

Mr. O'NEIL: Surely it boils down to what I said in the beginning: This Bill is nonsense in respect of carrying out a policy of selective price control. Stripped of all the niceties, it gives the Minister of the day power to ask the commissioner to declare the price of any goods or services in the State—goods or services supplied by any person to any person. It is total and complete power to have total and complete price control.

I should add, this excepts goods and services offered by the Government. There is no control on those prices. I refer, for example, to water and power. They are not controlled. The Government can do what it likes and no-one else can do anything about it.

Mr. Bertram: How do you work that out?

Mr. O'NEIL: They are excluded.

Mr. Bertram: There is such a thing as a ballot box.

Mr. O'NEIL: There is such a thing as a ballot box if anyone is charging too much for milk.

Mr. Taylor: In all sections of the State?

Mr. O'NEIL: Milk probably comes under orderly marketing, and the price is controlled from the calf to the can. The measure will control only the price of goods produced by an individual by his own effort and initiative.

Mr. Taylor: This Bill—

Mr. O'NEIL: The Government will be able to control the price of anything under this Bill.

Mr. Taylor: Yes, if we investigate it.

Mr. O'NEIL: Members will have gathered that we on this side of the House do not think the Bill is worth the paper it is printed on and we cannot see any justification for it. We certainly cannot see any merit in it. We oppose the measure.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. W. A. Manning.

House adjourned at 10.04 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 9th August, 1972

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

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

ABATTOIRS

Establishment

The HON. T. O. PERRY, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Is it a fact that an agreement has been signed or is about to be signed whereby the Government

guarantees or provides large sums of money for the establishment of abattoirs?

(2) If so—

- (a) What is the amount to be contributed by the Government?
- (b) With whom is the agreement and what financial contribution is that party or parties making?
- (c) What are the major matters of the agreement, such as sites, capacity, etc?
- (d) Is there any provision in the agreement for payment of so much per pound of stock killed to be paid to the parties to the agreement?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

The honourable member was kind enough to give me prior advice of this question, and I have obtained a written reply as follows:—

- (1) On the assumption that the question refers to a proposal submitted by the United Farmers and Graziers Association in conjunction with the Trades and Labor Council, no agreement has been signed or is about to be signed whereby the Government guarantees large sums of money for the establishment of abattoirs.

- (2) See answer to (1).

QUESTIONS (13): ON NOTICE

DAIRYING

Production Control

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

- (1) Is it correct that the Federal Minister for Primary Industry (Mr. Sinclair) has made a statement that measures for production control in the Dairy Industry have been agreed upon at the Agricultural Council meeting?
- (2) If production control is to be implemented, what is the basis on which such control will be imposed in Western Australia?
- (3) Did the Western Australian Minister for Agriculture concur in the decision to impose production control?
- (4) Will the Minister Table the submission made to the Agricultural Council by the Western Australian Minister for Agriculture on the State of the Dairy Industry in Western Australia?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied: 4.

- (1) to (3) Two proposals for production control in the Dairy Industry, the ADIC two price proposal and the Victorian proposal, were considered. Australian Agricultural Council decided to ask State Directors of Agriculture and Commonwealth officers to confer urgently on these proposals and report to Council. The subsequent decision of the Ministers will be discussed with the leaders of the various sectors of the dairying industry.
- (4) As is customary, the W.A. submission was made verbally.

2. SCIENTOLOGY

Legislation

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

Is it the intention of the Government to introduce during this session of Parliament, legislation to—

- (a) amend; or
 - (b) repeal
- the Scientology Act?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:
The matter is under consideration.

3. NATURAL GAS

Conversion of Appliances

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Is it a fact that appliances converted to natural gas are not as efficient in operation as they were prior to conversion?
- (2) If not, why does the Minister allow advertisements proclaiming this fact to continue, without the facts being refuted by the State Electricity Commission to protect the consumer?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (1) Natural gas has different burning characteristics to town gas. Some converted appliances perform better on natural gas and some not as well.
All appliances converted to use natural gas are capable of operating satisfactorily on this fuel.
- (2) See (1) above. The only such newspaper advertisement known to me was instantly withdrawn, at the request of the State Electricity Commission.

When radio announcements of a similar nature became known they were instantly withdrawn, at the request of the State Electricity Commission.

LAND

Market Gardening at Port Hedland

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

- (1) Has the Minister approved of any lands for market gardens with water rights in the Port Hedland area?
- (2) If so, have any grants or leases been made to farmers experienced in this area?
- (3) If not, when will land with water rights be approved for this purpose?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (1) Leases have been granted for market gardening purposes and lessees were required to make their own arrangements for water supply. Limited supplies have been made available through Country Water Supply systems. The Public Works Department administers the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act.
- (2) Applicants claimed to be experienced.
- (3) Lands Department has no proposals in this regard as suitable land with sufficient water is not available.

5.

TRANSPORT

City Bus Terminal

The Hon. Clive GRIFFITHS, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Government currently planning the construction of a bus terminal in the Central City area?
- (2) If so—
 - (a) where is its proposed location;
 - (b) what is the estimated total cost of the project;
 - (c) when is it anticipated that the project will be completed; and
 - (d) what effect will the construction of this terminal have on the implementation of the PERTS recommendations?
- (3) From which districts will buses using the terminal operate?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) On Western Australian Government Railways land north of Wellington Street between King Street and William Street.
(b) Stage 1 (approved)—\$367,000.
Stages 1 and 2—\$426,000.
Stages 1, 2 and 3—\$537,000.
These costs are for the terminal buildings and associated road works.

(c) Stage, 1, 31st December, 1972. Stages 2 and 3 dependent on extra money becoming available.

(d) A bus terminal in this general area was recommended by PERTS.

(3) North-Western Sector.

6. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES

Loss of Working Time

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

(1) How much working time has been lost in Western Australia in the

years 1970, 1971 and 1972, as a result of industrial disputes?

(2) What industries have been most seriously affected by such disputes?

(3) What has been the cost in terms of—

(a) wages and salaries;

(b) loss of production; and

(c) income to the State;

as a result of the disputes referred to?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

(1)	Current Years	Man Days Lost Due to Work Stoppages	Man Days Lost Due to Workers Being Stood Down	Total
1970	112,701	13,258	125,959
1971	59,440	432,847	492,287
1972 (January to June)	48,403	7,000	55,403

Source : Industrial Commission statistics and annual reports.

(2)	Name of Industry	1970	1971	January to June 1972
	Brick Making	2,220	....	....
	Building and Construction	17,224	11,735	3,908
	Building and Engineering	874	....	....
	Clothing and Textiles	....	130	....
	Food, Drink and Tobacco	....	90	375
	Electricity	11,028*	433,265†	....
	Metal Trades and Engineering (including Steel Industry)	26,966	16,294	37
	Mining and Quarrying	26,590	24,016	32,037
	Maritime Shipping and Stevedoring	422	1,918	2,683
	Oil Refinery	1,400	42	....
	Railways	19	....	....
	Slaughtering	37,721	....	....
	Transport	1,495	4,797	2,146
	Other Industries	....	....	14,217
		125,959	492,287	55,403

* Includes 8,000 man days lost due to workers outside S.E.C. being stood down.

† Includes 42,667 man days lost due to workers outside S.E.C. being stood down in April and September, 1971.

Source : Western Australian Industrial Commission.

(3) This information is not available to the Government.

7. WATER SUPPLIES

Yule River Tests

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

(1) Why did the Public Works Department stop the use of water on market garden Lot 79 on the Yule River?

(2) Were any pollution tests carried out on the water of the Yule River from 1969 onwards?

(3) If so—

(a) when were they done; and

(b) what were the findings?

(4) Was the lessee of Lot 79 compensated for loss of employment, or granted further land with water rights in the district?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

(1) Public Works Department did not stop use of water.

(2) No.

(3) Answered by (2).

(4) Answered by (1).

8. SOIL AND SEED-BORNE DISEASES

Control

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

- (1) Is it correct that the Agricultural Council at its recent meeting agreed upon measures to prevent the use of certain fungicides used in the treatment of seed for the control of soil- and seed-borne diseases?
- (2) What categories of fungicides will be so affected?
- (3) What alternative fungicides, or other treatments or managements, are to be recommended for use in the grain growing industry?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (1) and (2) Australian Agricultural Council adopted recommendations of the Co-ordinating Committee on Pesticides which include—
 - (a) that fungicides which when applied to human foodstuffs or fed to animals are known to give rise to residues of public health significance, should not be permitted registration as dressings on cereal and coarse grain seeds;
 - (b) that any use of organo-mercury compounds on cereal seeds should be prohibited. The target date for this prohibition should be 1st March, 1973.

In W.A. H.C.B. has been de-registered since 30th June, 1972.

- (3) Some carbamate type fungicides have been tested and will be available.

9. ABORIGINES

Tabling of Petition

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

Will the Minister Table the petition that was handed to the Premier by Mr. Colbung on behalf of an Aboriginal group in July of this year?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

Yes. Copy of petition Tabled herewith. (See Paper No. 222.)

The petition was tabled.

10. DAIRYING

Products: Price

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

- (1) Is it correct that in the year 1971-1972 dairy products to the value of approximately \$10 million were imported into Western Australia, mainly from Victoria?

- (2) What is the price paid to dairy farmers in Western Australia for—
 - (a) manufacturing milk;
 - (b) butter fat, delivered to factories?
- (3) Can the Minister advise the price paid to dairy farmers in Victoria for—
 - (a) manufacturing milk;
 - (b) butter fat, delivered to factories?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The interim prices as from 1st July, 1972, are the same as those which operated at the commencement of last year. These prices will be subject to step-ups.

Manufacturing milk at the factory—

First grade 43.7 cents/lb butterfat.

Second grade—42.9 cents/lb butterfat.

Cream—

Choice—38.5 cents/lb butterfat.

First—37.8 cents/lb butterfat.

Second 33.6 cents/lb butterfat.

- (3) The prices paid for manufacturing milk and cream in Victoria are determined by the individual factories and companies and there is no one price available. It is understood that the prices paid for cream will be in the same order as those in this State while prices for milk will continue to be considerably higher.

11. BOYUP BROOK-DINNINUP-ARTHUR ROAD

Realignment

The Hon. V. J. FERRY, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is he aware that the Boyup Brook-Dinninup section of the Boyup Brook-Dinninup-Arthur Road is a highly dangerous one with many tightly curving bends?
- (2) Is he aware that there have been at least 20 reported cases of cars overturning on certain portions of the road within the last seven years?
- (3) Will he request the Main Roads Department to programme complete re-alignment of the worst sections in the interests of road safety as soon as possible?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) and (2) It is known that a number of accidents have occurred on the Boyup Brook-Dinninup-Arthur Road. However, it is not a declar-

ed main road and therefore responsibility for its construction, maintenance and management rests with the respective local authorities.

Following an exchange of correspondence between the Main Roads Department and the Boyup Brook Shire Council the Council was given advice in respect of the erection of appropriate warning signs. The provision and erection of warning signs is also the responsibility of the Shire Council. The services of the Department's Divisional Engineer were offered to the Council to further assist them in the selection of the proper signs.

- (3) The allocation of funds for the realignment of sections of this road will depend upon its assessed priority in relation to other important departmental works throughout the whole State.

12.

HOSPITAL

Denmark: Additions

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

- (1) Adverting to my question on the 30th November, 1971, when it was advised that tender documents were expected to be completed to permit calling of tenders in March, 1972, for the purpose of providing a new operating theatre, outpatient treatment room, and the relevant service rooms as a separate block linked to the existing Denmark Hospital by a short covered way, the proposed work to be facilitated in the form of transportable units, have tenders been called?
- (2) If so, what is the present position?
- (3) If tenders have not been called, what are the circumstances of the delay?
- (4) Will he take immediate steps to implement the long promised improvements to the hospital?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Amendments to plans were required as transportable units proved to be impracticable for the site. Repositioning of building is required to obtain best use of land contour, which required taking of levels. A request for working drawings based on the revised sketch plans was forwarded to the Public Works Department on 7th June, 1972. The architectural firm of

Oldham, Boas, Ednie-Brown and Partners has been commissioned for the project.

- (4) Every endeavour is being made to expedite this project.

13.

YOUTH CENTRES

Subsidies

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

- (1) How many local authorities are at present receiving subsidies to assist with the employment of youth organisers?
- (2) Where are the youth centres situated, and how much subsidy is paid by the W.A. Youth Council for the benefit of each one?
- (3) Are subsidies paid to any youth centres other than those assisted through local authorities?
- (4) If so, where are the youth centres situated, and how much subsidy is paid by the W.A. Youth Council for the benefit of each one?
- (5) Is it intended to alter the existing subsidy system?
- (6) If so, what is the new proposal, and when will it take effect?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (1) There are 9 local authorities receiving subsidies.
- (2) Boyup Brook, full time worker—\$2,000.
Shire of West Kimberley, full time worker—\$2,000.
Shire of Boulder, part time—\$750.
Shire of Bayswater, full time—\$1,000.
Shire of Kojonup, full time—\$2,000.
Shire of Gnowangerup, full time—\$2,000.
Shire of Bridgetown, part time—\$500.
Shire of Exmouth, part time—\$400.
Shire of Esperance, part time—\$750.

- (3) Yes.
- (4) Methodist Youth Department, 3 full time.
Carlyle Team Service, 1 full time—\$2,000.
Charles Street Youth Centre, 1 full time—\$2,000.
State Organiser, 1 full time—\$2,000.
Mt. Tom Price, 1 part time—\$500.
The Diocesan Board of Religious Education (Anglican), 1 full time—\$1,500.

Baptist Youth Fellowship, 1 part time—\$500.

Presbyterian Youth Fellowship State Organiser, 1 part time—\$2,000.

Drop in Centre at Nedlands (Presbyterian), 1 part time—\$1,000.

Youth Christian Workers Perth, 2 full time—\$2,250.

W.A. Region (YCW), 1 full time—\$1,250.

Bunbury Region, 1 full time—\$1,000.

Girl Guides Association State Organiser, 1 full time—\$1,500.

Boy Scouts Association—

(i) Metropolitan—\$1,500.

(ii) Country—\$1,500.

Church of Christ State Organiser, 1 full time—\$1,500.

Y.M.C.A. Headquarters Perth and sub branches, 2 full time—\$3,000.

Eastern Goldfields, 1 full time—\$1,500.

Fremantle, 1 full time—\$1,500.

Y.W.C.A. Headquarters, 1 part time—\$625; 1 full time—\$1,750.

Nurses Christian Fellowship State Organiser, 1 full time—\$1,600.

Scripture Union State Organiser, 1 full time—\$1,250.

Anglican Church Drop in Centre Kalgoorlie, 1 full time—\$1,250.

Ichud Habonim Headquarters, 1 full time—\$1,000.

Combined Churches Youth Project (The Door) (Youth Council Experimental Project), full time—\$4,600 (full time salary for financial year 1971-72 to revert to normal 50% subsidy for 1972-1973).

- (5) No. The policy was reiterated after the June Council Meeting. This policy was set in the 1966/67 financial year.

Recipients of subsidy grants were notified of this policy and it would have also been mentioned verbally and generally is common knowledge.

- (6) There is no alteration to existing system.

CITY OF PERTH PARKING FACILITIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by The Hon. J. Dolan (Minister for Police), and read a first time.

SUPPLY BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 8th August.

THE HON. T. O. PERRY (Lower Central) [4.56 p.m.]: I apologise to the House for speaking at this late stage of the debate on the Supply Bill. Because of circumstances beyond my control, I was not in the House at midnight last night.

The Ministers sitting in the front bench have been subjected to a great deal of criticism in the last few days. I must say that I have received nothing but help and consideration from them during the time they have been in office.

However, I do have one grievance to state and that is to the Chief Secretary, who unfortunately is not in the House at this particular moment. A number of members in this House use the same bank and an alphabetical list of members' names is kept by the clerk. When the list was being typed, my name and that of the Chief Secretary somehow became transposed. Consequently, a few days later I received the salary of the Chief Secretary and he received mine. Unfortunately he realised the error.

I arrived home at Kojonup one night and received the message that the clerk had telephoned and asked me to put the matter right. I was very sleepy, I had a drink of Milo, and went straight to bed, forgetting about it. The next morning I arrived here and one of the clerks met me in the corridor and thanked me for coming in so promptly to put the matter right!

This is my only grievance: The one time in my life I have been paid my true worth the Chief Secretary took it off me within three or four days.

I would like to thank the Leader of the House for his answer regarding the guarantee for the proposed abattoirs to be built by the Trades and Labor Council and the United Farmers and Graziers Association. During the last few days rumours have been rife that the Government has decided to guarantee a loan to these organisations. I am pleased that the Minister has refuted the rumour by saying that no guarantee is to be forthcoming at the present time. I believe it would be a travesty of justice and immoral for any Government to guarantee the T.L.C., which has a political bias, and the United Farmers and Graziers Association, in a venture of this kind. I sincerely hope that this House has the opportunity to debate the subject before any such move is made.

When Mr. MacKinnon was speaking last night he mentioned a promise made by the Deputy Premier in Collie that preference would be given to building contractors in that town. I would like to say that Mr. MacKinnon's comments were quite correct.

I was present at the meeting and I will quote from the *Collie Mail* of Thursday, the 8th October, 1971. To my knowledge this is a true and accurate report of what occurred at the meeting. Mr. Graham said—

In the letting of contracts, preference would be given to local builders, Mr. Graham said.

"If the tender price of a local contractor is not the lowest, but is close to the lowest, then preference will be given to the Collie contractor."

I took this matter up at a later stage and found that a number of contracts had been let in Collie, but not one Collie building contractor had been given a contract. Following this I asked a question in this House to which the Leader of the House replied on behalf of the Minister for Development and Decentralisation. The question was in regard to a tender granted to Mr. Ietto of Brunswick, and the Leader of the House replied as follows:—

The successful tenderer for the Collie High School Canteen is from Brunswick and this is considered to be local to Collie.

The next day the *Collie Mail* came out with a small report on the front page, making some reference to the successful tenderer.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Will you also verify the fact that this left the Collie people very disappointed after there was no benefit created, despite the statement made by Mr. Graham?

The Hon. T. O. PERRY: I visit Collie quite often, as Mr. MacKinnon would know. It is a fairly large town and therefore, from time to time, there are matters to which attention must be given. In Collie not only the builders, but also other people have said the promises that had been made were never fulfilled.

My main concern was that the tender price of the Collie contractor was \$17,710 and the accepted price was \$17,282; a difference of \$428, which was less than 2½ per cent. below the tender price, and I would have thought that a local contractor would have been given the benefit of the contract, even if his tender had been a little higher.

I would like to speak for a few minutes in defence of the Commonwealth Government's decision on the marketing of wool. At present, around the country areas, the Commonwealth Government is subjected to a great deal of criticism, but in spite of this, I consider it has taken the right action. I have in my hand a submission from the Australian Wool Industry Conference that was handed to Mr. Ian Sinclair, the Commonwealth Minister for Primary Industry. I would like to read to the House a letter dated the 16th March,

1972, forwarded by the chairman of the Australian Wool Industry Conference. It reads as follows:—

16th March, 1972

Hon. I. McC Sinclair,
Minister for Primary Industry
CANBERRA A.C.T.

Dear Mr. Sinclair,

On behalf of the Australian Wool Industry Conference, I present the attached submission to the Commonwealth Government recommending that the Australian Wool Board and the Australian Wool Commission be amalgamated into a single body, which might be called the Australian Wool Authority, and that an acquisition plan may be introduced by the Authority into the marketing arrangements for the Australian wool clip.

The submission gives effect to a unanimous resolution of Conference in November 1971 that the formation of such a body with the widest possible powers to co-ordinate and control the marketing of the clip be recommended to Government.

In putting forward the proposal, Conference has examined not only the immediate requirements of the wool industry but also its needs in the long term. Probably not all of the powers recommended for the proposed Authority, therefore, would require immediate implementation, and some powers would need supporting legislation by States. However, their use, when granted, would still be subject to Ministerial approval, as would certain others. Nevertheless, it is considered prudent for the legislation to include at the outset all powers intended for the Authority whether or not these would be exercised immediately. The alternative of successive amendments could impede the smooth development of the Authority's operations. Machinery has also been suggested for industry and Government consultation to determine which powers should be immediately available and which could subsequently involve major policy changes requiring prior notice to industry.

I will not quote the whole of the letter, but as Mr. Logan has said in an aside to me, the important part is that the letter ended with the thought that the Commonwealth Government had the power to control the marketing of the Australian wool clip. Also, in its recommendations, the Australian Wool Industry Conference pointed out the disadvantages of acquisition. On page 7 of its report, the following appears:—

The introduction of acquisition could discourage the continuing involvement of commercial organisations, expertise and capital in the industry in Australia and increase the

size of the acquiring body to inefficient levels. With the loss of competitive elements, its commercial flexibility could be hampered.

In the area of wool disposal, it is possible that many existing trade channels and contacts could disappear rapidly under total acquisition. This would pose serious problems, particularly in the short term, unless full account was taken of its implications. If the rate of change to any form of acquisition was more rapid than the total industry would tolerate, the effect would be disastrous. Some overseas wool users may regard the acquiring body as a convenient instrument for the Australian Government and wool growers in the achieving of ends divorced from purely marketing considerations. Such a reaction from users could distort or depress the wool market.

In view of what has been said I believe the Commonwealth Government acted correctly in amalgamating the two bodies into the new authority, whatever it may be called. It will have the same powers as the wool commission had to operate on the wool market, which powers have been extremely effective in raising the present price of wool.

It is all very well to criticise, but surely an industry as important as the wool industry deserves some consideration; before vital changes are made it should be told how such changes will operate. I believe it would be unwise to take action to effect any change that would disrupt the marketing of wool. Where wool is sold by direct negotiation, we may have a situation that would involve a good deal of research; a good deal of consideration before such a scheme was put into effect. Some farmers believe that the price of wool should be set at the beginning of the season and that this price should operate throughout the whole of the selling season.

If such action had been taken at this time last year when the "K" type wools—or those wools within the "K" type—were not considered for subsidy by the Commonwealth the situation may have been quite different. Many pieces and locks were selling at 7c. or 8c. a pound, and many of our leading woolgrowers were suggesting that this wool should be dumped into the sea or burnt, yet at the end of the selling season these wools were the ones that appreciated the most in value. Wools at 3c. and 4c. a pound were sold at 42c. a kilo, which is about 20c. a pound. I do not know who would be responsible for fixing the price of this wool at the beginning of the season, but I believe that had prices been fixed at the beginning of the season on that type of wool it would have been to the disadvantage of the woolgrower and would have been responsible for a loss to the wool industry.

Dr. Rex Patterson, the shadow Minister in the Labor Party, has been set up as an authority on wool marketing. Speaking in the House of Representatives on the 17th March, 1971, he moved a motion as follows:—

The failure of the Government to report to Parliament on the operations of the Australian Wool Commission and on the critical economic condition of the Australian wool industry.

The following, which has been taken from *Hansard*, is what Dr. Patterson had to say about the wool commission when he condemned it:—

The Australian Wool Commission has panicked because of its failure to bludgeon the wool market into accepting higher prices. Grave fears are now arising that the Commission's activities could wreck the entire economic foundation of the wool industry. Some authorities even predict that this massive stockpile of wool will reach 700,000 bales by the end of June next. The aggressive policy of stockpiling wool with the objective of forcing up wool prices is now seriously depressing the market and the immediate future level of wool prices. As the Commission buys and stockpiles more wool, synthetics progressively capture an increasingly greater share of the world's textile markets.

I will stop at this point to say that this stockpiling of wool amounted to 900,000 bales by the end of June, instead of the 700,000 bales as mentioned in that statement by Dr. Patterson. Therefore, we can see how untrue that statement is, because the textile industry is in great financial difficulty today and it has not recaptured any of the markets that were traditionally held by wool. Dr. Patterson, on the same day, went on to say further, in the same debate—

The Government once again is guilty of gross complacency. It has no forward plan. It is obviously backing the stockpiling activities of the Wool Commission to the hilt on the fallacious assumption that it is in the best interests of wool to remove wool from the world markets. The Government is sitting back hiding behind the skirts of the Wool Commission and handing the Australian wool markets on a plate to synthetic manufacturers. All this Government has done in recent months, to the knowledge of this Parliament and the people, is to echo those profound sentiments of the majestic and incredibly costly International Wool Secretariat that the price of wool is expected to rise perhaps to 40c per pound in the next 10 years.

I would like to repeat that; that the price of wool is expected to rise perhaps to 40c a pound in the next 10 years.

I think any person should be extremely careful when making statements such as that, especially when it involves condemning the Australian Wool Commission, because the price of wool has increased not in 10 years, but in one year, and not to 40c a pound, but to 50c a pound. I might mention that in my district wool is selling at 110c a kilo which includes sweepings from the floor. The 900,000 bales of stockpiled wool Dr. Patterson was so concerned about has been greatly reduced, because I understand the Australian Wool Commission is now holding only about 200,000 bales today. The wool the commission has sold has brought a profit of about \$21,000,000, and so that money will go some way towards reimbursing the Commonwealth Government for subsidising the industry.

I believe that the wise management of wool is a sound marketing scheme. To feed wool, or any commodity, on to a depressed market is not in the best interests of either the wool industry or of any other industry. There has been a great deal said about the announcement made by the Commonwealth Government during the Budget debate last year when it indicated it had set aside about \$60,000,000 for the subsidising of wool, following which the news media condemned the action of the Commonwealth Government. In a leading article one of the newspapers stated that the man in the street subsidised the woolgrowers of Australia. Statements made over television programmes and radio programmes also claimed that the man in the street was subsidising the woolgrowers of Australia.

However, I do not think it is an unwise policy to subsidise the woolgrowing industry, because it is still the major primary industry in Australia. Although eventually the Commonwealth Government did pay \$51,000,000 in round figures to subsidise the wool industry, the same Government, in 1968-69, paid \$54,000,000 to secondary industries as an incentive payment to boost the export trade.

But neither the Press nor the radio came out and publicised this fact. Many of the secondary industries were making handsome profits, but if they qualified by exporting the required percentage of their production they then received an export incentive over and above the margin of profit they had made. I am not criticising this at all, because we wish to encourage our secondary industries to produce goods for export. This is a good move.

Many other sections of industry are also subsidised and assisted. For example Chamberlain Industries in our own State were assisted with a view to getting them into production. This, of course, is not unreasonable.

I am concerned however at the fact that there are many farmers, and those who should know better, who are condemning the Federal Government at the present time for its action in not giving the new authority the power to acquire, without their being aware of the details of what is required.

In the case of an industry that is important to Australia, I think it is most essential that the newly-formed authority should spell out to the Federal Government exactly what is required in an acquisition scheme. We should then see what is required, because this State along with all the other States of the Commonwealth will have to pass complementary legislation for this purpose. Accordingly I think it is only reasonable that we should know what is involved.

With those remarks I support the second reading of the Bill.

THE HON. J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Minister for Police) [5.17 p.m.]: I will not keep the House long. A few matters were raised during the debate on the Supply Bill on which I feel I should have something to say.

I will first mention the reference made by Mr. McNeill to an experience that one of his constituents had with the Railways Department concerning dry cleaning. Mr. McNeill commenced by saying—

I also refer to a Press report from *The West Australian* of Tuesday, the 11th July dealing with the report of the Western Australian Government Railways. The article is headed, "\$12.5m. deficit." I will not read the article but clearly the Railways Department is in a very difficult situation.

I would like to inform the House that our Railways Department is in no greater difficult situation than any other Railways Department in the Commonwealth. Despite all kinds of difficulties that have been experienced in the last 12 months the department has been able to produce a working profit. It is making progress and is still handling increased tonnages each year, and it will continue to do so in the future.

To indicate how confident the Government is in the operations of the Railways Department and the faith it has in the future of farming in Western Australia, I would like to say that last Friday I had the pleasure, and quite an unusual experience, of opening a new railway station at Bencubbin.

The enthusiasm of the farmers and the townspeople in the district was unquestionable. They came from as far as Beacon and other centres and this was an indication that the farmers in that community generally have a lot of faith in the present operations of the Railways

Department. I would say that the Railways Department today is a very efficient, well run, and progressive organisation.

Mr. McNeill possibly took me a little unawares because he said, "I will tell a little story which, I know, will be of interest to the Minister for Transport." I took the word "little" to mean short, and I was rather surprised to find that the little story took five or six pages to relate. It was a long time before the honourable member completed the story.

In my book the story goes back to an approach made by Mr. McNeill and Mr. Runciman in connection with this matter. I arranged to receive these honourable members in my office, but unfortunately Mr. McNeill could not get there. After Mr. Runciman had told me the story and I had taken a note of it I referred the matter to the Railways Department and eventually the department came up with its story; and this goes back to the 3rd November last year.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I suppose you mean story in its factual sense?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I think the honourable member knows what I mean. Let us not be too pedantic. I would like to quote a minute I received from the Commissioner of Railways. It reads as follows:—

Reference is made to the telephone enquiry of the 2nd November concerning the loss of a parcel of dry cleaning at Serpentine.

2. The box of dry cleaning, weighing 25 lbs., was brought to rail at Pinjarra on Friday, 15th October, at 4.21 p.m. and was duly delivered to the unattended siding of Serpentine at 6.35 p.m. the same day. The guard placed the box in the shed provided at the siding for receipt of goods and parcels, and this completed the contract of carriage.

3. When parcels are accepted under ordinary conditions, in the event of loss or damage, liability is limited to an amount of \$20.00. There is no charge for this coverage. If the client so wishes, parcels can be insured against loss or damage at the very cheap rate of 5 cents for each \$40 in value of each parcel.

4. In this particular case, the consignment was for delivery to an unattended siding, and even if it had been insured the Commissioner's liability would have been limited to proof of delivery to the siding, and as the parcel was duly placed at the siding no compensation would have been payable.

5. As a matter of interest, enquiries made from one of the larger dry cleaning firms in Perth reveal that these

firms do not accept liability for loss of items which have been accepted for dry cleaning. The customer is expected to provide his own insurance.

I checked that aspect and it is quite factual. I handed that information to Mr. Runciman and I expected he would have passed it on to Mr. McNeill. Following Mr. McNeill's reference to it again I asked my officers to re-examine the matter and this is the story I have received. It is a little different, but I do not think the Railways Department can be blamed; nor do I think the final comment made by Mr. McNeill when winding up his speech was at all necessary. He finished his speech by saying that on the side of the envelope was an inscription which reads, "Send goods by rail its safer and cheaper." That is a factual statement.

The Hon. N. McNeill: I said it was rather ironical at the time.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I know how the honourable member felt, but I am sure he knows how we feel when we listen to this sort of thing. I would now like to read a minute dated the 7th August, 1972, sent to me by the Commissioner of Railways. It reads as follows:—

3. The normal transit for Mr. Lane's dry cleaning for Serpentine is via the morning passenger train from Bunbury which departs Waroona at 8.09 a.m. and arrives Serpentine at 9.14 a.m. This train does not run on Saturdays, however, and to cater for Friday's dry cleaning it has been the practice to despatch the box from Pinjarra at 4.45 p.m. on the Australind and which does not stop at Waroona or Serpentine, take it through to Armadale and return it on the evening passenger train from Perth to arrive Serpentine at 6.35 p.m. No additional charge is made for this transit.

The Hon. N. McNeill: You say the Australind does not stop at Waroona or Serpentine.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: That is the statement I have here.

The Hon. N. McNeill: I think the Minister should check that again.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: The arrangement was that the box should be picked up at Pinjarra, taken to Armadale, and sent back on the passenger train and put off at the siding. No charge is made for this additional transit. That is on the house. That will show the honourable member how much the Railways Department considers its customers. To continue with the minute—

4. Serpentine has been operating as an unattended siding since 1963 and Mr. Lane's Serpentine agent must be well aware of the arrangements concerning the delivery of goods at these

points. The dry cleaning in question was put out at Serpentine at 6.35 p.m. on Friday, 15th October, 1971—

The Hon. N. McNeill: So it did not go to Armadale in fact.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: It was put out at Serpentine at 6.35 p.m. on Friday, the 15th October, 1971; that is the day on which it was sent. To continue—

—and not at 6 o'clock the following morning as intimated in Hon. N. McNeill's remarks and the agent must take some responsibility for the loss in not collecting it immediately.

It was left at the unattended siding. It was known that the train was due to arrive at 6.35 p.m. and that is in fact the time it did arrive on that particular day.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Mr. Lane believes that the goods came back on a goods train from Armadale, arriving early next morning and not the same evening.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I can only give the facts as presented to me by the Railways Department. If Mr. Lane felt it would arrive at 6.00 o'clock on Saturday morning when in fact it arrived at 6.35 on Friday evening there was an obligation on him to make sure there was somebody present to collect the parcel.

The Hon. N. McNeill: There is an obligation on the department to advise people that goods have arrived, and this was not done.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: On the question of the dry-cleaner's liability, would the Minister like to get back somebody else's pants and his own coat? Would he be amused about that?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I cannot see the analogy.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The analogy is that the dry cleaner should accept some responsibility.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Does not the honourable member think he should have accepted the responsibility to see that somebody received the goods?

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You said the dry cleaner did not accept any responsibility.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: That is right.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I think he should.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: So do I; so that takes care of that problem.

The second matter to which I wish to refer is the point raised by Mr. Withers in connection with freight. I sympathise with State Shipping Service officers have been what he submitted. For some time the engaged in preparing a new schedule of freights; more particularly those associated with volume. This is not ready yet for application to all the ports in the north, but it soon will be.

May I say that the State Shipping Service gives a regular weekly service to all ports and it is saving money by comparison with what happened prior to our having bought our new ships. We hope there will be considerable improvement in the future. The aim of the shipping service will be to give its customers in the north not only a fast regular weekly service but also, wherever possible, to pass on to its customers any advantage that might accrue from the purchase of the ships to which I have referred.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Are you forecasting a standing charge?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Until the schedules come out I would prefer not to comment. The honourable member can rest assured, however, that the question of freights will be continually examined with a view to improving conditions for the State ships' customers in the north.

After all, that was the purpose for the establishment of the Coastal Shipping Commission; it was to provide a service for the north-west as cheaply, as economically, and as regularly as possible.

The next matter to which I wish to refer is the comment made by Mr. Ferry about road maintenance tax. I would like to speak dispassionately about this, because I feel that the actions we have taken in this matter are realistic and compassionate; we have tried to solve a difficult situation in a manner which, I think, deserves credit rather than disapprobation.

I would like to say that the question of road maintenance tax on operators in our State was on the plate of the previous Government for a long time. There were several prosecutions and many of the operators were dissatisfied with road maintenance tax, permits, and the rest.

As I have said, these people were prosecuted and they got further and further into the mire, and eventually they reached a stage that has been reached by many other people. One reads in the papers every day of the applications for bankruptcy from those whose businesses have failed.

Many of these people had reached the stage where they owed considerable sums of money to the Transport Commission both for road maintenance tax and for permits. Those debts, combined with fines which were imposed, meant that they eventually ran into debt to the tune of many thousands of dollars. They did not have one chance in a million of paying the money which they owed. Of course, there were some who did pay their debts. However, among all groups of people—and they are just human—there is always someone who will try to put something across.

The stage was reached where some fellows owed thousands of dollars on their trucks, they had no assets, and they did not have a penny with which to bless themselves. A great number of them, of course, had a wife and two, three, or four children to support. Most of those fellows went into the business because it seemed to be lucrative, and some were probably victims of truck salesmen who persuaded them that big money was to be made in the north. Many of them were not businessmen and the result was that they got themselves into trouble.

We were faced with the situation of having to prosecute everyone who could not pay his debts. They would have to be taken to court at a cost of many hundreds of dollars, and the stage would have been reached where our gaols would have been even more overcrowded. To prosecute people in that situation only adds to their burdens. If they go bankrupt they go through the court and are relieved of their obligations. Others, wanting to do the right thing, held out hoping for the day—which was always very far off—when they would be able to do something. Those operators did not go to the Bankruptcy Court and, because of that, they could be sent to gaol. It follows that their burden is thus increased and, quite often, marital troubles commence. The State is faced with the burden of paying \$10 a day to keep them in gaol simply because the State could not collect a sum of money which was owing to it. The Social Services Department and the Child Welfare Department would have to assist the wife and children and there would also be further difficulties involved.

This Government decided it was about time it examined the position in an effort to come up with a solution which was, at least, humanitarian. For the first time since I have been a Minister the last couple of months have been singularly free of my continually having husbands and wives in my office as a result of transport operations.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Will the Minister do the same thing for sales tax, which is the same sort of charge?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: That is a different subject and I hate to be diverted from what I want to say. We eventually set up a committee which I consider was reasonable. It consisted of, firstly, the Commissioner of Transport who knows the conditions under which these fellows operated and how they got themselves into difficulties.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: And who has always known the situation.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I know that. He is an officer I value highly, and I think the State is fortunate to have him because he is most considerate. His secretary was also on the committee, as was the Director

of the Department of Corrections who could portray another side of the picture—one I referred to earlier. Another member of the committee was the Assistant Under-Secretary for Law who was also the convener.

The committee, after considering certain proposals, presented the following report:—

- (a) Many operators have failed to pay charges and convictions have been recorded against them.
- (b) The stage has been reached where further law enforcement in these cases can be effected only by the issue and execution of Warrants of Commitment.

It is considered that because of the insufficiency of assets in many cases the enforcement of Warrants of Execution against the offenders' goods would be ineffective and undesirable because of the hardship inflicted by such action.

I would comment that the men concerned are not criminals. I do not think that anybody has ever regarded a fellow as a criminal when he has failed in business after working very hard and for long hours. To continue the report—

- (c) A proportion of these offenders are in such stringent financial circumstances that payment of outstanding charges is an impossibility.

I do not want to intrude on the recommendations; I want to be patient and unemotional and not bring in all the side issues. I have heard them often and whether or not I agree with them is beside the point.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Would the Minister consider—

The Hon. J. DOLAN: To continue—

The Problem

In the light of Parliament's decision not to abolish the legislation, the problem appears to be to determine what administrative action should be taken to—

- (a) relieve the situation of those unable to meet liability incurred by them for road maintenance charges as well as fines and legal costs;
- (b) to avoid the development of similar circumstances in the future.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: The Minister certainly does not seem to want to listen.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Well, neither does the honourable member. I have now mentioned the problems we faced.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: They are not unusual.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: The report continues—

So long as legislation remains in existence the Committee considers there is an obligation on the responsible authorities to see that it is enforced. However, enforcement to the point of gaoling offenders who are categorically unable to pay charges, fines and costs serves no useful purpose to the community, the State or the individuals.

It was the view of the committee, of course, that similar difficulties should be prevented from occurring in the future. The committee recommended as follows:—

- (a) That the circumstances of each of the persons involved be examined and that he be asked to submit necessary information or evidence to enable an assessment to be made of his position.

A form has to be filled in by each person who is in difficulty, and the form is presented to the committee on a confidential basis.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: How long has that form been in existence?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Since this committee made its recommendations.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: A similar form was in existence for years before the formation of that committee. Does the Minister not think that the previous administration considered that?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I have no comment on the previous administration; or on whether it did the right thing or whether there could have been a compromise. I pass no blame on to the previous administration. I mention what we have done because I think it is fit and proper to advise what action was taken. The committee recommended that the situation of each person should be examined, and that those concerned should be asked to submit the necessary information to enable an assessment of their position. The recommendations of the committee continue—

- (b) That where the assessment indicates ability to pay, payment in full or on a "time-payment" basis (according to the circumstances) be insisted upon. Failure to comply to be followed by execution of warrants.
- (c) That in cases of clear inability to pay, approval be sought to remit the amounts involved.

And in respect to future operations—

- (d) That licences or permits be refused unless the applicant can demonstrate that he has the financial stability and resources to meet the liabilities associated with the work he intends to perform.

I have discussed this matter on many occasions with the officers of the Transport Commission, and I have told them that these are the conditions which are to apply, and the conditions under which the officers are to operate. Any operator who does not conform with the conditions will face the penalties imposed by the law.

Finally, many operators came to me and said they had gone out of business. I checked and found that what they had said was perfectly true. I realise this is a most difficult question, but it always has been. There are two points of view and we could argue all day without getting anywhere. I acknowledge, completely, that the circumstances have been most unusual. I offer no criticism whatever of the previous Government and the way it operated the road maintenance tax and the issuing of permits; no criticism whatever. However, we were faced with the problem which was getting worse and worse.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: And it was aggravated by the attitude of the Government.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I do not acknowledge that, nor do I think it fair that I should continue to debate the subject. With those remarks I support the Bill.

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [5.41 p.m.]: May I begin by thanking members for the way they have received this Bill, and the way they have entered into the debate. The Bill has been debated in depth by many speakers and it has followed, somewhat, the procedure adopted during the Address-in-Reply. I think that is reasonable and natural, when one considers that the Address-in-Reply occurs in the first part of the session, and the Supply Bill is introduced in the second part of the session. I am grateful for the opportunity to conclude the Bill today, just one week after its introduction.

The amount of supply sought is often commented upon by Leaders of the Opposition when they speak to a Supply Bill. It is surprising to note how sharply and constantly the amount sought increases year by year, and the increase emphasises the requirements of the Government to run the State. The Government has to respond to the calls made upon it by those who represent the electorates, and the demands made on behalf of the constituents. The provision of finance is most important in the conduct of a State.

We would not have imagined, 10 years ago, that the Supply Bill would have reached the dimensions which it has reached today. Of course, the figure is an ever-increasing one which, I think, is a good thing so far as the State is concerned. I do not intend to speak at length because the debate which occurred last night ironed out fairly well some of the

questions raised, and for me to debate them further would be only to reiterate what has already been said.

I will deal with some points which I think are of considerable importance in their State-wide concept at the moment. I am not saying the other matters raised were not of State-wide importance.

I was impressed by the remarks made by Mr. Heitman and Mr. Abbey in connection with the eradication and control of brucellosis. I have here a written reply which I would like the House to allow me to read. It is as follows:—

The ability to eradicate a disease such as brucellosis depends not only on the availability of staff but on the ability of sufficient resources in a fund to compensate the owners of diseased cattle. The Cattle Industry Compensation Fund is made up by levies from the owners of cattle at the time of sale, matched by equal amounts from the State Government. It can be appreciated therefore that the rate of eradication cannot exceed the resources of the fund which has already been heavily committed in meeting compensation payments.

The programme against brucellosis began in 1948 when Strain 19 vaccination was initiated in the dairying districts. Subsequently, the wide usage of this vaccine enabled the progressive reduction of disease incidence to a level at which eradication could be contemplated. Although it might be considered appropriate to attempt to eradicate, irrespective of the actual incidence of disease on a particular property, economic considerations cannot be ignored. It has therefore been policy to insist that compulsory eradication with compensation will only be accepted where the herd incidence is less than 3 per cent.

Last year an initial attempt was made to eradicate the disease irrespective of the actual incidence on properties. As a result the Cattle Industry Compensation Act Fund became severely stressed and this policy was required to be revised.

Staff, both field and laboratory, has been increased in recent years to service the tuberculosis and brucellosis programme. There are, however, over 300 herds under quarantine for brucellosis at present and it is considered that priority must be given to detecting and eradicating infection in these herds rather than assisting other herds to reach accredited or certified brucellosis status.

The matter of the usage of auto-analysers in testing programmes has been assessed and it is believed that the use of laboratory assistants provides greater flexibility and allows for

a better level of diversity of testing than do these machines, although this position will be kept under review.

Recently the Commonwealth Government requested the States to prepare a plan for an intensification of its tuberculosis and brucellosis effort. Recommendations in this respect by the Commonwealth and States' Veterinary Committee drew attention to a need for a new Commonwealth-State financial agreement which was based on a continuation of the current effort by the States with the Commonwealth meeting the increased financial resources needed in the intensified programme. In addition, the Commonwealth Government was requested to provide funds for a compensation scheme for animals affected with the disease. The Commonwealth Government, however, indicated it was unwilling to modify the present arrangements which are based on a matching of the State effort.

This attitude will certainly prevent any intensification of eradication effort in this State. However, the Government recognises the problem and is prepared to maximise its efforts to control and eradicate brucellosis. It is believed that full control will be achieved within five years and eradication within 10. Already surveys in the pastoral and Kimberley areas have indicated that those areas are probably free of brucellosis.

As the ability to intensify the programme in Western Australia is, to a great extent, inhibited by the ability to compensate the owners of diseased cattle, consideration is now being given to increasing the levy under the Cattle Industry Compensation Act. Such an increased levy, together with the matching contribution from State funds, should enable eradication efforts to proceed at a level acceptable to the farming community.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I cannot understand why a man whose herd has up to 3 per cent. of infection gets compensation and a man whose herd has 4 per cent. does not get anything. It seems to me to be so unjust.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: It certainly appears to be unjust on that bald statement.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: A man whose herd has 3 per cent. of infection can afford to carry that but the man whose herd has 10 per cent. or 20 per cent. cannot.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It would put him out of business.

The Hon. J. Heitman: Is it possible to go further into the matter of auto-analysers so that the blood samples can be analysed quickly? I understand they can

take 3,000 blood samples a week but it is impossible to analyse 3,000 blood samples a week.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: I will take a note of the interjection and obtain a reply. I do not know anything about the subject and I could not answer the question.

In regard to the matter raised by Mr. Williams the present Government will continue to provide financial assistance to those private proprietors who run hostels which provide accommodation for former psychiatric patients. There are 25 hostels in this category with accreditation for 695 persons. At the present time Mental Health Services pays the various proprietors \$1 a day for 595 persons.

Before any hostel qualifies for this assistance, certain standards must be met and the hostel is inspected by the psychiatrist superintendent of Claremont Hospital or, in certain instances, the physician superintendent of the Mental Deficiency Division. As most of these former patients qualify for social service benefits, they are contributing to their maintenance, which includes pensions and supplementary allowances. The fact that a hostel is privately owned and may or may not be operated on a profit basis is not a consideration in determining accreditation.

A considerable number of former patients resident in private hostels attend the Mental Health Services industrial rehabilitation unit. The department provides a midday meal plus morning and afternoon tea at no cost to the attender or the hostel. In addition, small payments are made to the trainees who are graded according to the level of their work. The former Minister for Health will be aware of constant approaches to the Commonwealth to have these payments excluded when assessing social service entitlements. No success has been achieved to date.

Although there are 1,100 persons on after-care, only 595 are resident in the hostels mentioned by Mr. Williams. The remainder are in the community and no doubt living with their families or friends.

No former patient is discharged to after-care from a Mental Health Services hospital without adequate clothing, including such items as razors and other minor personal items.

In addition to the assistance granted under the subsidised scheme, the Government is continuing to provide additional facilities within the Mental Health Services. That department is also planning and building units for the care and training of the intellectually handicapped.

Members will no doubt be aware of Government assistance granted to voluntary organisations such as the Slow Learning Children's Group and the Mentally Incurable Children's Association.

Mr. Withers drew attention to the prospective loss of cattle trade in meat with Japan. His criticism was based upon action taken under the Plant Diseases Act. I have received the following reply to his comments:—

Section 5 of the Plant Diseases Act permits the Governor by proclamation to prohibit the bringing or sending into the State, or from one portion of the State to another, of any specified kind of plant which would in his opinion be likely to introduce any disease, etc.

The movement of sorghum plants and sorghum seeds was prohibited by proclamation on 2nd May, 1972.

Whereas there is no likely way of the midge being transported into Western Australia except per medium of the plant or the seed, it is conceded that of its own volition it might penetrate. If it did it would have the effect of reducing the crop by 50 per cent., thus rendering it uneconomic to produce in the north. It would be useless to legislate for the protection of our primary produce, then on speculation and on present known means of prevention cast our efforts to the winds of chance that they will be ineffective in any event.

It is not correct for Mr. Withers to say that the Minister overruled the department in issuing a permit.

The fact of the matter is that on the then available knowledge that midge existed only at Tipperary in the Northern Territory, the Minister, in discussion with the Director of Agriculture, and on his advice, decided to issue a permit in this instance, taking into consideration the fumigatory measures which would be taken.

Shortly afterwards, however, further knowledge came to the department that midge had been identified at Katherine, the area from which the company desired to obtain its supply, and it was at that stage that the responsible authorities decided that the earlier risk which had been considered worth while was no longer practicable, and as a consequence the permit was withdrawn.

Mr. Hunt spoke about roads in the north-west, and I have received this reply from the Main Roads Department—

The Main Roads Department, in its 1972-73 programme of works, provided the sum of \$14,075,700 for the improvement of roads in the north-west and Kimberley regions. This sum represents 28.3 per cent. of the department's total programme.

Of this sum, \$525,000 has been provided for the section of Great Northern Highway between Meekatharra and Port Hedland. A substantial part of it will be spent on the construction of

64 miles of road between Meekatharra and Kumarina. On the section between Broome and Halls Creek a further \$488,000 has been programmed, and between Halls Creek and Wyndham \$1,514,000 will be spent.

Altogether, for the whole of Great Northern Highway from Perth to Wyndham, a total of \$3,286,300 has been allocated for construction and \$550,000 for maintenance.

Mr. Withers dealt with travelling allowances in the north. The advice I have received proves that it is not correct to say the Government has decreased travelling allowances in the north.

Under an agreement between the Public Service Board and the Civil Service Association—being agreement No. 2 of 1967—a flat rate of \$10 prevailed, irrespective of whether the officer stayed overnight in a hotel or at private accommodation. Under a new agreement, rates and conditions have been varied, with defined rates being applied to specific towns according to accommodation costs and so on. In fact, this has brought about substantial increases in allowances in respect of many towns.

The new agreement dated the 7th December, 1971—of which I have a copy—states that where hotel accommodation is utilised when an officer is absent from his headquarters overnight, the daily rate of travelling allowance shall be in accordance with the table set out on page 5 of the agreement. These rates range from \$11 a day at Gascoyne Junction to \$20.60 a day at Tom Price. Those rates should be compared with the flat rate of \$10 a day under the previous agreement.

The complaint made is apparently in respect of a new class of travelling allowance applicable where the officer has accommodation and meals other than those pertaining to the accommodation previously mentioned, and in that event a flat rate of \$5 a day is payable. Should reimbursement under the latter item be insufficient to meet the officer's reasonable expenses he shall be allowed expenditure actually and necessarily incurred, subject to the production of receipts or other reasonable evidence of expenditure.

Mr. Withers also mentioned increased mining rentals and said they would tend to produce less revenue. I am advised as follows:—

The reasons given by one company for relinquishing 1,100 mineral claims, either by withdrawal, surrender, or termination of the option agreement, were based on a combination of the following factors:—

1. The increased rentals—the company's bill is something like \$250,000 per annum.

2. Shire rates approximate up to \$16 to \$18 per claim (7½ cents in the acre);
3. The company considers that the ground is barren;
4. Company policy had changed and a cut-down in exploration activity was warranted in view of the present economic climate and the fact that competition had eased or was not so intense.

Discussions with the Geological Survey Branch of the Mines Department have confirmed that it is rather too early to give a definite opinion on the effect of the increased rentals. The effect initially would be to clear up the speculative aspect.

Current down-turn in the economy of the mineral fields:

Rental for both mineral claims and leases is not the only problem being encountered by those engaged in the mining industry. One of the major problems is the current down-turn in the economy in the mineral fields, but especially in the nickel fields. Large companies, and many small companies, may consider they have a viable proposition but unfortunately at this time there is no great demand for nickel and it is understood that some of those companies have had discussions with the Mines Department in efforts to obtain some security for development purposes.

In the mining industry there is mandatory relinquishment after a certain period. The mining companies are very apprehensive that the Mines Department may insist on mandatory relinquishments. So an area which they have nearly proved to be a viable proposition might have to be abandoned because of the mandatory relinquishment provision.

This is a circumstance which it is hoped to resolve after the Mining Bill has been passed, but at this point the Minister is looking into the possibility of helping the people who are affected—just as he is hoping to help them in respect of rentals.

Insufficient time has elapsed since the new rentals came into force about six months ago.

As at the 31st December, 1971, there were 347 mineral leases in force and a deputation to the Minister, representing a number of companies, had already indicated to Mr. May that they agree that such rental is reasonable when a viable operation is involved.

The Minister is aware that there could be exceptions, and one possible exception is Greenbushes Tin, in respect of which a submission is made.

It is apparent that for some time now the Mines Department has been looking at the possibility of assessing the degree of hardship which increased rentals have imposed on both large and small mining companies. Numerous discussions have been held with various companies which have endeavoured to justify a reduction in the rentals, but unfortunately to date it has not been possible to obtain any real assessment of the true position.

Insufficient time has elapsed in which the department could really assess the true merits of whether or not a review should be made of the annual rentals for both claims and leases. The claims are of major importance because once a company takes out a lease, obviously it is a viable proposition and the company is in a position to go ahead with normal production.

However, in the case of claims a different situation exists because we are endeavouring to foster companies in regard to exploration. If we believe that diminution will occur in exploration in the mining industry we will obviously consider the possibility of reducing the rentals.

Obviously, Mr. May is favourably disposed to having a look at all the mining rentals for claims and leases generally.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Would you mind telling your colleague (Mr. May) that we still have a motion on our notice paper to disallow a regulation, and unless he does something about it very quickly we will have to make a determination on that motion?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: I think the Minister is already very conscious of the fact that the motion is still on the notice paper.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: He was conscious of that fact before the seven or eight-week adjournment.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: The Minister paid particular attention to this in his reply; that is why I took the opportunity to detail it. However, the comment of the Leader of the Opposition will be drawn to his attention.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It does not give us the answer.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: The Hon. T. O. Perry spoke this afternoon following on a question he asked of me earlier. He hoped the House would have the opportunity to debate the matter should at any time an agreement be made between the Government, the U.F.G.A., and the T.L.C. So far as I am able I give him an assur-

ance that if ever we reach a point of agreement the House will have an opportunity to debate the matter.

The Hon. T. O. Perry: Thank you.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I believe the Premier has given an undertaking in the Assembly that if any agreement is proposed between the Government, the U.F.G.A., and the T.L.C. it will be brought to Parliament for ratification.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: I had heard that, but I was not able to verify it in the time available to me. However, the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition strengthen what I have already said.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I understand that to be the case.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: Yes, I could have said that I understood that to be the case, but I was not positive.

I would conclude by briefly referring to that very interesting section of the debate which concerned the various aspects of the economy and the unemployment situation. Divorcing from the remarks which have been made the political implication that the Government is run by dolts, I would say that the debate was on a high level. We heard an interesting series of comments when the pros and cons were debated. I propose simply to read the opening page of the latest White Paper on the Australian economy, published by the Commonwealth of Australia as late as July of this year. The first chapter is headed, "The Past Year—Problems and Policies," and I quote as follows:—

1971 is sure of a place in international economic history. A year in which, while most advanced nations of the Western world continued to be plagued by growing inflation and high unemployment, the U.S. dollar price of gold was changed for the first time in almost 40 years and the exchange rates of most major currencies were realigned, will not be readily forgotten. The world situation has also been reflected in Australia. Our unemployment problems have remained much less severe than those of most countries. But our rate of inflation in 1971 was as steep as in most developed economies and the determination of our exchange rate involved no less difficulty than attended the general currency realignment finally achieved in December.

Within 1971-72, the economic situation has been changing in response to complex forces. But with excessive inflation and above normal unemployment persisting, the year has been notable for the range of policy instruments used and the flexibility of policy adjustments.

The major problems of economic policy in 1971-72 were threefold. First, there has been an excessive rate of

price increase carried over from 1970 and continuing throughout 1971 and into 1972. The rate of increase of consumer prices maintained throughout 1971—6 per cent. or above—was double our average experience of the 1960s. This topic will be more extensively considered in Chapter 2.

Secondly, aggregate demand in general has been subdued. In particular, recent months have seen the end of the latest of our periodical booms in private non-dwelling investment. The main factor here has been the reversal of the extraordinary expansion of mining investment in recent years. The phenomenon of sluggish consumer spending has persisted throughout the year. To these factors have been added more general uncertainties and lack of confidence stemming from a variety of causes, particularly the international monetary crisis in the latter half of 1971 and its associated impact on the world economy.

The second problem has been reflected in the third—a slowly rising trend of unemployment that has only recently flattened out.

These problems did not, of course, appear overnight. That the breakneck expansion in the minerals industry could not go on indefinitely was obvious; the timing of the slow-down and its likely extent were, however, in doubt. The reaction of consumers to rapidly rising money incomes and prices in a context of above-normal unemployment was more cautious than past experience would have indicated—but whether and for how long the new trend would continue could not be confidently predicted in advance. The potential for an international monetary crisis was always there, but the precise form which it took was certainly unexpected by most. With hindsight—that most useful of all tools of economic analysis—events and trends such as these were comprehensible enough. In practice, the difficulty of countering them in advance has meant a particular need to ensure flexibility of policies to meet the situation as it developed.

Sitting suspended from 6.11 to 7.30 p.m.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: I was reading from the White Paper on the Australian economy before the tea suspension. I shall conclude by quoting the following paragraph from it:—

Policy measures taken since the 1971-72 Budget have embraced monetary, fiscal and social measures. The broad aims were to keep the economy moving forward while at the same time not adding to inflationary pressures. Monetary policy was eased

progressively from last October onwards. Interest rates were reduced, controls on bank lending removed and liquidity allowed to rise significantly. On the fiscal front, there was action to cope with the particular problems of rural unemployment, to relieve some of the hardships arising from inflation and to aid spending by government authorities and consumers. The investment allowance on manufacturing plant and equipment was restored.

I conclude my contribution to this debate by thanking members again for their participation.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by The Hon. W. F. Willesee (Leader of the House), and passed.

TRANSPORT COMMISSION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Minister for Transport) [7.35 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill has reference to the existing scheme of licensing, permitting ships to engage in the coastal trade.

As members will know, the object of the Transport Commission Act was the establishment of a commission to control, license, and permit the transport of passengers and goods by road and by air, and by sea in shipping engaged in coastal trading. State ships operated under the Western Australian Coastal Shipping Commission Act of 1965 are exempted.

As regards license and permit fees payable, section 21 of the principal Act achieves flexibility to meet varying circumstances by fixing only the maximum limits in relation to road vehicles and aircraft. Also, the commission has discretionary power to fix lower fees for individual cases.

It is proposed that similar provisions should apply to coastal shipping licenses and permits. Coastal shipping licenses may be granted for any period up to three years—or longer with the approval of the Minister—while a permit relates to a single voyage only. The Act provides that fees shall be payable as prescribed by regulation.

It was not intended that fees should do more than cover administration costs, and the following were prescribed:—

For a license or renewal of a license \$50 per month of the term thereof.

For a permit 5c per ton of the relevant cargo—subsequently reduced to 1c per ton as an interim arrangement to ease anomalies pending amendment of the Act—with a minimum of \$10 per permit.

Experience has indicated that these fees are appropriate in some cases, but in others are higher than is necessary. As earlier mentioned, anomalies such as these are avoided in respect of road vehicles and aircraft by fixing only a maximum level of fees, with power for the Commissioner of Transport to determine fees up to that limit. The amendment to section 47B, contained in clause 3 of the Bill, has the effect of bringing shipping fees into line.

As regards the power of exemption proposed in clause 2, it was not intended that the provisions of the Act should apply to bulk tanker cargo such as crude oil from Barrow Island to Kwinana, iron ore from Koolan to Kwinana, or fresh water supplies to Koolan, as these are not operations which can be undertaken by the vessels operated by the Western Australian Coastal Shipping Commission. There could well be other circumstances which have not yet come to notice nor are they presently envisaged.

It is therefore proposed to empower the Minister to exempt any ship or class of ships, or any cargo or class of cargo, from the provisions of the Act.

While a ship is being operated or a cargo is being carried under the authority of a notice published by the Minister in the *Government Gazette*, the usual license or permit will not be required.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon.

TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading

THE HON. J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Minister for Police) [7.40 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

In introducing this measure to amend the Traffic Act I would remind members that the Premier, when delivering his policy speech on the 3rd February, 1971, gave an undertaking to place complete control of traffic with the Police Department. I shall quote his words—

As the present system of multiple traffic control and vehicle licensing is incompatible with State-wide efficient traffic management we shall place

complete control of traffic with the Police Department which we propose to restructure.

Accordingly I ask members in this House to take cognisance of this undertaking when considering the resultant legislative proposals contained in this Bill.

As an indication that this proposal for uniform traffic management by the Police Department is soundly based, I remind members that every Australian State except Western Australia has uniform traffic control under its Police Department.

The Hon. J. Heitman: That did not help the other States very much.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Despite some suggestions of dissatisfaction with the existing States' systems inquiries have revealed that no general change in the set-up is contemplated by any State.

In this State the previous Government in June, 1965, set up an interdepartmental committee of seven members to inquire into the control of traffic in country areas. The committee presented its report to the Minister for Traffic in the April following.

I am led to believe that the concern of the former Government in initiating this inquiry centred about accident prevention and the rising road toll. My Government's concern about the road toll is demonstrated by the presentation of this amending legislation.

For general information details of the findings of the committee may be found on page 2 section 2 of the report.

With regard to traffic control, the majority recommendations, five to two—the two minority represented the Department of Local Government—were as follows:—

- (1) That the Police Department be established as the sole authority responsible for the enforcement of the Traffic Act throughout the State.
- (2) That the take-over of responsibility be implemented progressively in defined areas in three stages, each stage requiring approximately one year.
- (3) That all existing traffic inspectors be appointed, if they so desire, as special traffic constables within the Police Department, subject to the following provisos:—
 - (i) That the induction requirements of the Commissioner of Police in regard to character alone are met.
 - (ii) That the normal retirement age for police officers is not exceeded and in the event that a traffic inspector below the age of 65 years would be retired on this ground, that he be offered suitable employment in Government service or otherwise compensated.

- (iii) That appointees be employed as far as practicable at their present locations.
- (iv) That appointees satisfactorily undertake such training as the Commissioner of Police deems necessary.
- (v) That the remuneration of appointees be no less than that at present prescribed for traffic inspectors; that their long service and other accumulated leave rights be preserved and that, where practicable, they be given the opportunity of participating in the State superannuation scheme.
- (4) That subject to the agreement of the local authorities, the State assumes responsibility for traffic control equipment and housing provided by local authorities, with appropriate compensation.
- (5) That an upper speed limit of 65 m.p.h. be imposed on the open road throughout the State.

Of the foregoing recommendations, the previous Government acted only on No. 5—the imposition of a 65 mile-per-hour speed limit on the open road.

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons is an organisation which is gravely concerned about the road toll and is in a position to evaluate the appalling results of road accidents. It has set up a National Road Trauma Committee with subcommittees in each State. In Western Australia we have two outstanding surgeons who have made a submission to the Premier on this subject. They are G. M. Bedbrook, Chairman of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Road Trauma Committee and B. A. R. Stokes, secretary of that committee. I quote an appropriate section from the submission:—

We have been very impressed and congratulate you on your policy statement concerning the overall implementation of traffic enforcement throughout the State and as members of the medical profession who are daily in contact with the results of the havoc on the roads, we submit the following recommendations, respectfully, but with a sense of urgency for your immediate consideration.

Here I quote the appropriate recommendation—Recommendation 6—Enforcement—

It is recommended that enforcement remains in the hands of the Police Traffic Department under the direction of the Commissioner of Police, but that the Statutory Body should advise and direct the Commissioner in matters falling within its jurisdiction. In order for enforcement to be effective throughout the State, the Shire

Council Traffic Authorities should be disbanded as independent organisations.

The report on the Victorian Police Force presented to the Chief Secretary on the 22nd February, 1971, by Colonel Sir Eric St. Johnston, C.B.E., Q.P.M., H.M. Chief Inspector of Constabulary for England and Wales, 1967-70, contains a chapter—chapter XI—on traffic operations and I quote from it because of its application to the legislation now before this House—

It is sometimes argued that the Police should not concern themselves with this problem and that a special organisation should be set up to deal with offences against the traffic laws but with those views I do not agree.

Such a special organisation would have to be built up almost exactly on the lines of the Police Force. It would have to be comprised of men and women of integrity, who are of adequate intelligence to become knowledgeable of the increasingly complex law; they would have to be good drivers; they would have to be physically fit and willing enough to do duty at awkward hours (i.e. outside normal working hours) and in all weathers; they would have to have good judgement and commonsense in order to decide when to caution a motorist and when to report for a summons, while they would, to a great measure be ineffective unless they had powers of arrest in serious matters.

They would have to have special stations at which to report for duty, write their reports, prepare their cases for Court and garage their vehicles. They would, in other words, be a Police Force in all but name. Since this would be a parallel organisation, the total cost to the State would be greater than if the Police continue to do the work.

Above all, the members of a Traffic Corps would, in the course of their work, come across accidents in which people may be killed or, being injured, die later. This would entail dealing with the Coroner which is a proper Police responsibility. It has also to be remembered that Traffic Patrols in the course of their work frequently come across and deal with criminal suspects and cases of crime.

For all these reasons, I am convinced that it is right that the Police should continue to have responsibility for patrolling the roads to deal with offences against the traffic laws.

But good Police work goes further than merely detecting offences, for the presence on the road of an adequate number of well-signed and well-driven Police cars manned by men (and women) of smart and alert bearing does

act as an excellent deterrent and hence reduces the numbers of cases of breaches of the law and encourages civilian drivers to drive more carefully and not too fast. The Police also can and do play an important part in the education of motorists and pedestrians—particularly children—to use the roads, with care, by giving lectures and organising exhibitions. There should, therefore, in every Police Force be a strong element of accident prevention officers. From my inspection, I am satisfied that the Victoria Police Force accepts all these principles and attempts to carry them out.

Proponents of a system of traffic enforcement by bodies separate from the State Police Force are prone to quote the New Zealand structure in justification. Yet this is quoted in support of the totally unproven belief that this system is the reason for the low rate road accident ratio in that country. In fact, there is no one single traffic authority in New Zealand. Apart from the Transport Department there is a good deal of police involvement as well as powers vested in 17 local authorities. So, in point of fact, there is no single traffic authority in New Zealand. There are, however, many probable reasons for the favourable road accident situation in New Zealand, an experience more likely to have been brought about by a combination of many factors rather than just one single factor. If indeed more efficient enforcement is provided in New Zealand, this is due, perhaps, to the number of personnel involved rather than the quality.

A mere change of name, of course, will not achieve greater efficiency. Certain aspects of traffic law enforcement cannot be divorced from Police involvement, as has been found in New Zealand. For example—

- (a) accidents involving death and serious injury;
- (b) driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol;
- (c) hit and run accidents;
- (d) the association of criminals with vehicles;
- (e) vehicle stealing and their unlawful use.

Details of New Zealand's road fatalities for the past five years are revealing—they are on the increase.

Road fatalities in 1967 were 570; in 1968, 522; in 1969 up to 570 again; in 1970, 655; and in 1971, 680.

These figures, supplied on the 14th February, 1972 by the New Zealand Trade Commissioner in Western Australia show an increasing road toll, as I have indicated.

While this situation is regrettable it prompts one to ask whether the New Zealand system is indeed the answer to Western Australian problems.

It cannot be denied that the control of moving traffic is a proper police function. I pose that it is only a state of mind that there is a moral difference between the death or injury of a person by wilful or careless use of a motor vehicle as against the use of a gun or other weapon.

In submitting this legislation I draw attention to the Police Department itself which has the nucleus of an economic and efficient traffic law enforcement organisation. A separate organisation would undoubtedly require enormous additional outlay in personnel, training, equipment, and accommodation.

Expansion of the Police Force, however, to undertake full traffic control would strengthen the existing service in combatting all forms of criminal activity and not merely traffic violations. With clearly identified radio-controlled police vehicles the advantage of an enlarged Police Force to cope with traffic law enforcement would bring greater security to areas now sparingly policed. A traffic officer on the other hand gives the public only the limited protection at his disposal.

Furthermore, it is doubtful whether an organisation of the size and quality visualised to take over traffic law enforcement could be recruited under present-day labour conditions. While it may be possible to establish the nucleus of a separate force from existing traffic personnel, it could not be fully equipped from existing resources. There would have to be freedom of choice in a transfer situation and the material benefits would have to be sufficiently high to attract personnel now engaged by the department.

It would have to be accepted that a separate force would require a larger number than the currently combined forces of police and traffic inspectors, if any real benefits were to arise from such an organisation. It is not visualised that a force of less than 400 could cover adequately the extensive mileage of roads in this State with any degree of success. With a nucleus of 100 traffic officers from the Police Department, the loss of which the department could ill afford, it would still fall far short of a force strong enough to give any benefit of closer and tighter law enforcement. Even the inclusion of the existing approximate 100 traffic inspectors now engaged on this work would not build up the force to the required strength.

In this direction, perhaps, there may be some misgivings about the possible role of police in the country from the public relations aspects should some of the country folk find that they come into conflict with police.

As shown in other places, it is only a proportion of the public that commits traffic offences. By far the greater percentage is law abiding. Until recent years, with the increase in traffic inspectors provided by shires, the police had virtually

been doing all traffic work wherever they were stationed. The more serious traffic offences have always been the concern of the police by direction of the commissioner under section 22 of the Traffic Act.

Even now, whilst traffic inspectors do take more action in this regard, the police still perform considerable traffic enforcement duties.

Having regard to the existing situation there need be no apprehension that enforcement by police of traffic road rules would harm the very enjoyable and acceptable co-operation of the majority of the public in country areas. However, even were this to deteriorate a little we are duty bound to look to the future and not be content with the *status quo* of today. The gratitude of the public generally for added police protection would outweigh by far any resentment which might arise against police from traffic offenders.

Our State in the decades to come will have large cities throughout its length and breadth and thus matters between public and police will probably be of a level with what it is now in the metropolitan area and, as stated earlier, objection and annoyance will come from only a small percentage of the population.

It cannot be stressed too strongly that the Police Department can upon immediate application throw in some 400-odd men on traffic enforcement in the country, but to have a separate enforcement agency set up would be a costly and lengthy project.

Local government bodies are continually requesting additional police strength in their districts. This need is fully appreciated and receives progressive attention. The posting of additional police as proposed if enforcement control of traffic is vested in the police would provide the presence of officers who could be deployed to any duty as the occasion arose, thus serving a two-fold purpose.

Again, in respect of accidents there is usually one person at fault and any person considering himself aggrieved is entitled to the services of a person trained in investigation generally in which category the police officer may be placed.

The machinery of police enforcement already operates throughout the State and additional duties brought about by traffic enforcement work could be initially effected by staff increases only at establishments which already exist.

Traffic enforcement is carried out by the police in the metropolitan area by members of the force engaged solely in such work—specialists in specialised sections.

Requests have been received that country centres be permitted to retain their identity regarding number plates when State-wide traffic control is handed over to the police.

Although this suggestion has been put forward on a number of occasions and has received careful consideration, the view is taken that whilst there may be sentimental reasons for residents of those centres to retain their old plates, there are stronger reasons from a registration point of view for such a system which is unique in Australia to be discontinued.

Vehicle registration records in the metropolitan area are maintained by computer and now incorporate all vehicles which have been taken over from country councils.

It would not be practicable to include prefixes for each country council in the computer as this could eventually necessitate 121 separate files—one for each council—being incorporated in the main register.

Were a vehicle sold by a person in one district to a person in another it would, under these circumstances, be necessary to delete the records from one file and to recreate them in another and for the old number plates to be returned and new ones issued. It would also be necessary to maintain in a number of locations sets of plates for every local authority district within the State.

The establishment of a central registry also has decided advantages from a statistical and commercial point of view and will prove of particular benefit to the motor industry which is seriously inconvenienced by the present multi-prefix plate system.

Although many country residents may feel that their identity is being destroyed by the loss of their country number plates, it is felt that if a more objective view of the situation were taken it would be agreed that such a procedure would not prove an economic proposition even if the practical difficulties could be overcome.

It is considered that the identifying of road accidents or the tracing of motor vehicles would be more efficient through a central bureau because it would contain all records.

With regard to voluntary takeover of traffic by police, I would remark that a great deal of incorrect and misleading information has been disseminated in an apparent attempt to discredit the Police Department where takeover of traffic control and vehicle licensing from local authorities has already occurred.

Information now collated from some centres under police control provides rebuttal of any criticism. While it may be considered unfair to refer to any shire by name, two significant facts have emerged in takeovers, the first being that traffic inspectors induced into the police have found the added status and authority of their police appointment increases their efficiency in traffic law enforcement and

secondly that the posting of marked police vehicles in outer areas has been a notable deterrent to law breaking generally.

In general it might well be asked: Can Western Australia, with its great distances between towns, and its vast area and sparse population, afford two police forces with dual administration, communication systems, offices, buildings, and housing for staff?

If traffic duties are separated from police control which authority will attend and investigate fatal and serious injury traffic accidents and hit and run accidents, locate stolen vehicles, arrest and detain drunken drivers and dangerous and reckless drivers, and deal with such things as crowd control for the Royal and V.I.P. visits, processions, protest marches, escorts, and guards for Royal and V.I.P. visitors? Which authority will handle crowd control at sporting fixtures of international and local level, at local events such as football finals, races, trots, speedway meetings, and New Year's Eve celebrations?

The Hon. J. Heitman: Who looks after them now?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Which authority will deal with disorderly persons driving vehicles and riding motor cycles at high speeds where crowds are assembled in such places as beach resorts and parking areas, and who will handle crowd control at the Royal Show and at inspections of visiting war ships, for instance?

I am endeavouring not to overlook any aspect in explaining to members the need for this legislation.

If traffic duties are separated from Police control, which authority will arrest persons caught stealing or unlawfully using vehicles—

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Which authority arrests them now?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: —arrest persons seen breaking and entering premises; arrest persons apprehended for carting stolen stock or other goods and assist C.I.B. officers in the apprehension of criminals and in searches for prison escapees?

Unquestionably the motor vehicle has become an integral part of our society and few crimes are committed without the use of a motor vehicle in some way. The police need a highly mobile and active force of young men and the traffic patrols supply this facility. Personnel can be directed to any place where they are needed and attend to every day traffic work. If this control is placed under another authority both the Police Force and the Traffic Department will lose efficiency.

Recruitment of suitable personnel is most important. Young men are required to ride motor cycles and drive cars at high speeds. The road patrol section of the

Traffic Department provides an exceptionally good training ground for young police officers in all branches of the force. The trainees come into close contact with the public and learn to be tactful and how to interview people.

I think the next point is also important. The young officers are taught how to ride motor cycles and drive cars safely at high speeds; they undergo mechanical training courses; they attend and investigate serious traffic accidents and they learn to control crowds. Also they make arrests for numerous and various types of offences and become familiar with the preparation of briefs and attendance in court as witnesses.

Risk of injury is great and many policemen are injured, some seriously, and some are even killed in the course of their duties. For this reason, after several years work in the section associated with high speed, the men require a change. Family responsibilities often compel a man to request a transfer to other duties and within the Police Force he can be transferred with advantage to other branches where his experience can be used. For example, he can be transferred to the C.I.B., carry out investigations into serious and fatal traffic accidents, and perform numerous other duties associated with motor vehicles in which he is well experienced.

Conversely, it will be asked: What will happen to personnel employed by local authorities on traffic work? When they become too old to ride a motor cycle or drive a car at high speed will their services be dispensed with? This of course would not be conducive to efficiency or loyalty. It will also be asked: Will these men continue to ride motor cycles or drive cars at high speeds until they retire at 65 years of age? I might say that some shire inspectors were driving at high speeds at 60 years of age. Will those men be placed in unproductive jobs, or in positions for which they are neither trained nor fitted and so cause inefficiency in the service?

In the voluntary takeover the Police Department has honoured every undertaking given and the same practice will be continued in the case of a compulsory takeover. The interests of local authorities and traffic personnel associated with them will be safeguarded. Most local authorities accept that there is a need for uniform control and have adopted a system based on the New Zealand operations. However, for economic and other reasons that system is not acceptable to the Government.

The Government sincerely believes that the proposed police traffic control is most desirable in an effort to reduce the road toll and in an effort to afford greater police protection to the whole of the State. I again remind members that Western Australia is the only State in Australia which does not have uniform traffic control and that it has the worst road toll of all states in the Commonwealth of Australia.

Although statistics may not tell a completely reliable story the following are worth recording. The average number of vehicles licensed for 1966-71 in the metropolitan area was 267,181. That figure represents 66.8 per cent. of the State total. The average number of vehicles licensed for 1966-70—the 1971 figures are not available—in country areas was 132,689. That represents 33.2 per cent. of the State total.

The fatalities which occurred in the period from 1966 to the 14th September, 1971, number 826 in the country areas. The figure for the metropolitan area represents 46.1 per cent. of the State total and the figure for the country areas represents 53.9 per cent. of the State total.

In another place it was suggested that they were all city drivers who were involved in the country accidents. As I stated, statistics on their own cannot tell the whole story but they are surely indicative of an overall circumstance.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: They would only be indicative if you compared them with the same figures in the Eastern States.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: This legislation is a necessary part of the Government's policy plan to restructure the Police Department. The plan includes—

(a) a traffic safety council which will devote itself solely to those matters within the area of traffic safety; and

(b) a safety research council.

The efficiency or otherwise of individual local government bodies in the sphere of traffic control is not the issue in this legislation. The issue is uniformity of control by the Police Department in accordance with Government policy.

Finally, it might be appropriate to refer to the fact that consideration has been given—and is continuing to be given—to the feasibility and practicability of separating from the Police Traffic Department the requirement of licensing of vehicles and handling of motor drivers' licenses. A new department could be created which, perhaps, could be known as the department of motor transport.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Before you sit down, you have not made any comment about recommendation 3 listed on page 4. You have not commented at all on the recommendation that all existing traffic inspectors be appointed special traffic constables if they so desire. This is a very important matter.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: The honourable member would have found that this was mentioned later on in my notes had he been following.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I was following carefully.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: In a voluntary takeover the Police Department has honoured every undertaking given.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: But—

The Hon. J. DOLAN: The same practice will be continued in the case of compulsory takeover. There has not been one instance of a takeover where the local government personnel have not been completely satisfied. The police scrupulously followed the lines laid down by that authority and will continue to do the same thing. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned until Tuesday, the 15th August, on motion by The Hon. V. J. Ferry.

PERTH REGIONAL RAILWAY BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 1st June.

THE HON. L. A. LOGAN (Upper West) [8.10 p.m.]: I make no apologies for having adjourned the debate on the Bill towards the end of the last period of this session of Parliament. When members look at the measure they will see that it is fairly small in size, but the ramifications of the two purposes which it seeks to achieve are far-reaching and the ultimate cost will be colossal.

One of the purposes of the Bill is to close a railway line. Clause 3 states that on a date to be proclaimed the scheduled railway shall cease to be operated. Clause 5 states that it shall be lawful to construct each of the parts of a railway to be called "Perth Regional Railway."

If the measure were passed the Government would have the right to pull up a railway line. The Government would also have the green light to go ahead and spend, on today's figures, something like \$546,000,000—the amount which has been suggested in discussion on this measure.

A little while ago the Minister for Railways talked about opening a new railway station at Bencubbin. He also talked of the faith which farmers have in the railways. It is obvious to me farmers have more faith in the railways than has the Minister for Railways himself, because he is supporting a measure to pull up a railway line which has been in existence for a long while. Furthermore, the service on that section of railway is first-class.

One feature I cannot understand is the suggestion to put a tube, or underground, around the city, while at the same time, pulling up this section of railway—one of the lifelines of the railway system—and supplant it with a bus service. It seems passengers will be brought to the perimeter of the city and then told to embark on the tube.

I do not know of any underground or tube railway anywhere in the world where this happens. I have been around the world and, in the course of my travels, I

have looked at underground systems and travelled on some. As I have said, I do not know of anywhere else in the world where this happens.

I do not believe it is right to discontinue the Fremantle-Perth railway service. I do not know how many members of Parliament have travelled on the trains recently, but I understand a few have recently travelled on some of them. They, as well as other people whom I know, have nothing but high praise for the service which is given on the three lines.

Rather than pull up this railway line, it may be better to induce more passengers to use it. The capital cost involved in pulling up the line and laying down a highway would be considerable, and it would take many years to catch up with the added cost of the new highway, buses, etc., without taking into consideration the money supposedly lost on the present railway. I do not know how much investigation has been undertaken into this aspect. I suspect it is not very much. As a matter of fact, my information is that even if the railway line is not used, there is no need to pull it up completely because there would be very little alteration necessary to some of the stations. I appreciate it is no good having an unused railway and a highway running alongside because an unused railway deteriorates much faster than one in use. There has been insufficient research into this proposition.

Whilst I was Minister for Town Planning the issue of closing the Perth-Fremantle railway came up on many occasions. I never once hesitated to say that I was opposed to the closing of the railway. So I am quite in order in saying tonight that I still oppose the closing of the Perth-Fremantle railway.

To come now to the second point, I hope the Minister can inform the House just how many passengers are likely to use the underground tube and from where they are likely to come. I would also like to know the expected revenue of the proposed tube because, from my study of the diagram, the tube system does not generate any traffic at all. The traffic comes in from outside and is then channelled into the tube in the central city.

At the present time somewhere between 180,000 and 190,000 people commute to the city and only 7 per cent. of these use the railway system. I believe there are various ways by which we could improve this figure. However, even if it is improved 100 per cent. the number of people coming into the city and using the tube will be very small and certainly will not justify the expense of putting in an underground railway such as this.

We have been given insufficient information about the expected patrons and nothing about the likely revenue to be derived from the underground railway. Also, it seems strange to me that within a

few months of the Director-General of Transport approving the PERTS report he is now supposedly supporting this scheme. The PERTS report was produced by Dr. Nielsen after many months of research. We are now led to believe that the Director-General of Transport has forgotten about the PERTS report and supports an almost entirely new report, and this does not make sense to me.

I suggest that because of the enormous amount of money involved for the very few people who are going to use the tube, we should forget about the PERTS report, forget about the attempt to establish an underground railway, and revert to the original intention—something which this State can afford and something which will carry the populace of the metropolitan area for many years to come.

Mr. Dans said something of interest last night by way of interjection when Mr. Wordsworth was speaking. He said that this underground railway was a long way away. Bearing that in mind, why was there the urgency in the last days of the first part of this session to pass the Bill? We were asked to put it through in 24 hours. I asked for the adjournment because I considered that the implications contained in this Bill were very far-reaching.

I do not intend to delve into the engineering features of the underground railway—I will leave that to the experts. However, it seems to me that we have not been supplied with all the answers in this regard. I do not like to use the same expression as was used last night, but I believe this is justifying the saying which indicates this is just "A pie in the sky."

The concept of an underground railway sounds very nice—it is a good gimmick. However, if the idea becomes a reality our State will be bankrupt for many years. It amazes me to think that the Government can blandly introduce a measure such as this and ask for Parliament's approval. It says, "It shall be lawful to construct." The revenue from the proposed underground railway will not even pay wages, and yet the Government intends to commit the taxpayers of this State to a tremendous capital outlay. A little abattoir at Carnarvon was threatened with closure because it was not paying its way. When the Midland Junction Abattoir did not pay its way, the Government increased the charges. When the Fremantle Port Authority did not pay its way, again the charges were increased. However, if we pass this Bill, we will be committed to pay far into the unknown future. I submit it will never be paid for and the taxpayers will pay forever.

Let us again look at the central city and the number of commuters. I mentioned the figure of between 180,000 and 190,000 people. Some town planners suggest that the size of the city should be

held at 190,000 to 200,000 commuters. I do not know whether this is possible. However, if the Government is sincere in its decentralisation policy and satellite city proposition, the number of commuters coming into the city in the next 25 years will not increase greatly. The road systems already laid down in the regional plan will be sufficient to carry the commuters for that period of time.

We must bear in mind the regional shopping centres which have been built right around the perimeter of the city. These large shopping centres contain big department stores. Booragoon is possibly one of the biggest centres to be established in the metropolitan area. Others are at Fremantle, Midland, Karrinyup, and in the northern suburbs. Every centre which is established must affect the number of people who use the city centre for shopping. It cannot be otherwise, and figures prove already that the regional shopping centres have reduced the number of people coming to the city.

Some of the large city stores are moving to the regional shopping centres because city custom is falling off. They are forced out to the regional shopping centres.

These three things—the regional shopping centres, decentralisation, and satellite towns—all affect the number of people using the central city and reduce the need for a tube railway for many years to come. If these factors have been taken into consideration, we have not been told sufficient about them.

In all sincerity I suggest that we go back to the original concept of lowering the railway through the central city as suggested by the previous Government. We called for tenders world-wide and received one very suitable suggestion. My recommendation at the time was that we accept it. On today's values we could complete this scheme for \$15,000,000 to \$20,000,000 and the city would have a satisfactory transport system for at least 25 years. As a matter of fact, we could have accomplished this for \$6,500,000. The land would have been extra but the taxpayers would not have had to bear the cost of it. Unfortunately, a few organisations objected because they were going to lose a little land, and someone else would have gained an advantage. It was proposed that the whole of the area from Milligan Street to Pier Street should be left as open space. Where else in the world could one find an area such as this in the middle of a city?

We already have some lovely parks around Perth—King's Park, the Esplanade, Langley Park, the W.A.C.A., Hyde Park, and Queen's Park. This city is well endowed with open space. We do not need a large park in the middle of the city, but perhaps we should have some smaller areas for the office workers to use at lunch time. I cannot understand what has happened to the New Heart for the City of Perth,

because looking at this map, the new proposals take up most of the area. There is a parking station, a stadium, and only one small area of open space.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Do not forget the bus terminal.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The bus terminal will take up almost all the area between King Street and Milligan Street. I do not know where the heart of the city of Perth is.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The New Heart for the City of Perth seems as though it will have a coronary occlusion.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I do not know what it will have. The original proposals would have suited our needs. The railways would have gone underground and the barrier between the north and the south would have disappeared. The cultural centre would have been something of beauty. The new road transport system under the Stephenson plan is already carrying a tremendous amount of traffic out of the city. When the other part of the ring road is completed it will take a lot more out of the central city and further reduce the need for the tremendous expenditure involved in putting the railway underground.

If the Government is sincere in its efforts to obtain \$10,000,000 to build 1,500 houses for Aborigines, it should get on with the job, instead of crying poverty continuously, and blaming the Commonwealth Government for all its shortcomings. The Government itself, the taxpayers, and everybody else would be much better off if the Government reverted to the original intention and spent that amount of money to carry out the work and retain the right to do what we like with it. This would entail the construction of a bus station underground; not on the surface as proposed by the plan under consideration which will immediately clutter up the area in question. The original intention was to put the bus station underground on the present site of the Perth central railway station and another on the old technical school site, and Wellington Street was to be widened to 120 feet. I believe this would be all that would be required in this State for the next 25 years.

I return to the points I have mentioned; that is, we should adhere to the original shopping centre, satellite cities, decentralisation, and ring roads which carry the traffic out of the city. All these matters must be investigated. We should not be asked to commit the Government to an expenditure of something like \$546,000,000. That is a great deal of money. I know that it will be said that to put the PERTS plan into operation the expenditure would have been something of the order of \$496,000,000, but I am not worried about

that, because in my opinion both the PERTS report and the present proposal should be scrubbed.

I do not intend to support this measure unless and until a proper feasibility study is presented to Parliament for our consideration. So I repeat once again that if we want \$15,000,000 or \$20,000,000 to construct 1,500 houses for Aborigines it can be made available for the asking by altering our ideas and reverting to the original concept in regard to public transport. On that basis I intend to move an amendment when the Bill goes into Committee, but with what result I do not know. I intend to move that Parliament should not agree to this measure until such time as a proper feasibility study is presented to the Parliament, because I am quite satisfied that this has not been done.

When replying to the debate I am sure the Minister will be unable to tell me the number of passengers who will be moved in any one week.

The Hon. J. Dolan: Could you give an estimate yourself?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Of course I cannot.

The Hon. J. Dolan: Neither can we, but we can give anticipated figures.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Would the Government spend \$500,000,000 on anticipated figures?

The Hon. J. Dolan: This is rubbish!

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It is not rubbish at all. You can be a very rude person at times, Mr. Dolan.

The Hon. J. Dolan: Dicken you can't!

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: After hearing the Minister's interjection I am satisfied that no feasibility study has been carried out in regard to this project; because the Minister is unable to tell me the number of people who are likely to commute on this railway, or what revenue will be derived from it.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: Probably no engineering study has been made, either.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That is not my department. I will leave that to the experts. I am concerned that we intend to commit the taxpayers of this State, for ever and anon, to something on which no expenditure is required. The present Government is crying poverty every day in the week and blaming the Commonwealth Government for every one of its problems, and yet it wants to commit the State to this large amount of money. I am certain that it can put the money to much better use instead of spending it on this project. So I conclude on that note, and in the Committee stage I intend to move the amendment I have foreshadowed.

Debate adjourned until Tuesday, the 15th August, on motion by The Hon. I. G. Medcalf.

SALES BY AUCTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 2nd August.

THE HON. I. G. MEDCALF (Metropolitan) [8.36 p.m.]: I must commend Mr. Jack Thomson for his great tenacity in persisting with this legislation. I have followed its course ever since the first measure was introduced about three years ago. I think it was about this time in 1969 when the honourable member introduced his first Bill, and since that date we have seen the introduction of two further measures. We are now considering the third edition of the legislation.

As I say, I seriously congratulate Mr. Thomson for his tenacity of purpose and his constancy in keeping before him this desire to rectify the ills which were occurring at auction sales of livestock at some country centres.

For the benefit of some of the new members who were not present in this House when the first Bill was introduced, I may perhaps be pardoned for referring briefly to the fact that the situation which caused Mr. Jack Thomson to bring the Bill to the House was a series of prosecutions which took place at some centres in the Great Southern, at which some people connected with auction sales of livestock were found guilty of various offences under the Criminal Code. They were not found guilty of offences under this legislation, but they were found guilty of criminal offences and some were imprisoned or fined and some lost their employment and were obliged to bear some punishment for the crimes they committed.

There was a feeling in the Great Southern—certainly in the town of Albany and other country towns—that farmers were being taken for a ride by stock firms and companies generally. Feeling ran very high at the time. In fact, it was so high that in the town of Albany I think the trials that were heard there should have been transferred somewhere else, because in my view it could have proved difficult to empanel an impartial jury. I can say this now that the trials are over, but I did express the opinion at the time that it would have been difficult to empanel a jury in Albany when certain people were being tried there for offences similar to those that are to be dealt with under this legislation.

I believe that the trial of one offender was, at least, transferred to the metropolitan area. However, the outcome was no different; the offender was still convicted. As I say, public opinion ran high and I can understand the reason for this, because a farmer who believes he has been taken down in regard to the sale of his stock naturally is not inclined to regard that as a trivial matter.

Therefore, Mr. Jack Thomson's motion, initially, to introduce legislation was very laudable, but unfortunately after it had been introduced various defects in it were pointed out and it became necessary for further consideration to be given to it. One of the defects of the Bill was that instead of protecting farmers it was likely to reduce the price of livestock at some sales because it would inhibit some stock agents from bidding when they had firm orders in their pockets on behalf of clients who were not present at the sale.

For that reason Mr. Thomson promptly withdrew the Bill and listened to the suggestions that were made, and I am pleased to say that in the Bill before us he has incorporated most of the suggestions that were put to him. The principal objection I raised at the time was that at an auction sale the auctioneer or his offside may have in his pocket buying orders which he had brought along on behalf of customers who were not present at the sale and, because of the terms of the Bill, would be unable to use the buying orders, which would result in the value of the stock being offered at the sale being depressed. This was not the object of the exercise; it was to assist the farmers to get a true and fair value for their livestock.

Mr. Jack Thomson has now amended the previous Bill he introduced in accordance with the various suggestions I have made to overcome that problem, and I appreciate the very co-operative action he took in having the Bill deferred at that time. Whilst that is a summary of the position up to the present time, after a careful and strict perusal of the measure that is now before us, I feel it is my obligation to point to one or two other items which, to my mind, still require some further consideration.

I am aware that Mr. Ron Thompson spoke on this Bill earlier at some length and I listened with particular interest to what he had to say. Obviously he spoke with some considerable knowledge of sales at auction, certainly in respect of sales of farm produce, which are also covered by this Bill. The legislation refers not only to sales of cattle, but also to other farm produce. I thought that Mr. Ron Thompson spoke very much to the point. Obviously he had been carefully and well briefed and he made a few points which I think have also been taken into consideration—most of them, at any rate—by Mr. Jack Thomson.

When Mr. Ron Thompson spoke the other day I was a little surprised when he rather shrugged his shoulders, indicating that he had given up the unequal struggle, and that after the third time of asking he was not prepared to contest the issue any more and would leave it to the Department of Agriculture to introduce any further amendments. If we look at the consequences of that attitude it is really a criticism of ourselves; as

we are saying that there may be something wrong with the Bill and we will leave it to the Department of Agriculture at some future date to bring forward amendments to the legislation.

If we do that I think we are vacating the field of legislators. I would have thought that we, as legislators, would be the ones to take the primary interest in the Bill rather than let the Department of Agriculture tell us what ought to be done. In fact, since I have been in Parliament I have consistently advocated that we should make up our own minds on certain matters; that we should take the advice of Government departments—but not necessarily accept it—and decide for ourselves what we consider is the right thing to do, bearing in mind the interests of the public.

It is with this in mind that I now approach the Bill and refer to certain specific points which I still believe require attention. There are only five or six of these and the first one is that in the definition of "cattle" we have included colts.

The Hon. J. M. Thomson: It would appear that they are young colts that should be in saddling paddocks and I think we can deal with them.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: I believe Mr. Jack Thomson will quite clearly be happy to agree that colts are not cattle and that they should be deleted from the definition. I will leave it at that, because I do not think the honourable member intended that colts should be included in the definition in the Bill.

Clause 5 of the Bill proposes that a member of the Police Force or a stock inspector may at any time inspect the register kept by the auctioneer. I quite agree that a member of the Police Force must have this power at any time, but I wonder whether we should not give a little more thought to giving power to the stock inspector to inspect the register at any time.

A stock inspector who is dealt with in the legislation is a stock inspector appointed under the Stock Diseases (Regulations) Act, 1968-69. We should think of a stock inspector as a kind of health inspector for stock. We may well wonder why he should be given the right to inspect the register which relates to actual dealings between farmers recorded at the auction. In other words the stock inspector will have powers similar to those of a policeman. Need we bring the stock inspector into it at all?

Is it not sufficient to allow members of the Police Force—which includes the C.I.B. and all other branches of the Police Force—to be given the authority to inspect these registers? By adding stock inspectors I cannot help but feel that we are giving the stock inspector the powers to inquire into

the private dealings of farmers at an auction. He is being given the right to check on things which are not his business at all.

The Hon. S. T. J. Thompson: He has the right to check brands and earmarks.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: This could well be within his purview but that would be done before the auction commenced. If there is some difficulty in identifying a brand or an earmark which is indistinguishable in some way, the stock inspector would be asked for his view.

But is it necessary for him to inspect the register after the auction sale? After all, we are giving the Police Force the right to do this so why should we bring in the stock inspector? I raise that point because I wonder whether in trying to assist people who are selling and buying at auctions we are not perhaps imposing a little too much authority in connection with the inspection of private dealings.

After all, it is a private deal, even though it takes place at auction; because farmer A sells to farmer B during the auction, and normally speaking this is pretty private. It is a little difficult for an outsider to know what is going on at an auction particularly when he has to contend with the waving of hands and nodding of heads and the various guttural noises that are emitted from time to time. It is difficult for him to know what is going on even though the auction may be held in public. I wonder whether we should allow anyone but a member of the Police Force to inspect the register.

This brings me to my next point which is rather along the same lines. In his Bill the honourable member proposes to amend section 4 of the Act in such a way that a person who buys stock but who does not buy it for himself must make a public declaration as to whom he is buying the stock for.

This does not only affect cattle, it affects farm produce as well. The amendment to which I refer appears in clause 6 (d) of the Bill. This is a proposed amendment to section 4 of the principal Act, which says that the auctioneer is liable to write down the actual name of the successful bidder in the register. He must write it down after a sale of stock or farm produce. He is exempt from writing down the name of the successful bidder in one case; this is where the successful bidder informs him he bought the stock or farm produce on behalf of someone else.

If the successful bidder comes up after the auction and says, "I bought that stock on behalf of my next door neighbour so will you write in the other man's name and not mine," the auctioneer is exempt from writing down the name of the successful bidder; otherwise he must write in the name of the successful bidder.

There may be only a handful of people present at an auction and there may be a lot of bids. To take an extreme case, there may be present managers of rival stock companies each of whom has in his pocket bids from his own clients. These managers will know who their clients are and they will also know how much they are prepared to pay. But even though each manager knows how much his client is prepared to pay he does not want to divulge this information to the other; nor do their clients want it known as to who is bidding for them. Due to the problems experienced by farmers it is possible that a farmer may owe a lot of money to one stock company and he may accordingly wish to buy and sell through another. If a public declaration is to be made immediately after the sale by the manager of stock company A, who will say, "I bought that for Mr. Jack Thomson," what will Mr. Jack Thomson say when this becomes public knowledge, particularly when he has been trying to keep the matter quiet, because he happens to owe money to the other stock company, the manager of which is standing alongside him?

I wonder whether we are serving the interests of farmers by insisting they make a public declaration after each sale. I think it would be better to leave it as it is, so that after the sale the successful bidder simply informs the auctioneer privately and says, "I bought that for Mr. So-and-so; put down his name and not mine." That would be more reasonable and I do not think we will lose anything by it.

What happens if somebody tells a lie? He does not get into trouble for doing so. The successful bidder does not get into trouble, because there is no penalty if he says he bought it for Tom Jones when he has not done so. The penalty is on the auctioneer. So I do not think we would achieve anything by making this a public declaration; in fact, I think we will annoy a lot of farmers.

I would like the honourable member to give further thought to that aspect, because on reflection I feel he will agree there is not much point in amending section 4 in this fashion. It is only a minor part of the honourable member's Bill, and I might say I am only criticising matters on the fringes, since I agree with the main proposition.

The next point I wish to mention is contained in clause 7 of the Bill which provides that if an auctioneer does not do the right thing and breaches the provisions of the Bill, he is not only liable to be disqualified from his license and fined up to \$1,000, or imprisoned for 12 months, but in addition he must pay back all profits which result from the purchase he has improperly made.

I cannot quarrel with that. I think it is quite sound but when we come to the provision contained in subclause (5) of clause 7 we see that an employee of an auctioneer who breaches the Act and does these things that have been mentioned, does not have to pay back the profit he makes. He is liable, however, to a penalty of \$1,000 and is also liable to imprisonment, but because he is an employee of the auctioneer, and although he has made a profit why should he not pay it back?

This seems illogical, because if he makes a profit why should he not pay it back? He is in no different position from the auctioneer who makes a profit on the transaction. In this case we simply say the employee will go to gaol for 12 months. He is not accountable for the profit he makes.

So I think subclause (5) of clause 7 should have the same words added as appear in subclause (3) of that clause. This will ensure that an employee who makes a profit will also have to account to the farmer who has been defrauded.

One further point I would like to make in connection with clause 7 appears in subclause (6) which states that an auctioneer is not allowed to charge commission in the event of his purchasing cattle placed in his hands for sale by a particular vendor. For example, if he says to the vendor, "I want to buy those cattle myself and I want your written consent to my buying them" and the vendor gives that consent, then even though the cattle are sold at auction and the auctioneer, having been given the vendor's written consent, tops the bidding and buys the cattle himself, he is not permitted to charge commission for that transaction. If inadvertently he does charge commission he can be fined \$1,000, or imprisonment for a term of not more than one year, or he may have his license suspended for such a period as the court thinks fit; in addition to which he must repay the commission to the vendor.

This is a pretty severe penalty to impose on someone who is doing something with the vendor's consent, because it was the vendor who instructed him to do this at the auction sale.

I think the penalty has been copied from an earlier section and I feel it should be reduced or, better still, subclause (6) of clause 7 should be left out altogether, because what the auctioneer is doing he is doing with the consent of the vendor—the firm is doing it at the request of the vendor.

If the vendor does not want him to auction the cattle he will say, "No, do not auction them. I will sell them to you privately." That is up to the vendor. I do not think it is fair that the auctioneer should be fined or sent to gaol for 12 months or lose his license if the vendor

says, "I am putting the cattle in your auction sale and you can buy them at the top price, and here is my consent in writing to permit you to do so," and the auctioneer's clerk inadvertently puts through an entry for commission. I think it would be a bit hard to penalise him in such circumstances.

My last point refers to clause 8 which requires attention in that it refers to the reading out before the sale of certain sections of the Act, including sections 3, 4, and 4A.

Section 4A only affects sales of cattle and yet this must be read out at every sale including the sale of farm produce which has nothing to do with the sale of cattle. This is a material point which I feel should be amended. We should delete the reference to section 4A relating to farm produce. With those remarks I support the Bill.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. T. O. Perry.

AGE OF MAJORITY BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 31st May.

THE HON. I. G. MEDCALF (Metropolitan) [9.05 p.m.]: This Bill is designed to lower the age of majority from 21 years to 18 years, and it says so in almost so many words. It is not a very big Bill; it contains only six clauses. Clause 5, in part, reads as follows:—

5. (1) Subject to the succeeding provisions of this section, for all the purposes of the laws of the State—

- (a) a person who, on or after the commencing day, attains the age of eighteen years attains full age and full capacity on attaining that age; and
- (b) a person who, on the commencing day, is of or over the age of eighteen years but under the age of twenty-one years attains full age and full capacity on that day.

The day, of course, is the day on which the Act is proclaimed. Clause 5 goes on as follows:—

(2) Subsection (1) of this section applies and has effect, in the absence of a definition or of an indication of a contrary intention, for the purposes of the construction of the expressions "majority", "full age", "adult", "full capacity", "*sui juris*", and similar expressions, and the expressions "infant", "infancy", "minor", "nonage", "minority", and similar expressions in—

- (a) an enactment whether passed or made before, on, or after the commencing day; and
- (b) an instrument executed or made on or after that day.

Over the last few years we have heard quite a deal of discussion on the proposition that a person should attain the age of majority upon reaching the age of 18 years. The proposition has already engrossed the attention of other States and the Commonwealth. The Attorneys-General conference has been aware of the problems associated with this change for some time.

I recall that when the present Leader of the Opposition was Minister for Justice he informed the House on more than one occasion that this subject was under continuous study at the Attorneys-General conference. And well it might be because there are many more problems beneath the skin than appear on the surface.

On examination it will be found that a great number of matters will require a lot of careful attention if, in fact, the age of majority is reduced to 18 years for all purposes. It is easy enough to say that the age of majority shall, henceforth, be 18 years. That only takes about seven or eight words, but many ramifications are apparent to people who have been engaged in preparing legal documents such as wills, deeds of settlement, and other matters where the age of majority has been 21 years since time immemorial.

What will be done about a will written some time ago but in respect of which the testator has not yet died, and which provides that a property shall be distributed to the children of the testator on attaining the age of 21 years? Does it mean that henceforth the age of 21 will be read as meaning 18 years? Will it mean that in future the children, or the young people, who would have inherited at 21 years, will inherit at 18 years? What about those who are already over 18 years but not yet 21 years; will they have to wait until they are 21 years of age? There are so many points involved.

The whole concept bristles with points. This is one of the reasons the Attorneys-General conference approached this subject with a good deal of deference, a good deal of care, and a good deal of proper respect. The change in the age of majority will not only affect wills and legal documents; it will affect conditions of employment, arbitration awards, rates of pay; any number of different subjects are affected by it.

There are certain occupations which one cannot accept or undertake until one attains the age of 21 years. What of those? By passing an Act to say that henceforth one is an adult when one attains the age of 18 years, will that really mean one is an adult? I would submit that that is very dubious. I submit it is a particularly doubtful proposition: that because we pass a Bill—if we pass a Bill—which says one is an adult at 18 years of age that will mean one is an adult at 18 years of age.

I am aware that many instances have been given to illustrate just how ridiculous it is to choose the age of 21 years. We have heard references to the fact that that was the age at which a young man was able to carry a suit of armour, or was able to ride a horse, or perform various other feats. That might be ridiculous but the age of 21 has been accepted for so many hundreds of years and accepted in so many different ways. It is hard to put a finger on many of those ways. I think we would be deluding ourselves to believe that all we need say is that henceforth one is an adult when one attains the age of 18 years.

Nevertheless, I am not saying that for certain purposes it is not desirable to change the age of majority. For example, during the last three years of the term of the previous Government the age of majority was changed in four different respects. Since I have been in this House I have observed that in respect of contracts for advances made by certain reputable institutions it has been made legal for people of 18 years or over to sign such contracts. Prior to that no-one under the age of 21 years could sign a contract of that type. That provision was made under the Housing Advances (Contracts with Infants) Act.

In the last session of the previous Government we amended the Wills Act so that a person of 18 years of age, or over, could make a will. The Electoral Act was also amended to provide that persons of 18 years and over could vote at State elections in Western Australia. When we passed the Liquor Act, in 1970, we allowed young people of 18 years to enter licensed premises and purchase liquor.

So, in four important respects, the law has recently been amended to reduce the age of majority to 18 years, and I go along with those decisions. I have always held the view, personally, that this is a matter which should be approached piecemeal. In other words, each area should be examined to see if it is appropriate to lower the age limit. I go along with the action taken to allow young people to borrow money with which to purchase a house, to vote at State elections, to be entitled to go into licensed premises and purchase liquor, and to make wills. However, I do not know that I go along with some of the other matters which have been mentioned, and I will illustrate what I mean.

Traditionally, a young person under the age of 21 years has not been able to enter into a contract. That has been the traditional situation of the law: unless the contract was for the benefit of the child—anyone under the age of 21 years being considered a child—or was for the purpose of providing items required to keep the child alive—one might say—and in a reasonable condition, a child could not enter into such an agreement.

That provision gave a great measure of protection to young people who were unskilled in business dealings and might otherwise have fallen victim to glib confidence men and salesmen who would sell them goods which dazzled them but were relatively worthless and not the sort of goods they should be buying at that particular age.

I well remember one of the first problems I dealt with when I was a young legal practitioner, back in 1948. A youth was in trouble over the purchase of a motorbike which cost far more than he could afford. It was a gleaming, sparkling, beautiful B.S.A. motorbike which had completely dazzled him. He agreed to buy it but could not pay for it and he was being sued. The question was whether it was a necessary item, in which case the seller could force him to pay for it. I was happy to be able to set up the defence that he was an infant and the motorbike was not necessary for his occupation or for his benefit, and he was therefore able to get out of the contract.

Perhaps a motorbike has not nowadays the significance it had in 1948. Times change. It may be that a motorbike could now be regarded as necessary in certain occupations.

The point I make is that the law has provided a measure of protection for young people of 18. Anyone under 21 could plead he was legally incapable of signing a contract, which gave great protection, particularly if he could not live up to an agreement or contract and did not need the article purchased. That protection will go under this Act. Eighteen will be sufficient age for the purpose of signing any contract at all. No longer will a person of 18 be able to plead he did not know what he was doing or that he was too young to understand what he was doing. In other words, once he signs on the dotted line that is the end of the exercise.

I think we must make up our minds whether we think this will be of benefit. When members of the junior political parties put forward views that the age of majority should be reduced for all purposes, I doubt whether they seriously understand some of the advantages and protection which are given by the law to people under the age of 21. There are certain safeguards which will disappear. We must realise that. We must know what we are doing. I hope that all those who have so eagerly been seeking all these so-called benefits will be happy to receive them.

However, although I do not think it is a good thing, I am not prepared to oppose the Bill. There is such a clamour, partly based on emotional grounds, that it is very difficult to oppose a Bill of this kind. I think it is a case of people having to learn by mistakes and find out the hard way. Although I do not like agreeing to this

measure, one cannot forever act as a kind of benevolent parent to protect people from their own incapacity.

I think I am right in saying the Law Reform Committee was commissioned by the last Government to consider this question. At any rate, the committee entered upon a study of the question some time ago and the present Government has requested the committee to set out its views, which it has done extremely efficiently and effectively in a paper. The committee states that it has not seriously considered whether or not it is proper for the age of majority to be reduced to 18; it has not undertaken that task. In its paper the committee says—

Shortly after the reference set out in paragraph 1 above, the Government announced its intention to introduce legislation to "lower from 21 to 18 years the age of responsibility for all citizens" of the State (Governor's speech at the opening of Parliament, on 15 July 1971). The Committee has accordingly accepted that it has been settled as a matter of policy that the age of majority is to be reduced to 18 years and has not dealt with the question whether it should be so reduced

We must bear in mind that in producing its views on the subject the Law Reform Committee has accepted that the Government intended to reduce the age of majority and the committee has not considered whether or not that is the proper thing to do. The committee has simply attempted to interpret that policy decision in the light of the existing law and the proposals in law.

The New South Wales Government has been keenly aware of the problems of infants; that is, of people below the age of majority. The Law Reform Committee in New South Wales has produced what might be called a code to be adopted in determining matters concerning persons below the age of majority. The code is still under consideration in this State. It has not yet been proposed by our Law Reform Committee, although it is likely that at some future date the committee will put forward proposals in relation to people who are below the age of majority, which will be 18. We are therefore likely to see a code which will apply safeguards for people below 18. That is a good idea because it will overcome some of the anomalies existing in our law as it stands at present.

The Law Reform Committee has made it clear that it has not dealt with certain other major questions, and the Government has made it clear that those questions have been omitted from the Bill now before us. Those matters are the age qualifications for entry into certain occupations, the terms and conditions of employment, and the special provisions aimed at protecting the young.

I would like to quote from the opinion of the Law Reform Committee on the first subject; that is, the age qualifications for entry into certain occupations. The committee listed a number of Statutes relating to the minimum age for entry into certain occupations, and in regard to this matter it said—

The occupations field was outside the New South Wales Commission's terms of reference. However there would seem to be no reason why at this stage consideration should not be given to the question whether, in specific cases, the minimum ages should or should not be lowered. South Australia and New Zealand amended the Acts governing entry into certain occupations as part of the general reduction of the age of majority in those States.

We are not doing that. We are leaving this question of age qualifications for future consideration, but it is of some interest to note the occupations in which there is a prescribed age for entry. These are listed in part B of the report and I will refer to some of them. One must be 21 to be an architect, a builder, a director of a building society, a chiropodist, a chiropractor, a member of the Legislative Council or the Legislative Assembly, a debt collector—

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The age for entry into this House was one thing we did not alter in the Constitution Act.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: One must be 21 to be a dentist, an inquiry agent, a land agent, or even a used-car dealer. There are certain qualifications in connection with being a trustee or manager of a friendly society. The list of such occupations covers six or seven pages in the report. This, of course, has a bearing on prescribing that the age of majority shall be 18.

I come back to my point. By using a dozen or so words and saying, "The age of majority will in future be 18," how do we overcome the situation that one must be 21 before one can enter any of these occupations? It seems to me we are going only halfway. There must be a general acceptance by the community. Why leave the age of majority at 21 in one area and bring it down to 18 in another? In so doing we would not really have reduced the age of majority or adulthood.

The same applies to the terms and conditions of employment. There is no need for me to go into that subject. It is quite apparent that the terms and conditions of employment are based on industrial agreements and awards and that they vary in accordance with the age of the employee. Lowering the age of majority to 18 will not make the slightest difference in that sphere; or if it does, it is not apparent.

The final matter which is dealt with is the special provisions which protect the young. I quote from paragraph 24 of the Law Reform Committee's report—

There are some statutory provisions which are essentially protective in nature. However, in so far as they make distinctions on the basis of age, they are logically to be considered in connection with any proposal for generally lowering the age of majority. Here again, it is proper to observe that because it is thought advisable to extend responsibility in a particular area or areas, it does not necessarily follow that all other distinctions based on age should also be removed.

From the many ramifications of this matter, it can be seen we are embarking on a fairly troubled and difficult sea. However, I do not propose to oppose the Bill, although I do not believe it will in fact do what those who espouse the Bill perhaps hope it will do.

I do not believe the Bill will work any miracles. I do not believe that we can say, by legislation, "So-and-so, this is the situation," and lay down the law on a matter which is essentially concerned with human relations, which is essentially a human situation, and which is essentially a matter of acceptance by the community. I do not believe we can simply say that henceforth the age of majority will be 18 years, and by those words work a miracle.

I think I have illustrated sufficiently that there are so many other aspects of this and we are really only dealing with one aspect; and even then we are taking certain risks and placing at a disadvantage some of the young people we are hoping to benefit.

I would prefer that the Government waits until it has a comprehensive Bill with which to tackle the other aspects to which I have referred; with which to tackle the question of protecting the young, the question of employment, and the question of age limits for other occupations. Therefore, for those reasons I have doubts about the wisdom of bringing this Bill forward at the present time. Personally, I would prefer the Government to wait until the Law Reform Committee has completed its report, instead of reporting on only two of the five aspects about which its opinion was sought. However, we have the Bill, and although I have misgivings I do not propose to oppose it.

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (Lower West) [9.32 p.m.]: Mr. Medcalf, with his meticulous attention to detail, has covered this Bill admirably, particularly in so far as its legal aspects are concerned. I have no intention of traversing that ground. However, I would like to elaborate a little on a very serious aspect on which Mr. Medcalf touched towards the end of

his speech. I believe this particular aspect is even more important than the mechanics of the actual Bill. I refer to the philosophical basis of the Bill and the political motives for its introduction.

I am not critical of any particular political party because, as was mentioned by Mr. Medcalf, Governments throughout Australia seem to have embarked on the course of the reduction of the age of majority in answer to consistent clamour and pressure. However, I have come to believe that certain groups of people who think that this action will give those people aged between 18 and 21 years a relief from restraint fail to appreciate that it will also force upon young people at an earlier age an acceptance of responsibility.

I think some young people feel that the restraints imposed upon them are a hindrance to their freedom, and they forget that the only true freedom is the acceptance of personal responsibility which, heretofore, came at the age of 21. This is not a new theory. I think Gibbons expressed this when speaking about the decline of the city of Athens in ancient Greece, and I believe it is still valid.

I believe that in following this course we are imposing too heavy a burden upon young people, because it seems to me that young people are given an ever-decreasing period of time in which to accustom themselves to the acceptance of responsibility and its burdens. It appears to me that an ever-increasing amount of responsibility is being thrust upon them at an ever-younger age. I think that even among the young people there has been a reversal of opinion, and many of them now feel that the move to give them the vote at 18, along with the other rights which are gradually creeping upon them, was a mistake.

I think the mistake has occurred—as have other mistakes in regard to a number of other changes—because political parties have not examined in sufficient depth the complete philosophical implications of the moves which have been made. I repeat that this request for relief from restraint emanated from young people with wild, youthful enthusiasm who belong, in the words of Mr. Medcalf, to junior political movements. They advocated this move in the belief that it would give them relief from the restraints which have been placed upon them over the years. However, I believe they have forgotten that automatically the acceptance of responsibility is quite onerous and heavy.

I have come to feel that we should have been a little more reluctant to introduce these moves. However, with Mr. Medcalf, I believe we have set our feet upon the path and we have no option but to pursue this course. In the light of the

little experience we have I tend to regret it; and I believe in the fullness of time thoughtful people will regret it even more.

I remember some years ago I asked a young fellow if he wanted to be involved in a particular activity. He replied that he was busy enough as it was and would like a little of what he called "mucking about" time. In the course of growing up it is good to have a few years of relief from the heavy responsibilities of adulthood. I feel that perhaps in our enthusiasm for the theory behind this move and as a result of the emotional aspects of it we, as legislators, have gone overboard. I repeat that I criticise no party because all parties have agreed to it. With Mr. Medcalf I intend to support the Bill, but not with a great deal of enthusiasm.

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [9.37 p.m.]: I believe that by passing this Bill without the full support of the Law Reform Committee for every aspect of the situation—and particularly in view of the brief speech of the Minister when introducing it—we will do young people between the ages of 18 and 21 a very great disservice. I cannot bring myself to agree to support it at the present time.

The Bill proposes, in the main, to allow young people between the ages I mentioned to enter into contracts and agreements, and to make them responsible for any debts they may incur, just as those over the age of 21 are responsible.

Let us consider the situation not only in Western Australia but in the rest of the world. We find that pressure sales techniques are being used. If this Bill is passed those techniques may be imposed upon young people at the age of 18 who have barely left the schoolroom and who know very little about business procedures. How easy it would be to cajole young people into signing a contract and entering into a debt without knowing what they are committing themselves to. Surely enough people of a mature age enter into contracts without knowing what they are signing. Yet here we are proposing to give young people barely out of school the right to enter into such contracts and to be liable for any debts created by that action.

In another place recently a report was tabled by an Honorary Royal Commission which inquired into hire-purchase sales, etc. I would like to have the opportunity to read that report before I consider a measure of this nature in order to see what recommendations have been made. I feel that report may have a great bearing on this Bill. A thorough investigation was made by that Honorary Royal Commission, and if we had the opportunity to study the report we would understand the things which happen to mature people in relation to these transactions,

and we could assess what would happen to young people between the ages of 18 and 21 years.

I know great pressure has been applied by young people—mainly from universities and other organisations—for this legislation. However, I think very few of them really understand what they are agitating for, because not many of them would understand the machinations which go on in the business world. Let me state an example of two young people under the age of 21 who wish to marry. They must obtain the consent of their parents, and this Bill will not alter that. Let us assume the parents of the young couple consent to the marriage, and the couple are married. Under this measure either the husband or the wife may enter into any contract to purchase any article, and they will be liable for any debt they incur.

In my experience of credit purchasing over the years I find that high-pressure salesmen cajole a terrific number of womenfolk—in particular—to enter into contracts to purchase washing machines, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, and other electrical appliances. The women enter into contracts without the knowledge of their husbands; yet under the law the husbands are liable for the debts incurred.

So a young girl of 18 could incur a debt for which her husband who is of a similar age, or perhaps a little older, will be responsible. The husband may be working in a job for which he receives a low pay—sufficient only to pay the rent, feed and clothe his family, and live reasonably comfortably. The next thing he knows is that he has a debt contracted by his wife without his knowledge. How does he meet it? The family must go without because under this Bill he is liable for the debt. However, if this Bill is not passed, before the wife could enter into a contract the consent of her husband or of a parent would be necessary. In this respect, if the Bill were not passed I think there would be a great saving for young people. I am not keen on this measure and I do not think we should pass it at the moment. With those remarks I indicate it is my intention to oppose the Bill.

THE HON. F. R. WHITE (West) [9.44 p.m.]: I do not want this Bill to go to the vote at this stage. When a Bill was introduced to lower the voting age to 18 years, I was one of those in this Chamber who opposed it. I intend to be consistent. I intend to oppose this piece of legislation.

We find that young people are demanding the privileges of adulthood, but if given those privileges they would not be happy with the responsibilities which go with them. The term "age of majority" is rather a strange one, and I think it is

a little misleading. Does it mean the age of majority; does it mean the age of maturity; or does it mean the age of responsibility?

I think that what we are trying to get at is to determine at what age a person is considered to be mature enough to be able to accept the responsibilities of life. I know of many people over the age of 21 years who have not reached maturity. We have to strike at some age, and up to this point of time it has been 21 years of age. However, let us face the situation: a small majority of those of 21 years of age have reached maturity, and a lesser number below that age have reached maturity. Despite that it is proposed that the age of adulthood, of maturity, and of responsibility be lowered.

I feel that will not be acceptable to the young people of this State. As I have pointed out, although they are screaming out for more rights and privileges, when it comes to the acceptance of responsibility by them it is a completely different matter.

I feel that in introducing the Bill the Government has treated the young people of this State as children. In his second reading speech the Minister did not make any reference to any contact with the people under the age of 21 years. Surely if legislation is to be passed to affect the lives of these people they should be given the opportunity to express their opinions; but the Minister did not mention any such opportunity being given to the youngsters.

In my reading of the newspapers I have not seen any Gallup polls being carried out on this subject. If the Government considers these people not to be mature enough to give their opinions, why has it introduced legislation to lower the age of majority? I think that the great majority of the young people below 21 years of age are immature, and that is indicated by the fact that many of those over the age of 21 are still immature. Rather than have the Bill passed without expressing my views, I have made these few remarks to indicate my opposition to it.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. D. K. Dans.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL.

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [9.47 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, the 15th August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.48 p.m.