

Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 22nd August, 1972

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

QUESTIONS (7): ON NOTICE

1. TRANSPORT

North-West Road Permits

The Hon. G. W. BERRY, to the Minister for Transport:

For each of the years 1969-70, 1970-71 and 1971-72, what amounts have been collected by the Road and Air Transport Commission for permits issued for cartage of goods from—

- Geraldton;
- Meekatharra; and
- Leonora?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

Transport from the rail-heads mentioned is authorised either by permits covering specific loading as and when required or, for transport of a continuous nature, by licences granted on a monthly or annual basis at the option of the applicant. The replies to the Honourable Member's questions are therefore given under the headings of "Permits" and "Annual Licences". They are shown in dollars as follows:—

	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72
	\$	\$	\$
From Geraldton—			
Permits	444	3,121	4,204
Annual Licences	3,176	4,574	7,626
From Meekatharra—			
Permits	Nil	Nil	297
Annual Licences	2,272	467	2,003
From Geraldton and Meekatharra (combined)—			
Permits	440	84	133
Annual Licences	18,014	15,560	39,153
From Leonora	Nil	Nil	Nil

2. DAIRYING

Price Equalisation Arrangements

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

- What dairy products are included in the Commonwealth-wide arrangements for price equalisation administered by Equalisation Ltd.?
- What particular dairy products of significant export value are not included in the Commonwealth-wide equalisation arrangements?

- What is the current export price of these products?
- Which of these products attract the Commonwealth subsidy?
- Are there any equalisation schemes in operation which involve these products?
- What was the most recent annual disbursement of equalisation funds for each of these products which—
 - attract Commonwealth subsidy;
 - are not eligible for subsidy?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- Butter and cheese are included in the voluntary Price Equalisation Scheme administered by the Commonwealth Dairy Produce Equalisation Committee Ltd. Skim Milk powders and casein are included in equalisation schemes operated by Victorian Committees subject to approval from Equalisation Ltd.
- Milk powders other than skim milk powder, and whole milk.
- The current export prices of these products are not available as the transactions are on a trader to trader basis and the prices obtained are not divulged.
- Butter, cheese and processed milk products.
- Yes, for butter and cheese.
- (a) Disbursements are made during the year and the latest disbursements bringing the total paid up to the 30th June, 1972 are as follows:

		\$
Butter	1970-71	38.70 /cwt
	1971-72	41.75 /cwt
Cheese	1970-71	26.40 /cwt
	1971-72	29.25 /cwt

The pools for these years have not yet been finalised but final payments for 1970-71 are expected in a few months.

No disbursements have been made in W.A. for processed milk products.

- W.A. manufacturers first became members of Casein and Skim Milk Pools in 1971-72. No disbursements have yet been made.

3.

DAIRYING

Dairy Industry Authority

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

With reference to the "Political Notes" by the Hon. John Tonkin in *The West Australian* dated 27th July, 1972 in which it is stated

"even the dairying industry was experiencing prices at most gratifying levels, said Mr. Anthony—but with typical Country Party closeness he made no suggestion that a little of the subsidy it enjoys might be spooned off to far more desperate needs in the same rural sector", will the Minister advise—

- (a) is the Premier correctly reported in that statement;
- (b) if so, is it to be assumed that the Government resents—
 - (i) a favourable report on the industry by Mr. Anthony; or
 - (ii) the industry receiving gratifying prices;
- (c) can it be further assumed from that statement that if control of the industry was in a Labor Government's hands that "a little of the subsidy would be spooned off";
- (d) if so, to what extent, and to what "more desperate needs";
- (e) can the Hon. Premier's statement be considered in conjunction with his Government's current proposals for the creation of a single Dairy Industry Authority in which all dairy products would be vested in that Authority;
- (f) if so, is the Hon. Premier's attitude as expressed in that statement basic to his Government's thinking in the preparation of that legislation?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (a) Yes.
- (b) No.
- (c) It is unwise to assume anything in connection with what any Commonwealth Government may do.
- (d) Answered by (c).
- (e) Yes.
- (f) No. The welfare of the dairying industry is fundamental.

4.

FRUIT FLY

Baiting Scheme Subsidy

The Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT, to the Leader of the House:

Whereas in reply to a question in the Legislative Assembly by the Hon. Mr. Nalder on Wednesday, 16th August, 1972, in respect to financial assistance paid for 1971-1972 to the Kwinana Fruit Fly Baiting Committee, a figure of \$300 was given, and a Nil amount was given to a similar question asked by me on Tuesday 8th

August, 1972; does the answer given to Mr. Nalder also mean that the total subsidy of \$8,900 quoted in reply to my question of 8th August should be increased by the amount of \$300?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

Yes.

DAYLIGHT SAVING

Effect on School Hours

The Hon. S. T. J. THOMPSON, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Has the Minister consulted with the Teachers' Union regarding the announcement concerning school hours in the event of daylight saving being introduced?
- (2) Can he give an assurance that all teachers will co-operate if a change in hours is requested by parents?

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

- (1) No.
- (2) No. However, Education Department advise that provision already exists to alter school hours at the discretion of individual school authorities.

In fact school hours are already staggered in some places.

6.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Tradesmen

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON, to the Leader of the House.

How many qualified tradesmen in all categories were employed by the Public Works Department in the years 1970, 1971 and 1972 at the peak period of employment in each of the years mentioned?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

Tradesmen employed by the Public Works Department at peak periods of employment during the years 1970, 1971 and 1972:—

	1970	1971	1972
Blacksmiths	8	8	8
Bricklayers	49	30	43
Cabinet Makers	9	11	8
Carpenters	206	235	271
Electricians	10	12	10
Electrical Tradesmen	32	41	63
Electrical Trade Assistants	—	—	3
Fitters	72	71	78
Fitter's Assistants	—	4	—
Foremen	46	44	51
Foreman Drillers	1	1	1
Machinists	8	10	8
Mechanics	63	55	61
Painters	110	101	106
Plasterers	23	34	32
Plumbers	72	81	99

Polishers	1	1	2
Plant Officers	3	5	5
Shipwrights	3	2	2
Tilers	2	2	2
Trade Assistants	—	—	1
Travelling Mechanics	14	15	22
Telephone Technicians	7	5	10
Turners	27	32	32
Welders	56	57	65
Sheet Metal Workers	7	7	8
Welders—Sheet Metal	3	3	3
Instrument Makers	3	3	3
Pattern Makers	4	3	4
Riggers	1	1	1
Tool Makers	3	3	3
Welders (Electrical)	8	9	11
Boiler Makers	19	19	27
Press Operators (500 tons)	1	1	1
Wood Machinists	2	1	1
Moulders	11	13	14
Electricians (Auto)	1	2	2
Electrical Fitters	18	16	19
Electrical Installers	1	1	4
Body Builders	3	2	3
Panel Beaters	3	4	4
Radio Technicians	1	3	5
Trimmers	2	2	2
Refrigeration Mechanics	1	1	1
Injection Fitters	1	1	1
Process Camera Operators	—	1	1
Fitters and Turners	6	6	6
TOTAL	921	959	1,107

If the State was able to intensify its programme, the Commonwealth was prepared to match the amount up to a limit imposed by the Commonwealth triennial vote.

The Commonwealth has agreed to renew the arrangement for another 3 years commencing 1st July, 1972, on a similar basis to that described above.

(2) 1970-71 \$118,680
1971-72 \$192,209.

(3) The money has been used for all aspects of eradication, other than meeting compensation payments.

LAND AGENTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Report

Report of Committee adopted.

TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 17th August.

THE HON. J. HEITMAN (Upper West) [4.54 p.m.] : There is probably no need for me to say that I rise this afternoon to oppose the police takeover of traffic. This is a very important measure, and like so many Bills which have come before this House it contains only the two usual clauses. Most of the legislation will be enacted by regulations if we are to take notice of the voluminous second reading speech delivered by the Minister.

Legislation brought before this House should be clearly spelt out rather than have it rely on regulations which could be disallowed at a later date. The provisions in every measure which comes before the House should be defined; that is if Parliament is to perform its traditional duties. In this way members will be able to discuss the legislation, whereas all we can do on this occasion is to discuss the second reading speech given by the Minister.

When we look at his second reading speech we see that the Minister indicated the police could take over everything except road maintenance and paving at a date to be fixed. The Minister told us of the manner in which he hopes traffic will be controlled, but he really did not tell us a great deal. We are not given the chance to go through the legislation clause by clause in the Committee stage to say whether or not we agree with it. The Minister said this—

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.

7.

CATTLE

Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Control

The Hon. C. R. ABBEY, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Will the Minister set out in full detail the present financial arrangements between the State and the Commonwealth in T.B. and Brucellosis control?
- (2) What contributions have been received from the Commonwealth in the last two years?
- (3) How has this money been used?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

- (1) The financial arrangements relate to the amount of money spent by the State during the base year 1968-69 to control tuberculosis and brucellosis.

State Expenditure included funds from both Consolidated Revenue Fund and Cattle Industry Compensation Trust Fund sources but exclude payments for compensation purposes.

The State was required to spend from its own resources an amount equal to the expenditure in the base year. Expenditure in excess of this amount was recouped from the Commonwealth Central Fund up to an amount equal to the State base year expenditure.

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.

I will quote the road fatality figures for a State operating under police control so that members can see how Western Australia's figures compare. The road fatality figures for New South Wales are as follows:—

Year	Metropolitan Area	Country Areas
1959	417	442
1962	412	464
1964	460	550
1966	513	630
1968	502	709
1969	498	690
1970	573	736
1971	503	749

These are the figures for a State under police control. The mileage of country roads in Western Australia has not been taken into consideration. I could quote the figures for Victoria, Queensland, and South Australia, but I will not do so because they show a similar pattern to those of New South Wales.

The road fatality figures for Western Australia are as follows:—

Year	Metropolitan Area	Country Areas
1959	86	85
1962	83	94
1964	88	134
1966	115	138
1968	148	172
1969	156	155
1970	180	171
1971	160	172

The pattern in Western Australia is much the same as that in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and South Australia; and yet, we have country roads running from Albany to Wyndham. We have a much greater mileage of roads in the country than in the metropolitan area.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: And higher speeds.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: Yes, that is so. Many motorists drive great distances in the country at speeds of at least 65 miles per hour. The speed in the metropolitan area is around 35 to 40 miles per hour. The Minister has the audacity to say that our road fatality figures are slightly higher in the country areas than in the metropolitan area because the traffic is not wholly controlled by the police in the country areas.

I admit that our present system is not perfect by any means; it is certainly not uniform. However, many areas in the country are better controlled than they

would be by police officers. Many of our traffic inspectors are dedicated to the job, whereas a policeman must divide his attention between traffic control and other police duties.

He said that in this State in 1965 the Government decided to have a look at the traffic position. This was done by an interdepartmental committee which recommended that traffic control should be taken over by the police.

Of course that committee was loaded. I have volumes of information on this particular aspect. In fact I was one of the witnesses, representing the Country Shire Councils' Association, who gave evidence before that committee, and I know how it was set up. There is no chance of the country areas getting a fair go in view of the personnel on the committee. They were committed to police control in the country areas right from the start. We have all read the report and we all know what was attempted by it. We all know there was a minority report and a majority report. We also know that the country shires put up a case that if they were given the authority they could set up a uniform traffic control system for the whole of the State. The councils submitted they could meet the requirements of the Traffic Department by setting up a separate body which would have no worries other than policing traffic throughout the State.

We also know that the traffic inspectors are dedicated to their job and they would have achieved whatever was asked of them under that set-up. Despite the fact that the shire councils put this case up on more than one occasion to the then Minister, it was not approved. Initially, he agreed when the suggestion was put to him, but the final answer was always no. In fact, he gave this answer on so many occasions that in the country the Minister at that time was known as the Minister for Noes. I am not saying that the present Minister is any different.

When we read what the present Minister has said to those who have approached him and asked to be heard we find on most occasions the answer given was that, as the appropriate Minister, it was his obligation to carry out the policy of the Government as indicated; that the Government had taken steps to implement this and there was no necessity to debate the pros and cons of the situation.

Indeed, when we look at this Bill consisting of one page and two clauses there is not much to debate in it. The only thing we have to debate is what is contained in the Minister's second reading speech. The remainder of the provisions will be introduced by subordinate legislation.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Who made the statement you just read out?

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: The Minister. Let me continue with what the Minister had to say. This is what he said in his second reading speech—

- (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.

I understand that Northam wanted to switch over to police control.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: They have given notice of their intention to rescind that.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I am pleased to hear that, because I understand that five of the six traffic inspectors were not going to be taken over by the Police Department. I continue to quote from the Minister's second reading speech as follows:—

- (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.

If we want uniformity of traffic control we must have uniformity in regard to the instruction of the appointees who are to be employed. This is exactly what the Liberal Party has said on every occasion when deliberating this question. The Liberal Party wants all the traffic inspectors to attend a school to obtain the same training given to members of the Police Force. I know that this has been happening for the past 10 years. I know one traffic inspector who has attended two or three schools and the procedure he went through was exactly the same as that followed by the police. But, of course, he has never had the statutory authority held by a police constable. A traffic inspector has always had to take a much lower rating than a policeman in regard to

traffic control. He has never had the power of arrest or many of the other powers held by the police. Therefore, on all occasions a traffic inspector works in strict conformity with the police in country areas.

I must say that this co-operation between the traffic inspectors and the police has been gradually achieved and it now applies on all occasions. In his second reading speech, the Minister went on to say—

- (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.

The Minister knows, as I do, that the Western Australian Superannuation Scheme will only accept contributors at a certain age. The Minister also knows that the pay received by a traffic inspector at present, including his overtime, is much more than that received by a policeman. If the Government is desirous of taking over traffic inspectors in the country and putting them under the control of the Police Department on traffic control duties, there will be trouble, because, as I have said, very few inspectors receive the same remuneration as a policeman. They are entitled to receive more, but if the Government pays them more than that received by a policeman there will be strife in the Police Department.

There is more in this Bill than meets the eye. The Minister went on to say—

- (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.

The point is: How will the Government get on when taking over a house at present owned by a local authority? Will the Government rent it from the local authority, or buy the house outright? If that question were in the Bill we could debate it, but it is not included in the Bill; it is only in the Minister's second reading speech.

I will have to skip many pages of the Minister's notes that I have in front of me, because I know there will be other speakers to the Bill. As I have said, there is nothing in the measure on which we can speak so we have to speak on what the Minister said when introducing the Bill. In his second reading speech, he went on to say—

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.

If we are to take over traffic inspectors we would have to teach them how to handle such a situation. I suppose traffic inspectors will be taught how to handle cases that are to be prepared for presentation to a coroner.

At present a traffic inspector can visit an accident where there has been a death. This has occurred on many occasions. It is then his duty to call in the police. This means that double mileage is travelled on the one case. If a traffic inspector were given statutory powers he could take action in a manner similar to that taken by a policeman on such occasions. At present a traffic inspector visits the scene of the accident and has to return to his office to call the police. A policeman then visits the scene of the accident later. After a traffic inspector has reported the accident and the number of people killed as a result of it he supplies the local police with all the necessary information.

If it is to take over the duties of traffic inspectors I suppose the Police Department will teach them all the responsibilities at present shouldered by a policeman in connection with a death as a result of a traffic accident. This could be done, of course, under the set-up the Liberal Party wants to institute. I will refer to that point later.

For the moment, I will continue to quote from the Minister's second reading speech as follows:—

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.

I can recall one case that occurred in Carnamah when a traffic inspector picked up a chap who had stolen a car and he asked the police constable to arrest him. Of course, a traffic inspector is not supposed to make an arrest. He is supposed to let go the person who is apprehended and the police are expected to catch him later. In the country a great deal of common sense has to be exercised in the case of traffic control and this is what the traffic inspectors have been doing for the past 10 years.

The Hon. R. Thompson: They are not armed with the authority to do just that.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: Of course they are not. As much authority as possible is taken away from them. They are called traffic inspectors and nothing else.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It looks as if you have an ally in Mr. Ron Thompson.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I am sure he will help me through. The Minister went on to say—

But good Police work goes further than merely detecting offences, for the presence on the road of an ade-

quate 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.

In the country there are many miles of roads, but I am certain they will not be policed when traffic is brought under the control of the police. In my opinion there will be more traffic accidents on such roads because motorists will know that there are not many policemen around. At present the traffic inspectors in the country areas carry out a tremendous amount of patrol work, but I recall on one occasion when one of the local shires in the south-west which was taken over by the police—

The Hon. J. Dolan: It was not taken over; it surrendered voluntarily.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: It was taken over by the police and on that occasion the police patrol was doing 28 miles a week; that is, actual road patrol work.

So let us have a good look at this Bill which seeks to amend the Traffic Act and try to work out some plan whereby traffic will become the sole responsibility of an organisation that will have nothing else to do but police traffic with a view to endeavouring to reduce the death toll as much as possible. I think we are all striving to achieve the one goal, but the Minister has his own way of seeking to do it.

The Hon. J. Dolan: It is not the Minister; it is Government policy.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: It is also Government policy. It appears to me that the Minister will not listen. He will not learn because he will not listen to anybody. This is Government policy and the Government will carry it out whether it is the right thing or not.

The Hon. J. Dolan: We think it is the right thing.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: During the second reading speech, the Minister went on to say—

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.

I suppose our Police Force does that, too. I know that every country traffic inspector in the area I represent visits the schools

to give lectures to the children on what they should do in regard to traffic control. They teach the children the proper hand signals. They present these lectures to the children in language that is easy for them to understand and they learn exactly how to handle themselves in traffic.

At that age, of course, they are not driving motorcars, and that is the difference. The Minister continued and said—

A mere change of name, of course, will not achieve greater efficiency.

We all agree with that. To continue with the Minister's remarks—

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.

So is the level in every other State in Australia.

The Hon. J. Dolan: They are not increasing.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: The figures I have read out show that the rate is increasing in every State both in the metropolitan area and on country roads.

The Hon. J. Dolan: You are not reading the statistics. You will find that our accident rate is down quite markedly.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I have read the figures and they indicate that in 1959 the figure is shown as 86 and in 1969—10 years later—the accident rate is shown as 180.

The Hon. J. Dolan: Take the present figures and compare them with last year's and the year before that.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I have not the figures the Minister mentions.

The Hon. J. Dolan: You should have them.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: As members know it is impossible to police the miles and miles of road in the country areas as efficiently as one would like. It is just not possible to do this. Although the figures I have read do not give the increase in the number of new cars that come onto the roads, they are the figures

of accidents which are caused by vehicles as a result of a lack of care in traffic matters, and this is something which must be worked out. The accident rate has not been cut down; it is still increasing.

The Hon. J. Dolan: It is not increasing.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: If there were 86 accidents in 1959 and 180 in 1969, the accident rate must be increasing.

The Hon. J. Dolan: But if there were 100 last year and 50 this year they must have declined and you will see that is a fact.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: A fact is only a lie and half. I have figures here on which I can rely.

The Hon. J. Dolan: I think the figures are given in the paper tonight. What is wrong with you? There is little point in going back and seeing what happened in 1959—that is a long way back. You might just as well go back to 1939 and perhaps tell us there were no accidents.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: We will not say that, because every day we read in the papers about car accidents. Let us not fool ourselves. If the Minister thinks that the figures I have given constitute an improvement I can only say there is a great deal of room for further improvement. The Minister continued and said—

Expansion of the Police Force, however, to undertake full traffic control would strengthen the existing service in combating 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.

I agree that if we had another 1,000 policemen in the country areas we would be able to cut down the accident rate. It must be appreciated, however, that both in the country areas and in the metropolitan area the police rely tremendously on public support. They get this in the country areas at the moment; but if the Police Force is to take over the control of traffic in the country areas and a policeman pulls up young Johnny for not having a tail light or something similar I feel sure that this could cause a good deal of unpleasantness and could perhaps jeopardise the co-operation that is being extended to the traffic inspectors and the police at the moment.

If we divorce the control of traffic from the Police Department and set up a separate authority I am sure we will get somewhere, and I implore the Minister to have another look at this aspect. I assure him that we are all here with the one aim; to try to improve the control of traffic

throughout the country in order that we may reduce the tremendous number of deaths that occur at the moment. Incidentally, I might point out that I have not mentioned the number of people who have been maimed; those who are at present mere vegetables and who are being cared for at the Shenton Park annexe.

As I have said, if we have a separate authority to control traffic it will help us to achieve our aim; but if we continue to mix the duties of traffic control and police control we will be in exactly the same position in which we have been in the past.

We all know that from shire to shire there is no uniformity of traffic control; the men concerned have other jobs to do. This is also the case in the metropolitan area. The organisation for the control of traffic is far too great to police; it is just not possible for the men concerned to do this work together with the other jobs they are given. The Minister continued—

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.

I think the Minister mentioned on one occasion that he had 100 policemen in the Traffic Department and the Police Force could immediately take over traffic control. He also said he anticipated getting another 100 men from the country. If this is so it provides a nucleus of 200 policemen who could take over the new traffic authority which is proposed and who could do just the one job—they should be employed on nothing but traffic control. This is what we would like the Minister to achieve.

If, however, the Minister proposes that the policemen should also take over the duties of the traffic inspectors, I think he is on the wrong track, because the inspectors in the country areas are dedicated to their jobs and they control the traffic admirably at the moment.

They are not policemen and are not considered as such, though they often work in with and help the Police Force—they work in conjunction with the Police Force. The Minister continues and says—

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.

I think we agree wholeheartedly with this. The Minister's speech continues—

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.

Here again I agree with the sentiments expressed by the Minister; but we must go further than that. Does not the Minister feel that a force of 400 men employed in a separate traffic authority and not having any other work or worries imposed on them would do a better job than if they were expected to do policework as well? It naturally follows that these men must do a better job if their efforts are concentrated on the control of traffic alone.

We find, however, that the Minister is not prepared to listen to any argument which may be contrary to his views; he is determined that the Police Force should take over the control of traffic, irrespective of what is said, or what advice he may receive to the contrary. I think the Minister could learn a great deal by listening and expanding his theories rather than by being dogmatic in this aspect of the control of traffic being taken over entirely by the Police Force.

The Hon. J. Dolan: You are not telling the story fairly. I received innumerable deputations, letters, and submissions which I considered.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I suppose the Minister told them all the same story.

The Hon. J. Dolan: No.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I say that because I heard the story I read out tonight repeated by about six different sources.

The Hon. J. Dolan: I will tell the story in due course so that you will know the truth.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: It does not look as though your party listened very much, because it did nothing at all.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I do not think that is altogether correct. I have already said that the Minister at the time (Mr. Craig) let us down very badly. I agree that we should try to achieve the principle for which we are all working.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: It sounds like sour grapes.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: It is nothing of the kind. I agree we did not do all that possibly should have been done and I

admit that possibly we let ourselves down. I have already said this. The Minister's remarks continue as follows:—

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.

Out our way there is an area which must be covered which is 150 miles long by 100 miles wide. There would be at least six policemen stationed in that area and, up till now, I can say that had the police handled the traffic, the control would have been nil. There was one policeman at Morawa and one at Mullewa. There were also four others, and they would not have had any time to carry out both police and traffic duties. To continue with the Minister's speech—

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.

For the reason I explained earlier, power has been taken from the ordinary traffic inspector in the country and he is unable to perform the duties associated with police work. However, as I have already mentioned, the traffic inspectors work in conjunction with the Police Force so, naturally, considerable traffic enforcement duties are carried out by the police; this is so because the traffic inspectors cannot do it all. They do, however, work in conjunction with the police and get the work done. The speech made by the Minister continues—

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.

This is the Minister's opinion; my opinion is quite different from that. I know that at the present time the Police Force is regarded with considerable respect in the country areas. Everyone in the country areas does his utmost to assist the police in the apprehension of vagrants and they do this very successfully in their respective districts. Apart from this the Police Force works in well with the people in the country areas and the community generally is quite satisfied with the work done by the police in those areas.

What will happen when the control of traffic is taken over by the Police Force, I do not know; it is anyone's guess. When the Police Force at Morawa is increased by at least four men to look after traffic in those areas I do not know what is likely to happen. To continue with the Minister's second reading speech—

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.

I hope that by the time we reach the stage of having big cities there will be one organisation established which will control all traffic matters throughout the State, and I trust that the accident rate will be considerably less when that occurs. It will be possible to abide by rules that are uniform throughout the State. At the moment we have separate control—there is police control in some areas with policemen looking after the police work and at the same time trying to control all aspects of traffic when they just do not have the time to do so.

If we have employed men who are dedicated wholly and solely in the control of all aspects of traffic I feel sure that when these big cities to which the Minister referred are established there will be complete control of the traffic situation. There will be one traffic authority and a code of rules which is uniform throughout the State, and if there is this uniformity throughout the State this will indeed be a step in the right direction. The Minister went on—

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.

This, I argue, is not good enough. This is why we are attempting to get one statutory traffic control authority throughout the State which would not have to perform other duties. The officers would not be sent to other districts to perform police work; they would not have to deviate their attention from traffic control. We desire to have a single statutory traffic control authority in this State to reduce the incidence of deaths and multiple injuries. The Minister continued—

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.

We hope this will be the situation throughout the State if the control is under one authority. However, the areas which have been taken over already are not receiving specialised attention. The traffic inspectors who have been absorbed into the Police Force are doing police work most of the time and the traffic is neglected a lot more now than was the case when the inspectors were able to continue with their traffic duties alone.

What the Minister has in mind would work if the control of traffic were under one authority, but it will not work when the officers can be sent out on other duties. The Minister further said—

Requests have been received that country centres be permitted to retain their identity regarding number plates when Statewide 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.

Well, the system is unique to Western Australia, but it is not unique to Australia. I was in South Africa recently and I saw many vehicles there with country registrations even though there is central police control in that country. Vehicle owners are still able to retain their various prefixes even with the use of computers. I particularly noticed this fact because, whilst on my trip, I was looking for this sort of information. Individual identification of country towns does not seem to cause any trouble in South Africa.

I think the Minister mentioned that a total of 121 local authorities would have to change over. As far as I am concerned the registration number of my car is MO 2, and I have had that number for many years.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: My registration number is EX 2.

The Hon. J. HETTMAN: In my opinion one can do these things if one desires. If one does not want to do them one raises the argument that the records of 121 local authorities could not be kept in separate files. However, I know that at the present time various number plates are issued in certain centres throughout the metropoli-

tan area, and that does not seem to cause any trouble in the transfer of a license. I do not see why it should be a hardship for the Police Department, or a central traffic authority, to keep 121 files. If the records are kept by a computer then what comes out of the computer depends on what is fed into it.

The Lands Department, and the Public Works Department, have thousands of files and those departments do not seem to have any trouble handling them. I do not see why this should cause a terrific hardship. It is a matter of designing a system to overcome the problem. The Minister stated—

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.

I think that happens now, but I do not think there is any need at all to go to so much trouble. Local authorities have been looking after country traffic control for many years; they know their job and have the answers to most of these things. The problem of the type of plate to be used would soon be overcome because the people living in country areas would like to retain their identity by keeping the plates they have at present. The Minister goes on—

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.

I think it should contain all records now. I believe local authorities already provide a register of all vehicles and vehicle transfers in their areas. They also pay in half of the transfer fees collected for the provision of railway crossing lights, and so on. So there is already considerable co-operation between local authorities and the Police Department which the Minister seems to have overlooked when he speaks about bringing in police control. The Minister went on—

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.

I could enlarge on that particular matter. I have with me a report on what has occurred when some country areas have been taken over. The report proves that the system is not as good as it was previously. I could point out that some local authorities in near metropolitan areas, which handed over traffic control to the Police Department, have requested that it be handed back. Wanneroo is an example, and that shire does not want to change to police control again. I know that other local authorities have also changed over but they too are not happy with the present situation.

In a few cases, of course, where the shire clerk is not at all energetic, the loss of the licensing of vehicles would mean less work for the particular shire clerk. However, the shire would receive so much less income. Shire clerks receive a pretty fair wage at the present time and perhaps those who are not worried about the situation are also not worried about the wages which they may lose as the result of a changeover. The Minister continued—

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.

There are possibly some who may look at the situation from that angle but as far as I am concerned when I see a police vehicle I know that policemen are in the area. They are generally pretty good fellows and I know that I can always call on them for help. However, it is not always felt that traffic inspectors could do the same job. The Minister went on—

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?

I think that every local authority throughout the country areas of Western Australia would be prepared to provide houses, which they already do, for traffic inspectors if a statutory traffic control authority were set up. However, under the scheme proposed by the Minister, additional houses

will have to be purchased for the police officers. Money can be saved by setting up a statutory authority to carry out only traffic control duties. There is no need to have a duplication of housing and offices. Most country towns already have shire offices and police stations, and the shire councils usually house the traffic inspectors. I think local authorities would be prepared to carry on and provide such housing because they would be more interested to do this than would be the case if an additional police officer were posted to the town.

I consider that a lot of these problems could be overcome by the setting up of a statutory authority. That is all we ask the Minister to do. The Minister continued—

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?

I do not think there is any need for me to tell the Minister who will look after such events. The Minister for Police, himself, should know very well who will look after crowd control on such occasions. Traffic inspectors will, of course, take charge. In the event of an escort having to be provided in Perth for someone like the Governor this would, of course, be provided by the police because traffic control in Perth comes under the police. However, if it were necessary to provide an escort for the Governor in Kalgoorlie, this would be provided by traffic inspectors.

On one occasion when I visited a country shire council I had an escort of five traffic inspectors. They escorted me right into the town. They also escorted me from the town. I do not think there is any need to argue the point about who will look after what because subordinate legislation and regulations will be introduced. However, at this stage I would like to be able to see what is proposed.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: That was only a red herring.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: Of course, we could tell the Minister who should look after those things.

The Hon. F. R. White: The local authorities have been doing it for the last 50 years.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: That is so. The Minister went on—

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?

I ask: Who controlled the crowds which demonstrated against the Springboks when they came to Australia? The answer, of course, is that the crowds were controlled by the police. The Springboks did not go into the country areas, but had they done so they would have been looked after by the local authorities with the help of traffic inspectors and others.

In Perth, and other cities throughout Australia, the police had a devil of a job controlling the hoodlums who attempted to destroy the sporting atmosphere between the Springboks and the Australian sporting team. We all know there is nothing like sport to foster goodwill between nations. The hoodlums who attempt to interfere with sporting teams have to be controlled.

The PRESIDENT: Order. I will draw the attention of the honourable member to the fact that we are dealing with the Traffic Act Amendment Bill (No. 2), and not discussing sport.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: Thank you, Mr. President. These matters are mentioned in the Minister's second reading speech. The Minister went on to say—

—at local events such as football finals, races, trots, speedway meetings, and New Year's Eve celebrations? . . . Which authority will deal with disorderly persons—

This is what I was talking about, Mr. President. They are mentioned in the Minister's second reading speech, and I say to him one must be reasonable about these things. The Minister continued—

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—

I hate to have to tell the Minister that under the set-up we would like to see established, traffic inspectors would be responsible in matters concerning speeding and traffic infringements and the police would be responsible for matters concerning crimes and so on. I do not know why the Minister mentioned these things in his second reading speech. I do not suppose they will be referred to even in the subordinate legislation he will bring in at a later date if this Bill is passed. One might as well ask who will be responsible for preventing the burying of stones in the grounds of Parliament House. It is the same thing. The Minister continued—

If traffic duties are separated from Police control, which authority will arrest persons caught stealing or unlawfully using vehicles . . . arrest persons seen breaking and entering pre-

mises; 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?

Everyone has his job, and I think under properly set up rules and regulations this situation would continue. The police officers would do their work as they are doing it now, and under the new set-up the traffic inspectors would look after traffic. I do not think there is any need for me to comment further on this aspect. It was stupid to bring up these matters in a second reading speech on a Bill of this nature because they are not mentioned in the Bill and will not be mentioned even in the regulations. The Minister continued—

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

They are continually doing this, and it is causing trouble. The Minister went on to say—

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.

Some of them do. I have met quite a few policemen who have been on traffic duty in the metropolitan area. If the traffic is not thick and they have the time to do so, they will make fools of decent people who happen to be driving vehicles. On one occasion I was driving one of two vehicles which were at an intersection. When both I and the driver of the other vehicle commenced to drive through the intersection the policeman pulled me up and said he was drawing my attention to the fact that I must learn the signs. Perhaps I am a country mug and do not know the signs. Some policemen may be tactful but others are not. I approve of the training given to policemen and I think the same training should be given to the traffic inspectors in order that the administration of the traffic code may be uniform. The Minister continued—

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.

I think traffic inspectors in country areas are taught the same things. Very few people who are brought before the courts by country traffic inspectors get away without being fined. At least the inspectors are taught that much. Here again, we are asking these young fellows to do much more than control traffic and I think it is time the practice was discontinued. The Minister continued—

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.

I think that is fair enough. The Minister then said—

For example, he can be transferred to the C.I.B.—

I thought the brains of the Police Department were in the C.I.B. I did not think it was a branch into which people would be retired.

The Hon. J. Dolan: They are transferred. Surely you are not implying that traffic policemen have no brains.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: They can be transferred into a branch for which they have not been trained.

The Hon. J. Dolan: They can be trained in certain aspects of the work of the C.I.B.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: So could I, but I would not like to take on such work when I was nearing the retiring age. The C.I.B. is a specialist department.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: You are playing a specialist role at the moment.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I am not often able to speak for so long.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: You are playing a specialist role at the moment. There are only 30 of us in Western Australia.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: Yes. The Minister went on to say—

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.

I do not blame the Government for not accepting the New Zealand system. We need uniform traffic control in which all concerned have the same approach and in which there is no victimisation in any

shape or form. We will not achieve this by having the police control traffic matters. The Minister gave some statistics. He said—

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 length and types of roads in country areas are not taken into consideration. Country drivers do not drive in country areas alone, and metropolitan drivers do not drive only on metropolitan roads.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: What is the percentage increase in the number of vehicles on the road?

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: When Mr. Dellar speaks perhaps he will let us know the mileage travelled in country areas by city dwellers. I have not had the time to ascertain those figures. The Minister continued—

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.

The Hon. J. Dolan: That is right.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: The Minister shakes his head and says that is quite true. I will not argue that point with him. Traffic control will be given to a department that has plenty of other work on its plate. We would be better off if traffic control were given to a statutory authority which is concerned wholly and solely with traffic.

It does not matter whether or not I am a specialist on this subject. I am expressing my thoughts on it, and I hope the Minister will take cognisance of the fact that for many years I have been connected with country traffic and I have learnt a little about the matter. I have never been in

favour of the Police Department taking over traffic control. I felt one authority was needed to deal with all matters concerning traffic, and that in this way accidents would be prevented. The Minister went on to say—

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.

It therefore appears there will still be two departments.

The Hon. J. Dolan: No.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I think there should be only one department handling traffic.

I would now like to read the recommendations in regard to traffic control that have been made by the Liberal Party. They are—

1. That there should be one Statutory Authority, other than the Police Department, to handle traffic in this State. All necessary powers to carry out its task to be vested in the Authority.
2. That this should be a permanent executive body designated "Traffic Control Authority" headed by a Chairman and under the Minister for Traffic and Road Safety.
3. That the Authority comprise 9 members as follows:—

One person nominated by the Minister for Traffic and Road Safety who will be the Chairman.

Two representatives of the Country Shire Councils' Association.

One representative of the Country Town Councils' Association.

One representative of the Local Government Association.

One representative of the Perth City Council.

One person nominated by the Secretary for Local Government.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Did you say this was the policy of the Liberal Party?

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: These recommendations were made by a committee of the Liberal Party.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: When did they decide that?

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: When the Government saw fit to set up one statutory authority.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Prior to the last election?

Hon. J. HEITMAN: Many of the recommendations were formulated then, and others have been formulated since.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: It was mentioned in Sir David Brand's policy speech.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: Yes. I said earlier that a Government can admit it was not always right, and I hope the present Minister will do just that and admit that our policy would be better than a police takeover. The recommendations continue—

One person nominated by the Commissioner for Main Roads.

One person nominated by the Commissioner for Police.

Note: Representatives from Local Authorities to be selected from panels of names by Minister.

Terms of appointment: As to be determined, retiring in rotation.

4. That the Traffic Control Authority establish a Central Research Section equipped with a highly qualified mobile research team for accident investigation.
5. That the Authority shall be responsible for the employment and discipline of Traffic Inspectors throughout the State.
6. That Local Authorities shall act as agents for the Traffic Control Authority in handling vehicle plates and licensing, and co-ordinate details with the Authority.
7. That there should be an inspection of vehicles prior to issue of license to a standard laid down by the Authority.
8. That the amount of re-imbursement to be agreed between the Councils and the Authority.
9. That the Authority should be responsible for road safety and overall supervision of such matters as cross walks, road signs, etc., in liaison with such bodies as the Main Roads Department and Local Authorities.
10. That every endeavour should be made for local identity to be retained on plates.
11. That where desirable and suitable, and without sacrificing the interests of efficiency, the Authority should use existing facilities, e.g. Local Authority offices, Traffic Officers and personnel in order to avoid duplication and unwarranted capital expenditure.

12. That the Traffic Control Authority should review the Traffic Act and Regulations with a view to simplification.

That is the set-up we would like to see; and I think it would be well worth the Minister considering it before he carries on with the proposed police takeover of traffic control.

I would now like to refer to communications I have received from various organisations. I have received letters from the Eneabba Progress Association, the Shire of Goomalling, The Geraldton Retail Traders' Association, the Irwin Shire Council, the Badgingarra Progress Association, the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu, the Shire of Swan, the Coorow Shire Council, and the Shire of Moora.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: And Chapman Valley?

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: Yes. All those organisations oppose this proposal. I have also received a traffic survey from the Shire of Swan which I would like to see incorporated in *Hansard* if that is at all possible, Mr. President. It is too lengthy to read out, and I would be very pleased if it could be incorporated in the record. I had a tremendous number of these letters but from time to time I have let some slip out of the file because they are repetitious.

I would now like to refer to an article which appeared in the *South Western Times*, Bunbury, on the 20th July, 1971. The article refers to police traffic control under the heading of, "Doubts as to if it is the best" and states—

Now that Parliament has resumed, the question troubling many local authorities is what the Tonkin Administration can and will do about switching State-wide traffic control to the Police Department.

For months Police Minister Dolan has pounded the drums of an impending eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation with about 120 local authorities on the question.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Who wrote that?

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I have already told the House where this article came from.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: I asked who wrote it.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I take it that it was the editor of the newspaper.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: It is an editorial comment?

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: To continue—

Mr. Dolan said recently that he was confident that Bunbury would be "delighted" to accept police control of traffic.

Most authorities, including Bunbury, want to retain some sort of control, mainly through a central traffic authority, modelled on the New Zealand system.

Most responsible police officers doubt the wisdom of police control in the country.

It is doubtful whether in the department anyone outside the near top brass, who would benefit with promotion from an expanded department with the takeover, really wants the police to have absolute control.

Country police officers believe that a takeover can only lead to a general breakdown in police work—what the department was originally established for.

Two prime examples at this stage are Manjimup and Busselton.

Manjimup is the better example because there police have had control since last October whereas Busselton control was effected early this year.

A visitor to Manjimup cannot fail to notice the slackness of traffic control. That is not to reflect on the officers in any way, all of whom fully meet the standards the department requires.

The fault is within the department itself. It has always been notorious as a penny-pinching department that effects the most outrageous economies because it is regarded as a non-revenue earner.

In Manjimup it lives up to its reputation. For many months it has carried on police traffic control with two officers whereas the shire employed three.

Recently it appointed a third man to traffic control. But at the same time it took counter action with an officer of 10 years' police service seconded from Manjimup to two years' service with the United Nations police force in Cyprus.

While that officer is abroad he remains on Manjimup station strength. So that on paper the station is up to its full strength and Police Minister Dolan would give that answer in the House if the question were phrased that way.

Actually, the station's force for police work has been weakened in more ways than one.

A senior man has been withdrawn and not replaced and the two traffic inspectors taken over from the shire have never been to a police school and have no police experience.

Add to that the fact that police traffic control in the country is slowly but surely eroding police work and the police image.

In the country, police depend heavily on public goodwill to give them leads so that they can protect the community.

Now, picking up someone for a minor traffic offence and serving him with an infringement notice that could mean a fine, turns a potential source of information sour.

While Police Minister Dolan and his colleagues may ardently want police traffic control because of the golden revenue egg it produces—

I think that is wrong. The article continues—

—it could be at the cost of eroding country police work.

The situation, of course, does not arise in the city. The trauma shows in comparatively thinly populated areas.

In Busselton, most are happy with police traffic control. That is mainly because most were dissatisfied with shire control, including the council itself.

It is doubtful whether shire traffic control anywhere else in the State for a town of similar size was at so low an ebb as in Busselton.

So the police could hardly fail to succeed. Any improvement would have been welcomed.

Shires handing over control to the police find that they are still left with parking control, which the department clearly does not want.

That means they have to continue to employ a traffic inspector either full or part time to implement a minor section of the Act that the department does not want.

Yet in Rockingham shire where the police have controlled traffic for years, the shire does not police parking.

Why then should the department be so selective in other country areas?

If the Tonkin Government wishes to alter the Act this session to achieve State-wide police control it will rely heavily on Liberal Party goodwill.

The Country Party has already declared its opposition.

The question is whether the Liberal Party will line up with the Government to pass the legislation, which certainly will not be a vote winner.

So at least one newspaper has stated that the proposal for the police control of country traffic is not as good as it could be.

The Hon. J. Dolan: One man working for that paper.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I do not know how many men write the leaders for *The West Australian*; I do not know how many men from that newspaper have always been down on country shires with regard to traffic control; but I do know that when *The West Australian* sent a man to give evidence before the inter-departmental committee he presented one of the weakest cases I have ever seen.

The Hon. J. Dolan: It was a strong case.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: The *South Western Times* stated that Country Party members have already declared themselves. However, when Mr. Logan was speaking the other night I was disappointed to hear him say that he wished the situation to continue.

Sitting suspended from 6.09 to 7.30 p.m.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: Before the tea suspension I was saying that I could not altogether agree with what Mr. Logan had said in his contribution to this debate. I mentioned that he was not inclined to change anything.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Where in the Bill is anything said about an alternative.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: At the time the honourable member said there was nothing wrong with the way we are carrying on at present. He said that if the shires were given another \$1 on top of the \$4 they have been given, they would be able to conduct traffic control without any further finance.

I would point out that originally I was involved in the allocation of the \$4 to the shire councils for each license that was issued by them. At the time I thought they should not retain this amount. All that the money has been used for is to cover the cost of the general office work and the running of the shire business. I am certain that at the time there was no intention that this \$4 was to be used in any shape or form to help in traffic control.

I can instance this as it affects the local authorities in my own district where there is regional traffic control, and where every shire pays in \$5,000 or more a year for this purpose. There is no thought that the \$4 helps in paying the cost of traffic control. So, if the local authorities were to get \$5 or even more for each vehicle they license, the money would not be used for the purpose of traffic control. However, if the shires put the \$4 in with the rest of the money, it would be matched, and the greater amount would come back in monthly payments.

I am sorry that I have to say this: I think Mr. Logan was under a misapprehension, although I know there is no-one more dedicated to traffic control and to the welfare of country shire traffic authorities than is the honourable member. I

did feel I should correct the view he expressed, because there was no thought originally that the \$4 for each vehicle license would be used for traffic control.

The shire clerks of quite a large number of the local authorities which have handed over traffic control to the police have fooled their boards by saying this money was not sufficient to cover the cost of undertaking the job for which it was set aside. I stress again that this \$4 for each vehicle license was not intended for the purpose of covering the cost of traffic control in country districts.

I can remember arguing this very point with the Country Shire Councils' Association, with Mr. Aitken, and with Mr. Ross Hutchinson (the then Minister for Works). This money was set aside to enable the shire councils to pay for the cost of administering the work involved in collecting license fees and rates, and not for country traffic control at all.

I know that the Broome Shire was fooled in this manner by its shire clerk who said not sufficient money was available in the \$4 for each license issued to administer traffic control in this area. I do not know that any shire which engages traffic inspectors to control traffic has made any money out of this \$4.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: The Broome Shire is very happy with the existing set-up at the moment. Traffic control there is much more efficient than it was before.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: It could be. The honourable member may know more about this than I do, but I am sure I know much more than he does about the purpose for which this \$4 was set aside. The person who created this fund said what I have just outlined, to the Esperance Shire when it changed over to police control of traffic.

I suggest that every shire which has handed over traffic control to the police has let its fellow shires down. If they had stuck together I am sure there would not have been any thought of traffic control being handed over to the police. Personally, I do not think there is any need for it. I am aware that this issue is one of the planks of the A.L.P.'s platform, but I suggest the A.L.P. has not looked further than the police taking over control of traffic. If it has then I am sure it would have established some authority to be responsible for this single job.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Is there any evidence that a separate highway control authority, divorced from the Police Department, brings down the road toll?

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: Even if there has not been any, does that prevent Western Australia from trying out the system? In New Zealand there is a fairly good system of traffic control at which some people have pointed the bone. In Sweden there is similar control.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: Be careful where you point that bone. We have had enough trouble with it.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: That seems to be the problem. It does not mean that Western Australia should not adopt a separate traffic control authority, just because other States have not tried the system. Other States of Australia have tried out State-wide control of traffic by the police, but not one of them has proved that this method of traffic control is as efficient as is the system in Western Australia. However, I am not satisfied with the system that now exists in Western Australia; I say we should appoint some authority which should be dedicated solely to this job.

We should all pool our resources, in an effort to establish a method of traffic control which is second to none in the world, so that we can find out the points of contention. By setting up such an authority in a proper manner we will have uniformity of legislation, and we will be able to train the personnel required to do the job. Why should Western Australia accept the second best, and hand over traffic control to an organisation or department which is responsible for two or three other jobs? I did not think the A.L.P. would support this move. I thought it was the policy of the A.L.P. for one man to hold one job.

Let us get together and establish a single authority, which is to be responsible for this job so that we can find out where we are going in traffic control. Methods that have been tried out elsewhere have not proved to be successful. I suggest that by establishing our own single authority we would have the means available to investigate all traffic accidents and their causes; and furthermore speed checks and other devices could be set up to safeguard the motoring public and make driving as safe as possible.

Before I was elected to Parliament I was in local government for 22 years. I have served in every department, and also on the traffic committee. Consequently I have more knowledge than has the average person of local government matters, including traffic control. All I ask is that the Government look into the proposition which I have put up, and which Mr. Ferry put up before me.

There are many other speakers who, no doubt, wish to participate in this debate, so I shall not prolong my contribution. I say that I have no intention of voting for the police takeover of traffic control in the country.

I have received a lengthy screed from the Shire of Swan, and before tea I asked the President whether I could have it incorporated in my speech in *Hansard*. I would ask you, Mr. Deputy President, whether I could move for this to be done?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Normally unless a document is read it is not incorporated in *Hansard*, but if the honourable member wishes he can seek leave to have it incorporated in his speech in *Hansard*.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I seek leave of the House to have the screeed from the Shire of Swan incorporated in my speech in *Hansard* without my reading it.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Leave granted.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I thank the House for allowing this course to be adopted. I will not support the Bill, and I hope the Minister will take into account what I have said: that it is better to have the support of the whole Council in establishing some authority which is dedicated solely to the control of traffic. The following is the screeed which I have received from the Shire of Swan:—

SHIRE OF SWAN.

Traffic Survey July, 1971.

1.1 Traffic Road Patrol Staff. A total of 101 full time uniformed Traffic Inspectors are employed by country Local Authorities in road patrol duties whereas 113 Police Patrol Officers are attached to the Road Patrol Section of the Police Traffic Branch.

1.2 The effective road patrol time of the Country Traffic Inspector is approx 60% after allowing for General Court appearances, escort duties, attendance at traffic accidents and office reports. The effective road patrol time for a Police Patrol Officer was 39.94% during the 1969/70 financial year. (a rise of 5% on the previous 68/69 year. This 5% increase is the result of the introduction of Traffic Infringement Notices)

1.3 Local Government Country Authorities also employ 30 part time uniformed Traffic Inspectors.

1.4 The Police Traffic Branch consists of 255 Officers these are made up from the following classifications: 6 Commissioned Officers, 38 Sergeants, 211 Constables. Of these Officers 113 are attached to the Road Patrol Section, 19 to the Heavy Haulage Section and 8 Plan room staff. The balance being attached to Accident Inquiries, M.D.L. Examiners, Vehicle Examiners, Police Summons (Traffic) and Police Driver Training.

1.5 The Police Road Patrol Section was reduced by 13 Officers during the 1969/70 financial year despite an increase of 31,803 registered vehicles and the taking over of 3 Local Government Traffic Authorities responsibilities. Country Local Authorities are increasing their patrol staff as the occasions arise.

1.6 When one considers that there were 274,572 vehicles registered in the metro area as at the 30th June, 1970, and a further 147,458 vehicles licensed in the country by Local Government Authorities the ratio being 70% metro and 30% Local Government country districts (the total on register as at 30/6/70 is 422,030 excludes Trailers, Caravans and Tractor type vehicles.) Yet the Police Road Patrol staff only amounted to 113 as against Country Local Government Authorities 101 full time uniformed Traffic Inspectors. The ratio was 1 Police Patrol Officer to 2,429 vehicles registered in the metro area as against 1 Traffic Inspector to 1,460 vehicles registered in the Country by Local Government Authorities.

2.1 Clerical Staff. The Local Government bodies in Country areas employ 64 full time Officers and 80 part time employees on Traffic/Vehicle Licensing duties.

2.2 In larger municipalities, a number of male Officers are employed. These Officers have chosen to make a career in Local Government, many are engaged in studies to qualify in Local Government Administration.

2.3 Should the Government succeed in its present stand, a large number of clerical Officers will become redundant. Local Government Authorities will be unable to carry on the employment of these Officers.

2.3.1. In the smaller Municipalities a large number of clerical staff, (80) are partly employed on the Traffic/Vehicle licensing. The balance of their time is made up on other general municipal activities. Should the Government succeed, the Municipalities will have insufficient work for these Officers to remain in full time employment. These Officers will add to the list of the increasing number of unemployed through-out the State.

2.3.2 The Government will not be able to offer employment to these Officers on a full time basis, if its current policy of no further recruiting in the public service is continued. In any event the Government would not offer these people employment in the country, where the need is greatest.

3.1 Traffic Equipment. Country Local Authorities own 50 items of radar and amphotometer speed detection equipment and are conscious of the fact that these items are essential for the proper working of any Law enforcement agency.

3.2 The Police Department is also conscious of this fact but in 1971 still has only 8 items of radar and speed

detection equipment. This Department is renowned for its penny pinching ideas on Traffic Control equipment.

3.3 Country Local Authorities utilise 87 cars and 11 motor cycles on Traffic Control, 50 of these vehicles are fitted with radio telephone equipment.

3.3.1 During the 1969/70 financial year 426 Police Officers were stationed in country districts it is no wonder that this department lacks the mobility in country areas where it had only 60 vehicles stationed.

3.3.2 Records should show that there has been a general decline in Traffic Patrols in country districts where the Police Department has taken over the function of traffic control from Local Government Authorities. Police Officers believe that a take over can only lead to a break down in Police work.

3.3.3 One only has to read the South Western Times (front page) of the 20th July, 1971, where it is reported "Police Traffic Control." "Doubts as to if it is the Best."

4.1 Buildings and Machinery. Local Authorities own a large number of buildings in country centres which are used by its traffic staff. These include offices and housing. These buildings will not necessarily be made available to the Police Department. Traffic Inspectors utilising a Council house will be made to surrender the use in order that other Council employees may have its use. There would be some cases where it may fall into disuse because employment opportunity has disappeared.

4.2 In larger municipalities expensive office machinery is in use. This machinery will become useless or too expensive to maintain because of its reduced work load.

4.3 The Shire of Swan is considering the introduction of computer equipment in order to reduce administration costs and further improve efficiency. Traffic control work including licensing would comprise a significant part in the work proposed to be allotted to the computer. If this volume of work was eliminated, it would be some considerable time in the future before such equipment could be again considered. This would deny Council of an opportunity to improve its overall efficiency.

5.1 Traffic Accidents. During the 1969 calendar year there were 4,809 accidents involving casualties in this state 78% of these occurred in the Metropolitan Area. The remaining 22% occurred in Country Local Government Districts. In the same year 6,788 persons were injured as a result

of road traffic accidents 77% of these were in the Metropolitan Area. The remaining 23% were in Country Local Government Districts. 70% of the vehicles registered in this state are in the Metropolitan Area (Road Traffic Casualty Accident figures taken from the annual report of the Commissioner of Police 1969-70).

6.1 Charges under the Traffic Act and Regulations. For the year ended 30th June 1970, amounted to a total of 43,428 for the State (by Traffic Control Authorities Country and Police) of this amount 24,801 were a result of Police action in the Metropolitan Area and Country districts. The remaining 18,627 resulted from action taken by Traffic Inspectors employed in Country Local Government Districts.

6.2 Members of the Police Force have been authorised to carry out certain duties of Traffic Inspectors in all country districts. Vide *Government Gazette* No. 44/71.

7.1 Traffic Control Expenditure. During the 1969-70 financial year Local Government Authorities in the country contributed \$841,413 towards Traffic Control (Salaries, Wages, vehicle running and replacement costs etc. Figures taken from Annual returns of all Country Municipalities, presently carrying out the function of Traffic Control and held by Local Government Department).

7.2 The Minister for Police and Transport is reported to have said in the Legislative Council that the cost of establishing traffic control on a State wide basis was \$591,990 (not including housing) and the estimated annual running cost was \$689,500. This figure is \$151,913 less than Local Government expenditure twelve months ago.

8.1 Vehicle Licensing. The majority of Country Local Government Authorities carry out a once only inspection of vehicles, that being when it is first registered with that Authority. They also possess the necessary equipment and facilities for these examinations, which are carried out to a standard laid down by the Police Department.

8.2 Whilst it is admitted that the present system of checking a vehicle only on its first registration, is not a satisfactory solution to overcome the number of unroadworthy vehicles. This same policy is adopted by the Police Department within the Metropolitan Area. It can be stated with certainty that there are many unroadworthy vehicles registered in the Metropolitan Area.

8.3 A number of years ago Parliament saw fit to pass legislation for the purpose of having annual inspections carried out at a set standard by licensed inspection stations, for the whole of the State. The Government appointed a committee to formulate standards and policy. As yet this legislation has not been acted upon. It is submitted that if this legislation was implemented, then the present anomalies in relation to unroadworthy vehicles would be partly overcome. I use this word partly as an unknown number of motorists would not rectify vehicle defects which became evident (whether by ignorance or otherwise) after its annual examination, until shortly before presenting it for its next annual inspection. It is felt that this problem would not be unique to Western Australia.

9.1 Staff General. The Traffic staff particularly the inspectors who a number of years service who have chosen Local Government Traffic Control as a career would also suffer a grave injustice by way of salary and conditions of employment if the Government were to succeed on its present policy.

9.2 The Police Department will not take into account the seniority of the Inspectors and the length of service in Traffic Control. It has been stated that brevet ranks cannot be given.

9.3 A number of Traffic Inspectors (some ex police who have resigned from the department on their own accord) have stated publicly that they will not transfer to the Police Department because of its penny pinching ideas on traffic. The Police Department can ill afford to lose these Inspectors.

10.1 Regional and Group Schemes. 56 Local Authorities are participating in 20 Traffic Councils or Groups. These schemes have been developed into workable units in areas where little or no supervision in Traffic Control was given prior to their inception.

10.2 The further development to this type of scheme should be encouraged as it would appear to be a practicable operation throughout the State with the exclusion of the Kimberleys and Murchison areas.

10.3 Approx. 70% of Local Government Authorities provide reciprocal appointments with Inspectors of adjoining Shires. In the case of Shire of Swan 8 uniformed Traffic Inspectors are appointed. This type of appointment enables Local Authorities to utilise the services of Inspectors from adjoining Shires should any occasion arise.

10.4 A number of Local Authorities also provide radio equipment: on single and dual channels basis for Traffic Patrol Vehicles. This also is a very desirable method in dealing with emergencies. In the case of the Shire of Swan radio communications are established with the Shire of Wanneroo when patrols are being carried out, outside of office hours.

11.1 Parking Control. Local Authorities may with the approval of the Hon. Minister of Police establish their own parking facilities, restrictions and control.

11.2 Subject to such approval the control of parking by Local Authorities in the Metropolitan Area is permitted on all roads except those under the management of the Main Roads Department in which case the Commissioner of Police retains authority.

11.3 The Commissioner of Police desires to retain authority on main and secondary roads, the inference being that Local Authorities would be unable to provide sufficient control measures.

11.4 Local Authorities who do not exercise the control of parking and thus their control is in the hands of the Commissioner of Police, have little chance of success in obtaining Ministerial approval for parking restrictions as the Police Department is unable to guarantee enforcement.

11.5 Parking restrictions are usually approved on Local Authority roads where the enforcement is carried out by the Council concerned.

11.6 If the Minister approved the control by the Shire of Swan of parking in the Shire of Swan, the Commissioner of Police would nevertheless retain control of parking on Great Eastern Highway, Johnson, James, Meadow and Swan Streets, Terrace Road and Great Northern Highway.

11.7 The Shire of Swan recently applied for parking restrictions on the Great Eastern and Great Northern Highways. This application was refused on the grounds that the Police Department lacked manpower and cannot guarantee enforcement of any new restriction. (Letter attached.)

11.8 It is ironical that the Shire of Swan would not be permitted to exercise parking control on a number of roads on which it would be able to guarantee sufficient enforcement, yet the Commissioner of Police who desires to retain this control, cannot guarantee enforcement.

11.9 The Shire of Swan has not yet sought control of parking partly because its traffic control in general

may be demolished in the proposed Police Department take-over of traffic licensing and control and partly because it fears that public relations may suffer if it enforces parking restrictions on the local roads system whilst the Police Commissioner overlooks enforcement on the adjoining main roads.

11.9.1 The Swan Shire Council has resolved to proceed to seek the control of parking when these two obstacles have been removed.

12.1 The abovementioned facts do not show there would be any advantage to the community in general, if traffic control was transferred to the Police Department. It is believed it is true to say that the proposed change would not improve traffic control and would certainly inflict hardships upon the numerous local communities because of the loss of local autonomy in traffic matters and the elimination of employment in the country.

M. P. Johnston,
Senior Traffic Inspector.

Middle Swan.

THE HON. F. D. WILLMOTT (South-West) [7.43 p.m.]: In the main my remarks on this Bill will be confined to commenting on the speech made by the Minister when he introduced the second reading. As I prepared my notes for this debate yesterday, I feel that I will no doubt be making some repetitions in the course of my contribution; therefore I ask members to bear with me.

The first comment I wish to make is on the following part of the Minister's speech—

I remind members that every Australian State except Western Australia has uniform traffic control under its Police Department. 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.

I accept the statement that quite probably there is no intention in the other States to alter their set-up. They have established their single traffic control authorities around their Police Departments, but that is no argument or reason for Western Australia to follow what the other States have done. Because the other States have adopted such a system, it does not mean it is the best system.

I think we might be able to do better by adopting the proposal outlined by Mr. Ferry. I do not intend to enlarge on that proposal at this stage, but I do not believe it carries any weight to say that the other States have adopted that system. It is no reason this State should do likewise.

When dealing with two eminent surgeons, two very learned gentlemen, the Minister said they are "daily in contact with the results of the havoc on the roads". I will agree that these men are certainly authorities on the results of the havoc on our roads. They are in daily contact with it and probably know more about treating those results than does anyone else in the State. However, that does not mean they are authorities on the cause of accidents. I will not accept that argument for one moment. The cause of traffic accidents and the subject of traffic control are not related to the treating of the results of accidents. It is in regard to the results of the accidents that the two learned surgeons are eminent in their profession and they should be listened to in the treatment of those results; but that this gives them any real authority to stipulate what should be done to prevent accidents, cannot be accepted. To advance that as an argument in support of handing the whole of our traffic control over to the police does not impress me one little bit.

Further on the Minister said—

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 number 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.

With that statement I can agree almost entirely. The reason I say "almost" is that the Minister used the word "Police." If he had used the words "a State-wide authority set up to control traffic throughout the State" then I would agree entirely. The rest of his contention makes sense. Such an authority could do exactly what the Minister claims can be done by the police.

The Hon. J. Dolan: That was a quotation from a report by Sir Eric St. Johnston. It was not what I said.

The Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: The Minister used it as part of his speech.

The Hon. J. Dolan: I quoted from his report.

The Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: I agree, but the Minister was only citing the report in support of his contention that the police should take over traffic control.

The Hon. J. Dolan: That is right.

The Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: If I were in any way misleading in the way I put it, it was not my intention.

The Hon. J. Dolan: It was a quotation.

The Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: I have made it clear before, that I was dealing with the statement of the two surgeons.

The Hon. J. Dolan: That is right.

The Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: I had no intention of doing other than continuing in that vein at that stage. However, the Minister is quite entitled to clear up the point. I agree he was only citing this in support of his argument for police takeover of traffic.

I know all of us must be concerned with the increasing road toll, but I believe the authority suggested by my party would be the solution for the reason already given by Mr. Heitman; that is, the control of traffic would be its sole job. This would not be the case in a police takeover.

I have said that the increase in our road toll is alarming; but I submit that what is equally alarming, if not more so—and I personally believe it is more alarming—is the overwhelming increase in other crimes such as murder, rape, bashings, hold-ups, and burglary. Only in this morning's paper were there reports of two more hold-ups of roster service stations. These are the matters which should concern us even more than the road toll, for this reason: When fatalities occur on the roads they are not intentional; they are accidental. However, all these other crimes are done with intent—very definitely.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I do not think you can call them accidental. I think you must admit that an accident is something which cannot be prevented; but many road accidents could be prevented.

The Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: That may be so, but all the other crimes which are everlastingly on the increase are matters for the police, but we do not have sufficient police now to deal with them; so members can imagine what the situation would be if they were given the State-wide control of traffic. However, I will deal with that a little more fully later.

Not so much is said about the alarming increase in all other types of crime. So much play is made of the road toll by the news media all the time, but these other crimes are of equal concern to us—or they should be.

The next portion of the Minister's speech to which I wish to refer is the section dealing with the opposition many people have to the police takeover; that is, the result of the New Zealand scheme. The Minister said—

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.

I agree there is absolutely no proof for this assertion; but, on the other hand, there is no proof to the contrary—none whatever. Consequently that to me is a futile argument, not that I am advocating the New Zealand system for one moment. I do not agree with it because it does not provide an overall authority. We are not asking for the New Zealand system. However, I just make the point because the Minister said that no proof exists that the New Zealand scheme is responsible for the low accident rate in that country, but equally it can be said that there is no proof to the contrary. Consequently that argument does not bear much weight with me. I believe that a separate authority on which the shires would have adequate representation would be preferable—certainly in country areas—to a takeover by the Police Department.

The Minister, still referring to the New Zealand scheme, quoted the number of fatalities in New Zealand to indicate that the road toll is rising there. It is, and so it is all over the world. In my opinion we will not solve the problem by fooling about with traffic control. We must get to the root cause; that is, driver education. I do not mean the type of education gained from road patrols. If we are to do anything about the road toll we must go back to the young people, and I can envisage the day when the school curriculum will include driver education, in all its facets, and not just the correct road signs and so on. The children will be taught how to handle cars and how to handle them at speed and under skid conditions, because this is the cause of most of the accidents. The young people get onto the roads before being taught how to handle vehicles under all conditions and the first time they try to handle a car at speed or in a skid, they are gone.

I know that such a scheme will be costly, but it would have more effect on the road toll than any other single action. The next portion of the Minister's speech on which I wish to comment reads—

A separate organisation would undoubtedly require enormous additional outlay in personnel, training, equipment, and accommodation.

If we are to achieve anything concrete concerning the road toll we must face up to a big expenditure; but I do not agree that the police takeover of traffic control would result in less expense than the takeover by a separate authority. We will spend the money anyway if we are to do the job properly.

Reference has been made to having to set up personnel, equipment, accommodation, and so on. As Mr. Heitman said, much

of this equipment and personnel are already available. Many shires have gone to great expense to provide accommodation and other facilities which could be utilised just as well as police facilities—in fact, more so, because they were designed for this purpose. The facilities in the various shires could be utilised, not, I repeat, under the control of the individual shires, but under the control of an overall authority. The next portion of the Minister's speech to which I wish to refer reads—

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.

I could not agree more. To continue—

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.

I agree with the Minister that there is not nearly enough of these men. It would be far quicker, easier, and in my opinion far better to train men for traffic control alone, rather than to train them for general police work. I am sure in this way the job would be done more quickly. This is another reason for thinking it preferable to set up an overall authority away from the police. The men concerned would be trained more quickly because they would be trained in the one job alone and not in law enforcement, generally. For the reasons I have stated, once again I am not very impressed by the argument used by the Minister.

A little further, the Minister said—

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 . . .

To my mind, that statement is at complete variance with the Minister's previous statement to the effect that the department can ill-afford to lose these men, even with the inclusion of 100 or more traffic inspectors who are already engaged on this work in country areas.

The Hon. S. T. J. Thompson: Perhaps people are so lawabiding that the police can immediately be put onto traffic control.

The Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: Perhaps. I believe the statement is at variance with the Minister's previous remarks and the only way 400 men could be thrown into this job in the country would be at the expense of the Police Force doing jobs in other directions which I have already

indicated, namely, the control of crime of all kinds. This must be quite obvious. I cannot reconcile those two statements. To my way of thinking they certainly do not tally.

In regard to the same matter the Minister went on to say—

Local government bodies are continually requesting additional police strength in their districts.

Of course they are. We do not have enough police now, on the Minister's own statement, to deal with all the police matters in the country. The department cannot supply the men the shires are requesting without taking over the traffic aspect. Irrespective of traffic control in the country, the department is still receiving requests for additional police for country areas.

A great deal of what the Minister has said constitutes a very good argument indeed for setting up a separate authority outside the Police Force. The more I read the Minister's speech the more convinced I am that he made a good speech in support of my way of thinking. I really mean that. The spate of breaking and entering offences alone which have burst out in country areas over recent months has caused a great deal of concern. The police will need to catch up with the offenders and the Minister is well aware of this. I might mention that there is a growing tendency toward breaking and entering in country areas. It is obvious that it is the work of an organised gang and I think the Minister would also share this view. This is the reason for shires wanting extra police in their districts. They do not want them to take over the control of traffic but to look after other matters.

I repeat that the Police Force has more than enough to do now in this State in both city and country areas. In many ways I consider it a waste of a policeman's time to be dealing with unimportant traffic offences when other crimes are rife and becoming more evident in our State.

Further in his speech the Minister made reference to crowd control at shows and beaches. Obviously, under the proposal put forward by my party, the authority would deal with the traffic involved. I do not mean for one moment that there would be no police at these shows. Of course there would, because it is well known that a criminal element gathers around shows and in crowded places. I am sure the Minister is well aware of this fact. It would be necessary for the police to attend to control these people, but that would be outside of traffic control.

Whatever we do there must be a dovetailing of responsibility in connection with police and traffic matters. We cannot draw a line and say, "This is yours and the other is someone else's, and you will both have nothing to do with one another." That would not make sense. The criminal

side of law enforcement is a police responsibility. However, a great deal of the time, as the Minister will be aware, traffic control often constitutes pinpricking to the general public, but it must be carried out. Personally, I do not think the police are properly engaged on this sort of thing.

The next portion of the Minister's speech to which I wish to refer concerns the statistics for car registrations and fatalities. Mr. Heitman has already referred to these statistics. The ones which struck me particularly were those for the registration of motor vehicles and fatalities. The Minister said that 66.8 per cent. of cars are registered in the city and 33.2 per cent. in the country. He also said that fatalities in the city represent 46.1 per cent. and those in the country 53.9 per cent.

Obviously the Minister cited these figures to demonstrate that control of traffic by the police in the city results in fewer accidents. Of course this is completely fallacious. As Mr. Heitman has said, it takes no consideration whatsoever of the miles travelled. I refer not only to the miles travelled by the 33.2 per cent. of cars which are registered in the country but also to the long distances travelled in the country by a large proportion of the 66.8 per cent. of cars which are registered in the city. These statistics, to my mind, are quite meaningless unless they are related to the distances travelled by those cars and the speeds at which the cars might have been travelling. Once again, this is an argument which does not impress me in any way.

Later on the Minister said—

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.

This is the real kernel of the nut. The Government is steadfastly sticking to its idea of police control, because this is Government policy and always has been. The policy of the Liberal Party has been one of overall control but not by the Police Department. This is where we differ.

I am not for one moment trying to say the present position is satisfactory. I do not believe it is. In fact, it is far from being satisfactory.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I think it would be fair to relate what the recipients of the legislation think about it. The political parties have their points of view. What do the shires think?

The Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: I do not know what all the country shires think but I do know what most of them think. They would prefer a suggestion such as ours and many would even prefer to leave the position as it is rather than have the police take over the control of traffic in

their areas. I do not agree with this, because I think there should be an overall authority on which shires would be represented. If we are to do anything really worth while in this field we must have the goodwill of country shires and country people. This is essential. Public attitude to traffic control is very important. If the public attitude is not behind the move, it will not succeed. The public attitude is reflected by the country shire councils. This is a fact and anybody who lives in the country knows it to be true.

I have taken up a good deal of time but I still wish to deal with one or two other points. I shall refer firstly to my attitude on centralisation and computerisation of licensing. If my experience of late in another direction is a pointer to what could happen in regard to traffic, I do not want any part of it. I say that unequivocally. My reason is that ever since the registration and licensing of firearms has come into existence I have possessed a license for quite a number of firearms. Over recent years I have had six—four rifles and two shotguns.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Do you ever use them?

The Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: Yes. Sometimes I would like to use them in a direction which, perhaps, the honourable member would not like! When licensing of firearms was done locally I never had any trouble. However, this has been centralised and computerised, and what a mess it has become. Only a few weeks ago I received a renewal notice for my firearm license. According to the notice, all I possess is one rifle. Three other rifles and two shotguns have apparently disappeared somewhere into thin air. There is no record of them. I certainly have them, but they were not recorded on the renewal notice. If this is what happens under centralised firearms licensing, God help us when it happens to car and vehicle licensing.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You will lose five motor vehicles instead of five guns.

The Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: I inform Mr. Arthur Griffith that he may run to five motorcars, but I do not. I could run to five bob! When I received the assessment, I did what any ordinary, sensible person would have done. I went straight to the local police sergeant in my home town of Bridgetown and told him what had happened. I showed him last year's license and asked what he would do. He made a few derogatory remarks as to how this had occurred, he then rolled the license into the typewriter and included the other guns. He told me to get it stamped by the Clerk of Courts. He also said that he would bring the people in Perth to their senses. I now have to wait 12 months to see what happens on the next occasion.

The Hon. J. Dolan: Perhaps it would be better not to let the Minister know about this fellow.

The Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: He did the right thing and he was also right in criticising the efficiency of centralised licensing. If this happens in regard to motor-cars I am sure there will be a total mess-up. I related that incident to show what could happen.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Where were your guns on the night the service stations were robbed?

The Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: The criminals did not borrow them—at least I do not think they did. I will have a look when I return home. I am sure they will be where they always are—under lock and key.

I said at the outset I would confine myself in my remarks on this Bill to the Minister's speech. I have done that for the reason there is very little in the Bill itself on which one can comment. The Bill is confined almost entirely to section 11A of the Traffic Act. We cannot go outside that.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You could give us a dissertation on decentralisation under this Bill.

The Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT: I could perhaps do that, but we cannot talk about much else because it is not in the Bill. There is nothing in the Bill. If we pass this Bill it is comparable to signing a blank cheque. I have found nothing in the Bill which gives us any idea of what is proposed other than a police takeover of traffic. We do not even know how the local authorities will be treated.

I am very reluctant to pass a Bill where so little is defined. The Minister should pay attention to the comments of members of this House regarding an alternative. If he does not agree with the alternative, at least he should introduce a Bill which clearly defines all the aspects of a police takeover of traffic.

The Bill is quite unamendable, and the Minister is well aware of this. It is tied to one section of the principal Act. If the Minister wishes to have a Bill passed through this House, he will need to produce a measure containing much more information. I would be very reluctant to support this legislation.

THE HON. CLIVE GRIFFITHS (South-East Metropolitan) [8.16 p.m.]: I do not intend to speak at great length. It seems to me that uniformity of traffic control is the desire of the Liberal Party as well as the Labor Party. I believe our ideas differ only as to who should control the body that is to be set up. The Bill provides that control of traffic will be administered by the Police Department. As a member of the Liberal Party I support the concept of one body to control traffic throughout the State.

It has become quite obvious during the debate that members of the Liberal Party and members of the Labor Party are dissatisfied with the present system. I am not sure about the Country Party, although I would think from Mr. Logan's comments that he is quite happy with the present set-up. However, I feel that the majority of the members of this House are dissatisfied with it.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: I was only talking to the Bill and I disagree with the Bill.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: Well, the Country Party is also opposed to the present set-up.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Not the present set-up.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: For the purpose of my present argument it does not matter whether the Country Party opposes it or not.

The members of the Liberal Party would prefer to see the setting up of one authority to control traffic throughout Western Australia. As I see it, the Labor Party also wants a single authority to control traffic in Western Australia, but it says that this authority should be the Police Department.

I certainly do not disagree with the Liberal Party policy. I believe it is desirable for traffic control to be in the hands of one authority. However, we are not here to discuss that particular proposal but to discuss something entirely different. We have the opportunity to leave the present unsatisfactory system as it is or go along with the proposal that the Police Department should control the whole of the State's traffic. On those grounds I feel I am quite entitled to support the Bill. On those grounds I feel I can justify the stand I intend to take on the matter.

Members who have looked at this Bill say it is impossible to amend it. If it were possible to amend the Bill to implement Liberal Party policy, I would certainly support the amendment. If the Minister, when closing the debate, says, "I will withdraw this Bill and introduce one along the lines suggested by the Liberal Party," I would certainly support that. However, in the meantime the only thing I have to consider is the Bill which is before the House. The present state of affairs borders on idiocy because ump-teen authorities are looking after traffic control throughout Western Australia. I feel the majority of our citizens would agree that that is unsatisfactory.

The Hon. T. O. Perry: How many is umpteen?

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: Somebody said 121 authorities. There are a number of them.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: There are 140-odd local authorities and about 20 of these are already under police control.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: So 121 is not far out.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That is pretty near.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: Surely it is desirable to have a single authority to turn out officers who are trained to go about their duties as traffic officers with a common course of instruction. I feel it is necessary that the instructions given to these people should be uniform. At the present time there is a wide disparity in the qualifications of the people who are administering the traffic laws of Western Australia.

The Hon. J. Heitman: Would you explain the disparity you see in this particular set-up?

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: I will in a minute, but I wish to make another comment first.

If traffic control is administered by one body, traffic officers will be able to transfer from one town to another. Occasionally with the effluxion of time an individual may desire to move to another town. This is often a good idea because people who have lived in one town for a number of years form habits and make friends and enemies.

A person living in a town may cross swords with one particular traffic officer and it may be helpful to know that eventually he will be transferred somewhere else. On the other hand, a traffic inspector employed by a local authority is answerable to the local authority for his actions and may perhaps find himself invoking the wrath of the particular local authority because of some action he has taken. This type of problem disappears if traffic control is administered by one authority.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I think you are prepared to disregard the fact that the inspector may be right.

The Hon. J. Heitman: And also the fact that the inspector was trained by the Police Department.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Are you saying that a traffic inspector who displeases somebody in the town should be transferred?

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: I am not saying that. I am saying a traffic inspector may be reluctant to perform his duties properly for fear of invoking the wrath of the people employing him, that is, the councillors of the town. At the present time he cannot go to the next town for a job.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: Obviously the human element creeps in. The honourable member is quite correct.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: Mr. Heitman said that the Minister was incorrect in saying that the present system

is unique in Australia. He said he had been to South Africa where a similar system was in operation. The other States do not use this system, so it is unique in Australia.

I do not believe that the road toll is the only aspect of traffic control we should consider. A traffic officer has a multitude of duties. Whatever authority is set up—the one proposed in the Bill, the existing system, or a statutory authority which my party would like to see—will have to deal with many things including road fatalities. Certainly this is a major aspect of traffic control but there are many other areas where it is desirable to have uniformity of thinking throughout the State.

I have undertaken some research into the subject of road fatalities. The Minister mentioned that a committee was set up to study this problem in 1965. Other speakers have mentioned the committee and its findings. Many questions were asked by various members at that time in Parliament. By looking through some of the copies of *Hansard* from 1966 I discovered that at that particular time 11 per cent. of the accidents in country areas were attributable to faulty vehicles. As a result of that piece of information, a member in another place asked some questions about the necessary qualifications of a local authority officer who was charged with the responsibility of inspecting and licensing vehicles. I was appalled to read the answer to this question. Traffic officers have the responsibility to ensure that vehicles are roadworthy and whether or not they are licensed. If these duties are performed efficiently, it could make up to an 11 per cent. difference in the number of road fatalities. I cannot read out all this information as it is too lengthy.

However, whilst Mr. Heitman was speaking he mentioned several local authorities that had written to him and he gave the names of those authorities. I hastily jotted the names down on the front of the book I have before me and later I went through the book to ascertain how the men those local authorities employ shape up in regard to this particular aspect of traffic control. The first shire Mr. Heitman mentioned was Goomalling. I would point out that some of the local authorities referred to in this document have since, I understand, had traffic control in their areas taken over by the Police Department. I make that comment in case some member may think I am giving misleading information.

This was a document that was laid on the Table of the House on the 1st November, 1966, following a request made by a member of Parliament.

The Hon. J. Heitman: Could you not get a later one than that?

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: A later one was not available; this happens to be the only one that was available. Mr. Heitman referred to statistics back in 1959. I am now referring to the only piece of evidence that is available and it is dated the 1st November, 1966, which is not such a long time ago. I have already indicated that some of the local authorities mentioned in this document have voluntarily handed over traffic control in their areas to the police. I am not attempting to indicate that something is not correct. All I am saying is that that was the situation at that time.

I do not know where the Goomalling Shire is, but I will quote that as an example. In 1966, apparently, that shire had three inspectors. One was highly qualified as a fitter and turner, but the other two had no qualifications whatsoever. Therefore, of the three traffic inspectors employed by the Goomalling Shire which had written to Mr. Heitman stating that it is dastardly that its authority should be taken away, one is a fitter and turner and the other two have no qualifications whatsoever. I did not select these local authorities; these are the ones that have been mentioned by Mr. Heitman.

The Hon. J. Heitman: All those inspectors would have attended the school and would have been trained by the Police Department.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: No doubt some traffic inspectors would attend a school arranged by the Police Department and some local authorities go to great lengths to mention that. However, the Goomalling Shire has gone to great lengths to indicate that its traffic inspectors have no qualifications.

The Irwin Shire had only two traffic inspectors and neither of them had any qualifications. Mr. Heitman then mentioned the Wongan Hills-Ballidu local authority.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: What qualifications do police recruits need to have?

The Hon. J. Dolan: You want to make an application and you will find out.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: Just to prove to the House that I am not selecting these local authorities from this document with a biased viewpoint, I would like to mention that the qualifications of both the traffic inspectors employed by the Wongan Hills-Ballidu Shire were "good mechanical knowledge."

I will now refer to the Swan Shire to ascertain what qualifications that shire's traffic inspector held. The comment by this shire is that all vehicles are inspected on the same basis as the Police Traffic Branch, using the same equipment. It also mentioned that its traffic inspector had visited the National Safety Council school.

The Hon. F. R. White: That was six years ago. What qualifications would they have now?

The Hon. J. Heitman: The latest report may show something different.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: It may, but this is the system we are being asked to retain. The Coorow Shire had four inspectors. This shire happens to be in Mr. Heitman's province. None of those four inspectors had any qualifications whatsoever.

The Hon. J. L. Hunt: At least they were consistent.

The Hon. F. R. White: Do any of those fellows hold a driver's license?

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Do you happen to know whether these men are making good traffic inspectors?

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: No, I do not know.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What is the use of labouring this point then?

The Hon. J. Heitman: The shires wrote and objected to the takeover of traffic control by the police.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: I am saying that according to the information in one of these copies of *Hansard* it was indicated that 11 per cent. of the accidents that occurred in country areas were directly attributable to faulty motor vehicles, and I am merely pointing out that the people charged with the responsibility of ensuring that vehicles are roadworthy prior to their being licensed are those who have been mentioned in this document from which I have been quoting. The inspectors who were acting in 1966 may not be holding those positions today. Other traffic inspectors may have been appointed in their place, but I am suggesting that the same sort of arrangement could still apply today because no indication has been given to show that the qualifications of traffic inspectors in country areas have altered.

The Hon. F. R. White: Don't you think you should have made it your responsibility to find out?

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: The honourable member can tell us what he thinks about the position when he speaks. What I am saying is that under the system suggested by the Bill at least the course of instruction given to the men charged with this responsibility will be uniform. That is all I am saying. All officers charged with the responsibility of traffic control under this Bill will receive the same sort of instruction which will be uniform and will apply right throughout Western Australia.

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: But their uniform will be the wrong one.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It will be a uniform.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: I am not deviating from a suggestion I made before. The same would apply if the Liberal Party policy were implemented. All men involved in traffic control would attend the same classes and do the same course. At the moment I doubt whether 10 per cent. of the traffic inspectors hold any sort of qualification whatsoever.

The Hon. G. W. Berry: What is the percentage of inspections by police of faulty vehicles involved in accidents, compared with the inspections made by country traffic inspectors?

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: I do not know what the honourable member is talking about. I cannot relate what he is saying to the speech I am making. If he sees me privately later in the evening I will let him know what I have been talking about.

I now wish to mention another point made by Mr. Heitman which causes me a little concern. He referred to the 1965 report and yet members are complaining about my referring to a 1966 publication. In the 1965 report submitted by the committee there was some mention that induction requirements of the Commissioner of Police in regard to character alone are met. After quoting from that report, Mr. Heitman went on to say that five traffic inspectors from Northam would not qualify.

The Hon. J. Heitman: I did not say they did not qualify. They were not accepted by the Police Department.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: The honourable member made that comment after quoting that the induction requirements of the Commissioner of Police in regard to character alone were met. He then said that five from Northam did not qualify. The only inference I can draw from that statement is that those five men had characters that were not acceptable by the Commissioner of Police.

The Hon. J. Heitman: I think you will recall that I said they would take all these men over—

The Hon. J. Dolan: Subject to certain conditions.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: I think everyone would be seeking that requirement. Surely those who are to be accepted as members of the Police Force, or to be granted statutory authority under the set-up suggested by the Liberal Party's policy, should be of the highest integrity and the highest character possible. We would not appoint a man simply because he had been acting in a similar position if some aspects of his character and integrity were not beyond reproach.

The Hon. J. Heitman: It just goes to show that the Police Department held a different point of view in regard to this man's character; that is, a different point of view from that held by the local authority, and the local authority would not appoint a man unless his character was good.

The Hon. J. Dolan: He could be over age.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: I said I did not intend to speak for long. I simply wanted to make it quite clear that I am justified in supporting the Bill. I would prefer to support the system that has been advocated by the Liberal Party, but we are not considering that system. We are considering amending the present unsatisfactory situation, or adopting a system which, in my opinion, would at least be a great deal more satisfactory and desirable than the existing one.

THE HON. R. THOMPSON (South Metropolitan) [8.41 p.m.]: We have to face up to facts as they now exist. During the regime of the previous Government, the then Minister for Police (The Hon. J. Craig) in 1964 became greatly involved in the question of the Police Department taking over uniform control of traffic throughout Western Australia. At that time the Minister had set up a committee which submitted a very thorough and searching report, and the salient facts contained in it were published in *The West Australian*, dated the 4th May, 1966.

The basis of that report was referred to by the Minister when making his second reading speech and so, in fact, the Government has not deviated from the recommendations made by that committee. Actually, we are in a ludicrous situation, because if that report had been implemented at that time we would have been well on the way to having co-ordinated traffic control throughout the State. Instead, we have a piecemeal organisation. It is not intergraded in any shape or form.

Prior to last week 19 local authorities—today I believe the number has reached 21—had voluntarily surrendered their traffic control rights to the Police Department; they asked the Police Department to take over the control of traffic within their boundaries. I would like to point out that there is no radio communication between the local authorities, and if we are to tackle the problem as it should be tackled, only one body should control traffic throughout the State. If it is the desire of the Liberal Party to hand over the control of traffic to a different organisation it can do that when it regains office; but, from 1965 until 1971 the previous Government had plenty of time to implement its policies, but nothing was done.

However, this is not a subject in which politics should be introduced. This is a problem that affects not only my family but all families and we have to come to grips with it. The only way we can do that is to hand over the control of traffic to the Police Department. Unless we have co-ordinated traffic control over all our roads throughout the State and keep them under constant surveillance we will not get anywhere. Although I appreciate the sincerity and purpose of the people with whom I do not agree, we have to cast aside this parochial attitude.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Yes, cast aside the parochial attitude and adopt the policy of the Labor Party.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is not true.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Of course it is true.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: It is not, because if the Leader of the Opposition will look at the report I mentioned—and I would point out that it was presented to the previous Government in which the Leader of the Opposition was a Minister—he would know, as other members of this House know, that the Royal Automobile Club sent a letter to the then Premier concerning the situation.

It is dated the 18th August, 1970; it is numbered 5, and this is what it says—

R.A.C.W.A. President, Mr. J. O. Dewan today called on the State Government to establish, without delay, a single State-wide traffic control and vehicle licensing authority.

Mr. Dewan said that, despite the trend by some local authorities to cede their responsibilities to the Police Department, the R.A.C. believed that the present system of multiple traffic control and vehicle licensing was incompatible with uniform and efficient traffic management throughout the State and was not conducive to promoting road safety.

The R.A.C. also urged that the proposed single authority be adequately financed for the effective discharge of its functions. These should include (1) Police traffic law enforcement by officers specially trained in modern methods of traffic control and (2) the establishing of central motor vehicle and drivers' license registers. Separate authorities cause motor dealers etc. endless troubles.

Mr. Dewan added that the Club believed that the responsibility for traffic control, co-ordination of traffic planning, road accident research and the integration of the various auxiliaries contributing to road safety should be vested in a Minister for Transport.

So it is not only the policy of the Labor Party, it is also the policy of the R.A.C. From the report I have just read members

will no doubt gain the impression that the R.A.C. is a very responsible body. It is a body which probably represents the bulk of motorists in various areas who desire to have repairs carried out to their vehicles. I daresay the R.A.C. is one of the largest bodies of its kind per capita in Australia, when one compares it with similar organisations in other States.

It can be seen, therefore, that this organisation and the people it represents support police traffic control we propose to set up. When introducing the Bill the Minister also quoted an opinion given by the Royal College of Surgeons which body was also in favour of overall police traffic control.

The Royal College of Surgeons set up its own committee to examine the question and, as a result, the committee came up with much the same conclusions as those expressed by the R.A.C.; namely, that there should be one controlling body.

Accordingly, if by chance this has been the policy of the Labor Party for many years, it is certainly good to see that responsible people acknowledge our policy as being the right one. We would be in no way better off than we are at present if at this juncture we were to fragment our Police Force and have two separate authorities; inasmuch as in the event of an accident a policeman must attend at the scene as must the patrolman for the shire—at least this is the case under the present set-up. This is certainly an expensive waste of manpower.

Those who journey to Mandurah during the busy summer weekends would have seen a traffic inspector directing the traffic while a policeman was standing nearby watching. This, of course, is a duplication of manpower. If the police had control of traffic matters, the policeman would not be wasting his time and the traffic inspector would not have to be paid overtime.

What happens in some of the country areas where shires have the control of traffic? They generally have one or two inspectors, but nobody has yet told me, and nor do I know, what happens when one of these inspectors takes ill for a period of time, or if he happens to be on holiday or on long service leave. Is he replaced by another trained person, or does the area in question go without traffic control for the period of his absence?

This question would not arise if the Police Force were in control of traffic matters, inasmuch as personnel would be transferred from one area to another to meet a particular emergency; as is done in the case of school teachers, who are transferred from area to area to meet any particular emergency that may arise.

Great stress has been placed during the course of this debate on the situation that exists in New Zealand which has an independent traffic control authority. I do not know whether the New Zealand

system is good or bad, but I notice that nobody has mentioned what happened in Sweden which in 1965 had, I think, 63 different sections where the local authorities controlled their own traffic inspectors. In spite of the volume of traffic in that country it had a fatality rate which is ranked as the lowest in the world. The authorities there finally integrated and came under the control of one centralised body which could be co-ordinated in such a manner as to produce the greatest efficiency. This was the keynote, and that is probably why Sweden holds this record at the present time.

It may be politic for certain people to oppose this measure, but it is certainly lacking in common sense to do so. If experience shows the system we propose is not a good one a future Government can change it; but at least let us try to do something along these lines.

During the life of the previous Government we often heard members and Ministers say they had a mandate to do this, that, or the other. This applies equally to the present situation, because what we are proposing is the policy of the Labor Party and we can claim we have a mandate to do this, because this is what we said we would do. It would be wrong for members of this House to deny us the opportunity to carry out this undertaking.

During the short period of time we have been in Government we have, among other things, appointed a Minister for Traffic Safety and we have indicated that the co-ordination of the Main Roads Department and the local authorities will be taken into consideration in the overall traffic policy. We admit—and the Minister also said—that this would be done over a period of three years, as was suggested in the 1965-66 report to which I have referred.

We should be given the opportunity to carry out these undertakings to show that we have at least tried to tackle the problem. If this is not done the present position will continue for years and years during which time many lives will be lost. It will eventually become a great deal more expensive to put into operation than it is at the moment. Apart from this, in the end we will probably revert to what we are trying to do tonight.

We have heard about various ideas that exist throughout the world, in Australia, and in Western Australia particularly, where things have been set aside because they happen to be too costly to develop. It has been said that the ideas just will not work. Eventually, however, they have worked because the people concerned have had the courage to go forward and make them work.

There are, of course, faults in all systems. We can point the finger and say that this, that, or the other is not working efficiently; that it has not achieved what it was supposed to achieve. Under the system that exists at the present it will not be possible for anything to work. This would be free enterprise at its worst. That is what it amounts to. At the same time, however, people's lives will be at stake because unqualified and untrained personnel will continue to be given the job of inspecting and licensing motor vehicles.

I do not for one moment cast any aspersions on any particular shire clerk in Western Australia. I admire them greatly. In many areas, however, these people are appointed as licensing authorities; they may not be appointed as traffic inspectors at all. For example, in some cases we find the shire clerk is the accountant, the treasurer, the general clerk, the building surveyor, the health inspector, the one who is licensing and inspecting vehicles and, in some cases, he is also the undertaker.

Shire clerks are most versatile people and it is necessary for them to be versatile; but they are still not qualified and they certainly do not possess sufficient knowledge to say whether or not a particular vehicle is roadworthy.

I admit this does not obtain in all shires but it does in some, and because of this situation there is always the possibility of someone losing his life. At the moment the local authorities would not lose the equipment they possess. This would be readily absorbed by the Police Traffic Department. In some cases the vehicles that the local authorities possess are superior to those used by the Police. I know of the case of one shire council, however—one which you, Mr. Deputy President, happen to represent—which bought a vehicle two years ago. The traffic inspector did not want to take delivery of the vehicle because he said he would not be able to catch any lad who owned a car five years older than his and which had been hotted up.

Yet the shire council bought this brand new vehicle and expected the traffic inspector to enforce the law even though the vehicle was completely inadequate for the purpose. I am aware that, generally speaking, the shire councils do possess vehicles which are adequate for the job on hand.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: There was a traffic inspector who apparently knew what he was talking about.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes, because he realised that the vehicle with which he was being supplied by the council was totally inadequate for the job on hand. But we have the point made by Mr. Clive Griffiths that there are councillors who are not well trained or versed in traffic

control being given the responsibility to say that a particular vehicle is all they can afford and that is the vehicle that must be purchased.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: The Police Department does that. They are happy to take over fast cars.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I agree. I have already said that some of the cars provided to traffic inspectors are superior to those used by the police, but in the shire to which I have referred a vehicle was bought which was totally unsuited to the job.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: In other words, you make out a case on the example of one experience.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I merely point out that this is a waste of the rate-payers' money. I would now like to quote the following in connection with traffic control and licensing:—

Date District

1919—All the Metropolitan Traffic Area defined by Regulation, including part of Wanneroo Road Board, part of Greenmount Road Board (now the Shire of Mundaring) and part of Armadale-Kelmscott Road Board. Rockingham and Darling Range (now Shire of Kalamunda) Road Boards were excluded.

1955—Rockingham and Kwinana were included in Metropolitan Traffic Area.

1966

Oct. 1—Armadale-Kelmscott—Balance of Shire added to Metropolitan Traffic Area.

In 1969 the Shire of Broome and the Shire of West Kimberley were taken over. In 1970 the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrah-dale was added to the metropolitan traffic area; the Shire of Ravensthorpe, the Shire of Esperance, and the Shire of Manjimup—Mr. Ferry spoke about the latter the other night and did not mention whether or not it was working satisfactorily there—were taken over. I can only assume that the police takeover at Manjimup is working satisfactorily. Requests, in 1971, came from the Shire of Merredin, the Shire of Busselton, the Shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley, the Shire of Ashburton, the Shire of Lake Grace, and the Shire of Murray. In 1972 requests came from the Shire of Tableland, the Shire of Marble Bar, the Shire of Nullagine, the Shire of Roebourne, the Shire of Kondinin, the Shire of Port Hedland, and the Town of Northam. I understand that the Shire of Coolgardie, the Albany Town and the Albany Shire are also making representations to be taken over.

The Hon. J. M. Thomson: The Albany Shire?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is what the report states; Albany Town, Albany Shire.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: They have had discussions.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The report states they were meeting with the departmental representatives at Albany on the 13th September, 1972.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: They wanted to know what was involved.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: It might be a case of wanting to know what is involved. I said I understand that representations were made.

Let us look at the situation at Coolgardie which has been voluntarily taken over. That shire was part of the Goldfields Regional Traffic Control, but since the police takeover control is divided. This will cause a weakness because different authorities will be controlling the traffic, and so it will go on. The police in the area will patrol the Kalgoorlie-Kambalda road, and part of the Kalgoorlie-Coolgardie road. There will be no co-ordination.

We cannot let things like that happen. If we are to have control let it be by the one body. I can remember speaking in this House several years ago when nobody listened to me—and probably no-one will listen to me now. However, I put forward a scheme for combining all the ambulance services in Western Australia in one body so that there could be a radio link-up and some co-ordination. However, my proposal fell on deaf ears. There should be co-ordination, particularly in the metropolitan area, where there is a fragmentation of ambulance services. That is not good. Co-ordination would mean that an injured person would have a chance of receiving the services of a trained ambulance driver.

I gave an example of an ambulance situated at Armadale where a driver was employed on a daytime basis. Voluntary drivers worked at night time. However, the relief driver could not take the ambulance home at night time. The telephone would be switched through to his house and in the event of a call he would drive himself, in his own vehicle, for 1½ or two miles to pick up the ambulance and then attend the accident. He would probably have to pick up a policeman on the way to the accident. There is not the co-ordination there should be if we value lives and if we wish to give a service to the public.

I intend to conclude on the note that unless the Liberal Party and the Country Party can put something forward—and those parties had 12 years during which they could have attended to the matter, and reports were at their disposal. At one time I remember reading in the Press where a Cabinet sub-committee had been formed to examine a report and make recommendations. In all probability some of the

opinions expressed by Mr. Heitman and Mr. Clive Griffiths are in line with the policy which came out of the meetings of the Cabinet sub-committee. Evidently the Country Party and the Liberal Party could not see eye-to-eye on that matter, otherwise we would have had something of a more concrete nature than we have at present.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: What is the end of your sentence about the Liberal Party putting something forward?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Unless they can put forward something of a concrete nature. The Minister's second reading speech—and his Bill—have been criticised but I did not rise tonight with the object of criticising the various speeches which have been made. However, some very sketchy and scratchy suggestions were made but no method of implementation was put forward.

The Hon. J. Heitman: That is only in your opinion.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: It may be in my opinion.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: I am still waiting for the end of that sentence.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If Mr. Medcalf is waiting for the end of my sentence, I do not think sufficient thought has been given to bringing forward a policy for the purpose of controlling traffic in Western Australia. I think the problem was toyed with for six years, and it appears that members opposite are prepared to toy with it for another six years. For goodness sake do not let us play with it; let us do something positive.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That is the stuff!

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The report which I have states that under police control there would be—

- (1) All areas in the State interlocked to provide uniform advantages . . . i.e. Complete radio links between areas and Headquarters, giving improved assistance for motorists.

The Hon. J. Heitman: We have had that in country areas for years.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes. To continue—

- (2) All areas work could be co-ordinated in order to avoid blank spaces in the State . . . i.e. In many areas now where Traffic is interspaced by Police and Shire, each work their own routine.

Is that true? Of course it is. To continue—

- (3) Members can be interchanged throughout the State to cover for sickness, long service leave, etc., thus providing skilled men at all

times . . . i.e. What is the position should these items arise in a Shire with one or two Inspectors?

I made that point earlier. The areas go unattended. There is no co-ordination with neighbouring shires. To continue—

- (4) Complete supervision of all areas to ensure uniform protection for the motorist and the public . . . i.e. Tours of inspection by Senior Officers at Regular Intervals.
- (5) Complete use of prosecution section of Police Department and Crown Law in legal problems involving traffic, i.e. It is assumed that lawyers are retained in complicated cases by the Shires now.
- (6) Skilled vehicle examination supervisors who are completely up-to-date visiting all areas to ensure up-to-date measures are maintained.
- (7) Enable proper planning for the protection of those employees who are involved in the change-overs which are taking place at the moment.
- (8) Traffic Officers are restricted in their powers and duties . . . i.e. The Police have to attend fatal accidents and process drunk drivers at present.

This is a duplication of what we have at present. To continue—

- (9) With increased Police traffic staff on the roads throughout the State this will provide greater coverage and protection for country people in relation to crime, involving Vehicles . . . i.e. Stolen vehicles etc.

Many questions are asked concerning the number of cars which are stolen. I do not know that it is the lot of a traffic inspector to keep his eyes open for stolen cars. There is a radio hook-up throughout the police network and I am sure that is the reason for the quick recovery of many vehicles.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What do the police do about stolen cars now?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: They try to find them, of course.

The Hon. J. Heitman: Over 2,000 vehicles were stolen in the metropolitan area in the last 12 months.

The Hon. J. Dolan: They have recovered 94 per cent. of them.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: As the Minister has interjected, 94 per cent. of the vehicles have been recovered. Much has been said of the qualifications of traffic inspectors but I think inspectors are quite genuine in their approach to the job. The Wanneroo shire council employs four ex-policemen as traffic inspectors and that is

an illustration of the value of having been a policeman and being versed in the law. There is no doubt that the traffic inspectors would be absorbed into the Police Force.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: If 94 per cent. of stolen vehicles are recovered at present, with the passage of this legislation we could expect 100 per cent. recovery.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That information was supplied by the Minister through an interjection. Only the other day I heard about a car which had been stolen and chopped up. Nothing was stolen from the car; it had just been chopped up because of some action taken by the person from whom the car was stolen.

To get back to the purpose of this legislation, it is an attempt to do something which is most necessary and desirable in Western Australia. I support the measure.

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West) (9.12 p.m.): I think it is quite remarkable that Mr. Ron Thompson should stand up and, towards the conclusion of his address, start a sentence which he did not complete. He was constantly reminded by Mr. Medcalf, by way of interjection, but he still did not really complete his comment. However, I presume that the honourable member was implying that the Liberal Party had not come up with a concrete suggestion or a concrete proposal as a better alternative to what, in fact, the Labor Government is putting forward.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You would be pretty dumb if you could not comprehend that.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: That is what I thought he meant.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: That is right; so I am not so dumb because I understood the honourable member correctly. He said, and I repeat: "Something concrete by way of proposals." I consider that the very weakness in the Government's legislation is the fact that there is nothing concrete in it other than that it will be a direct imposition of takeover by the police. That is the very matter of criticism—and constant criticism—from members on this side of the House.

The Government has fallen down because this is legislation by regulation. Nothing is spelt out in the Bill at all other than that to which we are accustomed; that is, the Minister shall direct. That, too, is what it means.

Where is all the detail of what the Government and the Police Department will, in fact, do? We are not told that. It will come subsequently in the form of regulations. We argue: Why are not those regulations on the Table of the House now so that we can at least consider them in conjunction with the Bill?

The Hon. R. Thompson: A total of 21 shires have been taken over voluntarily and they are working under regulations with no complaints.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Exactly, and so is every other traffic control in Western Australia working to the same regulations.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Well, what are you grizzling about?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The honourable member opposite is the one who is grizzling. There is another principle which members of the Labor Government would not understand or comprehend. I refer to the voluntary action on the part of those shires which are taken over by police control. It is voluntary on their part.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I think I understand that.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Obviously Mr. Ron Thompson does not.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I told you. You must be a slow learner.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: It is voluntary, and I certainly have no objection to any shire volunteering to assume police control of traffic in its own district. If that is the wish and decision of the shire, it is welcome to do so.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What would happen if we set up a separate statutory authority? Would they have to go over to that authority or would they have the same option to stay with the Police Force if they so desired?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The Labor Government has not asked all the shires and local government authorities in this State whether they were agreeable to this legislation or whether they were agreeable to a direction. This is another big difference. The Liberal Party's proposals enjoy the regard and approval of the local authorities in Western Australia. The proposals have been discussed with those authorities in great detail over a long period, so the question of direction in regard to the adoption of the Liberal Party's proposals does not arise.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That was not my interjection. My interjection was: If, for instance, the Liberal Party's proposals were adopted, what would happen to the 21 shires that have already opted to have their traffic controlled by the police?

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: He is stunned.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am not sure of the relevance of that.

The Hon. R. Thompson: We can understand the question.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Let me get back to my speech, with particular reference to some of the other comments made by Mr. Ron Thompson. He referred to the

question of traffic control by one authority in Sweden. I understand the Superintendent of Traffic visited Sweden for the purpose of looking into traffic matters and traffic control.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: He was sent by the Government.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: So I understand. I do not know whether this Bill arises from a report or submission made by the superintendent or whether the Government has proceeded with this Bill irrespective of what the superintendent's submission and report might have been.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Has he submitted his report to the Minister?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I do not know.

The Hon. J. Dolan: The Government—

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Let me—

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The Minister wants to tell you that this policy was formulated by the Labor Party long before Superintendent Monck went away.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Of course it was.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Once again, Mr. Ron Thompson's views are rather irrelevant to this measure. He mentioned having observed the situation in Mandurah during a very busy weekend, or some similar time, when a traffic inspector was on traffic duty and a policeman was watching. It so happens that I have the traffic report of the Shire of Mandurah which deals with the amount of work entailed by traffic inspectors in that shire. I believe it is quite an impressive report. I ask: Has Mr. Thompson any knowledge of that policeman's capacity to handle traffic? Is that policeman's ability in traffic matters equal to that of the traffic inspector? I direct this question to the Minister: Are all police officers fully trained in traffic matters and traffic control?

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Silence was the grim reply.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Of course they are not. The Minister went to great pains in his speech to illustrate that while a body of men in the Police Force was available to augment traffic policemen, there was no suggestion that they were trained as traffic officers in the same way as officers of the Traffic Branch are trained. The Minister stressed the fact that the Traffic Branch consists of specialists whose work is solely concerned with traffic matters. I thought that was contradictory to other remarks he made about parallel organisations.

Let us take the situation in a shire in which there is at present one policeman and one traffic inspector employed by the shire. In the event of takeover, is one to assume the traffic inspector, having met

all the requirements, will be inducted into the Police Force and will become a policeman? That traffic inspector knows nothing whatever about police matters. He cannot be compared with the police officer who has enjoyed 20 or 25 years in police work. In the same way, the policeman in that town, who under certain circumstances exercises jurisdiction in traffic, does not know as much about traffic as does the traffic inspector. I reject the arguments on that score.

I think we should bear in mind that in his speech the Minister said—

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—

I will not quote the Premier's words again.

I pass on to the Minister's next remark—

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

Many speakers have referred to the efficiency or otherwise of the present set-up, and the capacity or abilities of traffic inspectors, whether in 1966 or 1972. The Minister said—

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.

That, by repetition, is obviously the real concern of this Bill. Efficiency is not the question. Therefore, when Mr. Ron Thompson and other speakers refer to the gross inefficiency or the efficiency of traffic officers, traffic inspectors, or anyone else, in the Minister's view that is completely irrelevant to this Bill.

I do not mean this seriously but it could be inferred from the Minister's speech that he is not concerned about efficiency; that he is only concerned about implementing a policy. The Minister said—

The efficiency or otherwise of individual local government bodies in the sphere of traffic control is not the issue in this legislation.

I believe it is the issue and that it certainly should be the issue. If the Minister and the Government are introducing this legislation purely on the basis of policy, without giving sufficient attention and emphasis to road safety, traffic control, the road toll, havoc on the road, or whatever it might be described as, they should certainly not be doing so because surely that must be the purpose in the Labor Party

having this sort of policy. I believe that, in the question of traffic control, road safety is basic.

Mr. Ron Thompson said there was no concrete proposal from the Liberal Party. In relation to the Government's proposals, let us not forget that, firstly, the Government is introducing the Bill to implement a policy. The Minister also said the Police Department may be restructured and that a new department may be set up to handle registrations, licensing, and so on: all "ifs" and "buts." If they are concrete proposals, will we not end up with parallel organisations which, in the Minister's words, would be uneconomic and perhaps would not contribute to an improvement in road safety? It is a pity the Government did not make the position clearer when introducing the legislation.

By contrast, in this debate I believe the Liberal Party point of view has been made clear. I think I should also refer to some of the other considerations we should bear in mind when debating a subject of this sort. I have expanded on the legislation, and I do not regard it as being satisfactory. I have also commented on the effects on traffic control itself. There is nothing to indicate that, if the police take over, traffic control will be any better, measured in terms of lives saved.

Figures of fatalities in the city and in country areas have been quoted. They prove one thing; that is, there is a greater number of fatalities in the country than in the metropolitan area. That is all. But the comparisons are not valid because we are not comparing equal or similar things. There are many other considerations which are probably of great importance in the question of the fatality rate. Road engineering is an obvious one. Presumably the Government recognises this because it will fragment the control by creating a ministry of road safety attached to the Main Roads Department. That is a further fragmentation of control. Surely it is not conducive to the co-ordinated approach about which members of the Government have spoken.

Other speakers have referred to the question of mileages. The fatigue of drivers in the country has not been mentioned, but I believe it may well have a considerable bearing on the accident rate. For argument's sake, what is the relevance or significance of the drivers or occupants of metropolitan cars and country cars?

I do not think the figures quoted are in any way comparable. There are too many dissimilar features to make a valid comparison. I therefore think the figures should be rejected.

Another aspect which must be taken into consideration is the effect on existing services. If the Government has been so much more concerned than the Brand Government was—to quote one of the speakers—this is another aspect it could

have considered with a view to doing something to correct the situation. If the present traffic control by the shires is so unsatisfactory, the Government could have done something to improve that rather than what it is doing at the present time. Of course, the existing services, particularly in the country areas, will be very greatly affected, and this was recognised.

However, I do not regard that necessarily as a parochial approach, because that expression has all sorts of interpretations. One could well regard a parochial approach as one which illustrates a little pride in and loyalty to one's district. It could also be interpreted to indicate a desire for the development of these areas, or for decentralisation into them. Obviously the Government has made no attempt to assist or to promote the control of traffic in local authority areas. If the services at present are so unsatisfactory—and the Government seems to believe they are—I am sure it would have been well and truly within the capacity of the Government to assist them, had it wanted to do so. But once again the Government made no move because it is not its policy to decentralise the responsibility.

I simply find the position ludicrous. All Governments talk so much about decentralisation. This Government is giving it lip service. It is absolutely ignoring one fundamental and basic aspect of decentralisation. Here is a Government service—a service of responsibility; of authority—which is completely and absolutely decentralised right throughout Western Australia and what is the Government doing to assist or enhance it? It is doing nothing; it is doing just the reverse because it proposes to centralise traffic control.

Let it be said by any Government speakers that the Liberal Party proposal will achieve the same result, let me say that that is not true. In fact, our proposal calls for co-operation, integration, and liaison, on the part of the Local Government Association, and all local authorities, town councils, and city councils throughout Western Australia. The services which would be combined with traffic control would, of course, still be located in the country districts, and located within the existing local government buildings and facilities. So, in fact, the process of decentralisation would be promoted under the Liberal Party proposals, and completely destroyed under the proposal of the Government.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I have been wondering where the newly-created Ministry of Traffic Safety will fit into all this.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: It seems to me that whenever I talk to you, you are wondering.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Is that so?

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: He has a lot to wonder about.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Mr. Deputy President, if I may continue to make my speech amongst these interjections I will be very grateful. With regard to the question of decentralisation—and I say the authority and responsibility is well decentralised now—I would like to ask the Minister, through you, Mr. Deputy President, what will be the nature of the decentralisation of licensing and traffic control facilities in country areas in the event of this legislation being passed? Are we to understand that in every district where there is presently a local authority with or without its own traffic inspectors there will be licensing centres in the future under police traffic control?

The Hon. J. Dolan: Not all of them.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: In other words, my assumption on this will prove to be correct; that is, that licensing centres will be created only at certain major towns. Once again, this means considerable inconvenience will be caused to people in the country. They will have to travel further to make inquiries and to arrange for their licensing, etc. In other words, again it is a retrograde step because the convenience of country people will be further destroyed. This is one of my main objections to this legislation.

It may be said that many of these matters are administrative and that they may be improved, but I will recount to the House two case histories which have come to my attention in recent weeks.

The first came to my notice last weekend and it concerns a person from the country who wished to obtain a permit for an overwidth load. He went to his local licensing authority—under police control—and was told, "I am sorry, we cannot issue you with a permit. You will have to go to the metropolitan area." The gentleman then went to the metropolitan area—I think to Midland, although I am not sure.

The Hon. J. Dolan: From where?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: From the country—the Pinjarra area. He applied there for a permit and once again was told he could not get one. He told the officers that he had spent a great amount of time looking for a place to obtain a permit and that he did not have much time at his disposal. They were good enough to phone the central office to find out where the gentleman could obtain an overwidth permit. The officers at the central office said that the only way to get a permit was for the gentleman to present himself personally at the central office. The gentleman said he could not do that because it was much too inconvenient.

He simply wished to take home a grain tank on the back of a truck, and by this time he was quite wrathful. He saw a

friend of his and told him about his problem. His friend said, "Don't waste any more time; just go to a local authority which has a licensing function and they will give you a permit." The gentleman did so and received a permit within a matter of minutes. Once again, this demonstrates the inconvenience associated with a large bureaucratic organisation.

The other case I wish to recount has already been drawn to the attention of the Minister and for his information I would say that I have received some satisfaction in the form of a considerable degree of apology by the Acting Commissioner of Police both to me and the person concerned. The gentleman in question bought a vehicle in the city 12 months ago and carried out some alterations, for which he submitted the appropriate documents. A month later the vehicle license expired so he took it to his local licensing centre—the Murray licensing centre—and relicensed the vehicle. He applied for a concession and was granted a license.

Subsequently he was advised by the central office in the metropolitan area that he had been undercharged by \$16 and, in addition to that, the engine number of the vehicle was incorrect. He said, "Everything is in order. I paid the correct amount according to the tare weight of the vehicle, which has been changed and is shown on the documents. Furthermore, you are misreading the engine number. I have given you the correct number." However, that was not sufficient for the central office because the gentleman then received a further letter which told him to pay the extra \$16 and please attend to the matter of the engine number.

The gentleman then wrote to the Commissioner of Police and received no acknowledgement or reply; but he did receive another reminder from the Traffic Branch. He then wrote to a superintendent of traffic and registered the letter. He received a receipt for the letter, so he knew that it reached its destination, but he received no satisfaction regarding his query. He went to the traffic office in Perth and said, "I want to clear up this business; it is clearly a misunderstanding. I have already written to the commissioner and to a superintendent, and although months have gone past I have received no reply." I have the permission of the gentleman concerned to state in this House the reaction he received at the traffic office. The officer said, "So you wrote a letter. We don't take any notice of correspondence up here."

I am sorry, Mr. Deputy President, that I must relate that sort of thing to the House, but it is important because it is typical of the treatment and the inconvenience the people in country areas have to put up with. Subsequently the gentleman got in touch with me because he was concerned about what would happen to

him and was expecting a summons. I wrote to the commissioner but did not receive a reply until I passed the matter on to the Minister. For the information of the Minister, I would say that we have now received an apology from the Acting Commissioner of Police. However, it is now the 22nd August, 1972, and this affair started in November, 1971.

The Hon. J. Dolan: Probably if you had sent it to me in November, 1971, it would have been fixed up by the end of the month.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The gentleman concerned happens to know me personally, but even so he waited for a long time before he thought it necessary to contact his member of Parliament. I admit that this could have been the result of a slip-up in the system, and that such things do happen; nevertheless, how many more such instances might have occurred in which the people concerned do not know a member of Parliament sufficiently well to put the matter before him? Surely this is important. That is a further matter I wished to discuss; the question of convenience to the public.

The next point I wish to mention is to me also of major importance; that is, the employment of traffic inspectors. Last year I asked the Minister a question regarding these officers and how they were to be re-employed. The Minister was good enough to give me the information I sought. In his second reading speech the Minister read at some length from the report of the interdepartmental committee's recommendations, but at no time did he indicate what are the proposals for the employment of present local authority traffic inspectors. He did not say whether all of those recommendations will be adopted by the Police Department, but in reply to an interjection by Mr. MacKinnon he said—and this is recorded on page 2350 of the current *Hansard*—

The honourable member would have found that this was mentioned later on in my notes had he been following. Mr. MacKinnon then interjected and said—

I was following carefully.

Mr. Dolan continued—

In a voluntary takeover the Police Department has honoured every undertaking given.

I wonder what those undertakings were. If we are to assume that the undertakings would be in line with the recommendations of the interdepartmental committee, then I think we need a little more explanation. I just do not think that is the situation.

As has been mentioned already in this debate—and I think it was Mr. Clive Griffiths in particular who referred to this—one of the recommendations of the committee is that all existing traffic inspectors

be appointed, if they so desire, as special traffic constables within the Police Department, subject to certain provisos. The first proviso is—

That the induction requirements of the Commissioner of Police in regard to character alone are met.

In other words, apart from retiring age, etc., that is the only requirement. I wonder whether in fact that is the situation; that local authority traffic officers will be appointed as special traffic constables on the consideration of character and integrity alone. If it is, I would like the Minister to refer to a letter written by the Commissioner of Police to the Secretary of the Police Union on the 2nd February, 1972, in relation to the employment of these traffic officers.

That letter is contained in the March issue of *The Police News*. The particular point in the letter is in relation to the employment of officers. It says that the traffic inspectors taken over will have to meet all normal requirements of police inductees, except that the age limit will be raised to 45 years. That is a very relevant and a tremendously important aspect to traffic inspectors. We understand that the limit for normal inductees into the Police Force is 30 years of age, but for the purpose of takeover the limit will be extended to 45 years of age. I quote from the letter published in the official organ of the Police Union—

A Traffic Inspector must meet with all the normal requirements of a Police inductee except that the age limit will be extended to 45 years.

In effect, he will be required to sit for and pass the Entrance Examination and meet the physical, medical and character requirements.

As he will be inducted to be a duly appointed Police Officer with all the powers and responsibilities of that office, he should, if at all possible, pass through the normal Academy training course with other inductees.

If a Traffic Inspector desires employment with the Force and cannot meet the foregoing requirements, he could possibly qualify for a position as a Civilian Vehicle Examiner.

So, there is an opportunity for the employment of a traffic inspector elsewhere in the Police Department, but not necessarily in the category for which one would assume from the second reading speech of the Minister he would be inducted; that is, to deal with road safety and traffic control. This should be made abundantly clear.

We could well presume that a traffic inspector, having met the character requirement, irrespective of his age will be absorbed into the Police Force; but such is not to be the case. An age limit of 45 years is to be placed on his induction. This is of very great importance to traffic inspectors throughout the country.

Finally I refer again to this question of decentralisation. I think it is of sufficient importance for me to labour it just a little. The other questions of road safety, traffic control, and the road toll are tremendously important; and they have been dealt with by other speakers at great length and in some detail.

As a member representing a country province—and I am sure this goes for all other country members—what I am concerned about is that we should not just be expected to accept some parochial attitude. On the question of registration plates the Minister said that some country local authorities did not want to lose their present identification. The Minister suggested that this was for sentimental reasons and that one could not give too much acknowledgment to that point of view, in view of the far greater and overriding importance of road and traffic safety. I suggest to the Minister that this is not just a question of sentiment. It happens to be very important to me that I have a certain number, because throughout my province the people have come to recognise the number and I have held it for 20 years. It is important for me professionally to retain it.

The Hon. J. Dolan: You could put your name on it—N. McNeill, M.L.C.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I could do that, but it is not my registration plate. If this question of the retention of a particular registration plate is based on sentiment, then one might ask why ministerial cars have special number plates—UDG007, UDG008, and UDG009.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: Why have you not queried that in the past 12 years?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Because this situation has not arisen before. If the Minister is asking me why I have not raised it before, I would point out that, in fact, I raised it when the Brand Government was in office and the takeover was being done on a voluntary basis. In company with other Liberal members I went through the Police Department to inspect the system that was in operation right from the front counter almost to the end of the system.

I have never changed my view that it is possible for a local identity number plate to be preserved. If it is possible for ministerial cars, irrespective of the type being used, to maintain their distinctive and easily recognised number plates, then it should be possible for other members of the community to retain their identity plates.

The Hon. J. Dolan: My car has been changed a number of times, and each time I got a different number plate. That did not worry me.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Perhaps it does not worry the Minister, but it does happen to be important—not just from a senti-

mental point of view—in country areas. If the argument that this does not fit into the computer system is valid, then I wonder how the licensing authority gets on in New South Wales; because I understand that in New South Wales and some other States it is possible for a person to retain a particular number plate.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: You started off by mentioning the ministerial situation; and as you realise, this is very temporary.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: It is temporary for the present Ministers.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: Indisputably so, and so it was before, and so it was in the lifetime of their forefathers.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: That is correct. If a system is to be preserved, surely it should be preserved not in one sphere but in other spheres as well. In my view the argument that it does not fit in with computerisation is not valid, because in New South Wales a person can purchase a particular number plate, and in that State I suppose there are five times as many motor vehicles registered as there are in Western Australia. The cost of a special number plate is a few dollars over and above the normal rate, but a person is able to obtain a special prefix. This apparently does not interfere with the computer system in that State. I therefore reject the argument that has been raised. What it really amounts to is that the method proposed will save certain officers a little extra work, and ensure they are not put to some trouble to accommodate the people.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: It might create another job for one or two officers.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I go back to the question of decentralisation. I regard it as being a major point. I do not believe that if the licensing authorities are disbanded in the country centres, with the police taking over traffic control, they will ever be replaced. Surely at present we have enough problems in trying to maintain populations, areas of responsibility, and centres of authority throughout the countryside; and we should be prepared, even at the expense of a little sacrifice, to preserve this sphere of decentralisation which is mature and well developed in Western Australia.

The Hon. J. Dolan: The Police Department is probably the most decentralised department of the State.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: As a Police Department I would not dispute that. As a matter of fact I would like to see it decentralise a little further. As the Minister has been told, we would like more police officers in country centres. If they are appointed there they and their families will be able to participate in community affairs. I think the process should be promoted.

All in all, proposals which we regard as being a more satisfactory alternative have been put forward. I say they are more satisfactory, because the Minister has indicated that very many of the things which the Liberal Party has proposed are now the subject of consideration and contemplation by the Government. I refer to matters such as the restructuring of the Police Department, the creation of a ministry of road safety, and the establishment of some sort of organisation for licensing and registration of vehicles. Presumably these are steps which will fragment police control, but they will bring about a new organisation. What I am saying is that rather than see the possibility of benefits being lost in a situation like this, the Minister will be well advised to contemplate a little more seriously the alternative proposal that has been put forward during this debate.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. F. R. White.

BILLS (2): RECEIPT AND FIRST READING

1. Hairdressers Registration Act Amendment Bill.

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs (Chief Secretary), read a first time.

2. Bulk Handling Act Amendment Bill.

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by The Hon. W. F. Willesee (Leader of the House), read a first time.

House adjourned at 9.58 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 22nd August, 1972

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

BASSENDAN No. 2 TOWN PLANNING SCHEME

Subsidy for Deep Sewerage: Removal of Petition from the Table of the House

THE SPEAKER (Mr. NORTON): I have studied a petition presented to the House by the member for Swan on Thursday, the 17th August, 1972, and I find it is not in accordance with Standing Orders.

I therefore direct that it be removed from the Table of the House.

Personal Explanation

Mr. BRADY: Have I your permission, Mr. Speaker, to make a statement?

The SPEAKER: The member for Swan seeks permission to make a statement regarding the petition. If there is a dissentient voice permission will not be granted.

As there is no dissentient voice, leave is granted.

Mr. BRADY: Mr. Speaker, late on Wednesday night last I was handed a petition signed by a number of citizens of Bassendean, and it related to the No. 2 planning scheme. On Thursday, prior to the sitting of the House, I hurriedly checked the petition. It appeared to be correctly drawn up, and I presented the petition to the House in good faith.

It now seems that the petition was contrary to Standing Orders, and I apologise to you, Sir, and the members of the Legislative Assembly for the error in submitting it.

BULK HANDLING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Standing Orders Suspension

MR. J. T. TONKIN (Melville—Premier) [4.36 p.m.]: I move, without notice—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable a Bill for "An Act to amend the Bulk Handling Act, 1967-1971 to empower the Treasurer to guarantee the repayment of moneys borrowed by Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited, and for purposes incidental thereto," to be introduced without notice and passed through all its stages in any one sitting day.

The reason for moving this motion is that the matter is one of considerable urgency. Some publicity has already been given to the fact that Co-operative Bulk Handling has raised a substantial sum of money, under Government guarantee, for the purposes of carrying out major works.

Those engaged in the negotiations have raised a point which is a legal technicality. As one has to satisfy the people who are lending the money the Government has offered to amend the Bulk Handling Act for the purpose of removing the technical difficulty.

This is not a course which I would ordinarily follow, and I am only taking this step because of the extreme urgency of the matter and so that negotiations can be completed as quickly as possible.

The SPEAKER: This motion requires an absolute majority and if there is a dissentient voice I will have to divide the House. Is there a dissentient voice? There being no dissentient voice, I declare the question carried.

Question thus passed.