

Legislative Council

Thursday, the 13th April, 1978

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

SHEEP EXPORTS

Industrial Dispute: Urgency Motion

THE PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths): Honourable members, I have received the following letter addressed to me—

Dear Mr President,

Standing Order Number 62 provides for the moving of an adjournment motion for the purpose of debating some matter of urgency.

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order Number 62, I wish to advise you of my desire to move for the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing the role of the Government in the live sheep export dispute and, in particular:

the Government's failure to initiate action aimed at settling the dispute; its encouragement of confrontation instead of mediation; and the consequences of its lack of action, viz., encouraging widespread industrial unrest across the nation.

Yours sincerely,

D. K. DANS, M.L.C.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

THE HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [2.37 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 7.30 p.m. on Friday, the 14th April.

The PRESIDENT: This motion requires the support of four members.

Four members having indicated their support,

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Mr President, I have refrained from moving this motion until today and I am sure the Government expected me to move it before today. One of the reasons I have waited until today is that the situation had become so critical that I did not think it would have been in the best interests of the people generally, not only in Western Australia but also in the rest of Australia, to move a motion in this Chamber and open a full-scale debate without in some

manner or form exacerbating the position. As I see the situation today, it has cooled somewhat but not completely.

Our founding fathers, by way of the Constitution, were very well aware of the procedures which were to be adopted for the prevention of the settlement of industrial disputes. That became a part of the Constitution of this country; the setting up of conciliation and arbitration commissions that could be used equally by both sides where a dispute was pending or, for that matter, when a dispute was in progress. All of the States of Australia have similar laws. When a dispute extends over the border from one State into another, as the current dispute recently did, then the Commonwealth law takes over and provides those things I have previously spoken about.

If one looks at the situation here in Western Australia when this dispute was pending with the meatworkers on the one hand, and unfortunately on the other hand with members of the farming community, one finds that the Government of Western Australia took no action whatsoever to have the matter referred to an appropriate industrial tribunal or a mediator so that the parties could be brought together. Maybe—and I say maybe—such action would have prevented a dispute that in the first instance embraced meatworkers, the Government, and perhaps the members of the farming community.

As a consequence of that, a situation developed in which the original cause for disputation spilled out and over onto the waterfront in three of the ports in Western Australia. Now it has become a nation-wide dispute with hold-ups to shipping in all the main Australian ports, and with serious dislocation to shipping.

To the best of my knowledge this problem goes back some four years. It was not unexpected as it had been around the place for some four years. To avoid quoting short reports from different newspapers, I believe the best way to give the background to the dispute is to quote from yesterday's edition of *The West Australian*. This outlines fairly accurately the history of this very sad situation. The report is headed, "Row goes back to market snags" and it reads—

The live-sheep export row had its industrial roots in the problems experienced in meat export markets more than four years ago, leading to retrenchments at WA abattoirs.

Since then two years of drought has worsened the situation and caused an increasingly serious shortage of cattle and sheep for slaughter.

This has progressively led to more and more retrenchments of abattoir workers.

In September 1976 there was a strike of 300 meat-workers at Robb Jetty over the dismissal of 60 slaughtermen for their refusal to lift a restriction on the daily tally of lambs.

The men wanted the work to be averaged out during the off season when some workers were stood down as the volume of work declined.

A few days later about 100 angry meat-workers sat or lay on the Fremantle railway at North Quay to prevent a trainload of 16 000 live sheep being loaded into the Clausen Steamship Company's Atlas Pioneer.

The ban on the Atlas Pioneer was lifted after a week. The Robb Jetty Abattoir strike lasted for three weeks and ended when the sacked men were reinstated without loss of entitlements.

The retrenchment of 52 workers at the Bunbury beef exports works in May last year, bringing WA's total abattoir retrenchments to about 500, led to the barricading of stock carriers to prevent 10 500 live sheep being taken into the port for shipping to the Persian Gulf.

By June about 1 500 meat-workers had been laid off over a period of eight weeks because of the shortage of livestock for slaughter.

But by then a voluntary restraint programme had been worked out by three committees dealing with live-sheep exports.

There lies the genesis of the whole dispute. I do not intend to go into the accusations that have flowed backwards and forwards on this matter about how many live sheep should be exported in relation to the number slaughtered. At the bottom of this dispute is a real human problem. On the one hand the meatworkers are trying desperately to save their jobs. They are fearful of unemployment; they want to work. Fear breeds some very strange attitudes in the hearts and minds of men. On the other hand the rural producers have been beset with a number of very bad years, low prices, and more recently fire and flood. They deserve our sympathy. They want to export their sheep to obtain some relief from pressing financial and other problems they are beset with.

In essence the problems of the meatworkers are in fact no different from the problems of the rural producers. They are all members of

this community who are fearful about their future. As I said earlier, when fear takes over people will do anything.

We all know what happened. There was a confrontation. A line was drawn, and no-one would retreat. If the Government is sincere when it says it wanted to prevent what happened, it should have stepped in and at least ordered some mediation or conciliation. The Government should have tried to get the parties talking together and in this way the people concerned could have been informed of all the problems involved.

I do not expect to stand here in this Chamber, wave a magic wand, and come up with a formula to clear up the situation. However, because of the Western Australian Government's lack of initiative and its lack of any positive action, we now have the most serious industrial situation that has confronted this State—if not the whole of Australia—for nearly 70 years.

One could say that the Government should have done this, that, and the other thing, but I do not want to preach to the Government. I say simply that machinery was available if the Government had wanted to use it; and the use of this machinery at least would have mitigated the terrible situation that has now arisen. Where we had one dispute, we now have a dispute in respect of another group of people who were not involved originally. Indeed, the dispute has now spread beyond the limits of the borders of the State of Western Australia, and on that fact alone the Government stands condemned.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: Wasn't there any problem in South Australia?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: There are no winners; the country as a whole will lose.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I would like to say to you, Mr Dans, that we should not interject on your speech. However, I do not want you to take the lack of interjections as indicating any agreement with you. We think this is a serious problem.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: In answer to the Leader of the House, I certainly would not take the lack of interjections to indicate any lack of interest, and certainly I would not take the lack of interjections as indicating agreement.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I think we should listen to you—it is a serious problem—provided you do not take it as a lack of interest.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: It is now a most serious problem as it has not only national connotations, but also it could have international

repercussions because of the maritime unions and the stevedoring unions with their international links.

Because of the lack of action all members heard many untrue statements being made. I have been privy to letters received from shipping companies, but I will not quote them here. After the companies allowed their ships to be loaded and immediately those ships were out of earshot of Fremantle, statements were made to the waterside workers to this effect, "Look, we were ordered to do this. Please leave us and other ships belonging to our fleets alone."

Members must understand that when shipping is dislocated it is not just a question of a ship being delayed for two or three days; the whole situation starts to leapfrog. Sometimes the slightest dislocation can put back five or six months the delivery of goods from overseas.

That is the situation we are in today and at this stage there does not seem to me to be a great deal we can do about adjusting the secondary part of the dispute, a dispute which now is with the marine and stevedoring unions which, in the first place, had no part in this dispute and in fact wanted no part in it.

I have already outlined to the House in very broad terms what I think the Government should have done; but it did not stop there. The Government then entered the dispute as a third party, by promoting confrontation, by amending regulations, or gazetting new regulations to do certain things, and then hiding behind those regulations. Mr President, I intend to refer fairly carefully to some notes, because it is an important issue.

If one ignores the reasons for the dispute and deals simply with the Government's role in it, several things become apparent. They are as follows—

- (a) The Government is resorting to what can only be described as legislative heavy-handedness to control disputes. The last time there was a major dispute in this State over flour milling the Government passed an emergency Flour Bill. In this case the Government has passed emergency legislation.

I might say that without giving proper thought to the matter, I think the situation is out of control. The effect of both of these actions has been to make workers suddenly become involved in illegal activities which formerly were legal.

The Government is resolved to solving a dispute by legislating away the rights of the people on one side of the dispute. In every case this has been the workers and not the employers.

The principles of mediation and conciliation upon which settling of industrial disputes has been based for years have been thrown out the window by the present Government.

I think it is important to look at some of the history associated with industrial disputes. I spoke once before in this Chamber about the last time volunteer labour was used on the Fremantle wharves. I do not want to use any extreme language, because I believe some of us, who have been working very hard to get this dispute solved, now will have to turn our attention to going back some 10 years and rebuilding bridges which had been steadily built during that time, but which were smashed down overnight by the lack of action on the part of the Government.

Several hundred years of battle between capital and labour have shown that nothing has ever been gained by confrontation and the wielding of the big stick. Members can go back through the entire history of this country or of other countries, and the results will always be the same.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: The same as when Chifley put the Army into the coalfields of New South Wales.

The Hon. D. K. DANC: I am glad of the interjection from Mr Pike. I well recall the 1949 coal strike and the dilemma in which the Prime Minister found himself. I would say that, having made that decision and not retreating from it, it was probably one of the major causes of Mr Chifley's sudden death.

However, it was not done like this Government's action in the latest industrial dispute; every effort was made in those days to bring the parties together. In addition to that, with all Chifley's best intentions, the damage done to the coalfields in terms of wrecked machinery and the wrecking of the coal seams they had been working took years to repair.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: What about the wharves?

The Hon. D. K. DANC: I do not know of any wreckage to the wharves.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: As I recall, Curtin had the forces on the wharves. Can you tell us about that?

The PRESIDENT: Order, please!

The Hon. D. K. DANC: No, Mr President, this is such an important issue I am not going to be deviated from what I want to say. We are adjourning some time on Friday, so we have any amount of time.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It has not been passed yet.

The Hon. D. K. DANKS: Mr Pike raises a very important question. Yes, we had a wartime situation where troops were used on the wharves. I well recall it. To use the popular waterfront vernacular, the ships were "stuck up". The ships were there, waiting to be loaded and unloaded, and the situation required immediate action. The Curtin Government did exactly as Mr Pike said; it called in the forces. However, given a similar set of circumstances, I do not know of any Government or Parliament in the world which would not have done exactly the same thing. Let us be frank about this matter; it was a long time ago.

For cheap, narrow political gain, it is clear that the present Government is prepared to throw away the principles under which disputes are solved. The Government has an obvious willingness to hide behind narrow legal frameworks which it sets up, not as a means of showing strong positive action towards solving a dispute, but as a screen to hide from its real responsibility to solve a dispute.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Who wrote that?

The Hon. D. K. DANKS: I want Mr Baxter to listen. One could have very serious thoughts about this dispute. This was a dispute where the main people who were suffering were the people in rural areas. Of course, we know the Liberal Party gains most of its support from rural areas and wanted to be seen as the champion of the farmer and the primary producer. It is well known the Liberal Party wants to put the National Country Party out of existence and this was a perfect situation to demonstrate just how fine the Liberals were, and drive a further wedge between city and country workers; and, of course, at the same time to demonstrate they could do a better job for primary producers than the National Country Party ever knew how to do.

The Hon. T. Knight: You obviously did not listen to the debate between Mr Anthony and Mr Hawke the other night.

The Hon. D. K. DANKS: No, I did not.

The Hon. T. Knight: You would not be making those statements about the Liberal Party had you watched that programme.

The Hon. D. K. DANKS: I would never be happy with what was being done by the Liberal Party. Let us look at Liberal Party policy for 1977-1980. Under the heading "Industrial Relations" the following appears—

Overall, our basic theme in industrial relations can be found in team work—

In teamwork, mind you! It continues—

—co-operation, common sense, goodwill and a conscientious regard for the public interest.

That is the very thing this Government sought to disregard when it took action to amend the Fremantle Port Authority regulations; the public interest was totally disregarded. The policy continues—

To this end we will seek to win the support and active participation of the rank and file of union members in an effort to get back to the sensible approaches and thus defeat the ominous designs of the left-wing militants.

Any political party has a perfect right to propound policies and put them before the people and, if it is in Government, to endeavour to carry them out. That principle certainly has my support. That is the role of a political party; it is that party's right and, if elected to Government, its mandate. But can any person in the community say that course of action was followed on this occasion?

I had reason to go and listen to speakers at the rally in Fremantle.

The Hon. T. Knight: I can tell you they expressed a different opinion from that of the people who phoned me.

The Hon. D. K. DANKS: Mr President, it is clear Mr Knight still wants to promote the confrontation theme.

The Hon. T. Knight: We heard Mr Marks yesterday.

The Hon. D. K. DANKS: I am not responsible for what Mr Marks said. I heard him, but I am not defending what he said.

The Hon. T. Knight: You are defending what a rally said.

The Hon. D. K. DANKS: I am not. Mr Knight's faculty of hearing is almost equal to his lack of economic sense in how building societies work, bearing in mind he was a builder.

The Hon. T. Knight: You cannot even see what is right in front of your nose.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Do not get down to name calling.

The Hon. D. K. DANKS: I did not mention anyone by name.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Let us get on with the debate in a sensible manner.

The Hon. D. K. DANKS: Mr President, I am a paragon of virtue in here today. I did not want to deal with interjections.

It is impossible to reconcile the Government's actions of encouraging voluntary labour; of legislating to destroy picket lines; and of provoking and encouraging a nation-wide port strike with the basic theme of co-operation, common sense, goodwill, and a conscientious regard for the public interest.

Let me return to the rally. When I was there I saw people—and you, Mr President, would have some regard for the port area—from all sections of the waterfront including foreman stevedores, shed clerks, clerks, stevedore captains, and others who in the normal course of events would not be seen dead at such rallies, but they were there because tradition dies very hard.

On the last occasion when volunteers were used to work on the waterfront in 1919, not only were a number of people injured but one man was killed. It is a sad reflection that most of us live on legends. I do not suppose that any present-day port worker would have been around in those times, but they all know about that incident and they will remember it all their lives. They have a horror of the same thing taking place again.

People cannot say that in the realms of stevedoring, the Stevedoring Industry Authority has not introduced various methods for the performance of certain tasks which could have seriously dislocated the industry. The number of waterside workers has fallen from 2 700 to a figure of 1 100; and soon the number is to be reduced to 900. There is now fear of unemployment at the waterfront, and this matter was voiced at the rally.

I say without fear of equivocation that every member understands that fear, whether he be a country member representing the people involved on the other side of this dispute, or whether he be representing the meatworkers and the people I represent. At the risk of using a pun some people, like the police, became the meat in the sandwich.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: They have a right to administer the laws of this State.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: The Government must come to realise it cannot abdicate its responsibilities for industrial disputes by barricading itself with additional legislation. The natural result of legislation is that people are forced to act in a certain way, and are forced to do or not to do certain things.

The point I make is that the machinery was available to deal with this dispute. Not only that, but at that very time there were people within the meat industry among the employers

to help to resolve the dispute. I am led to believe that Metro Meat, which is a very good employer in terms of Australia-wide operations, was available. They could have been available to meet Mr Hawke in Adelaide on Thursday and Friday last in an endeavour to resolve this dispute. I do not know how Mr Hawke operates, but generally he is not called in to settle a dispute until the dispute is white hot.

The position is that agreement has been reached and the pickets have been withdrawn. I do not know whether the waterside workers are back at work.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: That is not right.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: The pickets have been withdrawn.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: That is not right.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I do not know whether the watersiders have returned to work.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: The ship has been loaded.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Are you not proud of that!

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Every good Western Australian is proud to see our exports being sent away.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Irrespective of the side of the House on which we sit, and whether or not we like it, there has always been a reluctance on the part of people to cross picket lines; that applies not only in Australia but in most countries. If one desires to research the matter one could bring to mind the dispute which occurred at Kwinana when the plumbers went back to work. Where are those plumbers now? It is a sad fact of history that when people are used to cross the picket lines, those using the people are the first ones to forget them. I think that is tragic.

If I may digress for a moment, it was only a few nights ago when the south-west and other parts of the State were ravaged by fire and flood; at that time all these petty differences of opinion were put behind.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Hardly petty.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: They started off being petty, but they ended up being serious. They were of concern to the people.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: The people were very concerned.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I am not saying they were not serious. What I am saying is that the Government has not done enough to try to resolve the dispute. Unfortunately there will be more of this type of action, as job opportunities diminish.

During this natural disaster the people were out fighting fires and bailing water from houses. I refer to farmers, workers, seamen, and the employees of the SEC who were battling the elements to restore power. That is indicative of the guts of our people.

The Hon. T. Knight: That happened overnight, and everyone was involved.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Where were the pickets during the cyclone?

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Doing their bit for the community.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Yes, on the wharf picketing.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: If that is the sort of contribution from the Minister then we are in for a dreadful time, because this will not be his last effort. There will be further problems when people are likely to lose their jobs. They have to be treated with sympathy and understanding. I have asked previously and I ask again: Do members opposite not think I have some sympathy and understanding for the farmers who want to send their sheep away? Of course I do. What I am maintaining is the sheep should have been sent away, and the Government should have used its good offices to resolve the dispute.

I recall the time when the Government agreed to include into the Industrial Arbitration Act the term "mediator". This is pertinent at the present time, and we could make use of the services of mediators who are *au fait* with both sides of the industry. Members cannot tell me there are no people in the meat industries and in the farmers' organisations who are *au fait* with both sides of the industry, and who could be available to overcome the present situation.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Did the AMIE union ask for mediators?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I do not think the AMIE union should have to ask for anything. The Government saw how things were proceeding, and could have acted. It did not take the Government very long to change the regulations of the Fremantle Port Authority.

If the Government is really sincere in wanting to prevent this kind of incident from taking place, it must make itself more aware of what is going on; it must be ever ready to move and talk. By continuing to create more legislation to prevent people in other areas from safeguarding their livelihood every time such a situation arises, the Government is guilty of doing the very things it has accused what it terms the militant unions

of doing; that is, the use of industrial muscle and bashing. In this instance the Government is doing exactly the same thing.

I am sincere when I say much damage has been done in one area. I am talking about the effects of the dispute which has still to be resolved. I do not like hearing people from interstate saying that ships of the Clausen Line will be blackballed, or ships of the Cunard Line will be blackballed. They represent a very vital link in the shipping industry of this country.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: They will all be blackballed.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I am taken aback by the interjection of Mr Gayfer. I say again that I am very unhappy when I see people making such extravagant statements. That is the last thing we want to see happening in this country. If I can do anything to prevent that kind of action I will do it.

The point I make is that we are in a situation where instead of looking at the original dispute, which to my way of thinking Mr Hawke seemed to have resolved, we now have another dispute; and this latter dispute has nothing to do with the meatworkers or farmers. This dispute has arisen as a result of the inactivity of the Western Australian Government and its failure to use its good offices to try to stop the dispute at that level.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: That is a strange sort of theory.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: It is not as strange as the member's interjection. I believe that, despite the damage which has already been done, given the goodwill of the people and maybe using some of the verbiage of the Liberal Party in its campaign speech, if we move quickly enough we can patch up those differences and return to a situation of normality.

The activities of the Western Australian Government seem to be designed to widen industrial confrontation and to make the situation as difficult as possible, by involving the Police Force, albeit reluctantly. I did not hear the officers of the waterfront union criticise the police yesterday. The police had a job to do, they were ordered to do it, and in the port area we tried very hard to comply. However, there was one activity of the Police Force which I think I may take up with the Minister, and that is that the pilot boat crew was not ordered; no-one knew whether it would go to sea and the police launch, in my opinion, engaged in an action of strike breaking in that it took the pilot off the ship.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: It did, did it?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: To the best of my knowledge it did. However, in all fairness, I will seek out the truth.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You said it did.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I am very sure it did, but I will go even further and have another look to see if that statement is correct.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Good.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I would not want to say anything that would exacerbate the position.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: But you are making allegations, are you not?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: No; I am not making allegations at all.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: But you don't know whether you are right or wrong.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Does the member want me to say I know for sure? Does he want it to go into *Hansard*? Does he want it to go into the Press? I am trying to play it down.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You would not think so.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I can ferret out every detail, chapter and verse, and tell members opposite what was said and what was not said. I can give individual cases. Let us quote the letters from the shipping companies. Let us quote the alleged statements from Captain Noble. Let us quote the statements from everyone trying to get out from under. This is the most amazing set of circumstances I have seen. No-one is responsible. Everyone says, "I did not do it. It was him. It was not me; it was him".

The Federal Minister shows a surprising and much greater degree of common sense in his remarks than does the Minister for Labour and Industry in this State. The Federal Minister has asked that the charges against the pickets at Fremantle and Albany be withdrawn in order that the dispute may be settled. Despite those requests by Mr Street, the Government has not seen fit to act.

As I understand it the settlement of the dispute—and I am saying "as I understand it"; it may be different—which was arrived at in Adelaide was reached on the basis that all of the charges against the meatworkers would be withdrawn. I think one of the major charges against Metro Meat in South Australia comes under section 45 (b) of the new part of the legislative machinery which the Federal Government set up in order to do a bit more union bashing of its own when all else failed. But none of the meat-

workers' representatives from Western Australia were present at that meeting and the basis of the settlement was that all of the charges would be withdrawn. All of the charges would be withdrawn and those which had not been withdrawn would be fixed up.

If I understand the Minister for Labour and Industry in this State correctly, he says the charges against the pickets cannot be withdrawn. In fact that is not right. The charges can be withdrawn; they can be adjourned *sine die* in which case, of course, the stoppage by the meatworkers will cease.

I was very interested to hear some comments on the radio this morning. I believe it was on 6PM. Some statements were made which I should like to quote. I shall hand them to *Hansard*. I heard some amazing statements, because I know Mr Street is very anxious to get the situation back to normal. The dispute with the meatworkers, apart from the area I have just mentioned, appears to be going reasonably well. What the final result will be I do not know.

The Hon. T. Knight: Do you believe that a meatworker who was racing to get to a picket line on time and got pinched for speeding should have his charges dropped?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: This is a very serious business. I do not see what that has to do with it. No, of course I do not.

The Hon. T. Knight: Well, you are asking us to drop the lawful proceedings.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I do think you should check on the basis of the agreement between Mr Hawke and Sir Samuel, because I think you may have it in a manner which is not strictly correct. I should like you to elaborate, but I think up to the present time you have been a little off beam.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Of course, when things were white hot Mr Fitzgibbons flew over to the East and both he and Mr Hawke knew of the seriousness of the situation. They were prepared to move to solve the dispute rather than sit down like the Western Australian Government has done and do nothing about it.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You would think they might have come here, because this is where the dispute is.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I should like to quote some of the statements I referred to earlier. They read as follows—

Bob Hawke says he believes Australia's meat industry will be back to normal when the nationwide strike ends on Sunday.

In the meantime Labour Minister, Bill Grayden, has flatly refused a request by his Federal counterpart Tony Street to drop charges against picketers who were arrested by police at Fremantle and Albany. Mr Grayden said the matter was now between the Fremantle Port Authority and police.

I would not want to say what the Fremantle Port Authority would do. To continue—

Mr Grayden was unavailable for comment this morning so we asked the Premier, Sir Charles Court, if he would consider dropping the charges.

This is a very good example of how we get good industrial relations. Sir Charles Court has this to say—

"Is there any good reason why they shouldn't be dropped, but I just remind everybody that the Government doesn't make charges against these people. The police, in the ordinary course of their business and without any direction from the Government, lay charges against people who break the law."

Notwithstanding that the law had been changed a short time earlier. To continue—

"It is as simple as that. Then why is it different in the case of an industrial person who claims that it is part of his industrial activity? He's breaking the law and if he is breaking the law well surely the police do the right thing when they lay a charge and that charge should be proceeded with."

"Sir Charles, the Federal Minister, Mr Street, has requested that the charges be dropped. Don't you think this would take the heat out of the situation?"

"Well I haven't had any representations from Mr Street, but if he rang me about it I would tell him to mind his own business."

That is really amazing. The Government gets into a situation like this, advances to the line, but is not prepared to give a bit. How far does the Government expect the other parties to the dispute to withdraw?

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You do not think the magistrate hearing the case might not say the same thing to Sir Charles, do you?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I have had some little experience on the waterfront and the coalition Government in Western Australia once had a very good Minister for Police. I am not suggesting it does not have a good Minister now. However, the particular former Minister to whom I refer was a National Country Party member

and he was most approachable. We run into a few hassles on the waterfront and without going through the Labor Party which was in opposition at that time, I was able to contact that particular Minister in the company of the police and others and, on one or two occasions, we avoided what could have been a very serious situation. I simply make that comment in passing.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Just in passing also, if the pressure on Ben Chifley brought about his heart attack, I wonder whether in fact the pressure on Charlie Perkins brought about his.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Mr President, I particularly admire the Leader of the Government in this House. He knows very well I am not referring to Charlie Perkins. He wants me to say it was not Charlie Perkins and by a process of elimination he will discover who I am talking about. In fact it was Mr Craig.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Aren't you the smart fellow!

The Hon. D. K. DANS: No; is the Leader of the House not a smart fellow? I have tried not to over-react. What do we have now in Australia? Let us recapitulate. We had a festering sore for some years that finally developed into this very unhappy situation—to say the least, a very unhappy situation. Once more I should like to say that I understand the fear and desperation of the meatworkers. I understand the frustrations of the people who own the sheep.

I am led to believe that a country not very far from here—New Zealand—foresaw what would happen in the Middle East and has taken a completely different approach to the supplying of sheep to the Middle East; it has built its own chillers over there. I do not know whether or not that is correct. If the Government of this State wanted to do something about obtaining a good price for live sheep it would set up an authority to acquire and sell them.

Mr Lewis faints at the very mention of orderly marketing or a situation which would give a better return to the grower. People in the rural areas tell me they get \$20-odd for a sheep on the local market but in Iran or wherever it is they get \$60 or \$70. There could be another \$5 or \$6 for the grower under an orderly marketing scheme. Then perhaps we would not have the kind of situation we have now.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: You are not fishing, are you?

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I think he may be, but he is only coming up with tiddlers.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I am not fishing.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Not much!

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I am just saying quite sincerely that if there were an authority perhaps we would not reach this kind of situation. I do not know; the Government parties are the experts in this field.

What I am concerned about—and it is the reason for this motion—is that a dispute has smouldered for four years when there was every likelihood of its being resolved within 48 hours. The Government which had done nothing reacted in its normal manner by changing regulations relating to the right of entry to the wharf, which did not have to come to Parliament. What did we see the other day? There were about 300 police down at the wharf. As someone said, it was just as well "bank robbers anonymous" did not have a field day; all the police were down at the wharf.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: That is an inaccurate statement.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Surely the Government, using its good offices through the channels available to it, could whisper in someone's ear to withdraw those charges. It should say that in future it will use every endeavour to stop any dispute getting to this stage. I think every dispute is capable of being resolved if we are patient enough and do something about it. I can understand the farmers. In four years they must have been getting very impatient.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: You have twice said the machinery was available but you have not said how the situation could have been avoided.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Mr Gayfer is usually a very good listener. I said the machinery was available to bring the parties together. I do not know whether it would have resolved the dispute but it may have done. I would never presuppose anything; I would not presuppose I will reach home tonight. The machinery existed but nothing was done. The extreme thing was done by the Government, as on previous occasions, and it was done deliberately in order to provoke confrontation. That confrontation is now not contained within Western Australia.

The Hon. T. Knight: What did the strike provoke? Confrontation on the other side.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Perhaps members opposite could take some lessons. The Government should use its good offices on all occasions.

Let us ensure that in future this does not happen again; that the Government takes the final bit of heat out of the situation.

I do not know the basis of the agreement reached by Mr Hawke and the people involved in exporting meat to the Middle East. It appears to me the magnificent freezer installed at Fremantle recently, which there were high hopes of filling up with meat, and the other one being built in Iran will be lying idle for a considerable time before they can be used to capacity.

Do not let us try to fight one another. Let us resolve that, having got this far, we will try to stitch up all the problems that have been created. They are not all here in Western Australia. I am sure we will be able to get things back to normal in the Port of Fremantle. Many extravagant claims have been made. I hope they go away for the good of this country. We all know that the history of any country proves beyond a shadow of doubt that confrontation solves nothing. We can go back to the Master and Servant Act, the "dog collar" Acts relating to the wharves, the second preference to seamen, Jacob Johnson and Tom Walsh. All those events over the years have come to nothing.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer interjected.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Let me say I want to dissociate myself from that remark. Perhaps in the context I overreacted to it. The fact is it is on the front page of the newspaper, and I hope, as part of the conciliatory process of endeavouring to normalise the situation, we will see that statement repudiated. That is the kind of extravagant language to which I refer. Do members think Australians would react in that manner? I will do everything in my power, inside and outside this place, to ensure they do not, just as I will do everything in my power to ensure things are normalised on the Fremantle waterfront.

Last but not least we have the role of the police. I feel sorry for the police. In a democratic society the most important man and organisation in the community must surely be the Commissioner of Police and his Police Force. They must be respected and looked up to. While it has been said they are only doing their job, Mr Knight and other members have received plenty of letters and telephone calls, as I have, about the "boys in blue" being called upon to carry out functions which are rightly those of the Government in the terms of the Industrial Arbitration Act.

THE HON. D. W. COOLEY (North-East Metropolitan) [3.27 p.m.]: I support the motion. It gives us the opportunity to discuss the events which have taken place in the last few days with respect to the industrial disputation on the wharf and in the meat industry. We on this side of the House would be failing in our duty to the people we represent if we did not highlight some of the injustices and outright acts of treachery which have taken place in the last week in Western Australia.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Mr Cooley—

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I will not be put off. The Leader of the House indulges in personal accusations.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That sort of language is what we come to expect.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I do not care what the Leader of the House says about it. I will not be bowed by his will. His Government is not bound by rules of ethics.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I will not be silenced by him.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The honourable member will resume his seat.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I do not care what happens. I will have my say and I will not be put off.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Will the honourable member resume his seat? I must remind members that the debates in this House have always taken place with the utmost of decorum being exercised, and I ask the honourable member to refrain from being interrupted by any interjections and to proceed with making his contribution to this debate.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: People who sit in the place you are in, Mr President, always look at me when they say those sorts of things in respect of the conduct of debate.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: They ought to look at the other side of the Chamber and the persecution that comes from there.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I had not been on my feet for one minute before that man interrupted.

Withdrawal of Remark

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask the honourable member to resume his seat. I am astounded at the outburst of the honourable member who accused the Chair when he ought to know that whilst I have occupied this position I have not done that. Indeed, my comments earlier were directed at giving him the utmost opportunity to proceed to make his comments. I take strong exception to the allegation that I singled him out particularly for criticism for the way the debate is going. I ask the honourable member to withdraw that allegation, or I will take further action.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Mr President, if I cast any aspersions on you in the heat of the moment then I withdraw them and sincerely apologise, because I know you are impartial. However, it is a fact that immediately certain people on this side of the Chamber attempt to make a contribution they are hounded by members on the other side and become subject to criticism from the Chair.

Debate Resumed

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: The reason this motion is before the House today is to enable members of the Labor Party to express their abhorrence at the events which have occurred in the industrial scene in this State over the past week; and the situation has been exacerbated by the Government. Without a doubt, everything the union movement has done in respect of this dispute—as is the case in every major dispute that has occurred in this State during the term of the present Government—has been wrong; there has never been a situation in which the unions have been right in a major dispute in the eyes of this Government, and when the Government has not taken sides. I refer in particular to the Minister for Labour and Industry who favours people on the side of the employers.

In this particular instance it was not my intention to criticise either the farmers or the meat workers; I think they both have a strong interest in respect of the dispute that has occurred. The farmers have been endeavouring to protect their interest in respect of the export of live sheep, and we are all aware of the difficulties experienced by farmers in recent times. On the other hand, the workers were endeavouring to protect their jobs. Workers have a God-given right to protect their occupational interests under any circumstances whatsoever.

Remember this, Mr President: it was not the workers or their union who destroyed the agreement made between the union and the farmers concerning the export of live sheep; that agreement was broken by the farmers who wanted to export live sheep *ad infinitum* under all circumstances. There may be good cause for farmers wanting to do that, and I do not criticise them for breaking the agreement if they thought it was in their best interests; possibly the agreement had expired in any case.

However, we had a dispute and it was a serious dispute. We had people trying to protect their own interests—something everyone is entitled to do. However, the events of the past week developed not so much on the actual issue of the strike, but on the matter of a very vital principle, and there has never been a more vital principle involved in respect of industrial relations than that involved on the wharves this week.

The farmers' ultimate action in respect of going onto the wharves and breaking picket lines has brought untold damage to this State and to the nation as a whole. There may have been another way of doing it, because the day the farmers crossed the picket lines a resolution of the dispute occurred in Adelaide, and if that situation had been allowed to continue in Adelaide the industrial chaos we saw in this State would not have occurred.

What is the future now for the industrial scene? I do not think the waterside workers will take this action lying down; repercussions will be felt right throughout the length and breadth of the land.

When we adjourned here on Tuesday night I went to my car. I did not switch on the radio; it came on automatically when I started the car; and the first thing I heard on the radio as I started the car was a news flash saying that Bob Hawke had agreed in Adelaide to a settlement of this dispute. In my long experience in industrial matters—and I have spent most of my adult life in this area in Western Australia—that was the first occasion on which I felt disappointed that an industrial dispute had been resolved, because I regarded it as a victory for "scabism". Every man who crossed the picket lines at Fremantle brought to himself the name of scab.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: That is your expression.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: It is my expression, and I know where Mr Masters stands on this issue. Every man who crossed the picket line branded himself as a scab. That was my reaction

to the settlement of the dispute, and it was the first time in my life that I was not relieved to hear the resolution of an industrial dispute.

The purpose of this resolution is to allow us to present to this Chamber our comments in respect of the attitude of the Government to this dispute. My principal worry is that we hear comments across the Chamber from people like Mr Masters in respect of people who break picket lines and commit the unforgivable sin of scabbing—

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Why are you talking about breaking picket lines? They didn't break them.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: —when in the country of Mr Masters' origin there is an Act of Parliament which allows picketing.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: It is lawful to be a picket here, too.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: It is lawful to be a picket provided one is there to protect one's own interests; and that is all the people at Fremantle were doing.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Who, the farmers?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: They were not engaged in any act of violence.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Are you talking about the pickets or the farmers?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: The pickets.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: But you could be talking about the farmers?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: With respect to the farmers, I have very strong doubts as to whether there would not have been violence had sufficient unionists been there to resist the farmers on the wharves. The farmers were prepared for violence—

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: So were the pickets.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: —because there were reports of weapons being carried, and a gun was used in one instance.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Has that been substantiated?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: If members opposite believe in that situation in which groups of men go head-on into conflict, they should not be in government. That is the sort of position they are encouraging. The Government put blue armbands on the farmers and led them onto the wharf. What would have happened if confrontation occurred? The men without blue armbands

would have gone to gaol, and those with blue armbands—the farmers—would have been allowed to go free.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: You know that isn't true.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: It is true.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: Anyone who broke the law would have been arrested.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: It was not Mr Noble who gave authority for those men to go onto the wharf because, in his own words, the authority came from higher up; from how far up, I do not know.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Did he tell you that?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: He did not tell me personally, but he told that to a very reliable source.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Who told you?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: A very reliable source told me. We now find that everybody seems to be blaming somebody else, and nobody seems to have given the instruction. I maintain that those people were authorised as a group to go onto the wharf and cross the picket line. That is the actual situation; and it is a very worrying situation to find that people are allowed to do that and their action is supported by this Government.

When we take into account the economic state of this country since 1945 we can appreciate the fact that some people do not understand the principles behind strikes and the crossing of picket lines. I daresay that the people of this nation aged 16 to 49 years, the people who entered the work force since the last war, have not experienced that sort of situation in regard to the industrial principles and attitudes that should be adopted to deal with strikes.

It is understandable when we find young members in this Chamber who come within this age group—I refer to Mr Masters, Mr Knight, and Mr Pratt—attacking the unions, and abhorring the word “union”. They laud those who have crossed the picket line.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member may proceed.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: By their own utterances in this Chamber, which are recorded in *Hansard*, these members have said they support pickets to the hilt.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You said “support pickets”. You mean “scabs”, I am sure.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: That is a misnomer. They support scabs and people who cross the picket lines. On this occasion when the people went onto the wharf it was the first time since 1919 that people, other than those working on the wharves, who were not members of the appropriate unions were allowed to do the work.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: He said that during the time of the wartime regulations people were used on the wharves.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I was referring to Fremantle. Perhaps we can understand the attitude of uninitiated people, like the younger members in this Chamber who have not known what industrial principles are all about. I can understand that with their influence in Government circles such incidents would be allowed to take place with the condonation of the Government. However, what I cannot understand is people like Sir Charles Court who is old enough to know what is involved in this dispute, condoning the action; and neither can I understand the Leader of this House, who boasts that he has been a tradesman, allowing such a situation to arise. I cannot understand how the Minister for Labour and Industry, who is old enough to know better, can allow this to happen.

Sometimes people would encourage others to cross picket lines, but their action was not condoned. They were doing that to gain their own ends. In this place we have members who not only encourage people to cross picket lines, but who also condone their action. This is borne out by a report which appeared in the *Daily News* of the 11th April which reads as follows—

In Perth, the Minister for Transport, Mr Wordsworth said today there had been little physical trouble—“nothing worse than a football match.”

Police had done a very good job in clearing pickets from wharves at Fremantle and Albany.

The Minister said the police were doing a good job, but they were taking action against people who were protecting their occupational interests.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: We were protecting the people and giving them the right of access. That is what I say.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: It is a disgraceful situation.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.05 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: I call the Hon. D. W. Cooley.

Point of Order

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I take a point of order. Mr President, would you allow the male and female members of the Chamber to remove the upper and outer sections of their apparel due to the temperature?

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask the member to repeat that question. I did not follow it.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Mr President, would you allow the male and female members of this Chamber to remove the upper and outer sections of their apparel because of the temperature?

The PRESIDENT: I am not sure whether the honourable member is serious, but I do not consider that the atmospheric conditions warrant it today.

Debate Resumed

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: The inconsistency associated with this issue was highlighted by an article I was able to read in the solitude of my room during the tea break. The article spoke of a farmer who admitted firing a shot into the ground at unionists who were on or near his property and threatened that the first one who came—

Point of Order

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I take a point of order, Mr President. It is an inaccuracy to say that the farmer fired a shot into the ground at a unionist. Had the unionist gone to ground? Was he a rabbit or something? That sort of phraseology is designed only to incite people, and I think it is quite out of order.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The accuracy or otherwise of what members have to say in this Chamber is not for me to determine.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That is a pity, Sir.

The PRESIDENT: It is perhaps a pity but opportunities are available to members to take up points made by other members at an appropriate time. In the meantime, will the honourable member proceed?

Debate Resumed

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: With 22 or 23 years' experience in the House I should have thought the Minister would have known that that is certainly not a point of order. Whether or not I make an inaccurate statement does not

come within the Standing Orders. This method of rudely interrupting a member before he has uttered more than three or four words of his speech is a tactic adopted by the Minister to denigrate people, to distract them, or to cast some reflection on them by means of the *Hansard* record. He thinks it is clever.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I recommend that the honourable member proceed with his comments so that they relate to the motion before the Chair.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I wish I was allowed to proceed without such stupid comments. The inconsistency of the Government's attitude is shown by the fact that nothing was done about this man who fired a shot when unionists were present and yet people who were peacefully picketing on the wharves are now subject to the processes of the law. This man is openly admitting and in fact boasting that he had a rifle in his hand; but that has not attracted any response at all from the Government. This highlights the necessity for us to move this motion.

The most inconsistent part of the whole matter is a statement by the Minister for Labour and Industry who said that the Government had advised all parties of the law and that it would be applied. He said—

That applies to union members to the same extent as farmers. If either party breaks the law, they will be arrested.

Surely to goodness, the man who was running around with a rifle has broken the law, but according to the Government a man breaks the law if he stands up and protects his occupational interests. I wonder how many people in this Chamber would protest if their occupational interests were put in danger.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt interjected.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: We would hear plenty of protesting from people who bleat like the member who just interjected from the other side of the Chamber. All he does is bleat across the Chamber and not provide anything constructive at all.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: At least I stick to the facts. How about you sticking to them with regard to that article?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: There seems to be some delight from the Government side that the scabs have had a victory over the people who have defended their interests on the wharves since 1919. There is no doubt that the people who crossed that picket line are scabs. What would have happened to unionists if they had jumped

on the back of a truck? The road traffic patrol would have had them taken off the road for conveying people in an unsafe way. The people who crossed the picket line were given free passage right through to the wharves not by any farmers or by the police, but by this Government.

Members of the Government are the guilty ones. They are the people who are dedicated to destroying those unions which will stand up for their rights. They do not mind the cap-in-hand unions. To them the Government will say, "We believe in unionism but we do not believe in people standing up for their rights. As long as people will comply with our wishes we believe in unionism but if they stand up for their rights we will smash them down."

Governments have plenty of power and their actions speak louder than words. The Flour Bill was introduced into this place for the specific purpose of assisting scab labour to break the bakers' strike. The Government introduced amendments to the fuel and energy legislation in 1974 for the very same purpose and to have power over the union movement if something happens in emergency situations.

If members want proof of this they can read the *Hansard* record. Mr Masters' comment was, "In smashing them we protect the public." He is the type of person who is coming up in the Government. He has risen to the position of Government Whip and it will not be long before he is sitting on the front bench. This is the type of person who is attempting to smash down the trade union movement. Such people believe in tame-cat unions and allow them to operate, but immediately someone wants to protect his occupational interests the Government brings down legislation and supports the smashing of people who are trying to protect those interests. This is the type of Government we are getting.

This Government introduced amendments to the Industrial Arbitration Act to allow members to opt out of their unions if they wished to do so. That has been done in this Chamber with the approval of every member sitting on the opposite side. They believe in unionism for as long as it suits them. Government members believe in the sort of unions which have not got the organising power to stand up for their rights. That is the sort of unionism we will have if the Government continues with its present attitude; and the Government will regret the day if it ever brings the trade union movement down to its knees. Let us not ever forget that. The day the trade union movement goes will be the day when the decent conditions in this country will suffer.

There is not one member in this Chamber or one of their constituents who has not benefitted in some way by the actions of the trade union movement and the Labor movement generally, and do not let members forget that. Let them think about it for a little while. When the trade union movement is destroyed then chaos will prevail in this country.

I can only say that it was a black day on Tuesday. It was a worse day than the Tuesday of the previous week when we had the terrible cyclone.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Rubbish!

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: More damage was done then than was done by the cyclone; mark my words.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That shows what little concern you really have for the people!

The Hon. T. Knight: You should be ashamed for saying that!

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I am not ashamed of anything I say.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: But you ought to be.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: The Government will do anything to destroy the trade union movement; its actions have proved that. However, members opposite will live to regret the day they bring down the trade union movement if they ever have the strength to do it.

They won the dispute, but it was a hollow victory. They destroyed the good relationship which has existed on the wharves for about 10 years. They have decent arrangements and there has been very little disputation there, but now something has been done to destroy the good relationship that has been in existence.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: You mean the Government has.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: No. He is all mixed up. Do not try to sort him out.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I conclude by saying that they will regret the action of last week, because they destroyed something which unionists hold very dear to their hearts.

THE HON. G. E. MASTERS (West) [4.17 p.m.]: I intend to be brief. I received a couple of mentions by the last speaker. I usually call him the member for Trades Hall, but perhaps I should say he represents Trades Hall, or I might be asked to withdraw the remark.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: He represents the North-East Metropolitan Province.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: No; he represents Trades Hall, but I just mention that in passing.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: Tell the truth then.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: We know the situation. Apparently I am the scab of all scabs. If it means what I think it means, I am happy about it. I am prepared to stand up and support the people to guarantee they have free access and entry, and if that labels me as a scab I am quite happy about it. I suppose I could suggest the honourable member withdraw that remark but—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: For the sake of accuracy, free entry to the wharves was denied to the Federal Secretary of the—

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am talking about the people who wished to pass through the pickets and they had a right of entry too, or does not the Leader of the Opposition think so?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The right of entry was refused to a number of people whose legitimate business was on the wharves.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: All I asked was whether, in the opinion of the Leader of the Opposition, the farmers should have had a legal right to go through the pickets.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: In my opinion they could have legally gone through if they had been going to the wharves to fish.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: That answers my question, and outlines the situation as the Leader of the Opposition believes it to be.

I suppose it is rather frightening to hear Mr Cooley speak as he did. There was no doubt that Mr Des Dans is quite sincere in some of the things he said.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: All the things.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: How jolly decent of you!

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: As long as *Hansard* has recorded what he said I am quite happy. It is easy to see the types of person behind the disputation, because they are reflected by Mr Cooley in this House. His conduct today was quite disgraceful. Behind his placid exterior outside the House, he is violent and irresponsible. There have been disputations and confrontations over the last few days and what has occurred in this House in the last minutes has demonstrated to everyone that Mr Cooley seeks to intimidate the members of the House as he has been used to intimidating members of his union over the last few years.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: What a lot of nonsense!

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: He does not frighten us. He bullies all right, but not here. He thinks a loud speech is a good one, but we are not fooled. Mr Cooley can laugh and smile now.

The Hon. R. Thompson interjected.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: That is a matter of opinion and no doubt we will hear from the honourable member of the middle bench in a few minutes and it will be interesting to know his views.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I thought this was a serious subject, but the hilarity from the Opposition does not indicate that, does it?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: When he gets down to the subject we will be serious.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I have been abused by Mr Cooley, as have others, and I am putting my point of view.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: As you are entitled to do.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Mr Cooley is a violent man, an irresponsible man, and a man who has insulted the members of this House on many occasions.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: I would not dream of it.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Mr Dans is smiling. He has had his fun.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Who is smiling?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I apologise. I meant Mr Cooley is smiling.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: I am registering contempt for you.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The motion is sanctimonious humbug and it was moved with tongue in cheek. There is no doubt about that. There is no doubt that the motion and the discussion are designed to inflame the situation, and not to cool it down. There has been very little debate and discussion until today and now Mr Des Dans intends to inflame the situation; it is the only way we can interpret his course of action.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I thought I explained why I did it today, and it is on record.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: On the one hand we are told we are interfering as a Government, and on the other hand we are told to do something about the situation. It is the usual two-bob-each-way attitude the Opposition adopts.

The Opposition is actually disappointed things appear to have calmed down to a certain extent and that we have been looking forward to some rationalisation.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You are not serious?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Mr Cooley said he was sorry it was solved.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Yes.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: And he has repeated it. What are we expected to understand from that, Mr Dans?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: If I could continue I will do so, because I want to be brief. I know other members have been incensed by the speeches made so far and will also want to speak. If we look at the front page of today's *The West Australian* we find the heading "A blunt warning". There will be many members opposite who will not agree with the article. Mr Dans is shaking his head now and I am sure that he would dissociate himself from such a comment.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I have already.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: However, there are a number of others who would not and I believe one of those would be Mr Cooley. I will read the article for the record. It deals with Mr J. Marks, of whom we have all heard.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: I did not say I agree.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I will read the article and then the honourable member can tell me whether he agrees. It is as follows—

He said that unions did not believe in violence but if it came "the blood would not all be shed by the workers."

He said: "The cockies will want to put a 24-hour patrol round their boundaries, because there's a very high bushfire risk now.

We all know what that means.

Point of Order

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I rise on a point of order. Did the honourable member say that I agreed with that statement?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: He was about to ask you.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I could not hear properly, but if he did say so I want it on record that I dissociate myself from that comment.

The PRESIDENT: The procedure is for the honourable member to indicate the words to which he takes exception, not to ask the Chair to advise what was said. If the member speaking

used words to which Mr Cooley has taken objection, then he should ask for them to be withdrawn and I will consider the matter.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I was not writing them down. I understood him to say that Mr Cooley would agree with that comment. I certainly would not agree with it. I read the newspaper report which indicated—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The situation is that I do not consider the words mentioned to be unparliamentary, and I am not sure the member used them anyway.

Debate Resumed

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Just to put the record straight, I will say I read out the article and suggested that Mr Cooley might well be one to support the remarks. He said quite definitely he does not, and I accept that. He condemns the writer for what he said and that is one of the few decent things he has said to us today.

I believe the strike is a serious matter as does the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the House. I believe there are certain sections of the community which have held other sections to ransom. They have put farmers in an absolutely desperate position so the farmers must eventually take action. The Opposition knows this and the strikers and picketers know they must, because this was the intention of the exercise.

The Opposition feels the action taken was not fair. It believes the unionists can take what action they like, but not the farmers. This is the situation. The Opposition believes the pickets can withhold access to the wharves.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: The farmers withheld the sheep from the stockyards.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am talking about freedom of access and the right of people to go through pickets with cattle, sheep, vehicles, or even just by themselves. It is their right. If the farmers picketed the docks tomorrow and denied the wharves access I would condemn them, too.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The dispute was settled on Friday night by trade union intervention.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Members opposite cannot blame these people for becoming desperate.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I said they were desperate. They were in fear.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am saying that the picketers had no right to restrict anyone's movement.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: They are losing their livelihood.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: They are still not able to prevent access to people. If they prevented the honourable member from going where he wanted to go, would he not accept that? He rightly could demand his right to go where he desired. That is what I am talking about.

These are vital exports, but the same applies to iron ore, wheat, wool, or any other item. They are vital exports and this was an exercise designed to restrict further our exports, and to damage our overseas trade and our standing in the eyes of the world.

Mr Dans had the gall to say they were provoked. What about the farmers? Were they not provoked? Confrontation solves nothing.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You didn't listen to what I said.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I wrote it down.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Then either you can't hear or you can't write—one or the other. You read my speech and you will find it completely different from what you are saying.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. D. K. Dans: On the Government side a lot of members lack faculties.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Confrontation solves nothing he said, but not once does he criticise the militant unions who year after year provoke, confront, and destroy our economy and way of life—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Rubbish!

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: —and obviously he supports them. If he does not, why does he not stand up and say so?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I support conciliation and arbitration.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The speech by the Leader of the Opposition was disgraceful. He will be looking for Press coverage tomorrow, but it will only inflame the situation. He said the second strike followed the first as a result of the actions of the farmers and the Government. He knows very well—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I didn't say anything about the action of the Government. It took no action.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: He said the second strike followed the first through the actions of the farmers. I do not know what he thought they would do. The farmers know the system under which the unionists work. They knew that the

unionists would be made to wait for weeks and weeks until the stock starved. The farmers could not take it any more. Mr Dans may think they know—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I don't know the basis of the settlement.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The strikers use the system very effectively. When someone moves in desperation the unions shout "foul". We have heard it before, and will do so again.

The other aspect referred to concerned the police. I believe they worked and performed in an exemplary manner.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: They have all my sympathy.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The police are there to maintain law and order; to protect the public in their lawful pursuits, whether it involves free access of movement, or anything else. The police must act—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Did you hear me criticise the police?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: No. The Leader of the Opposition said he felt sorry for them, and I think he said the Government perhaps used them wrongly. I might not be correct.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: There must be fair laws to begin with.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The honourable member is in this House to make and support laws. He is here as a lawmaker and should not support lawbreakers. I say again that we in this House, the same as the public, have the right to freedom, protection, and freedom of movement, and the police have the task of ensuring we retain that right. I have my rights. We all have our rights. I believe that the police worked and performed in a first-class manner and I congratulate them. I do not suggest they took sides, because I do not think they did do so for a moment.

They obeyed the law. If the police were arresting people for breaking the law, they were correct in their action. If there is some doubt about the laws, and about the right of the public to move in freedom and not be prevented from having access to where they want to go—if the public are not able to do this our laws are not good enough—I ask the Government to strengthen our laws so people will have freedom of movement, and pickets can operate lawfully and demonstrate without stopping me or anyone else from moving freely.

Mr Cooley attempted to hop into us by calling us scabs in a most disgraceful manner.

I accuse the Opposition of trying simply to lengthen the dispute and make it worse, if that is possible. The manner in which Mr Don Cooley addressed this House—and particularly myself—does not do him any credit.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: You do not like the truth.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I oppose the motion, and I believe it is disgraceful.

THE HON. A. A. LEWIS (Lower Central) [4.31 p.m.]: It may seem odd, but I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on the way he put the situation as he saw it. I do not agree with him, and I intend to point out my reasons. However, I do congratulate him on the cool way he handled his subject.

I am afraid the contributions of the last two speakers degenerated into name calling, and I do not think their speeches really should be considered.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The last two speakers?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The last two speakers. I do not think they dealt with the subject now before us. If we go back to the subject of this debate, the letter addressed to the President, in part, states—

the Government's failure to initiate action aimed at settling the dispute.

It is obvious that Mr Dans is not quite as much involved in the dispute as he has led us to believe.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I never claimed I was. I could not even pronounce the name of the organisation concerned.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: At the start of the dispute agreement was reached; the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Labour and Industry said, "Okay, quit your picketing, load the ships, and next Thursday we will discuss the whole situation." The meat employees' union refused to do that. Another attempt was initiated by the Government to have a complete inquiry into the matter if the union went back to work. However, the union refused to do that. To go on making statements in a high-handed manner about the rights of individuals, the rights of unionists, and the rights of farmers, will get us nowhere.

Basically, I think the union is being led badly in that it has not been told exactly what the export of live sheep is all about. The export of live sheep can only increase the number of chilled or frozen carcasses we can export to the Arab States which want to import them in the proportion that suits them. They do not want the sheep

in the proportion that we, as Australians, or the members of the meatworkers' union want to force upon them. In the old days—and I hate to use that expression because the Hon. Grace Vaughan sometimes comes back at me with it—the customer was always right.

The Arab States are our customers. Despite what is thought by the people involved between the farmer and the purchaser, we, as Australians, have to provide the meat for the purchaser. So, if the customers want the meat in a certain proportion, we have to give it to them in that proportion. I do not believe it is the right of anybody to stop meat going from the farmer to the consumer.

I will refer to the words contained in the motion again a little later. There has been talk about picketing and about bridges being smashed down overnight, and strong words have been uttered about wielding a big stick. Mr Dans did it extremely well. He did not become emotional but he used those sorts of comments in his speech. He then went on to criticise the Government for not making an effort to bring the parties together.

Well, I have pointed out the stages the dispute has gone through. Both the Minister for Labour and Industry and the Minister for Agriculture have endeavoured to reach a settlement. I know personally how well they have worked. Members do not really believe that Mr Old, as the Minister for Agriculture and representing one of the three lower House electorates within the province represented by Mrs Win Piesse and myself, likes to see 250 meatworkers out of jobs.

I was not able to go to Katanning yesterday, but at Kojonup I heard the workers were not even consulted on whether or not they should go on strike; they were told. That worries me, because those people were in the centre of the dispute. As I understand, they were told to go on strike.

It is worrying to hear that the escalation of the dispute goes to the black banning of ships. I have also heard that we should "give a bit". That sounds good; do something which all negotiators do. But how much does one give?

Mr Hawke has been credited with great acumen for solving the dispute. From what I have heard, Mr Hawke's solution is the same as that put forward by Mr Old and Mr Grayden a fortnight or more ago. That is fascinating, but Mr Hawke receives the credit for these things. The dispute should never have got as far as Mr Hawke if the local unions had been reasonable and gone back to work when they had

mediation set up for them. They would not accept that mediation, so Mr Dans' theory on mediation goes straight out the door; the unions would not accept it.

I was coming around to Mr Cooley's speech. Apparently Mr Cooley knows less about this matter than he does about many of the other subjects he mentions. There never was an agreement; that is part of the problem. There was a suggestion that an agreement be made but the producer organisations have never had an agreement with the unions on this matter. Again, that is a false premise on which to base an argument.

It is unfortunate that this type of dispute occurs. Again, it is the result of a lack of communication. I believe there has always been a lack of communication.

Let me get back to "giving a bit". How much does one give in the process of the law? There has been some talk about withdrawing charges. The unions have said they are out on strike for four days. They are talking about black bans on ships and companies, and they make those statements without any compunction at all. Then they turn around and ask the Government to withdraw charges against certain unionists.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Are you trying to tell us the Government was not aware of the likely outcome of its actions?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: No-one was likely to know of any likely outcome. We have been told Mr Hawke reached an agreement that if the unions went back to work the charges would be dropped. However, the unions would not agree and stated they would go on strike for four days. They want one side of the coin but not the other side.

It seems rather peculiar to me that that should happen: the farmers and the Government have to accept the situation, but the unions do not have to accept it.

Mr Cooley talked about the meatworkers having to protect their own interests. I have just given a summary of how they can protect their interests—by allowing live sheep to go out of this State.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: I was talking about their occupations.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: If we can export more live sheep we will be able to provide more jobs in the abattoirs.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: I was not arguing about the merits or demerits of the dispute.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I think Mr Cooley went into a name-calling exercise. He even accused a union president of being a union basher. The Hon. Ian Pratt was a union president, and was then accused of being a union basher. In reality, some people do run off the line a little. I am sure Mr Pratt would look after the members of his union just as well as, if not better than, Mr Cooley would. He would not rant and rave as Mr Cooley does.

I think it is despicable for Mr Cooley to say in a sneering voice that he would hate to have someone as a union president. I also have been on strike for something I thought was right. Some of us on this side have been on strike.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Did you win?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Yes, we did. I will tell Mr Hetherington about it one day.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I hope you were not holding up the shipbuilding industry at Whyalla at the time.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: As a matter of fact I was holding up the pastoralists.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The Minister for Transport nearly fainted on hearing that remark.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: He would have been right beside me in that particular strike.

We are going overboard with this sort of nonsense. Mr Dans tried to imply that everybody in the union movement was being fair and equitable. I just wonder whether the pickets are a form of threat.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Of course they are.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I have always believed pickets to be a form of threat, because they are set up to prevent someone going somewhere. I do not think that is a democratic system. Indeed, it is undemocratic. We talk about looking after our own interests. Do we have to do that by force? Are we to be put in the situation, in Australia, of people having to protect their own interests by force?

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Have you ever heard of violence from unionists in any picket line?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I am not discussing violence; I am talking about picket lines. Anybody who sets up a picket line is causing confrontation and a threat to other people; a threat to any person who wants to pass through that picket line.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: It did not just suddenly happen. A lot had happened before.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Honourable members opposite may convince me, although it may take a long time, that a picket line is not a form of threat to somebody trying to get through it. Are we to be treated to members such as Mr Claughton and Mr Cooley saying that a picket line is not a threat?

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: You said those things; that is your argument.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: In reality it is a little like this motion their leader has moved; it is totally without foundation.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Your remarks are without foundation.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Like Mr Masters I noted Mr Cooley's comment that he was disappointed a solution has been reached. That remark should never have been made. Surely most reasonable people believe a solution is far the best thing to have.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: It is a good thing as long as you win.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Members opposite fascinate me. Over my right shoulder a voice keeps burling on and on and it does not appear to me that its owner has had a new idea for 20 years. All we hear is that bosses and farmers are trying to grind the worker into the dust.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Sarcasm is the lowest form of argument.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: It was not sarcasm; I was just repeating the honourable member's argument. It is the sort of statement Mr Cooley makes the whole time when he is trying to protect the union movement.

I wish Mr Cooley could look at all sides of the problem. He must realise the farmers' predicament. Someone referred to Mr Marks' statement. I have just returned from a trip around most of the fire areas, and sometimes I wish we could hold a sitting out at these sites. Does Mr Marks really think he can threaten people with the sort of situations reported in this week's edition of *The Blackwood Times* in which we saw reports of houses, stock, and timber mills that had been burnt? Where are we going in this country when people make threats of that sort? Many of the people from my electorate helped to load sheep.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: A lot more would have helped had they been asked.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: As I understand it, enough people were rostered to load the sheep until next Tuesday morning. The ship was loaded very efficiently and quickly. I am not being sarcastic about the people who usually load the ships, because many more hands were available to accomplish this work. I do not want to be accused of being a union basher; comments like that are thrown at me at times.

Farmers are in a desperate position. About one-third of the total farming area around Boyup Brook has been burnt out and it is in this area that many of our sheep are grown. We were told earlier that this confrontation has been going on for four years. If the union members were really dinkum and thinking about the farmers as well as their jobs, surely after the fires they would have said, "Let us forget this rubbish; we will have a go at you later on, but let us get these sheep out now."

It is a national problem; the farmers must get their stock to the market if they are to receive money for it. If the farmers do not receive money and do not pay their taxes many of our welfare benefits will go out the door, because the farmers will not be contributing to the national purse. Matters such as this have not been referred to.

I will return to Mr Dans' motion again. Although far better speakers than I will deal with it, I believe the motion is an encouragement to confrontation rather than an encouragement to mediation.

The only substance in the speech made by the Leader of the Opposition was the reference to the port authority regulations. Maybe these regulations should have been changed a long time ago if they allow these threatening lines—called picket lines by the other side—to intimidate people.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Called by legislation a picket line.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: These picket lines were to prevent people going about their lawful business of loading their own sheep. In reality that is a nonsense also.

The final paragraph in the motion reads—

the consequences of its lack of action, viz., encouraging widespread industrial unrest across the nation.

The Leader of the Opposition must have spoken with his tongue in his cheek when he said that. He is blaming the Government wholly and solely for the dispute. He is not blaming all the forces which have been at work, and which were started mainly by a union that would not accept the first

agreement. The union decided its members would go back to work and the issue would be discussed on the Thursday. The workers would not do that but preferred to stay on strike; so I believe the union really escalated the strike. The union would not talk in the initial stages.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Mr Old called the discussions off.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Mr Old called the discussions off, because the union was still picketing the ships.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: There is no reason for the sessions not to have continued, whether or not the picket line was still in existence. If Mr Old wanted a solution he would have ignored that. You are trying to lay the blame at the door of the unions rather than where it belongs.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Has Mr Claughton finished his speech?

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: I have not started yet.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Mr Claughton is again playing Russian roulette. The union must have all the cards in its hand but the farmers cannot have anything.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Are you trying to say that we do not have a Government with any sense of responsibility?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The Government has acted with calm and common sense on this issue. Its members have bent over backwards, as have the farmers, to avoid any confrontation. I agree with Mr Dans; it is a pity the farmers had to go onto the wharves to load their sheep. However, the situation had been running for three weeks with a consequent loss of stock and return to the grower, so no sane person would have allowed it to continue any longer. The farmers were forced into the situation—

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: With goodwill on the Government's part, that could have been overcome.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: More than once a union has proved that it cannot be trusted to come to a decision. The union would not come to a decision the Thursday after Easter. The Leader of the trade union movement—the great Mr Hawke—had a solution but what did the union say? It said, "Don't worry, Bob, we will go on strike for four days and you get those charges withdrawn in Western Australia."

As Mr McKenzie knows, I have a great deal of time for many of the unions, and I have worked in fairly well with them at times. I am

horrified that a natural disaster can be used as a basis for confrontation by people who will not give. Mr Dans asked for a bit of give. Let the Meat Industry Employees' Union provide that bit of give. Let them go back to work, although I do not know about withdrawing the charges; I am not the Government. However, I am sure something could be done when the case is before the magistrate to ensure that the charges are dropped. I am talking from my own point of view. The unions must realise that the workers are prepared to go back to work. My guess is that they will not go back; that is the trouble with the whole situation.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What union are you talking about?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I was supporting the Leader of the Opposition. Mr Hawke does not have a solution as yet, because he has not got the Meat Industry Employees' Union back to work. We cannot play the game with loaded dice. I oppose the motion for the reasons I have given. I hope that future debate on this matter goes on in a quiet and dignified manner, because everyone will benefit if the problem can be discussed without rancour.

THE HON. F. E. McKENZIE (East Metropolitan) [4.56 p.m.]: I will take note of Mr Lewis' comments about the debate. At the outset I wish to congratulate Mr Cooley—

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That is not the right way to let the debate go on without rancour. Mr McKenzie.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I want to congratulate him, because he has been successful in directing the attention of members opposite to the problems that beset this industry. I think my colleague's record stands alone. If Mr Cooley had been left to handle this matter on behalf of the parties I am quite sure it would never have reached this situation. Mr Cooley has been a wonderful mediator, and his record in the trade union movement reflects this.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: A terrible speaker, though.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: What do we find is happening now? I believe the present Government has deliberately provoked the situation. During the short time I have been a member of this House I have seen two confrontations. The Government is changing the rules of the game. It is now saying that confrontation is all right.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: There was confrontation already.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The Government is not managing the economy and it is not managing the State. The meatworkers are desperate and the farmers are desperate.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: What about the farmers? Why should they not load their sheep? Are you suggesting they should not do that?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: No, I am saying that the Government cannot handle the present situation. The Minister for Labour and Industry has more and more problems cropping up and he cannot resolve them.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You want to look at who has caused them.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: We have an incompetent Minister who ought to be replaced. Until the Government wakes up to that fact there will be confrontation. In the long run the Government will go under just the same as Bjelke-Petersen will go under.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You are only mucking up the good argument put forward by Mr Dans.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Members opposite must understand why the people are desperate, and why the slaughtermen picketed the wharves. It was because 500 slaughtermen had lost their jobs already, and had nowhere else to go, that they were worried.

I have heard members opposite talk about dole bludgers. These people do not want to go on the dole; they are trying to protect their jobs. They would not worry about their jobs if they could easily get jobs elsewhere; but they cannot, and that is what worries them and has given rise to the present situation. As long as the unemployment problem remains, this type of situation will be relatively common.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: But how does picketing the wharves solve this problem?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Pickets are not something new; they are age-old.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You do not even answer the question.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: He does not have to; he is making his speech.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: He is not making a speech; just a lot of silly statements. The only one to make a speech, apart from Mr Lewis, was Mr Dans.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: As I said, in the short time I have been here there have been two major confrontations. It will not get us anywhere if we cannot sit around the conference table and

discuss these things in a sensible manner; I am sure it is only by this method that we can overcome these disputes.

I have refused to take sides in this dispute, because I can see the problems of both sides. I can see that the sheep farmers have problems. However, there is only one way to overcome the dispute and that is by conciliation and not confrontation. Nobody gains from confrontation except, in the short term, the Liberal Party, which initially receives the kudos. However, in the long term, nobody gains. Even once the trade union movement has gone—

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Are you predicting it will go?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Members opposite must realise we need trade unions. I do not think we will win by trying to destroy the trade union system. The Liberal Party wants to use it, and initially those tactics probably will be successful. However, they will not continue to be, because people will get sick of them. They will see that no progress has been made in improving the unemployment situation. I have seen redundancies in the railway industry, but fortunately the department has been able to place those men within the same industry. However, it would be a terrible thing to be retrenched completely out of the industry. That is what has happened already to 500 slaughtermen.

The Government changed the regulations to permit charges to be laid against the pickets. The Canberra colleague of members opposite has pleaded with this Government to withdraw those charges, and I believe that to be a sensible course of action. As a trade union leader I know one thing is paramount in solving disputes, and that is goodwill on both sides. I can well understand why Mr Cooley became so emotional about the issue. He understands this matter as well as I do, but I am sure some people opposite do not understand it.

The sheep have been loaded and are on their journey overseas; that objective has been achieved, and the people involved have had a win.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It is their last journey; they have had it.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Fair enough. They have had a win. However, to get things back to normalcy one thing must be done, and that is the withdrawal of charges. That is the bit of goodwill which can be shown by the Government. I will not accept the Government cannot arrange to have them withdrawn. Once the

charges are withdrawn, a lot of the heat will go out of the fire, and perhaps a sensible compromise can be reached.

Much has been said by previous speakers. I support the motion. I believe it was essential to bring it forward and I am pleased to have had the opportunity to say a few words in its support.

THE HON. GRACE VAUGHAN (South-East Metropolitan) [5.05 p.m.]: I support the motion. I believe there are some facets of the argument which have not been considered or emphasised enough, and I should like to bring these to the notice of the House.

Firstly, there are two very strong traditions in Australian society. One is the respect, admiration and affection held by the citizens for the farmers of this country, for the tribulations they have had to bear, and for the pioneering work they have done amid great fluctuations in their fortunes.

Another tradition which has been highly respected in this country—apparently some of our new arrivals have not learnt about it; Mr Masters obviously has not—is the great respect for the picket lines, which exemplify the hatred and contempt felt for scab labour.

These traditions have come into head-on conflict in the recent dispute, and this is why most of us feel a great schism within ourselves and our loyalties.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Were they set up to stop scab labour?

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: They are a symbol that there is a dispute.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: I do not think so.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: I am informing the Minister for Transport that pickets are a symbol of a dispute between employees and employers. Once those lines are crossed, a great tradition has been broken; it is a significant thing that has happened, because the workers who are negotiating with the employers have found that somebody has betrayed them.

That is what has happened on this occasion; that tradition has been betrayed, and betrayed by people who, over the years, have earned the respect, admiration and affection of our people. I refer, of course, to the farmers. This is a very sad state of affairs.

I am old enough to remember when farmers were having a much greater battle than they are now. I realise they have had a crook trot over the last couple of years, but when I was a child

the farmers did a lot more battling than in the years since I have been an adult. They battled for many years; they did not simply have a lean spell after a great period of good fortune.

Therefore, the tradition of respect and admiration for the farmer probably is a little less keenly felt today. One hears a lot of derogatory talk about farmers. People say, "They are doing all right. They whinge when things are going down a bit and buy their Mercedes' when things are good." Whenever I have heard this attitude expressed I have attempted to refute it; I have argued with the people expressing that opinion.

In addition, the good times have somewhat modified the attitude towards scab labour, towards the respect for picket lines. Many of our unionists do not feel acutely the sense of loyalty to the picket lines that was once traditional, because good times have made them soft. Any of the elder union leaders and unionists will agree that this is a fact. Perhaps it is an ill wind that blows no good; perhaps the outcome will be that the unions will recognise the need for absolute loyalty to one another when it comes to picket lines.

On a lighter note, I noticed that on Monday in New York, Muhammad Ali refused to cross a picket line outside a broadcasting station where he was due to appear for an interview. The broadcasting technicians were involved in a dispute and were picketing the broadcasting station, and Muhammad Ali not only refused to cross the line but also criticised the British and European champion, Richard Dunne—obviously, another Pommie who does not know anything about picket lines—for his failure to honour the picket lines. I think the word "honour" is very important in this context. The picket lines must be honoured and their crossing symbolises the betrayal of the workers by people who are interfering in the negotiations between employee and employer.

I also wish to mention the report which appeared in the *Daily News* last night. The journalist referred to the vibes he received from the people at Albany about the action they had taken. They were not rejoicing about getting the sheep away, because they realised the seriousness of what they had been forced by their own needs to do. This is where I want to come in and support Mr Dans most strongly on the inaction of this Government because, as with other disputes, the Government's entire action has been negative; again, it has done nothing to improve the situation.

I believe the crucial question here is, "Who gave the order which authorised certain people to go on the wharves?" Who gave permission for farmers to go onto the wharves? They were

unauthorised people; who made them authorised? If I want to go onto the wharf to load something precious I am sending away, I am not allowed to handle it. Certainly, the Fremantle Port Authority would not permit me to make sure it was handled properly. But in this case, these people who, to all intents and purposes are unauthorised people, were given authority. Yet an FPA man said, "I did not authorise it; it came from above."

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Who said that?

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: On the one hand, it seems that the Government cannot wipe out the charges which have been made against people on the picket lines while on the other it has obviously given directions as to who is and who is not to be authorised to go onto the wharves. I believe that to be the crucial question of this whole matter, and one that is going to bring ignominy to this Government.

I am sorry Mr Lewis is not present in the Chamber. We have here an example of the contradictions and conflicts which arise in a capitalist economic system. I am not being derogatory about any sort of economic system; certain conflicts and contradictions arise in any type of political or economic system. But in the capitalist system there is a great deal of conflict and contradiction. We see it particularly in the primary industries, the agricultural and pastoral industries. This is where the Government ought to be taking action, but the main complaint is that its action has been inadequate and that it has failed to plan and to anticipate the problems which may arise.

The problem of live sheep exports is a very pressing one and is one the Government should be tackling. The Government should be saying, "The farmers need the meatworkers when the fat lambs are ready to go." Yet now, it is talking about putting off hundreds of men, losing their skills, and having to recruit them again with the obvious possibility they have moved into other industries and have been lost to the meat industry for all time. When the farmers need the meatworkers they will very much regret these people have lost their jobs.

Of course the farmers do not want the meatworkers to lose their jobs. They are not exporting live sheep purposely so that meatworkers will lose their jobs, any more than the meatworkers are refusing to load live sheep so that the farmers will go out of business.

This is where the Government should step in and institute some planning in order to avoid these obvious problems and pitfalls, and to meet

the needs of the people. These are the types of actions of which government should be part and parcel.

Rather than allowing things to develop in a *laissez-faire* manner, which simply does not work in this day and age we need planning and action. We need an understanding of the problems and the needs of the people on both sides of the question but we have not seen this attitude from the Government. An article in the *Daily News* expressed the thoughts of farmers in Albany who said they had no cause to congratulate themselves on what they did. They realised that although they might have won on the day they were not happy about it or what it might do to Australia in the future.

I feel for those farmers because of the position they were put into of having to cross picket lines which to unionists are sacrosanct. People can say what they like about picket lines but they are a symbol. The picket lines on the wharves were peaceful and people such as Mr Marks were stirred by the Government to say the things he did, and others to speak of tossing sheep into the harbour. This talk arises because there is no mediator in the form of the Government to bring about understanding of the problems faced by either side.

The Albany farmers are aware that by going onto the wharves and getting their sheep away they have won only a pyrrhic victory; it will be of no use to them in the future and they will regret what they have done. If the Government had an ounce of nous it should have been able to prevent this situation occurring. The Government should have been able to promise that if this ratio of two to one, which is only a tacit agreement, was not working the Government would come in and compensate either side for the troubles it faced. The Government should have indicated that the workers would have received a reasonable income until the problem with the ratio got back its equilibrium. If this promise had been made and if there had been an understanding of the problem, perhaps there could have been a more sensible approach to the matter.

The Farmers' Union should be praised as it did everything it could to avoid the confrontation that arose. The union has been gradually moving towards an agreement but it has had to work alone as the Government has given it no help. All we have had is ranting and raving from Mr Grayden who said that anyone who presents his case in the way the unions did was simply part

of a conspiracy to ruin the economy. Members opposite cannot tell me this is not extravagant and extreme language.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Did you approve of what Mr Marks said?

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: I think the Leader of the House must be a slow learner or perhaps he was reading the paper and did not hear what I said. I will not speak for much longer as other members wish to speak on this subject.

Mr Lewis made the statement that farmers had to take action. I agree the farmers felt they had to take action because they were out on a limb, but what about the meatworkers; they have to take action too. I do not believe the members of the Government understand what it is to be earning a small wage; to be living from week to week; and to know that if they do not get paid next week they will be unable to live, and so have to go on the dole.

It is a pity there is not a different attitude to the vicissitudes of the capitalist economy. It is a pity we do not have people who are prepared to say that workers are entitled to have a decent wage when unemployed instead of coming in for the abuse we hear in this House month after month, because of a small percentage of people who may take advantage of the situation. Perhaps there could be a psychological explanation of this attitude but month after month we have this deprecation of the people trying to obtain benefits while they are unemployed.

This matter is tied up with the urgency workers feel when they consider that if they will be out of work—and so perhaps be classed as dole bludgers—they must take desperate means which they might sometimes regret, as do the farmers now. I have heard members on the other side claim they are great believers in unions; yet they do not consider the farmers were wrong in crossing the picket lines. I believe that anyone who crosses a picket line cannot be considered a unionist.

This urgency motion was precipitated by action such as this. Some members have said they could not take sides, because they had sympathies for both parties. I repeat that the precipitation of this motion was the crossing of picket lines which is to be regretted. I support the motion.

THE HON H. W. GAYFER (Central) [5.21 p.m.]: This is a highly emotive issue. I believe members are sorry it has taken place, but at least it has achieved what is required at this

moment and that is to get our livestock away. I believe an amendment should be made to Mr Dans' letter which reads as follows—

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order Number 62, I wish to advise you of my desire to move for the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing the role of the Government in the live sheep export dispute and, in particular:

the Government's failure to initiate action aimed at settling the dispute; its encouragement of confrontation instead of mediation; and the consequences of its lack of action, viz., encouraging widespread industrial unrest across the nation.

I believe the letter should be amended by deleting all words after the words "in particular" and inserting the following words in lieu—

to commend the Government on its initiative in making it possible for the livestock to be loaded for export from Western Australia.

I believe this should be done, because for three weeks this problem had been dragging on. There is no doubt that moves were made from all quarters. For four years we have been experiencing problems with the industry and then all hell broke loose. We had floods, fires and wind storms.

Most farmers had no feed in their paddocks. They then found that 6 000 sheep were in a vessel at Fremantle but nothing was happening to them; and no more could be loaded. There were 6 000 sheep locked up in something like a woolshed day after day. To the genuine farmer that fact alone meant something, and whether the Opposition likes it or not farmers have feelings for their stock. Even knowing the ultimate destination of the sheep, farmers were concerned for them. Farmers do not draw great pleasure from having to slit the throat of sheep or having to skin them, but it is necessary for them to do so at times.

It was a necessity for those sheep to be moved—an absolute necessity. Among them were sheep that had reached "crackers" stage; they had perhaps just a bit of mutton on them. Sheep which have reached the "crackers" stage are not wanted by housewives and I might add that I do not believe housewives today know how to cook mutton.

Farmers have had a gutsful of strikes. They have had absolutely enough of all the strikes occurring around the nation. If it is not a strike about wheat being shipped to Chile, it is something to do with the slaughtering yards

or the loading of sheep on vessels. Farmers do not go on strike; all they want to do is to live in the way they have lived for generations. We do not understand why our products cannot leave our shores.

We cannot understand it. It is not in our nature to be squabbling over whether we do this or that. We produce, we want to get our money, and we want to live. Talk about people not getting wages every week! Farmers receive wages once a year.

I have a report here from the Department of Agriculture about an average farm of 3 000 acres in the Wickpin area. The figures are absolutely authentic, because they come from an average of all farms in the area. This is an area which is one of the soundest in the State; it has not had a drought in years. After tax the return to that farm will be 0.91 per cent. For probate purposes this average farm is valued at \$450 000. Before that its return on capital is 1.5 per cent, and before living expenses are deducted it is 2.5 per cent. The total cost of living for this average family—husband, wife, son and daughter, none of whom has other jobs—is \$9 000.

I want to prove to members that farmers are not rolling in money. They need to get rid of their stock if they are to make money. It is only two months ago that, overnight, right through Naremben and Merredin we had floods which took away everything. It is only last week, just before this dispute took place, that cyclone "Alby" came. It denuded all the land in Mr Tom McNeil's area and further south of his area. The wind storm it created affected even the area that I come from. We have not seen anything like it for 60 years.

Then we had the situation of having 6 000 sheep on a vessel and we did not know whether they would be dumped into the sea, or if we sent others whether they would be returned. I have sheep ready to go now, because I have no feed for them. Farmers are suffering from the procrastinations involved in this dispute, because we are not being allowed to trade. Farmers have stood on the back blocks for years. We have not been groaning, grizzling, and saying, "I wish we could go on strike; perhaps we would get more."

There comes a time when people feel they have had enough. Farmers have lost homes, feed, and stock; they feel that they have had a gutsful. The Government made it possible, by the alteration of regulations, for action to be taken by farmers. I believe the farmers realised there could well be consequences to their actions, but they nonetheless decided that the time had come to act. These are the facts of the case, pure and simple. It is not a question of whether I believe their actions were right or wrong.

As Mr Cooley has said, the farmers have the God-given right to protect themselves, their families, and their products. I believe the Government should be commended, and I would like to quote from a news release that was issued after a recent National Country Party State Council meeting. In fact, it was held last Monday. The meeting endorsed unanimously the Liberal-National Country Party coalition Government's decision to protect the farmers involved in the live sheep dispute.

That was carried at the NCP State Council meeting, and much publicity was made of it. It was a simple matter for people here to criticise the actions of the farmers and their representations to members of Parliament. However, most of the criticism is coming from those who go home at night with no worries about disasters or what is likely to happen tomorrow. Those people do not go home to dams filled with six feet of mud and slush. People do not realise that unless those dams are cleared out, or the stock is disposed of, the water will not last for more than four days. Those are the conditions we have been living in for the last two weeks, and practically since Christmas of last year.

I know there will be a lot of recriminations. I have heard about Mr Marks suggesting that we will have to patrol our boundary fences. If that is the next step, being farmers we get used to that type of threat. I suppose the day will come when we will have to protect our land.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I do not think it will.

The Hon. H. W. GAYFER: I suppose if the threats are to be carried into effect that will happen, just as I have been told in this Chamber of what will happen as a result of this action. If these threats are carried out I am afraid members definitely will hear more about it. I am not accusing Mr Dans of making any threats, but most of the State and certain shipping lines are to be black-banned. In *The West Australian* of the 13th April it was stated that Mr Inkster said black bans would apply to the *Mashaullah*, *Farid Fares*, and *Linda Clausen* forever and a day. Does that mean to say that mediation is not possible now?

So, that is the end of another industry for Australia. That is the end of another decent income for the farmers; a quite clean income we were getting. Instead of receiving four lousy dollars for each sheep we were receiving \$15. Members might not be aware, but we were receiving \$4 25 years ago. Which members

present are aware of that? Just when we have a chance to get somewhere by satisfying a market, the door has been closed and we will have the market no more. That is not what I would do if I were on the other side. I would not pay \$200 000 to have a ship held up in an Australian port. They are fetching \$70 for our sheep on the Arab market, and we are receiving only \$15. The difference is involved in the cost of getting the sheep from here to there.

I am afraid that if the carcass is to be the end product we will take the knock. We are taking the knock now.

I am aware that what I am saying most likely will be recorded for evermore and held against me because I am a farmer. I am one of those referred to in this Chamber as being a scab. I have looked up the definition of scab in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*. I do not particularly like the term, but I have been called a scab. However, it appears that all farmers are scabs, more especially those who loaded the vessels. I did not do any loading but I am supposed to be a scab. According to the dictionary, a scab is a person who refuses to join a strike or a trade union. I am a trade union member—a member of the Farmers' Union. The definition continues to state that a scab is a person who breaks the rules of his trade or group. As far as I am concerned, the farmers did not break the rules of their trade.

I consider the action which has taken place has been very regrettable indeed. In an endeavour to protect ourselves as farmers and our markets overseas, and in an endeavour to prevent losses caused by stoppages, something had to be done. Something was done by regulations which were gazetted last week. Those regulations enabled the farmers to go about their business of exporting their products—their livestock—so that they could get on with the business of repairing the ravages caused to their properties in the last fortnight.

THE HON. M. McALEER (Upper West) (5.35 p.m.): I would like to argue that the step taken by the Government in amending the port authority regulations to allow pickets to be removed from the wharf has, in fact, had the effect of preventing violence. It has also had a cooling-off effect on the confrontation. The removal of the picket line simply prevented a physical confrontation. Morally, it was still present. Although it is easy to say that words spoken in anger have only the force of rhetoric, it is just as true that the situation could have been

similar to the comments by Mr Marks which appeared on the front page of today's *The West Australian*. He was reported as saying—

If this crowd here today had been there yesterday not one of the bloody trucks would have got on to the wharves.

Of course, not only would the picketers and their supporters on the wharf have been on the verge of violence, but also the farmers who were there. However, the situation was kept under control and the fact that confrontation was not allowed was very important in the situation which developed.

Every member in this Chamber has agreed that the farmers are in an extremely difficult situation. I think it would be agreed, generally, that the meatworkers also are in a bad situation so far as the meat industry is concerned. That industry is in a bad way. Many meat industry employees have lost their jobs, and others are in jeopardy. The point is that the export of sheep does not really control or affect the jobs of those in the meat industry. When they pin their resistance on a problem such as the present dispute they are not doing anything to solve their own problems; they are only compounding them.

Not only is it important for farmers to get better prices, which they do when they export sheep, but the exports have the effect of underpinning the market and making prices that much better on the home market. At the same time, the ratio of two to one or three to one will not increase the work available at the abattoirs but it will prevent us from exporting many sheep at all.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: A very good point.

The Hon. M. McALEER: I would like to give an example of where the Government's actions in this matter can be seen to be wise. I will refer to Geraldton. I have both northern and southern areas in my province, and they are involved in this matter. The farmers in the south have gone to Fremantle, and the farmers in the north have gone to Geraldton. We previously had a meat export works operating in Geraldton, and we still have a port and waterside workers.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: What happened to the meatworks?

The Hon. M. McALEER: It closed down. As a result of great efforts the farmers in the northern area were able to gather together 15 000 sheep for export. They came from far and wide, including the Murchison—parts of which are enjoying better

times at present. The export of sheep from Geraldton has been worth \$4 million to the area in the last 12 months.

When the ship arrived at Geraldton to be loaded some sheep were presented on the wharf and nobody was present. There were no picket lines at the time, but when the races were erected, the pickets did arrive. I might say it would appear that they were not all people from the Geraldton area. A certain number of them—perhaps 30—were strangers from elsewhere. However, I cannot prove that but it was observed to be so.

When the police came to the wharf and asked the pickets to move, they gave their names and moved away peacefully. The waterside workers went on loading the ship with fodder. However, on the following morning before the loading of fodder was completed the waterside workers received a direction from Fremantle that they were to stop work, which they did.

The farmers were at the wharf, but they made no attempt to load the sheep. The port authority did not call for labour because meetings were in progress which had a bearing on the matter. Yesterday work returned to normal, and today the waterside workers are loading the sheep as quickly as possible. Geraldton was in a very fortunate situation but, nevertheless, the action by the Government certainly did not precipitate any trouble.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: You must admit that the unions were very reasonable.

The Hon. M. McALEER: We expect the unions to be reasonable. In Geraldton they have a reputation to uphold. I think the farmers were also very reasonable. In fact, everybody acted with the greatest possible restraint.

I see no cause to blame the Government for anything that has happened, but rather I consider the Government should be commended. With those thoughts I conclude my remarks.

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [5.42 p.m.]: As one who supported the Government in its actions, I make no apologies for what the Government had to do. This country has reached the stage where one Government or another has to turn around and prove it is running the country, as a Government should when elected by the people. We have to decide whether the Government will run the country or whether the unions will decide to take things into their own hands.

When Mr Dans introduced this motion he said that the Liberal Party was playing a cheap political game, and trying to get cheap political

gain by making out it was the champion of the farmers. We have seen the same thing in the National Country Party and in the Labor Party; so all of a sudden everyone has become the champions of the farmers.

If anyone is trying to obtain some cheap political gain, I believe the Labor Party is trying to do that in moving this motion. The Labor Party has not put up a case to justify the motion which has been moved this afternoon.

While Mr Dans was speaking I questioned him, by interjection, on the meaning of "withdraw". He did not answer. I do not believe that people who have been ejected from a wharf have withdrawn. They were forced off. They were arrested and taken off and there is no withdrawal in those actions. No person involved in the meat industry dispute withdrew; they were forcibly taken off by the police. There has been reference tonight to the comments by Mr J. Marks.

If I remember rightly, Mr J. Marks is a well-known communist. I would hate to think people of the reputation of the Leader of the Opposition and Mr Cooley associated themselves with remarks such as those made in the Press by Mr Marks. I hope they do not go along with his views.

The farmers have been called scabs. I suppose this includes me because I was a farmer for many years. What is the definition of a scab? Is a person who is looking after his own interests to be labelled a scab? Are people who sit or lie on railway lines or wharves called scabs? No, they are not called scabs. The Labor movement considers people who are looking after their own interests to be scabs. Any farmer who came down to load sheep was looking after his own interests to ensure he could export sheep if he wanted to.

The question is: Who is right and who is wrong? Who refused to conciliate? The Meat Industry Employees' Union refused to conciliate. It has been stated that Mr Old was not anxious to settle the dispute. Our party has had many discussions with him about it. He was anxious to settle the dispute but he could not get the union to come to the party.

This issue affects not only Western Australia but also South Australia and other States.

The Hon. R. Thompson interjected.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The waterside workers refused to load the sheep.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: The waterside workers were not allowed on the wharf because of the regulations.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: They would not have loaded the sheep had they gone on the wharf. They were only going along with the Meat Industry Employees' Union in the picketing and the strike. Members of the Opposition cannot say the wharfies intended to load the sheep. They had no intention of trying to do so. As a matter of fact, at one stage they tried to move the runways off the ship to prevent the farmers loading.

Members of the Meat Industry Employees' Union are trying to ensure a quota of the sheep are kept here to be killed, but they do not tell the farmers where they can dispose of the sheep when they are killed. Where is the market for this heavyweight mutton? It cannot be sold in Western Australia or the Eastern States. The market is not there. The Middle East will not accept them. Where do the farmers send them, and what price do they get? When the union can give the farmers a guarantee of a market for the sheep when they are killed, at the same price of approximately \$15 net to the farmer, they will have a case to put up. But up to date the only case they have put up is that the export of the live sheep will affect the number killed here.

After all is said and done, when a drought comes along the farmer cannot go to anybody and say, "What about doing something for me? Otherwise I will go on strike." He carries on. But when things do not suit the meatworkers they say, "Let us go on strike."

This reminds me of the Tresillian issue. It was a blow-up for a while, but when the patients were moved to Sussex House last year there was not a murmur from anybody. That was a pre-election political stunt, as this motion is a political stunt.

I conclude by saying that tonight's edition of the *Daily News* contains a statement by the President of the National Country Party (Mr A. J. Fletcher) with which I do not agree. I support the Government's confrontation with the Meat Industry Employees' Union and in no way do I go along with that Press statement. I entirely dissociate myself from the statement made by Mr Fletcher because I believe it is really unfair, coming at this particular time, and I cannot understand why he made it.

I will leave it at that. This motion is just a party-political stunt, and that is all about it.

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South—Minister for Transport) (5.50 p.m.): The Leader of the Opposition commenced this debate by recalling a bit of history, which caused me to think about it, too. I came to this House in 1971,

when farmers had already been experiencing very difficult times. Perhaps the farmers were the first sector of the population in Australia to feel the recession. The Hon. Grace Vaughan said they have had only a couple of bad years recently, but that is not so. The difficult period goes right back to the beginning of this decade.

In fact, that is the reason we saw a change of Government, both in this State and in the Federal sphere. We all know what happened during the three years of the Whitlam Federal Government. We saw real wages escalate by 70 per cent and Government spending increase by 140 per cent. The result was that the farmer found he was not able to make woolgrowing profitable after 1971 when wages escalated. I am going back to the time when wool was 30 pence a pound. The unions were able to use their industrial might to win higher wages, and the primary producer found himself being priced out of the export markets he had traditionally held. He found himself completely disadvantaged.

As the Leader of the Opposition said, the start of this dispute probably goes back four years to the *Atlas Pioneer* incident. I recall that incident very well. I think it occurred about show time. Some meat industry employees got in front of a trainload of sheep as they were gradually being wheeled to the waterside workers, who declared they would load those sheep if they were delivered to them. There was nothing about scabs and that kind of thing. Those waterside workers were good, honest unionists, who indicated they would load the sheep if they were delivered to them.

At that particular time the Government did not take action; it negotiated. Subsequently some sheep were shipped from Australia, but the situation became worse and worse, and of course the position of the farmer has become worse and worse. We now see occurring an incident similar to that involving the *Atlas Pioneer*.

We had a ridiculous situation in Albany, where it got down to three or four picketers who were playing cricket on the wharf alongside the ship. That denoted a picket, and the sheep were not being loaded.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Not a very threatening situation.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: We are told the future of the meatworkers is at stake, their families are starving, etc.; but the loading of sheep is held up while a few people play cricket alongside a ship. Needless to say, the general public said, "How ridiculous of them to do that!"

Under the regulations of the various port authorities at that time, the secretary of the port authority could go up to those people and ask them to remove themselves because they were holding up work. All he was able to do was take their names and charge them in a court at some future stage. But that still represented a picket line and the nonloading of sheep.

I do not need to go back to what happened as a result of the drought, the worsening financial times, and finally the cyclone. Obviously the farmers were desperate and were not prepared to stand by and allow this ridiculous situation to continue, where a few people playing cricket and fooling about on the wharf were stopping loading.

So, quite rightly, on behalf of the port authorities and at their request—indeed, my job was merely to have the request put through the Executive Council—the Government changed the regulations to enable the port authorities to remove the picketers so that people could go about their lawful work. Let us face it, at that stage the lawful work was the work being carried out by the waterside workers. That was the intent of the regulations which were duly passed.

It is interesting to know that in some places the waterside workers did load the sheep. At Esperance they went ahead and loaded the sheep. Farmers did not load sheep anywhere before the waterside workers had first been given the opportunity to load them.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: They were not involved in the dispute until your Government brought in these regulations.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: That is right, and the regulations did not prevent the waterside workers loading the sheep.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: The regulations did stop them. They could not go on the wharf.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: It did not stop them. The waterside workers were allowed on the wharf.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Of course they were.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: How were the sheep loaded in Esperance?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Why was the Federal Secretary of the Waterside Workers' Federation not allowed on the wharf at Fremantle?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: He would not be allowed on the wharf only if the waterside workers declared they would not load the sheep. In all ports the port authorities allowed on the wharf those who were going to load the sheep. Indeed, at such ports as Albany it was quite

lawful. The agreement with the Waterside Workers' Federation was that its members would have the first right to load the sheep. They did not wish to load them, so the port authority allowed others to load the stock.

I think that was a very sensible approach. The farmers must be commended on their whole approach. They were very quiet. We had a very difficult situation in Esperance where 400 farmers were milling around the town; but they kept their distance. It must have been very difficult indeed for their leaders to keep them away from the wharves, but only a very small number of farmers—I think about half a dozen—went down to the wharf and finished loading the sheep in a quiet and respectable manner. It was a very sensible way to deal with the matter, and they must be commended.

It must be remembered that those same farmers did not have an abattoir. Why should the port at Esperance have been picketed by the Meat Industry Employees' Union? I point out that we have had debates in this House about wages in the meat industry. Certainly some people will lose their jobs in the industry, perhaps temporarily at this time of the year; but as members know, they are quite capable of killing two dargs in a day. Each man is allotted a certain number to kill on a given day, and each man is quite capable of doing, and usually does, two men's work in a day. I just wonder how good they are.

I would like also to record the fact that our beef exports have reached a record level. We have never before exported more beef from Australia, as farmers in their desperation are killing off their breeding herds. So members cannot say that farmers are not delivering the goods; they are delivering everything they have, and that is why they are so very desperate. They fully appreciate the insecurity of their future, because even if good times do come again—and I hope they will—farmers will be in an awful position as their stock numbers have been reduced so greatly not only in cattle, but also in sheep.

I am sure all decent Australians have been watching what has occurred in Western Australia. It is a remarkable thing that public opinion is right behind the action of the farmers in loading their stock. I believe that is one of the reasons the TLC backed down, and it was very sensible of it to do so.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The TLC was not even involved.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: All right then, the whole union system or whatever one likes to call it. The whole of Australia was behind the action of the farmers.

We have the ridiculous situation in which we are pricing ourselves out of our markets. We have got to the stage where our export income is falling away and we cannot pay for our imports. Yet we have these petty strikes everywhere, and we see strikes on the waterfront right around Australia.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Right around the waterfront?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Yes, in the Eastern States strikes have occurred regularly, as Mr Dans knows, at a time when the parties concerned are entering into negotiation for new conditions on the waterfront. Fortunately we have not had trouble in Fremantle over that matter; however, it has happened everywhere else and we have heard from the watersiders that they will stop all exports, and we will lose \$60 million-worth of exports for every day the watersiders are out on strike.

I know the waterside workers want to export live sheep. The waterside workers at Esperance make a great living out of the export of live sheep. How much do they earn from the export of meat? Meat is packed in containers which are lifted into container ships by one trained operator. Believe me, the waterside workers do very well out of the export of live sheep.

I point out that it costs a farmer \$1 to deliver a bale of hay to the wharf, yet it costs \$1 in waterside workers charges to have the bale placed on the ship.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The waterside workers charge \$1?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: That is what it costs.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It is the stevedoring companies.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Let us not get down to ridiculous little matters. There is good money to be made from the export of live sheep and the waterside workers want it to continue. That is why they have said it is a very good thing. They have said it would be very good for them if the farmers could assure them the export of sheep will continue.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Have you told the farmers at Esperance that the wharfies charge \$1 for every bale of hay?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: They can work it out for themselves; that is why they are receiving only \$17 or \$18—because of all these ridiculous charges; yet we have been told a sheep is worth \$50 delivered to the Middle East.

I hope we will see the black bans on ships removed, because if they are not removed we will see the end of a very good industry for Australia. As has been pointed out, carcase meat is worth so little that it does not matter. We do not want to see the end of the live sheep export industry, and I am sure we will not.

I would like to commend farmers for the manner in which they did the job. It was pointed out that perhaps they did not like doing it, but they wanted to make their point and they did; I am sure the whole of Australian respects them for it.

I would like also to say how well the port authorities acted during the difficult conditions. They could see the farmers were determined to load the sheep, and they were aware that after the dispute was over they would still have to deal with the various ship owners, shippers, and the unions. The port authorities acted sensibly and quietly and kept the whole thing down to a modest level. They are to be commended for that, and I am proud to be the Minister responsible for them.

There is one other thing I would like to mention. We have been told one of the conditions of the cooling off period is the removal of charges laid. I believe it is not a matter of the removal of charges, but a matter of the suspension of legal proceedings, and it refers to the action I, as Minister, have taken under section 45D of the Trade Practices Act, and also the action taken by the Meat Commission in respect of preference being given to members of the Australian Meat Industry Employees' Union in Western Australian abattoirs. That is what we have been asked to suspend.

Once charges have been laid in a police court there is no way any Government can remove them. Some of the charges were laid under the Police Act. I recall an occasion on which the Hon. John Tonkin when he was Premier wrote to an Albany magistrate—I think it was Mr McGuire—suggesting that his Government was not genuine about collecting road maintenance tax and that perhaps the magistrate would let off a person who was about to be charged. The Premier was very quickly told to mind his own business.

I believe the statement I have made in respect of the charges is correct. Most of them are of such a nature that we could not remove them if we wanted to. Once a person has broken the law and has been charged, we can do nothing about it. However, we can do something about the action under the Trade Practices Act and the preference to unionists matter. I believe that is the point Mr Street was making.

Mr President, there is no need for this motion because plenty of mediation is occurring on this matter at the moment. I trust it will be defeated.

Sitting suspended from 6.08 to 7.30 p.m.

THE HON. R. F. CLAUGHTON (North Metropolitan) [7.30 p.m.]: Mr President, because of the circumstances of our sitting tonight I intend to keep my remarks as brief as possible and in the time I shall take I shall not be able to elaborate on some points on which I should normally elaborate. We have seen what can be described only as a callous use by the Government of rather tragic human circumstances for cheap political advantage; and the less sensitive of the Government members, I suppose, would say that it was a heaven-sent opportunity to use the circumstances of Cyclone Alby to gain an advantage over the meatworkers who are in dispute in the case about which we are talking.

We heard a tirade from Mr Gayfer about the dreadful conditions which farmers have suffered as a consequence of Cyclone Alby and we on this side have expressed our sympathy for their position. But very little has been said about the meatworkers who have been facing very difficult conditions for quite a considerable time.

The dispute did not arise at the time of Cyclone Alby. It has been developing for a number of years and the Government has been well aware of all the circumstances that surround it; and its response can be seen only as completely irresponsible. The Australian Meat Industry Employees' Union made submissions to the Government as far back as January, to my knowledge, for ways in which some adjustment could be made to the industry to achieve more continuous work for its members in abattoirs, but we have heard nothing at all from the Government in response to the submissions that the union has made.

I have before me an outline of one such submission which was presented to Mr Old and which was revised at a later meeting. The purpose of that submission was to ensure that if farmers supplied stock to the abattoirs they would not be disadvantaged by so doing and would still receive an export parity price by way of subsidy. This would have meant that the meatworkers could have been employed, there would not have been a charge on the public purse for dole money while they were unemployed, and there would have been savings to the Government because of the utilisation of plant and staff which must be maintained at the Midland Junction Abattoir in particular. There has been no response to that at all, nothing has been published in the Press about it, and there have been no announcements. All

that has appeared in the Press have been some comments from the union side in respect of those submissions.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: The Government is picking up a very hefty bill.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: That is right in respect of the Midland Junction Abattoir and the costs continue to be incurred. As Mr Wordsworth knows, if stock does not pass through the abattoir costs will increase.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: That is right.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: There will be an increasing loss for the abattoir and the Government. By utilising those works so that the loss can be channelled into useful employment and greater productivity for the benefit of the public—

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You agree these sheep should have been put through Midland Junction Abattoir and not exported?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Yes.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You agree with that?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Yes.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: That is the most amazing statement I have ever heard. You would be turning \$18 sheep into \$4 sheep.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Those are the prices which—

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: They are correct. At least the Government is not as bad as that. We did not try to make the farmer pay.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I should like to offer some information to members of the House because it does not seem to have been made available to the Government. The point I am making is that the Government has been completely silent on these aspects of the situation. Earlier this year—I do not know the precise date—the Australian Meat Industry Employees' Union issued a statement headed, "Live Sheep Exports", in which it said—

The present specifications for export wethers are strongly built wethers, preferably off shears, 1½ to 4 years old with a sound mouth, a live weight of 53 kg, providing the sheep is not carrying lumpy fat. The simple fact is that the above specification for sheep is ideally suited for the export manufacturing mutton trade and especially so for the carcass mutton trade to the Middle East.

We hear a lot from Mr Wordsworth and his colleagues about these old fatty sheep which are not suitable for the local market and, as far as

the union is concerned, there is no quarrel over the fact that these sorts of sheep should be exported and its request for a three to one ratio would allow those sorts of sheep to be exported.

The union is not trying to prevent all exports of live sheep and that proposition has never been part of its policy. I have talked with officials of the union and they have told me that they are totally sympathetic with the plight the farmers are in. The view put forward by the Minister and those like him is that the union does not care one jot about farmers. That is a complete untruth and a distortion of the attitude of the meatworkers.

It should be remembered that this is an inter-dependent industry. The farmers do not go it alone and the meatworkers do not go it alone; they depend on each other. When the lamb trade starts the farmers will want the meatworkers to be working in the abattoirs so that they can kill and put onto the market that sort of sheep. But what is happening now? When the farmers can get this sort of price for export sheep they sell every sheep that they can on the export market and they do not care about what happens to the meatworkers.

Miss McAleer mentioned the abattoirs in Geraldton that have closed down, and the Minister cannot deny that this has happened. What is expected to happen to those meatworkers? Are they expected to leave their homes and move elsewhere in an effort to find jobs? It should be remembered that this area has one of the highest unemployment rates in this State. There may be a small number of meatworkers there, but the fact remains that the abattoir has closed down. Those workers cannot come to Midland because the abattoir there has sacked people also. This situation applies to all other abattoirs around the State.

We hear a great deal about the claim that there must be a certain ratio of so many livestock in order that the Middle East markets may be supplied with carcase meat. In contradiction to that, New Zealand has had a complete ban on the export of live sheep since 1973. I have not heard this mentioned by Government members.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Why do you think the farmers went to the wharves?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: New Zealand has still managed to sell carcase meat to the Middle East.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: We can still sell sheep worth \$18 for \$2.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I do not know who the Minister has been speaking with, but the New Zealand Government does not leave it to chance; it has studied the Middle East market and has assisted exporters.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Western Australia has beaten New Zealand to that market. You should not run down our people.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The New Zealand Government has assisted the abattoirs and has gone to the market place to see how meat is presented and how it can be marketed in a favourable context. I have not heard anything from this Government of what it has been doing in this regard.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The New Zealand Government has given an example of good government.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: A certain article on this subject appeared in the Press at the beginning of last year.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: We believe you.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I am not asking the member to believe me; I would like him to listen.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: Are you saying that if it is in *The West Australian* it is right?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: There has been nothing in the paper to contradict what I am about to read, and if Mr Pike has any information that will contradict what I have to say, we will be happy to hear from him. The particular article describes what was happening in the Middle East. The reporter spoke of the way the Australian meat was presented in that market, and he mentioned the problems of quality control.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I would not make fun of this debate because it is very serious, and it is not over yet. We are trying to find solutions.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I am a bit worried that Mr Cloughton might be getting a little too excited.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Don't worry about him.

THE PRESIDENT: Honourable members should cease their interjections as they should see that the honourable member is endeavouring to wind up his speech.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I had picked up the wrong article, Mr President, but the one I wish to quote from is dated the 23rd May, 1977, and is headed "Quality of Meat Exports Must Rise". I quote as follows—

A Dubai woman, who lives at times in Mt Pleasant, said she had switched to buying New Zealand frozen meat in preference to that from WA or other Australian States. "I can rely on New Zealand meat nine times out of ten," she said. "WA meat is a 50-50 chance."

The reporter said, "it was up to Australia to do something about the situation—such as a minimum price, minimum quality system if it could be done." I indicate to members that I am quoting at random from this article. To continue—

A Kuwait importer, Mr S. Jallad, said Anchorage Butchers (WA) of Coogee could always get 10-15 per cent more for their mince because of its quality.

I will not read any more, but there is certainly a market there.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: No-one is denying that.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: If this Government got off its tail and did something about this—

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Don't you want to talk about quotas?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: To emphasise this matter in a different sort of market situation, I would like to refer to a statement by the AMIEU of which I spoke earlier. The statement referred to the consequences of heavy exports of live sheep, and I quote as follows—

... the heavy exports of live sheep recently resulted in the Australian Meat Industry losing half of a 20,000 tonne boneless mutton order to the Soviet Union because local processors lacked confidence in being able to purchase sheep in sufficient numbers to meet the contract,

There again we see a potential market for carcase meat.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: What is the price? Does not price matter?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Of course it matters.

One of the other issues the union raised was that of losing workers from the industry. People who leave this work have to find alternative employment and there is no guarantee they will return when the situation improves. It is the unskilled worker who spoils the meat. It is the

meat he has spoiled that is turned into what we term boneless meat, which is sold at a lower price. It is important for the industry that the skilled work force be retained.

I believe it is the duty of this Government to see that these workers are retained, but the Government has failed to do something about this. I can only support the remarks that have been made by the Opposition members who I believe have substantiated the points made in the motion. I support the motion.

THE HON. G. C. MACKINNON (South-West—Leader of the House) (7.50 p.m.): We ought to thank the Hon. Des Dans for bringing forward this matter for discussion. It has been an interesting debate marred by what I regard as one very serious matter which I want to touch on before I go into any other matter. I refer to the speech delivered by the Hon. Don Cooley. I have always deplored the history that is associated with the term "scab" and I know that a great number of people in the union movement and in the Labor Party join with me in that feeling.

The history of the term "scab" is a sad and unhappy one. It dates from the early days of organised labour when certain people used to join with the "boss" and help to break a strike or to break down conditions, as was explained in the very excellent definition given by Mr Gayfer.

After the First World War and early in the depression when conditions were not good, there were occasions when men, in desperation to feed their families, would join for a variety of reasons, and would earn for themselves the epithet of "scab". They would be branded and they would move from State to State looking for work. When going back over the history of such people it is not uncommon to find that their ultimate fate was suicide.

It is a sad and unhappy chapter in the history of the Labor organisation movement. It is an epithet which we would be better to forget. It is a matter of some shame, in my opinion, in the history of workers in this country. I would sincerely request members to drop it from their lexicon and not to use it again.

I ask that no matter how much members might feel themselves pressured to respond, they should resist. It is as well to remember that in this country more than most the truism uttered by Rockefeller, which was that every family in the

United States moved from shirtsleeves to shirt-sleeves in five generations, applies. It applies to Australia even more than it applies to the United States of America.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: It is three in this country.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: It is probably three.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I must be overdue for promotion.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I can look around this room and name people who are well placed and whose children are in the tradesmen's group. I can look around also and see members who were themselves tradesmen and whose children have entered the professional group. We are that sort of people.

It could well be that the employer of today has grandchildren who are tradesmen. This type of name-calling and the use of epithets such as "scab" and all the history it conjures up are matters which we could well do without in this day and age. I make that appeal in all sincerity and I know full well that I have the good wishes of one or two people who do not see eye to eye with me politically. I will say no more about that.

The problem raised today by Mr Dans is one in which two groups of people who have had little argument in the past find themselves in a collision situation. I am referring to farmers and to waterside workers. Waterside workers and farmers have for a great number of years had a very real accord. A week or so ago I heard the Leader of the Opposition in this House say, "Send them to Fremantle and we will load them." He was referring to the waterside workers loading sheep for the farmers at Fremantle. Between those two groups of people who have had a happy relationship in the past has stepped a group which is in a very troubled situation. I am referring to the Meat Industry Employees' Union. That union is upsetting both sides.

Every sensible speaker today has accented the fact that the farmers were loading their own gear. They were looking after their own product—loading it—at a time when their situation was serious enough without the problems caused by cyclone "Alby". If Mr Cloughton regards that as being an extra embellishment, let us leave it right out of the situation, because the farmers were in a serious enough position as it was. Whether or not the farmers loaded the sheep, in fact whatever course of action they took, it made not one skerrick of difference to the Meat

Industry Employees' Union, because there is only a given quantity of meat we can eat in this country; there is only a given quantity of meat we can store; and there is only a given quantity of meat that can be stored in the Middle East. Certainly the Middle East is a good market and it is a market which has an increasing degree of sophistication.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: And an increasing demand for better meat too.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I understand there are excellent storage facilities on the coast. I understand there are sophisticated buyers in considerable numbers who actually order two pounds of chops, a forequarter, a leg, or whatever. However, I believe a large proportion of the market lacks those types of storage facilities and in order to keep the product fresh it has to be walked to its destination. When it arrives it is killed and if one wants meat one takes the first piece that comes off the carcase. In other words, one takes the head, the neck, a piece of the forequarter, or whatever as it goes up the body.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Quite correct.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Frequently the meat is cut off with a machete or an axe.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: They like hot meat.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Like the Aborigines. They like fresh meat.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: It is not like the Aborigines. I have lived under those conditions and I do not like those sorts of conditions. I have lived under conditions where rice is served and one looks for some added flavour and a piece of meat—it does not matter where it comes from—flavours it and adds a little nourishment.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: What about a bit of cat?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Cat is not that bad either. When one is hungry one will eat anything, and the stronger the meat the better it pleases the palate. In that type of situation if one is offered the choice between ram and lamb one would choose the ram because it is stronger meat and it adds a better flavour to the rice. This is the market we are supplying.

I know it is not all like that. There is probably some good four-tooth mutton going away. Nevertheless the bulk of it is like this and it will not help the union. We can sit down and cry for them, but it will not help them.

Some excellent speeches have been made today and in general terms there is only one which I think everyone would join with me in agreeing

that we are sorry was made. One or two sections of others we could have done without, but one speech I would rather have not heard.

All these things have been explained. What concerns me is that we seem to have entered an era of almost total confrontation—that what they do is bad and what we do is good. In this context it is that what the AMIEU does is bad and what the farmers do is good. That is simply not the truth.

The truth is that the AMIEU served no useful purpose other than to highlight the problem which exists for them, and it could well be that at this time and in this place their problem is similar to that of the farriers when the motorcar became popular and there were no longer any horses to shoe.

It may be that many young people have stopped eating as much meat as they used to eat. Members should stop and think about the number of sophisticated markets to which we sell. They will be surprised to find that the bulk of our markets for whatever products are not the sophisticated markets in this world, but the comparatively unsophisticated markets with the exception of Japan which has a different dietary pattern. We sell the bulk of our meat, not to Europe since the European Economic Community has been established, but to the Arab States, do not we?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I do not know. Those horrible Russians are buying a bit, too.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: That is not a sophisticated market, either—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: They do not eat the heads.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: —as the Leader of the Opposition would know better than I do, because he has been there. The solution of the farmers was not ideal without doubt. In the motion members opposite are trying to blame the Government. Let me assure them that what took place on this occasion would have occurred long ago had the Government not been firm in its discouragement of such action. As a country member, I know the number of farmers who have been to me and I know the discouragement I have offered them to take direct action; and I doubt that there is any member in this House on the Government side who has not had that experience, because the farmers were at desperation point.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: Their tempers would not have been raised by the comments made by Mr Old on the "Country Hour" would they?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I did not hear the comments, but I am sure they were sensible under all the circumstances.

The farmers have a product they want to sell in this State under very stringent circumstances. I do not think there is any point in my repeating that if the AMIEU members had sat on every railway line and stopped every ship going overseas they could not have obtained a better subsidy out of this Government than the \$4.5 million loss which we funded to the abattoirs of this State to keep them in employment.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Hear, hear!

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: They could not have got a better run than the tremendous sympathy offered to them.

An Opposition member: It was not \$4.5 million.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It was a lot.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: It was a big subsidy whatever it was. I think it was \$1.59 million. I was thinking of the loss over two years. But let us not split hairs. Members opposite had an opportunity to do some research on the subject. I am talking off the top of my head, and from memory only.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Don't admit to that.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: It was a tremendous subsidy and there was no excuse for them then to tell the hard-pressed farmers they could not take advantage of this market.

I do not accept that the Government has been recalcitrant in any way. As Mr Wordsworth has said, the Government has made it possible for certain actions to take place. The Government decided that the law was inefficient in this regard and we made it efficient. It is no good saying that the Government used the law. That is what Governments are for; that is, to make and alter laws and ensure that the law is enforced. People thought that it was possible to do certain things with picketers, and found they could not.

I took notes—many notes. One of the most important notes I took concerned you, Mr President, and I want to offer you my real sympathy, because today when you really chided me on one occasion in support of Mr Cooley and did your very best to support him you were belted about the ears by Mr Cooley—

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: I think Mr Cooley's remarks were misunderstood.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: —for trying to help the gentleman. I thought that was grossly unfair and I wanted to offer you my sympathy.

The Hon. Grace Vaughan: You'll get on!

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: It was a good piece of chairmanship, if I might say so.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Your kindness was so badly accepted.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Flattery will get you any place you want to go.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I repeat that I think Mr Dans has, in fact, done us a service. I was very proud today to hear how Government members were able to answer and refute every statement made by the Opposition, and they did it clearly and without rancour. They did it efficiently with reason and common sense.

I just want to conclude by saying that the other day one of my colleagues commented that he had occasion to go into the heart of the city as had I, and we compared notes, because I happened to go on the same day which was, I think, yesterday lunchtime.

I was impressed by the number of people who wanted to recognise me, and I think members know what I mean because they are all in the public eye to some extent. People wanted to recognise me and to indicate that they were happy with the results. They were happy that a problem was solved when it could have ended up in a real confrontation with blood on the streets or padlocks as was stated by that person Marks in the paper. I had the feeling of warmth and friendship of the ordinary people in the Hay Street Mall as I walked through and they conveyed to me that the Government had done a good job.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: I thought Mr Hawke had done it.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: For that reason I ask members to defeat the motion.

THE HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) 18.09 p.m.): I offer no excuse for having moved the motion. I believe explicitly in it and I think it was something that had to be debated. All speakers who participated in the debate, with no exception, have contributed something. However, having listened to many of the speakers, I realise there is still a great deal wanting.

I think some of the very important features have been overlooked. Mr Claughton touched on some of the problems still to come whilst we have live sheep exports. There are people in the community, private entrepreneurs, who know very well that a far better price can be obtained in the Middle East for better quality beasts. Frigo-Scandia, a Swedish firm, which is one of the biggest refrigerator operators in the

world, has seen this opportunity and has constructed a big plant at Spearwood, certainly the biggest freezer I have seen, and the most sophisticated. It operates at 30 degrees below freezing.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Let us hope they are correct. I have my doubts.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: It is a highly successful firm in the world scene. It has some 25 plants throughout the world.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: So has General Motors but you are always critical of it.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I have never mentioned General Motors in this House. Perhaps I lean towards Scandinavians, because most of them are social democrats and they know how to get on with one another in their own country. That is one thing the Minister might learn.

That company sees a great increase in the market, particularly in Iran where it is constructing a sister plant to the one at Spearwood. The Swedish manager of the firm has told me that while the live sheep market is very good, a great deal more is to be made. It has to be borne in mind that the company never owns the product; it freezes it, ships it, and collects the money. No doubt Mr Wordsworth will probably have a look at the plant. I just mention those things in passing.

The fact is we have a lingering dispute. The purpose of my motion is to point out the shortcomings of the Government and to try to impress on members in this Chamber that if we all use our good offices we can mitigate the kind of things that can happen. The unions do not have only a national connection, but an international connection.

I share with members on the Government benches the wish for economic well-being in this country to the same extent as they do. In the Port of Fremantle I was met with great warmth, but with some apprehension not only among the people in the waterside area, but also among ship owners. The ramifications of this dispute could affect not only one section of Australia but the whole of it.

The question of crossing picket lines is very serious, and can lead to all kinds of situations. If we had been patient for another 48 hours this confrontation would not have occurred. I agree with Mr Gayfer who put forward a very good case. I can imagine his frustration.

On the question of the use of the word "scab", not once did I use it in my speech.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: I acknowledged that.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: This is the first occasion I have used it tonight. It is not a home-grown term. If members here want to know the terrible implications of its meaning I recommend to them they read a poem by the novelist, Jack London. He wrote a poem simply called "Scab". I have seen how people have had to suffer who for a variety of reasons—as Mr MacKinnon has said—have got themselves into the situation where they have had that terrible name attached to them. It applies not only to them, but to their children. I do not agree with it, but I know what happens. It should not be allowed to happen. I have a genuine appreciation in this regard.

As I said earlier very carefully, the use of the term is legendary. It has been with us for a long time. Many people can use the term quite easily having never been subjected to the test to see whether they could stand the test themselves which applied to the people described by Jack London. We do not really know. So, perhaps it is better we do not use the term; I really mean that. It has been known to cause deaths, and as Mr MacKinnon rightly said in some cases it has caused suicides.

Having said all these things, we are not going to get anywhere. Let me repeat: if we are to continue this confrontation situation by amending legislation to make legal things illegal we will not get anywhere.

I read the report in the *Daily News* last night about a journalist following some farmers from Albany back to a tavern. I read the comments of those farmers and I sympathise with them. They were bewildered, the same as the meat-workers are bewildered. One comment which struck me forcibly, and it is the point on which I moved this motion, was "We might have ruined Australia but at least we did something." Let us hope that that comment attributed to one of the people who loaded the ship at Albany is incorrect.

We come to one very definite realisation in this modern technological State. It may not have been apparent 20 or 30 years ago, or even 10 years ago. There are stoppages from day to day in all manner of industries. At one time one man could stop work and it did not matter very much, but in the highly developed technological society in which we live at present it takes only one person, a garbage collector, to unbutton the whole system. The situation is like a complicated electronic machine. One small section of the printed circuit goes out, and that is it.

If we recognise one another's roles and rights in society then perhaps this would be a much better nation in which to live. I do not particularly accept Mr Wordsworth's point of view that because of union actions our overseas reserves are dwindling. I have plenty of examples in my office of papers which review things faithfully and correctly—not just to sell their papers—proving just the opposite.

I appreciate what Mr Neil McNeill said last night about having to subsidise certain industries. Perhaps they could be called "bludgers", but that is modern society. He said that the people have had enough—he did not say the farmers had had enough—because people generally wanted a better life and a right to work. We will not get it in this manner.

To conform with normal procedures of this House, when an urgency motion is moved—and I understand this is always the practice—I seek leave to withdraw my motion.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. D. K. Dans has asked leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

House adjourned at 8.35 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

QUESTIONS

Cost

64. The Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

- (1) Would the Minister obtain from the Premier the estimated cost of answering parliamentary questions, in this session, in each portfolio of the Cabinet, and advise this House of these costs, on a weekly basis?
- (2) Would the Minister also obtain from the Premier the hours spent by the chief executive officer in each of the portfolios in preparing the answers to these questions and advise this House?
- (3) Would the Minister also state whether the answer to the bulk of these questions would be available to Members through the process of contacting ministerial offices, and what would be the estimated delay if answers could be obtained in this manner?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) The estimated weekly cost of answering parliamentary questions over the first full three weeks of this session was \$15 312, which averaged approximately \$89.00 per question. However, the cost of questions varies considerably depending upon whether information is readily available. Questions in this exercise

varied from \$5.00 for ones with readily available information, to \$425.00 for those requiring in-depth research.

The figures for each portfolio per week are shown below.

- (2) An estimated 75½ hours per week have been spent by chief executive officers of the 13 portfolios. The figures for each portfolio are set out below.

	Question (1)	Question (2)
	Average Weekly Cost of Parliamentary Questions Under Each Portfolio this Session	Hours Spent Weekly by Chief Executive Officers
Portfolio	\$	Hours
Premier, Treasurer, and Minister Co-ordinating Economic and Regional Development	1 667	7
Deputy Premier, Chief Secretary, Minister for Police and Traffic, and Minister for Regional Administration and the North West	1 597	7½
Minister for Agriculture	857	6½
Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife, Tourism, Conservation and the Environment, and Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council	1 070	5½
Minister for Works, Water Supplies, and Housing	1 556	4½
Minister for Labour and Industry, Consumer Affairs, and Immigration	515	10½
Attorney General and Minister for Federal Affairs	153	1
Minister for Education, Cultural Affairs, and Recreation	1 211	3½
Minister for Industrial Development, Mines, and Fuel and Energy	1 274	3
Minister for Local Government, and Urban Development and Town Planning	645	2
Minister for Health, and Community Welfare	1 638	16½
Minister for Transport	2 382	6
Minister for Lands and Forests	747	2½
Average Weekly Total	\$15 312	75½

- (3) Yes—the answer to the bulk of these questions would be available to members through the process of contacting ministerial offices. Some questions directed in this way could be answered immediately, others may take a few days, depending on how the question was presented and its complexity.

The time taken should not be significantly longer than if the question were asked in Parliament, but it is acknowledged that there are often unacceptable delays in answering correspondence.

With this in mind, the Government would be prepared to have the system of dealing with correspondence from members of Parliament reviewed to achieve a more streamlined and quicker response.

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Star Swamp Area

84. The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Has the Minister received copies of the resolutions arising from a public meeting held at North Beach on the 19th March and calling for the reservation of the area known as Star Swamp?
- (2) Have all statutory bodies requested to do so responded to the Environmental Protection Authority report on the area?
- (3) (a) Has a decision as yet been made on the extent of the area surrounding the swamp that may be included in a proposed reserve; and
(b) if so, what are the boundaries of the area decided upon?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) (a) No.
(b) Not applicable.

POLICE

Special Branch

85. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) In relation to Special Branch files kept on current and previous members of this State Parliament, will he outline—
 - (a) the reasons why files currently exist on Members of Parliament;
 - (b) on how many Members of Parliament files currently exist;
 - (c) on how many Members of Parliament files have existed, but are no longer kept; and
 - (d) for how many years files on Members of Parliament have been collated?
- (2) In relation to files on Members of Parliament which have been kept in Police records, will he outline—
 - (a) the reasons why they are no longer kept in Police records; and
 - (b) why the files were originally collated on Members of Parliament and then subsequently removed from the records?
- (3) Are files from the Special Branch kept on current or previous Members of the Federal Parliament?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) (a) Within Police records there are currently some files on members or ex-members of Parliament. The reasons are confidential.
(b) This is confidential.
(c) This information is not recorded.
(d) This is not known.
- (2) (a) When the person is deceased.
(b) Because of their involvement in some Police investigation and if they were the only person involved it would be removed upon their death.
- (3) This information is confidential.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Theatre Consultant

86. The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Cultural Affairs:

- (1) Is the theatre consultant Mr. T. Brown, presently in the State at the invitation of the Government?
- (2) If so, how long is the duration of his visit?
- (3) What is the purpose of his visit?
- (4) What Government and non-government bodies will he be having discussions with?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) 2½ days.
- (3) To consult with commissioned architects Hill and Parkinson on the restoration and upgrading of His Majesty's Theatre.
- (4) The Chairman—Theatre Advisory Committee.

The Principal Architect, Public Works Department.

The Director, Western Australian Arts' Council.

The Administrator of the National Theatre Company.

POLICE

Duties of Officers

87. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Adverting to the answer to part (1) (b) of my question No. 51 of the 4th April, 1978, which administrative officers of the Police Force assess whether organisations or individuals have subversive or unlawful potential?
- (2) Will he make available to me, on a confidential basis, the information sought in part (2) of my question No. 51 of the 4th April, 1978?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) The Commissioner and his Assistant Commissioners.
- (2) No.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Theatre Complex

88. The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Cultural Affairs:

What organisations are being consulted or requested to supply briefs relating to planning for the proposed theatre complex in Perth Cultural Centre?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

The Western Australian Arts Council is the spokesman for, and the contact body between, the performing organisations and the Cultural Centre Planning Committee.

Early in 1976, the Council distributed 137 questionnaires to metropolitan and country companies and groups.

A total of 62 replies was received by mid-1976, including replies from all major groups. The consensus was submitted in the form of a report which will form the basis of the planning brief.

Preliminary discussions have been held this week with the Administrator of the National Theatre Company.

POLICE

Special Branch

89. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Police and Traffic:

(1) Has the Commissioner of Police ever given official sanction to liaison between the W.A. Special Branch and security organisations in other States?

(2) If so, when and by what method?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

(1) The Commissioner of Police has given Inspector Markham official sanction to liaise with other security organisations.

(2) In September, 1975—verbally.

90. *This question was postponed.*

WATER SUPPLIES

Allanooka

91. The Hon. MARGARET McALEER, to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) Could the Minister confirm that there is a lowering of the water table level in the Allanooka area, and specify the extent, and over what period of time?

(2) If the water table has been appreciably lowered, is it possible to separate climatic effects from the impact of ground water extraction?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

(1) Since the supply of water to Geraldton from Allanooka was commissioned in 1966, the water table in the borefield has progressively fallen. The extent of the drop in water level varies over the borefield from less than one metre to eleven metres.

(2) There is a climatic effect on water levels and the present position has been brought about to some extent by a series of dry seasons. As monitoring of water levels continues over a series of changing seasons, the relationship between water levels and seasonal factors will become more precisely determined.

HOSPITAL

Royal Perth

92. The Hon. MARGARET McALEER, to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Health:

(1) As a result of the power black outs caused by cyclone Alby is it correct that all lifts were inoperative at Royal Perth Hospital for a lengthy period?

(2) What length of time was SEC power unavailable to RPH?

(3) What provision is there for auxiliary power to keep the hospital functioning during times of power failures?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

(1) That is not correct, although a lack of lifts above the fourth floor level was a major problem for the hospital during the SEC power cut. The hospital's emergency power supply can operate two lifts during such breakdowns, one in the south-east extension which does not go above the fourth floor and one in the main ward block covering all "patient" floors. This lift happened to be out of commission during the blackout because of work being done on it, so the only lift which was in service on emergency power during the blackout was the one in the south-east extension. The staff of the hospital are to be congratulated on the way they coped with the situation last week.

- (2) The SEC power supply failed from 1750 to 2030 hours on Tuesday, April 4, 1978, and from 0833 to 1210 hours on Wednesday, April 5, 1978.
- (3) Royal Perth Hospital, Wellington Street, has 4 emergency generators with a total capacity of 635 KVA. This supply, which represents a small proportion of the hospital's load, is directed to maintaining the following:
 - (a) minimal lighting and some general power outlets in all wards and most departments which must maintain some level of activity;
 - (b) one lift in the south-east extension and one lift in the main ward block;
 - (c) most of the lighting and power supplies in special areas such as intensive care and operating theatres.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE:

SHEEP EXPORTS

Industrial Dispute: Comments of Mr J. Marks

1. The Hon. TOM McNEIL to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Did he see in this morning's edition of *The West Australian* a comment reported to have been made by the Assistant Secretary of the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights' Union (Mr J. Marks) that "The cockies will want to put a 24-hour patrol round their boundaries, because there's a very high bush-fire risk now"?
- (2) Will he indicate whether the Government proposes to take any action?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) and (2) I wish to thank the honourable member for prior information of his intention to ask this question.

The Premier has supplied me with the following reply—

The Premier, on behalf of the Government, has publicly deplored the reported statement and has called on both the Trades and Labor Council and the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights' Union to declare their attitude to Mr J. Marks' remarks.

The Premier is also making a statement and he will release copies of the letters he has written to the Trades and Labor Council and to the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights' Union.

I table copies of these documents which include a copy of a similar question asked by Mr Tubby in another place, the Premier's answer to that question, and letters written by the Premier to Mr Latter, as President of the Trades and Labor Council, and to Mr Grenfell, the State President of the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights' Union, and a Press statement made by the Premier with regard to this matter.

The papers were tabled (see paper No. 130).

QUESTIONS

Number: Reduction

2. The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the Leader of the House:

I would like to ask the Leader of the House a question without notice following his reply to a question asked previously by Mr Lewis about the cost of parliamentary questions. My question is this:

Does the Government have any intention to reduce the opportunities for members to ask questions in the Chamber and so stifle freedom of speech which is a very essential part of the Westminster system of Parliament?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

I do not really see the connection between the question asked by Mr Lewis and that of the honourable member. Nevertheless, I take it that the two have some connection in her mind.

The simple answer, of course, is "No". When the matter was raised the other day, I said to Mr Hetherington that restrictions of this type—that is a restriction on the answering of questions—almost without fail are attributable to those who ask the questions and not to those who answer them. If the questions continue to be "reasonable"—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What do you mean by that?

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: Who is to determine that?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Any member in this Chamber who cannot determine that ought to tender his resignation tomorrow.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: In other words you are saying you are intending to stifle questions.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: The honourable member asked the question, and I am trying to answer it. It is most improper to keep interjecting; the honourable member can ask another question.

The PRESIDENT: Will the Minister proceed?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I will go back to the statement I was making when I was so rudely interrupted. The Government has no intention at this stage of changing the format of answering questions. If members take it into their heads to change the format of asking questions, that might be a different matter.

QUESTIONS

Cost

3. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Leader of the House:

Can he inform us how much it cost the Government to prepare the answer to question 64 of the 5th April, 1978?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

The estimated weekly cost of answering parliamentary questions is \$15 302. The cost can vary from \$5 where the information is readily available to about \$475 for a question involving in-depth research. As there are three questions involved, I suppose that could be one at \$5 and two at \$475, or perhaps the other way around.
