opinion on these matters. Where was Mr. Tonkin when the Prime Minister announced the revaluation of the currency? Mr. Tonkin is certainly mistaken if he does not think that this move has had an effect on the State's rights. It had a great impact on the State's rights. Mr. Tonkin was not asked what effect the currency revaluation would have on the economy of Western Australia. He was merely told the currency would be revalued.

I understand Mr. Tonkin did send a letter to the Prime Minister on a particular occasion and asked him to devalue the currency. I do not know whether or not the Premier received an answer, but I know the Prime Minister did not leave a doubt in anybody's mind as to what would happen when he talked to the Australian mining companies on the 20th March.

Mr. Whitlam spoke to Australian mining companies on the 20th March and told their leaders they could expect no compensation from the Government as a result of the effects on their industry of the dollar revaluation in December. So for the Premier to say that the Federal Government has not interfered with State rights, even in regard to only those two items, is too silly for words.

I wonder where the Premier was when the Federal Minister for Housing issued his edict—and it was an edict because he did not ask the States about their housing policies; he just said, "This is it." Whilst at the outset I believe some States jumped in and said they would support the Commonwealth policy, I think those States have now had second thoughts because the Commonwealth policy does not tie up with their own policies. However, the Federal Minister for Housing did not consult the States; he simply issued an edict.

I wonder where the Premier was when the Federal Minister for Immigration (Mr. Grassby) made his statement on immigration. Did the Federal Minister consult with the States before he made his statement? Of course not. Where was Mr. Tonkin when the Federal Government announced that the export of kangaroo skins and meat would be banned? Did the Federal Government ask the Ministers of the various States what effect the ban would have upon the States. Of course it did not. Is not this interfering with State rights? We in this State have a policy which I believe will be the blueprint for

the rest of Australia; but there was no discussion. The Federal Government simply issued an edict and bypassed the States.

Did the Commonwealth consult the Premier regarding its policy on Aborigines? It may be that the State Government agrees with the policies of the Federal Government; I do not know. But what consultation took place before the decision was made and directions were issued? None whatsoever.

I have mentioned only six or seven items, but each of these leaves no doubt in my mind—and in the minds of many Western Australians—that the Federal Government has told the States, "We are going to run the country from Canberra." That is pure centralisation; nothing more nor less. Everything the Federal Government has said and every action it has taken points to this.

Perhaps I could add further to my comments on revaluation. It was stated that the Federal Government would give serious consideration to the plight of those producers, manufacturers, and mining companies which thought they had some right to compensation as a result of the effects of revaluation. I have already recounted to the House what the Prime Minister said to the mining companies: that they would not receive any compensation. Perhaps I should now tell primary producers what compensation they will receive. The *Primary Industry Newsletter* of the 7th February, 1973, contains two interesting items, one of which I shall refer to later. The first item states, "There will be no rural revaluation compensation . . . thank goodness." Further on the article states that it is now apparent there will be no revaluation help for some industries, and the industries are named. They are the sugar, beef, and wool industries.

So the mining companies will receive no compensation; and, with the exception of fruit growers, primary producers will receive no compensation. Further, I cannot foresee any decision concerning manufacturing export industries so probably they will be in the same boat. Therefore, all the talk about "having a look at it" is so much eyewash and a complete waste of time.

Many woolgrowers of Western Australia hounded the Country Party—and Mr. Anthony and Mr. Sinclair in particular—regarding its commitment to set up the Australian Wool Commission. Mr. Anthony and Mr. Sinclair were hounded in respect of the timetable for the acquisition of wool. I can recall many meetings at which those gentlemen were hammered and the Country Party was hammered in this regard.

However, the Federal Labor Party said it intended to fix this matter. In fact, I think the matter was the subject of a motion in the Federal Parliament that a

report should be compiled and the matter finalised within six months. Let us consider what the *Primary Industry Newsletter* has to say. Firstly, the marginal line states, "Labor denies commitment to wool acquisition". The article states—

It seems the Whitlam Labor Government does NOT regard itself as having any commitment to wool acquisition. PIN made this surprising discovery last week in discussion with new Primary Industry Minister, Senator Ken Wriedt. Discounting a widespread belief, in the wool industry and elsewhere, that his Government was firmly committed to acquisition as rapidly as possible, Senator Wriedt said: "I don't think the ALP has any particular commitment to wool acquisition. We just would like to see all the rural industries as efficient as possible. It remains to be seen whether acquisition is the answer for wool." Senator Wriedt added that even if acquisition turned out to be the answer for wool he was in no hurry to see it arrive.

Yet, I believe an urgency motion was moved in the Commonwealth Parliament that a report be compiled and acquisition be put into effect within six months. I would like the woolgrowers of Western Australia to study that document and to reconsider the action they took when they had a crack at the Country Party.

I am rather perturbed about the playing of bingo, inasmuch as I feel it has got out of hand. Lord knows what would have happened had the Bill originally introduced into this House been passed in the form in which it was presented, because the situation today is bad enough. I believe at present we have a shocking set of circumstances. At the time the legislation was introduced we were of the opinion that the opportunity to play bingo should be granted only to charitable and other worthy organisations.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Yes, to play the game for 1c or 2c at a time.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: A question was asked in the House this afternoon regarding which organisations are to be given the right to run these games of bingo. I for one do not appreciate the fact that professional football clubs and television stations are to be given the opportunity to run bingo games, because this will lessen the opportunity that might exist for smaller clubs to run them. The people we wish to look after are members of youth and amateur sporting organisations, but they will not have a chance once the big fellows move in. I think the Government should take a hard look at this question to see whether it cannot revert back to the situation of providing assistance only to

small organisations which have not the same opportunities for fund raising as professional football clubs.

Perhaps my next remarks have nothing to do with the Government; however, I am amazed that every time one sees on television or hears on the radio an advertisement dealing with cigarette smoking, the advertisement is immediately followed by a little skit, "Medical authorities warn that smoking is a health hazard".

I think that is about the most stupid announcement ever made on television. It has no effect whatsoever, and the fact that it is included after every tobacco advertisement makes the situation farcical. If the powers that be are satisfied that smoking is a health hazard, then why do they do everything they possibly can to assist in the production of tobacco? The Governments of all tobacco-growing countries assist in its production; so it must have the approval of Governments. A great deal of money has been expended on research into the matter, and I think the announcement that medical authorities warn that smoking is a health hazard simply makes the situation farcical. The sooner the announcement is cut out, the better it will be.

I was very perturbed to read in *The West Australian* this morning the following statement by Mr. Monck, under the heading of, "Car racket here, says Monck"—

There was evidence of a car stealing racket in Western Australia, the chief of the police traffic branch, Superintendent Athol Monck, said yesterday.

He said there was a strong possibility that car thieves were taking advantage of the present dual system of traffic control.

A little further on the article continues—

Superintendent Monck said: "At present there's nothing to stop a person stealing a car in the metropolitan area, throwing the plates in the river and taking the car to a country shire to be licensed again.

It is just not good enough for a man in that position to say that there was a strong possibility that car thieves were taking cars to country areas for licensing.

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: In other words, it is merely an assumption.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: If Mr. Monck has any evidence that this does take place why does he not produce it instead of saying it is a strong possibility? I have never known such baloney to be spoken in respect of traffic control as has been spoken in this State within the last three or four months. Just before Christmas we saw all sorts of headlines in the Press regarding statements made by Superintendent Monck on traffic control. But what has happened?

I have spoken to many people regarding traffic police chasing a person because he is speeding or has broken the law, and each time I have said, "One of these days it will finish up with one of the greatest tragedies this State has known." We had a tragedy the other day.

The Hon. J. Dolan: It is not the fault of the police.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The fault lies in the order issued to the police that they must catch the offenders.

The Hon. T. O. Perry: That applies also to country traffic inspectors.

The Hon. J. Dolan: You don't know the story.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: A person may be speeding at, say, 60 miles per hour. As soon as he sees a police car behind him he takes off; and instead of one car speeding at 60 m.p.h. we have two cars speeding at 60 to 80 m.p.h. and going through red lights, stop signs, and intersections. This merely makes the traffic hazard 100 times worse. Surely the police can take note of the registration number and the description of the car, and also the time the offence occurred. If they cannot obtain a conviction on that information, it would be much better for one or two persons to get away with an offence than to have tragedies such as the one we experienced recently.

I think it would be far better if Superintendent Monck were to co-operate with local authorities instead of sniping at them in an endeavour to force police control onto them. Let us upgrade the present system instead of trying to introduce something which, to my knowledge, has not been proved worth while in the rest of the world, and certainly not in the Eastern States. Let us upgrade the present system and co-operate with local authorities. I am sure they would be prepared to co-operate.

Lately we have heard talk about helicopters and aerial patrols. We have over 100,000 miles of road in Western Australia. How can all those areas be effectively patrolled day and night? Recently I asked a question on this matter, but it was obvious that the Minister and his department could not answer it properly and could not pinpoint any accidents which could be prevented with State-wide police control of traffic. When we find accidents involving two vehicles in head-on collisions in the early hours of the morning, such as the recent head-on collision between two trucks at night about 10 miles from a country town, how silly is the claim that police road patrols will prevent these accidents? There is only one thing that can be done to prevent accidents, and that involves the human element.

There has been talk about putting bad drivers off the road. Can anyone tell me how many of the unfortunate people involved in fatal accidents had a bad record

of driving? Until such time as it can be proved that those involved in fatal accidents had a bad record, all this talk about putting bad drivers off the road is sheer nonsense. If we check the evidence it will be found that very few people involved in fatal accidents had bad driving records. Probably they were involved in their first serious accident and that was their last. Why has all this ballyhoo been raised when no evidence has been presented in support of the proposed change? In 99½ per cent. of the cases it is the human element which will resolve this problem.

I now come to the question of implementing the one-vote one-value principle. I have said in the House before, that apparently it is the policy of the present State Government and the Federal Government to put this policy into effect. In regard to its implementation in Western Australia for the purpose of electing the State Government, the effect will be shown in the map I am holding up. I know that *Hansard* cannot record the map, but I should point out that the little black spot represents the metropolitan region, comprising about 2,000 square miles. The rest of the State comprises 194,000 square miles. The application of the one-vote one-value principle would return 54 members of Parliament for the area encompassed in the black spot, while 27 members would represent the rest of the State.

Let me draw attention to the Australian situation, to see whether the people of Western Australia are anxious to put such a principle into effect. The Federal Government has just introduced a Bill to amend the Commonwealth Electoral Act in which it seeks to reduce the tolerance from 20 per cent. to 10 per cent. in the number of voters before adjusting the boundaries of a seat. That is the first part of the implementation of the one-vote one-value principle. That is all it means.

I have here another map which I am holding up. If we take the southern part bounded by a line from Adelaide to Brisbane we find that a little portion in the south-east corner of Australia has the greatest representation. About 90 per cent. of the people of Australia live in that little pocket; and that figure can be checked. With the implementation of the one-vote one-value principle, 90 per cent. of the members will be returned for that little pocket and 10 per cent. for the rest of Australia. For that reason it is time the people woke up to themselves and realised the situation, and what the implementation of the one-vote one-value principle would do to the country areas of Western Australia, the people of Western Australia, and to Federal politics itself. It is time that the truth was brought home to the people.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The A.L.P. certainly would know what it means.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That is what it means to Western Australia. It is easy to appreciate that the Federal Government

of Australia is controlled by the population in the small pocket I have indicated. That is the position today, but at least today we have a chance.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: In Western Australia the first move is to adopt the first-past-the-post system.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I am not dealing with that aspect at the moment. I hope that aspect will be given its just dues at the appropriate time.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I hope so too.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That concludes the points I wish to raise in the Address-in-Reply debate. I would ask the Minister again to have a look at the Shark Bay situation, because it is a very important matter. I would also ask him to take back to the Government my request for a consideration of the situation in the Avon Valley.

I noticed that in his Speech the Governor said it was intended to set up an estuarine authority. It would be a waste of time to establish such an authority to control only the estuaries, because those are the places where the water ends. We should start to control the water at its source. It would be preferable to set up an overall authority, so that we can control the water from its source right up to the estuary. In my view it is too late to exercise control when the water reaches the estuary.

I hope the Minister will take back to the Government these two matters I have mentioned. I also sincerely hope that the Government will give some thought to the one-vote one-value proposal, as it affects Western Australia and its people.

**THE HON. I. G. MEDCALF** (Metropolitan) [5.51 p.m.]: At the outset I refer with sorrow to the death of my predecessor in the Metropolitan Province, the late Hon. Sir Keith Watson who rendered outstanding public service as a member of this House and a member of the community. He rose from very humble beginnings to become a member of the Legislative Council, and ultimately a Knight of the Realm. Sir Keith served in this House from 1948 to 1968—a period of 20 years—and during this time he fought fiercely for the principles in which he believed.

I do not think it is necessary for me to remind members, who served at the time when Sir Keith was a member, how fiercely he fought for the principles in which he believed. In private life he was noted for his generosity, which was known only to those who received it. This aspect of his life was not publicised. However, I was particularly struck with what I was told when I attended the funeral of Sir Keith; a number of people who were there told me they were there because of Sir Keith's personal kindness to them.

I would also like to refer to the passing of The Hon. Dr. Gordon Hislop in May of last year. He sat in this House for 30 years, and during his time he was one of the most distinguished physicians in the State. He was a man of great courage and independence, and he rendered great service to the ordinary folk of this State. I do not know whether it is generally realised that he pioneered one piece of legislation dealing with the disease of silicosis. He was one of the first people to relate this disease in the lungs of miners to workers' compensation. Not only did he treat many of the people who were suffering from this disease, but he also saw that so far as possible in terms of workers' compensation they received justice. The late Dr. Hislop was also noted for introducing the Bill granting universal franchise for Legislative Council elections. He was, also, a man of the people.

I would now like to refer to the retirement of The Hon. W. F. Willesee from the position of Leader of the House. He is a man whom we have all learnt to respect very greatly. Having suffered somewhat from ill-health we hope that he will remain with us to serve for a long time, and that his health will gradually improve. In this connection I extend my congratulations to The Hon. J. Dolan on his appointment as Leader of the House, and to Mr. Ron Thompson on his appointment as Minister for Community Welfare.

This afternoon I would like to speak on the provisions of the law relating to changes in local government boundaries. These are to be found in part III of the Local Government Act which contains provisions constituting and altering the constitution of municipalities. A municipality is defined as the inhabitants for the time being of a municipal district, and may be known as a city, a town, or a shire.

The word "constitution" in this sense refers to what constitutes or makes up a municipality and hence part III contains provisions which may cause an alteration in the constitution of municipalities, that is to say a change or variation in the inhabitants for the time being of municipal districts. This clearly refers—among other things—to boundary changes since the legislation obviously did not intend people to be physically moved from one area to another. So if the inhabitants of a district are to remain where they are any variation or alteration must be in the boundaries of the districts in which they live.

It seems doubtful that any one would argue with this contention but as the present unhappy situation in which many municipalities find themselves as a result of proposed mergers and amalgamations and other changes has produced a crop of conflicting arguments it seems necessary to set down at the outset some basic principles.

Section 12 (2) of the Act provides a power in the Governor by order made after the effective presentation to him of a petition bearing the common seal of each municipality which will be directly affected by the order to do several things as follows—

- (1) To dissolve a municipality and annex its district to an adjoining municipality.
- (2) To unite two or more municipalities whose districts adjoin, so as to form one municipality.
- (3) To alter and adjust the boundaries of adjoining districts.

It is to be noted that this subsection deals with agreement between two municipalities which present a petition bearing their common seals. No action can result under this subsection until there has been a joint agreement of all the municipalities affected.

The Governor—this, of course, refers to the Governor in Executive Council—does not have to make the order asked under the subsection; this is a matter entirely in the discretion of the Governor.

The next relevant provision is subsection (3) of section 12 which empowers the Governor—again after effective presentation to him of a petition bearing the common seal of one only of the municipalities directly affected—to sever from a district a portion of the district, and annex the portion to another district which the portion adjoins.

This is a case of unilateral action where one municipality makes a request, and this usually occurs without the concurrence of the other municipality concerned. Again, the Governor is under no compulsion to make any order; he may exercise his judgment.

By section 12 (4) the Governor may make an order without any petition from any municipality which will have the effect of uniting two or more municipalities whose districts adjoin, so as to form one municipality, provided—and this is a major proviso—there has been a recommendation for union by the Local Government Boundaries Commission. Under this subsection the Governor may also abolish a municipality without any petition, and he may exercise other powers set out in the section.

Section 12 (6) provides for the appointment by the Governor of three persons as the Local Government Boundaries Commission, and this commission is required to conduct its proceedings in such manner as the Minister directs, but if he does not give a direction then in such manner as the commission itself determines.

Paragraph (i) of subsection (6) authorises the Minister to refer to the commission for its consideration any question concerning the constitution or alteration of the constitution of municipalities, and in all

cases of disagreements over boundary changes the Minister is required to refer the question to the commission for consideration and report.

No terms of reference of the commission are laid down under the Act other than that it shall meet as and where the Minister directs, and shall hear the views of municipalities and persons affected and who may wish to be heard. The commission is charged to report to the Minister in due course. In fact, the words used are, "as soon as practicable" and the Minister has to give due consideration to the report of the commission before he makes his recommendation to the Governor.

To summarise the situation, the Minister does not have to refer to the Boundaries Commission unless there is a dispute between two adjoining municipalities. However, he may refer any question at any time. When a matter is referred to the commission it does not have any guidelines or terms of reference on which to act. It may determine its own rules of conduct if the Minister does not, himself, do so.

The Minister is not bound to accept the commission's report, but he is required to give due consideration to it. Finally, the decision of the Governor in Executive Council, after hearing the Minister's recommendation on the report, is final and binding. It is not subject to any review or appeal by the legislature or under any judicial process.

The justification for the system is that the boundaries of municipal districts must be expected to be changed from time to time in a changing and developing State because of the requirements of the economy and changes in population. It cannot be expected that boundaries will remain static forever; there will be variations in the interests of efficient government, if for no other reason.

The changes are presumably intended to be in the interests of ratepayers. For example, a town may undergo considerable expansion and, as a result, may overflow into a rural area which has its centre many miles away. The anomalous situation could arise whereby the residents on one side of a street were in the town municipality whereas those on the other side of the same street could belong to the rural municipality with its centre many miles away. In fact, similar cases have been considered by the Boundaries Commission, and Ministers from time to time. There may also be other examples of clear-cut cases where it seems desirable that there should be boundary changes.

Arguments and disputes could arise between municipalities; hence there must be some method of resolving the differences. That is the justification for the existence

of the Boundaries Commission. However, should the commission—perhaps without receiving any expression of opinion from the inhabitants—report in secret to the Minister, and should Cabinet after hearing the Minister's views make an order which is binding and without any possibility of that decision being appealed against or reviewed? That seems to be a somewhat arbitrary system and there is room for some alteration of it.

In my opinion the present system smacks of benevolent paternalism, and I do not think it is in keeping with the times. As I have said, there are no specific standards or terms of reference in the Local Government Act which might serve as guidelines to the Boundaries Commission when producing a report to the Minister. The commission has to decide for itself where it stands or what its terms of reference shall be on any particular question. In some ways this may be an advantage but it is hardly conducive to public confidence in the consistency of decisions.

But I want to deal now with another aspect which I believe is equally important from the public point of view. I refer to the aspect of the secrecy of the commission's reports. It must be understood that I am not blaming the Boundaries Commission for the secrecy; it is inherent in the administrative processes.

The Act, under section 12(6) (h), charges the Boundaries Commission to report to the Minister on any matter referred to it. On the 18th August, 1971, the Minister for Local Government referred the question of metropolitan municipal boundaries to the Boundaries Commission. The commission went through the processes of considering the submissions of the local authorities and, in due course—on the 1st December, 1972—it produced a report to the Minister.

The report went to the Minister, as the Act required. However, no copy of it came out, or was made available to the local authorities concerned. Nor was it made available to the public or even to members of Parliament until the Minister, as he indicated earlier this afternoon, acting on his own initiative made copies available on the 9th of this month.

*Sitting suspended from 6.07 to 7.30 p.m.*

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: Many citizens have had a keen and legitimate interest in this report of the Boundaries Commission; yet even the local authorities concerned were deprived of any opportunity to see the report, including the reasons for the proposed boundary changes—of which they had already received notification in the form of the plan of the proposed boundary changes—until many weeks or months had elapsed.

In the meantime, meetings were held in a number of areas and there were public discussions through the media; yet they

were held in ignorance of the actual reasons of the Boundaries Commission. I believe it would have helped had the reasons been published. That course might have enabled more reasoned comments to be made on the proposals.

No doubt the Local Government Department could quote the time-honoured practice of departments not printing reports unless they have specific authority to do so; and no doubt the department could say what I have already said—that this particular report was required, by an Act of Parliament, to be made to the Minister. But here is the important point: was this really a confidential report? Was it not really a matter of considerable public interest which it would have been of value to print and make available to the public?

If I may digress for a moment, the Local Government Department is not the only department which has shrouded its reports in secrecy. I could quote a number of others, including the Department of Agriculture. Those members who endeavoured last year to inform themselves of the details of the Knox committee report into the apple and pear industry will recall the problems we had in reading the one copy of it which was in the possession of the members of the Opposition during the passage of the legislation through the House. Whilst I was hastily reading sections of the report, it was almost snatched away by another member who was about to speak to the Bill.

Is this the way to stimulate an informed democratic public opinion? Does this policy of departmental obscurantism not do an injustice to Parliament, and through Parliament to the public? Can one not believe that the standard of comment at public meetings where boundary adjustments are under discussion would be elevated by a knowledge of the reasons given by the Boundaries Commission? Facts are always better than speculation and they enable interested citizens to weigh the evidence and form their own conclusions. My plea is that departments should get into the habit of recommending that all reports which are not confidential and which are really of a public nature be printed and made available.

It has been said that the basic justification of democracy as a form of government is that, given access to the facts, the people will reach surer conclusions and decisions in the long run than they will under a dictatorship or an oligarchy. The crux of the matter is: "given access to the facts".

At present the only "facts" upon which the citizen can form his judgment are, too often, those which the media select and publish. This derogates from the responsibility of both the electorate and Parliament.

Annual reports of departments are customarily printed; the reports exemplified above seem to be at least as important as routine annual reports.

Western Australian Governments are not alone in this matter. It seems to be an Australian phenomenon—in marked contrast to British practice. In the United Kingdom it has long been the convention to publish reports before they have been considered by the Government, so that in reaching its decision the Government may take into account any informed or public reaction to the report.

A recent *Green Paper* on a quite contentious issue in the United Kingdom offers an example of this. A *Green Paper* is a form of document which was instituted some years ago by the British Government. Before Government policy is decided on a matter of public interest, a *Green Paper* is issued to enable members of the public to make comments which will be of benefit to the Government.

The particular *Green Paper* to which I referred contains a letter of committal from the committee chairman to the Paymaster-General, and it includes the following paragraph—

The Working Party have been dealing with a subject which has aroused much interest over a long period and they hope, therefore, that you will share their view that it would be most desirable for the Report to be published and an opportunity for comment on its findings given to the organisations concerned, not all of whom could, for practical reasons, be found a place in the Working Party's membership.

The Paymaster-General's reply is printed in the paper—

Without any commitment on the Government's part, I am arranging for the Report to be published and the comments invited of the interests which would be affected were a scheme to be introduced for the establishment of a public lending right by amending the law of copyright. The careful examination in the Report of the complex practical issues in this field will, I am sure, be helpful in enabling the Government to decide on their future course of action.

This seems to be an admirable example of effective democratic procedure.

It seems to have been assumed that the public would not have been interested in the Boundaries Commission report. It seems that the public interest was underrated—as has frequently happened before—and that Cabinet finally and rather belatedly authorised the printing of a report which the department concerned had no intention of printing. Considering some of the other things that are printed which

are not of much general interest, it seems the printing priorities need to be overhauled.

I have since read the particular report of the Boundaries Commission. To be fair to the commission, it did make a point of conferring with all the local authorities concerned by visiting them and receiving their submissions. The report contains recommendations for boundary changes of quite a sweeping nature, involving the abolition or amalgamation of many of the metropolitan local authorities. It also contains submissions from various public authorities and departments in relation to the proposals.

The recommendations are, of course, those of the three-man commission, after taking into account the submissions made to it. I do not think it has acted in an improper manner, bearing in mind that it has no guidelines under which to operate other than those of its own making. It becomes a matter of opinion whether the Boundaries Commission should accept the view submitted to it by the Main Roads Department that there should be larger authorities so as to provide greater efficiency in the maintenance of roads; or the view of the Town Planning Department that local authorities should be of such a size as to enable the organized collection of statistical data in order to provide a more commonly based interrelated statistical picture of the metropolitan area; or the principle that local government should be as "local" or close to the inhabitants as possible, bearing in mind the need to keep solvent; or any other view or principle.

The Minister has now indicated that he proposes to appoint a Royal Commission to review the matter, and in view of this development I do not propose to comment further on the substance of the report.

But I would still like to deal with some general considerations as to what are in my opinion some guiding principles for resolving boundary questions between local authorities.

Firstly, as I have said, the Act should contain guidelines, albeit of a general nature, to assist the Boundaries Commission in formulating its recommendations.

Secondly, the reports of the Boundaries Commission should be published and made available in full to any persons or local authorities who may be interested. Where they are of widespread public interest, as in the present case, they should be printed and made available to local authorities and members of Parliament and to the public through public libraries; and, for a reasonable charge, to private individuals.

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: They are now available through the Government Printer.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: Thirdly, the decision to abolish, amalgamate, or merge local authorities where it has not been



agreed to by the local authorities affected should be subject either to previous consent of the inhabitants or to review in some proper manner. On this point, various suggestions have been made from time to time.

In the last session of Parliament we had before us a Bill to require the Minister to table the order so that it would be subject to disallowance by either House. The Bill was passed by the Council but failed to pass through the Assembly.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I think the Bill was defeated in the Assembly.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: I believe it was. It has also been suggested from time to time—and is now being suggested again—that a referendum of municipal electors be held when any such proposals are put forward, in order to ensure that they have the majority approval. In fact, today I received a letter from the Town of East Fremantle in which this very suggestion is made.

The Minister has now indicated that a Royal Commissioner will be appointed in the present case. Clearly, all cases would not justify the holding of a Royal Commission and this method has three serious defects—

- (a) The cost is only justified in a minority of cases;
- (b) the Royal Commissioner will be limited by the terms of reference which the Minister lays down; and
- (c) the worth of his recommendations will depend on his independence of judgment and grasp of the subject.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: I do not know where you will find him.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: This could be a difficult problem.

It would seem to me that a better solution and one which would overcome some of the practical difficulties in the other courses recommended, would be to allow boundary decisions to be the subject of appeals to an administrative appeals tribunal or other tribunal having a somewhat similar constitution to the Land and Valuation Court of New South Wales. It must be borne in mind that decisions on boundaries are administrative and not judicial decisions and therefore a properly constituted administrative appeals tribunal would be the right forum.

We do not have such a tribunal here but they can be found in other places and it would seem to me that such a tribunal should provide local authorities and groups of ratepayers with a fair and adequate method of obtaining an independent hearing of their case whilst allowing for such changes as may be found to be necessary as a result of the passage of time or other

considerations. Until the time such a tribunal is established here, however, I believe that in the interests of democracy we must have some effective consultation in greater degree than exists at present with the opinions of the inhabitants of any particular municipal district.

There is one final point which I should like to make and which perhaps rests on a deeper principle than any I have yet touched upon.

The lust for power and the urge to ride over others lie just under the human surface. In recent memory are the dictatorships of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy; and there are many examples of dictatorial Governments in our present world ranging from Africa to China.

A bastion of democracy is the division and diversion of responsibility at various levels and in different degrees. Local government is an important—indeed essential—element in the preservation of the democratic way of life by spreading the power and responsibility and by keeping many domestic aspects of government close to the people who are served by it.

In so far as we resist the tendency to centralise power, whether in excessively large local authorities or in an all-powerful Government in Canberra, we are helping to nourish the fragile flower of democracy.

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

## ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

THE HON. J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [7.48 p.m.]: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

I wish to direct the attention of members who were not present when the House adjourned last Thursday to page 205 of *Hansard* No. 2, so that they have cognizance of the remarks I made on that occasion.

*House adjourned at 7.49 p.m.*

# Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 27th March, 1973

The SPEAKER (Mr. Norton) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

## QUESTIONS (39): ON NOTICE

### 1. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

*Cockburn Sound: Sea Grass*

Mr. RUSHTON, to the Minister for Environmental Protection:

- (1) What has been the extent of the deterioration and loss of the sea-grass during the last 12 months in Cockburn Sound and the outer harbour?