

Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 4th October, 1977

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

BILLS (7): ASSENT

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills—

1. Acts Amendment (Pensioners Rates Rebates and Deferments) Bill.
2. Perth Medical Centre Act Amendment Bill.
3. Local Government Act Amendment Bill.
4. Construction Safety Act Amendment Bill.
5. Physiotherapists Act Amendment Bill.
6. Child Welfare Act Amendment Bill.
7. Fertilizers Bill.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

Tabling

THE PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths): I have for tabling the Auditor-General's report for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1977.

The report was tabled (see paper No. 250).

CLERK ASSISTANT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Overseas Duty Tour

THE PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths): Honourable members the Clerk Assistant and Usher of the Black Rod, Mr J. G. Ashley, has resumed duty following a three months' attachment at the House of Commons, Westminster.

During his time overseas, Mr Ashley also visited the Parliaments of Canada and Singapore, and the Legislative Council of Hong Kong.

I feel sure that members will join me in acknowledging his return to the House.

Members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

EDUCATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 22nd September.

THE HON. R. HETHERINGTON (East Metropolitan) [4.43 p.m.]: I wish to oppose this Bill and suggest seriously to the Government that it should withdraw the measure, reconsider it, and bring it back at a later date, or introduce another

Bill. It seems to me that the Bill has been brought in too early without sufficient information and inquiry, and it has caused a number of people a great deal of worry and concern—and caused them this needlessly.

I am a little interested that a Government which has talked so much about the needs of federalism—the needs of one section of government balancing the other—and the needs of decentralisation, seems to be at present building up in the Education Department a great empire. One of the things we have to be very careful of in our system of government is to make sure that administrators do not get on top of Ministers. I am not sure this is not what may be happening here; I am not at all certain.

I fear that able, intelligent, and dedicated men—this may seem an odd sort of statement to make—because they are able, intelligent, and dedicated, are people who are sure that what they are doing is right, and because of that ability and intelligence they expand their empires. It concerns me that we seem to be building up in the State Education Department a very tightly compacted and centralised system instead of a devolving system. This is apparent not only with the intended policy of the functions of the Pre-School Board being taken over by the early childhood education branch of the Education Department, but is also, I gather the impression, the intention of the Education Department.—I do not know whether it is the intention of the Government—to make sure that the recommendations of the Partridge Committee on technical and further education are not implemented so that the technical and further education branch remains under the general overall control of the Director-General of Education.

I am not here criticising the Director-General of Education; I have the greatest respect for him. I think he is very able, he is highly intelligent, and he is very dedicated, but I am wondering whether the Minister for Education—and I do not mean the Minister representing that Minister in this place—is not taking too much notice of his ability and dedication and, therefore, he is not being too anxious to get administrative centralism in the Education Department. This concerns me greatly. We should think about it very seriously, and here I am talking about the principle or the need to make sure that if it is desired to have internal politics in a Government department they are not made "court politics"—and I am not punning on the Premier's name—where all representations have to earn the favour of the person in charge of a department. There is a need for a kind of democratic politics where one branch can put its

case against another and all suggestions do not go through one department to the Minister.

It would be a good idea to make sure the Minister receives different advice. A very good function of the Pre-School Board was that it could give the Minister different advice from that received from some of his other advisers in the field of education. Therefore, I seriously suggest to the Government that it look to its own principles, or at least the principles it claims to have.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You were right the first time.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: The principles of devolution of power and decentralisation has been talked about by a multiplicity of good people. It is not my intention to claim that the pre-primary system is working well or ill. I notice from my reading of the debates which took place in another place, and from the interjections which were made, and arguments across the floor of the House, that a great deal of pique was generated on the fact that some pre-primary centres were working well, and some were working badly. Of course, we would expect both of those things to be happening when a system is just getting under way. I have no doubt there are very excellent pre-primary centres, and I have no doubt some are having grave teething problems. I am not talking about those centres.

What I am talking about is the need to rationalise the dual system which was introduced by this Government. I believe the Government will save something under \$300 000 by abolishing the Pre-School Board and bringing this education under the auspices of the early childhood education branch. However, by saving this money the Government may be indulging in false economy because of the confusion which will occur.

I remind the House that the Pre-School Board was established by the Tonkin Government, and taken over and developed by the Court Government. This project got under way fairly limpingly, but it managed to expand and develop when the Whitlam Government came to power federally and made moneys available to the State for pre-school education. I hope at some time I will hear some members opposite give some credit to the Whitlam Government in that it did make this money available, because we have heard a great deal of bitter complaint about the Whitlam Government, its centralising and socialising tendencies, and all the alleged evils it brought about. I have heard from teachers in secondary

schools, and I know from my own previous occupation as a lecturer at the university that secondary, primary, and pre-primary education in this State benefited considerably from the activities of the Whitlam Government, and, let us give credit where credit is due, this present State Government took advantage of the funds made available by the Whitlam Government.

I always felt rather critical of the actions of the former Minister for Education because it seemed to me that the results obtained were a consequence of a sort of bumbling accident, helped out because the Whitlam Government had made funds available to pull the chickens out of the fire—I know that is a mixed metaphor but I cannot find the right one.

Before the 1974 election, when the present State Government was in Opposition, it made a number of promises in regard to education. It promised to reduce the school entrance age to five years, although it was a little unclear at that stage whether or not the promise would ensure compulsory education at five. Certainly the implementation of that promise would have made it extremely difficult for parents not to send their children to pre-primary centres at the age of five years when there was a pre-primary setup at a primary school because children who did not attend the pre-primary school might have been disadvantaged.

At that time the Liberal Party promised also to alter the age of entry into high schools, and to divide high schools into junior and senior high schools. This was a very ambitious programme, which members of the Labor Party criticised very strongly at the time, and I think quite properly. The programme was criticised also by the Teachers' Union, and properly so. The Government failed to carry out its promises because the problems it faced were too great.

I remember reading the speech made by Sir Charles Court at the time, and he said that if necessary the school buildings would be built by private enterprise which would then lease them to the Government. This seems to be a favourite device of the Government; we have heard of school buildings which were to be built by private enterprise and leased, no doubt at an exorbitant rent, and we have now heard that powerhouses are to be built by private enterprise which will then sell or lease the powerhouses to the Government.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: It is a lot cheaper.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: That remains to be seen. We have heard recently that the State Housing Commission will arrange for

houses to be built by private enterprise, and these houses will then be leased or purchased by the Government. This course is to be taken because the Housing Commission is receiving insufficient money from the Loan Fund. I will discuss this problem at some later time.

We have now heard this education proposal put forward by the Premier. I do not know whether it was suggested seriously, or whether the Premier made these remarks in a moment of exuberance. The Premier is well known for his exuberance at times, and certainly I enjoy listening to his bubbling enthusiasm. However, I am never quite sure when to take his remarks seriously and when to regard them as an excess of zeal. The rather elaborate programme he propounded in regard to education seemed to be an idea put forward in an excess of zeal.

A very high-powered committee formulated this programme, no doubt after many discussions all around. The member for Karrinyup in another place was a member of the committee that came up with this proposal which obviously has proved impractical; it has not been carried out. Of course, when the Minister rises to reply to the debate, it is possible he will say that the programme was not carried out because of the Whitlam Government. He may say, "We would have carried it out except for the policies of the terrible Whitlam Government which made unemployment and inflation notorious things in Australia!" Perhaps that will be a way out for the Government, but I believe the proposals were just not practicable.

I believe the electors did not really listen to these proposals at the time; certainly they did not prove to be very popular, and they did not appear in the 1977 policy speech of the present Premier. However, the Government did do something—although perhaps its actions were improper—about pre-schools, because this was one of the "in" things at the time.

The Labor Party set up a committee to formulate policies for the same election, and I had the honour to be on that committee. We considered the whole business of pre-school education very seriously indeed, and we worked out an elaborate policy which we hoped we would be able to carry out one day. This policy took into consideration the whole range of children from nought to four years as well as the five-year-olds.

The Labor Party was very worried about education also, and continuing education right through life because we believed that individuals have a fundamental and inalienable right to be provided with education which will allow them to

develop more fully as human beings, and also to develop their inherent capacities.

The first Court Government found that it could set up some pre-primary centres in primary schools, and it proceeded to do this. However, it also proceeded to take over some kindergartens voluntarily. I have heard stories about some of these takeovers—I do not know whether or not to believe them, so we will just class them as rumours at the moment—and of pressures that were put on various kindergartens to become pre-primary centres. It seemed to us—and by the word "us" I mean people in the Labor Party who are concerned with education—that the Government was spending too much time and effort in taking over existing kindergartens, and it was not putting sufficient time and effort into building pre-primary centres in areas of the greatest need.

I believe one pre-primary centre was built at Bunbury and others were provided in a number of country towns; for this I am very pleased. However, perhaps the Government should have endeavoured to build more pre-primary centres in the metropolitan area where the residents enjoy lower incomes and the children are underprivileged. I say this because one of the drawbacks of the pre-school system as it existed, before the Government came in more directly, was that the system relied on the activities of the parents. This meant that quite often kindergartens were developed in areas where the residents belonged to the middle class and their children were reasonably advantaged anyway. I am not suggesting, of course, Mr President, that the children of middle-class parents do not need pre-school education, and I am not suggesting that the children of middle-class parents do not need to get away from their parents to learn to socialise away from the home environment. It seems to me that many children of middle-class parents need this opportunity because they are somewhat smothered at home; they too have rights; they too have needs; they too need to get away.

It is more important in areas where both parents are sometimes forced to go out into the work force; where children are not always as well cared for as they should be; and where pre-school education is of very urgent need.

I know that when the Leader of the House was Minister for Education he was aware of many of these problems. I think perhaps he too had an excessive zeal and did not always direct his priorities as well as he could have, but I still give credit to the fact that there is a vast number of children comparatively in pre-school centres of all

kinds who would not have got pre-school education some years ago. They would not have received this education before this Government came into office, and before the Tonkin Government came into office and kicked off the whole thing.

It does seem to me one of the problems involved with the whole question of pre-schools, quite apart from the fact that it seemed to me the Pre-School Board was doing quite a good job, is that it may have been better generally to channel pre-school education into the area of parent responsibility with the Pre-School Board rather than making it part of the great bureaucratic Education Department. This may have been a better way of dealing with it. It may have been better to separate in the pre-schools the children in year five and under. The Government may have been able to develop from this a system where younger children are gradually taken in.

One of the problems at present is that we are not quite sure what is going to happen with the abolition of the Pre-School Board. What surprises me, and the evidence is there, is that the Pre-School Board was told nothing about its demise until the decision was made to kill it. The board had no warning and I am told on good evidence that when the present Minister came to discuss some of the problems with the board he discovered a number of problems of which he had no idea.

I know when the Leader of the House was Minister for Education he set up a committee to look into the problems of what to do with the four-year-olds. Am I right?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Yes, you are.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I would have hoped had he remained as the Minister for Education he would have waited until the committee reported, as he seems a sensible man.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: He is a quick learner.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: It seems to me from what I have learned of the Minister so far that this is the kind of thing he would do. Having set up a committee to give information the Minister would have waited until the information arrived before he took the next step. This seems highly desirable and I would suggest to the Government that it is not too late. The Government does not need to proceed with this Bill; it could be dropped to the bottom of the notice paper. The Government could announce it was not going on with it. The Government could withdraw the Bill and wait until it had the information and then introduce a new Bill based

on the whole range of information from the inquiry that had been held.

A great number of pre-school teachers are very concerned and they are not sure what has happened to them. It may be argued that they should be sure of their position because the Minister has gone to a lot of trouble to set out a number of answers to questions that were put to him by pre-school teachers and by the Teachers' Union. These answers set out in great detail various things that have happened and give the teachers many assurances.

This still does not prevent the unease which is felt by many people in the pre-school system, particularly those who are going to remain in community-based centres independent of the Education Department. In fact, they will not be independent of the department because although they may have to get some funds from the community, from local government, and from fees charged for four-year-olds, and perhaps five-year-olds, the teachers will be paid by the Education Department. What happens in detail is not particularly certain.

For instance, what does happen in a community-based centre such as the one I have been told of where there are 25 five-year-olds in one class and there are 10 five-year-olds in another and 15 four-year-olds. In this case there are not enough five-year-olds for a full-time teacher unless they are all grouped together. But does the Education Department pay just for the five-year-olds or for the four-year-olds; or does it pay a portion for the five-year-olds with something from the parents for the four-year-olds?

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: The department pays for them all.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am glad of that assurance because there are people who have approached me and who are very concerned about this. I will be very pleased if the Minister in his reply will give that assurance, so that the people may cease to be worried.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: I understand the department will pay for all of it.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: The other point I raised with the Minister by a question earlier in the session concerns special-case children. There are two problems here. At present, the teachers in pre-school centres under the board do a number of things. They are very versatile and they have to be. With the parents, they are responsible for the administration of the centre. They are responsible for the children under their care in their pre-school education

during a normal session. They are responsible also for special-case children of all varieties with all kinds of special problems who are referred to them by other organisations.

The administration involves them in going out at night to meetings, which they are expected to attend, and it involves them in visiting parents and social workers to see if the referral of the special-case child has produced the desired result. In other words they are doing a great many important things which are not being done by ordinary teachers. They are in a very important position.

This brings about a worry on two grounds. When they are incorporated into the Education Department and particularly where there are pre-primary schools involved, will they continue to be able to do as they did, and where will the responsibility lie?

A pre-school teacher said to me, "We have these very small children who are away from home; it is their first excursion into the world. They have to be protected from older children; they cannot mix with the rough and tumble." Some people are concerned that pre-primary teachers are attached physically to schools and the young children are too close to other people. I do not know if this is right or wrong; I am not an expert on the education of young people. All I can do is to voice the fears put to me, so that the experts who advise the Minister perhaps can allay those fears.

If a child is hurt in a pre-primary centre the teacher arranges to take him to a doctor or home, leaving an aide to look after the centre. The young child is with someone he knows and trusts and to whom he can relate. I am told that in primary schools the senior mistress has this responsibility. So, if a child is hurt in a pre-primary centre he will be taken home by a senior mistress whom the child may not have met before. The senior mistress may not be able to relate to small children.

In other words, once the child leaves the pre-primary centre he will be taken away from two environments in which he feels secure and to which he can relate, and he will be with a comparative stranger.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: How would the child be taken home from a one-teacher country centre?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am talking about the worries of people in the metropolitan area. If the Minister wants to interject about country one-teacher schools which do have particular problems he is entitled to, but I would

like him to listen to what I have to say and find out the answers. I am telling the Minister what people have told me. If it is untrue or inaccurate I am sorry; all I can do is to tell him their fears. Whether he wants to allay their fears or not is his concern. I am taking this matter seriously; I am not playing games.

The Government has moved too fast, too soon. It could have waited another year and perhaps not saved the money it is going to save. Perhaps it could have done a better job then, because it would have had the time to make inquiries and come up with all the answers and people would have been happier.

The Government is worrying many teachers, as many of them are married women who are to go into the Education Department as temporary teachers for one year. They may or may not be absorbed; the Minister says most of them will be absorbed. They do not know. They are worried about this situation which raises two problems. The first problem concerns the number of teachers who have given good service to kindergartens. Many are married women with husbands who are working and they are very afraid of the glut of young graduates coming from the colleges, CAEs, and universities. They are worried they will be put off because they are married.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: They would not be put off simply because they are married. They may be put off if they do not go to a position where they are required.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Perhaps the Minister will get to his feet—

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I won't be getting up.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: The Minister is a member of the Government and perhaps he could whisper into the ear of the Minister sitting next to him.

Some teachers are concerned because they do not want to go away. Had the old pre-school system been retained they would be secure in the jobs they were doing well. It is argued by many people that as far as pre-school children are concerned, one needs people with wide experience and understanding; the very kind of people comprising the married teachers in the present pre-school centres.

If for any reason those women are lost to the Education Department then that may be a grave loss to the whole pre-school system, and a grave loss to the children concerned. The Government should take very careful note of this: because of the matrimonial circumstances of some teachers,

they may not be prepared to go 100 miles into a country area to teach, but those women may still be worth retaining.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: What happens in the country areas?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: There are problems in the country, but I am talking about the system as it is. Of course, great problems exist in the country, and I would be the last to belittle those problems. However, I do not know that I can give the answers. Were I the Minister for Education—which I do not think I am likely to be in the near future—I would have many people working on those problems to come up with the answers.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: The point you make is that the country people can do without those teachers.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I know what the honourable member is saying. The point is that we have to balance very carefully the loss to the system of competent, experienced, married women. If we say to them, "You will have to go to the country, because you have come into the Education Department" some of them may not be prepared to do so because they have husbands to look after. The services of those teachers may be well utilised in the city.

All I am saying is that this matter has to be considered very carefully. Many people are concerned that the overall detriment to the system may be grave, if that happens. I know it is a problem; and I know people are concerned about it. The position is that for 1978, as far as the pre-schools under the Pre-School Board are concerned, transfers and appointments are arranged by the Pre-School Board. The teachers will have a year to consider their position. At the end of that they will be wondering what is to happen to them.

They are very concerned from what I understand after speaking to some of these people, and this is not doing their morale any good. What I am suggesting is not that the problems are not present, but that we should wait another year to sort out some of them. We should wait and see what is to be done with the four-year-olds and the teachers. All this has happened too fast and unnecessarily fast. Even then there will be grave problems.

As far as the country areas and the rural towns of Western Australia are concerned the problems are very great.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: What is the position in the other States?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: As people within my own party and outside of it have told me, when I make statements like that, "It is all very well for you to say that, but this is Western Australia." The problems in this State are greater than those in the other States, and it took me a little while to realise that. However, I now realise the position fully. Coming from the middle-east of Australia, I refer to South Australia, I think the people in the east do not realise how different are the problems, how great are the distances, and how isolated are the people in Western Australia. We have very special problems. I shall not begin to suggest to members opposite that I can solve the problems for them. I am very interested to hear members opposite talking about the problems, because in due course solutions to them may come forth.

I am not trying to knock the country areas; that is the last thing in the world I wish to do. However, I do say there are people in the metropolitan area who are very concerned about how the new Act will operate, about the sudden takeover, and about the abolition of the Pre-School Board which many think has worked quite efficiently and effectively.

It may be that the new branch in the Education Department will work just as effectively. It may be that because it is a branch of the Education Department some of the community involvement will be lost. This is something which has to be considered very seriously. It may be that we will lose from the Pre-School Board a group of people who are prepared to put forward very forcibly and strongly to the Minister the point of view of those in that particular section of the education system; in other words, to point out to him that he may be the loser in being deprived of a multiplicity of advice.

I think the present policies of the Minister are wrong and he is taking wrong advice, but I do not think he is incapable of taking a multiplicity of advice and sorting it all out. It would be better if he had done so. If he had done that he would have made haste a little more slowly.

There are the problems as to what might happen to the teachers; and the teachers are quite worried about their security of tenure. When we look at the question on paper, we find that in fact once the pre-school teachers have been transferred into the Education Department the security of tenure is carried on, as it is now. The pre-school teachers are aware of the requirement of six months' notice on either side.

I stand corrected, because I see the Minister moving his eyebrows. The pre-school teachers are

aware of the six weeks' notice on either side. In the Education Department, once a teacher is permanent he remains permanent unless he prefers not to be permanent. For all practical purposes this used to be like the tenure at the university, where the staff were on an approval basis for three-year periods. In the good old days that was for all practical purposes permanent tenure of office.

As far as the pre-school teachers are concerned the six weeks' notice on either side is for all practical purposes permanency of tenure. What they are worrying about is whether at the end of the year they have been serving as temporary teachers, they would have the same permanency of tenure as they now have. Despite the assurance of the Minister for Transport, speaking on behalf of the Minister for Education, he has not convinced me.

The interjection by the Leader of the House has made me even less certain that what I have said will be the case, because it gives the possibility—I do not say it will happen, and I think the days have long passed when any Government department would behave like this—that a married woman can be ordered to teach some distance away from her domestic home, and on her refusal to comply she could be got rid of. That would be a convenient way to get rid of these teachers.

The Hon. O. N.B. Oliver: What is the position with the unmarried women? Can they be dictated to?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Of course, they can be dictated to. I am not talking about the degree of dictation, but what may happen to a married woman who is quite capable, but who can be lost to the system. I am saying the whole matter ought to be balanced and looked at in an overall perspective. I am not convinced from the way in which this Bill has been introduced, and the way the Minister for Education made his announcement about the abolition of the Pre-School Board, that this overall look has been taken. I am quite sure that when the Minister for Education made the announcement he did not know about the special-case children, and about the couple of thousand of four-year-olds in the pre-school centres who will remain.

I am not saying the Minister is not concerned. I am saying he did not know, and it seems he made that announcement before he had the facts. It is unwise, when playing around with the lives of children, to take steps when one does not have all the facts. It seems to me that, in fact, the

Government has stepped in too quickly. I hope the Government will reconsider its position.

I remain very concerned; and I remain unconvinced that the system will necessarily work well. I do not know what will happen to the four-year-olds. I am concerned that the Government should abolish the Pre-School Board, and that it will set up an early childhood education branch, after which it will consider the results of a committee of inquiry and decide what will happen to the four-year-olds.

This is like a kind of blank cheque which the Government asks us to give. It says, "Have faith in us. We will do everything to work it out." I do not think the Government should ask the people to have faith in it on important issues like this one. The Government should have it all worked out, and provided the people with time to discuss the proposal. There was no time to discuss it adequately before the Bill was introduced—as to whether the Pre-School Board would be to the advantage of the community, or whether the pre-primary centres should be put under the control of the Pre-School Board. There was no time for the public to talk about these matters; and the people are very concerned.

I can well remember the time the Pre-School Board was established by the Tonkin Government, when there was a great deal of discussion, lobbying, and anguish. Pressures were put on the Government to establish the right kind of board while the Bill was passing through Parliament.

That was also the experience when the Brand Government introduced the Tertiary Education Commission setup. It was not malice on the part of that Government, when it wrote into the Act the power to be given to the Tertiary Education Commission to override completely the autonomy of the universities of this State. To its credit, when this was pointed out to the Brand Government by the various university unions—or staff associations as they prefer to be called—it was prepared to amend and to change the legislation. It introduced the legislation in the initial form not with intent. Had the legislation been out earlier it could have been discussed; and a great deal of the anguish, lobbying, and pressures could have been avoided.

In this area perhaps the Government was afraid there would be too much controversy; certainly there would have been. Once there is a playing around—I retract the term "playing around" because that is not what the Government is doing—once we start dealing with pre-school education problems then all the parents with pre-

school children, all the parents with school children, many of the parents with post-school children, many of those who hope they will have children, and many of those who set themselves up as instant experts on everything, will have something to say.

The Government will come under great attack, and a great deal of heat will be engendered. Perhaps not very much light, but a little light will come out of the discussion.

I would have been much happier had the Government and the Minister been prepared to telegraph its policies and indicate that it was thinking of abolishing the Pre-School Board and then to wait for all hell to break loose, as no doubt it would have to the benefit of the Government. After all, discussion, listening, pressuring, and modifying proposals, as well as waiting for information, is what democracy is all about. I know it has been said in this House that people do not know what democracy is, and I have said that we are not really operating under a democratic system. However, we do have some of the attributes of democracy, and the good thing about democracy is that every adult over whatever arbitrary age we may choose—and we have chosen 18 years—has the right to take part in decision making if he or she wants to, even if it is only by way of destructive criticism.

I wonder whether anyone will take me up on this point, but it seems to me that the thing that differentiates a Liberal democracy as it exists here and in the United States from the other authoritarian regimes, whether of the left or right, is that we do allow destructive criticism. We allow people to say, "This is a terrible thing you are doing," even though they do not know how to change it. They do not have anything constructive to offer, but they are permitted to yell if something hurts them. Previously I have quoted A. D. Lindsay, and I do so again now. He has said that only the wearer knows where the shoe pinches. Only the people who are affected by laws can tell us whether those laws suit them. Many people in our community, and particularly in our Government service—and let me make it quite clear that I am not criticising them for this because I am glad they are like it—have a great deal of expertise and are prepared to tell us how we and our children should behave.

However, we believe in a parliamentary system under which Ministers who do not necessarily possess the expertise have access to public servants and have the right to discuss matters with them. If you will allow me a minor digression, Mr President, I would like to say that it would be a good idea if this State developed the

habit of producing green papers which is a system that the United Kingdom Government has begun so that the Government could submit proposals which are not firm, and allow them to be discussed before they are adopted. I suggest this to the Leader of the House because I think he could possibly have a sympathetic and receptive ear on this point. I do hope he might persuade his Cabinet to do something about it.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Similar type of things have been done and, indeed, on this particular measure the amount of information sent out by myself and my successor would, if put together, have made a very satisfactory green paper.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: In that case, I think it is a great pity such information was not put together because I take his word for it that it would have made a satisfactory green paper.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Any practising kindergarten teacher could have collected it and had a marvellous explanation.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: The Government might have found itself under less criticism had it done so.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I doubt that because there are elements out to cause trouble.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I do not think the Leader of the House should—

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: The point is well made.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: —make statements about elements being out to cause trouble because such elements which are out to cause trouble are always a minority, and people out to cause trouble normally can do so only if they have something real upon which to seize.

As far as education is concerned many people are not out to cause trouble, but are worried about their own children, and very much so particularly in today's society. I might point out to country members that the city has problems peculiar to it, and I hope the Leader of the House does not dismiss what I am saying as being sociological nonsense.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I would never dismiss anything you said.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: It seems to me that in our metropolis as it is growing up—we have not reached the stage of a megalopolis—we have very grave problems concerning how to educate people, bring up our youth, and turn them into happy useful citizens, because there are all sorts of things which are against us. If we pack enough people into a small enough space we will

get all sorts of neuroses and troubles. Therefore I hope no-one will misunderstand me. I am not saying that country areas do not have problems, but there are problems peculiar to each area and we must study them differently. I am sure the honourable member who is looking at me from over there would agree with that. His only complaint is probably—a note from my colleague has broken my train of thought.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Did he suggest you were speaking too much?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: He may have suggested that, and if the Minister wants to suggest that to me—

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: I am not suggesting it.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I thank the honourable member for his note, and I will consider doing so in a moment when I have worried a little more about this Bill, because I am particularly concerned about it.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: He might feel you are labouring the point a little.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: It has been said by some people—and I am not too sure whether or not it is true—that in pre-primary centres the APA standards are not being observed.

I hope the Minister can assure me that this is not true, or that if it is true in some schools it is because it has been unavoidable and that every attempt will be made to ensure the situation changes in due course, so that all pre-primary centres do observe the APA standards.

When I say that, I am reminded of something else I wanted to say which is of fairly general concern to me; that is, the fact that pre-primary children will come under the general supervision and control of primary school headmasters. In this respect I have no intention of criticising primary school headmasters or headmistresses; but we all realise that primary school principals have not necessarily been trained to look after pre-school children. Many of them have been quite happy with the way primary schools have been run for a long time and they will not be happy when they have to deal with pre-school children. This raises the question of whether pre-primary centres should be given some kind of autonomy in administration so that the women who have been accustomed to dealing with the administration of these centres should be permitted to continue to do so under the general supervision and control of the principal. Whether or not this is intended, I do not know.

I also do not know how the four-year-olds' pre-primary education will be funded, but I hope we will learn about this in due course. It is time that we stopped playing around with the policy of the four and five-year-olds and admitted that some people believe it is desirable that all youngsters should be covered. Why stop at five-year-olds? Why not include four-year-olds? These too would then be the responsibility of the Government.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: Where do you stop? What about a child who is four in December and then turns five in January?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: An arbitrary stage is set in every system. In South Australia when I was a boy, a long time ago, we could not go to school unless we had turned five on the first day of term. Thus the children who turned five the day before the term started did not go to school, so the child who turned five on the first day of school was a year ahead.

Over here a child goes to school at the beginning of the year in which it turns six. An arbitrary point must be set.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Of course it must be.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: However, the Minister has argued, so far as the Bill is concerned, that we are trying to rationalise the system because by some unfortunate accident we have a dual system established. In those circumstances we might as well say that by the same unfortunate accident there are some four-year-olds in the system and we wonder whether we should include them and extend the ambit of Government responsibility down to four-year-olds. Sooner or later we will have to face the fact that it will be necessary to provide pre-school child-care centres for children who have not even turned one in this modern community where women are seeking equality with men.

It has been suggested to me that I have spoken for too long. I have spoken at length, although I am not sure that I have said all that I should have said.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Who suggested you had spoken for too long?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Someone has. I received a little message! I have spoken at length because I have a real concern for this subject and it is not too late for the Government to change its mind. I know that rarely Governments do change their minds, but it would be a sign of maturity in our political system if Governments sometimes did do so and indicated that perhaps they had been too hasty. On this occasion the Government should indicate that it

will wait until the committee it established submits its report. It should wait to see how the four-year-olds fit into the system, and wait until it is more certain about the fears expressed by many pre-school teachers. It should wait just one more year until people have talked, argued, fought, and got cross about the subject. I assure the Leader of the House that most of those who have entered the controversy are not just stirrers, but are people who have a real and genuine concern about the subject.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I fully agree.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: If the Government would do as I suggest it would gain a little credit in my eyes, but whether this is something which would encourage it to do so, remains to be seen. I ask Ministers opposite to think very carefully about this and I suggest that Ministers in another place should consider withdrawing the Bill and wait until they have the information to produce. I appeal as it were from Caesar to Caesar better informed, and I hope that a better informed Caesar would submit a better Bill.

THE HON. I. G. PRATT (Lower West) [5.44 p.m.]: I am very happy to support this Bill, and I do owe the previous speaker some debt for raising a subject on which I was not going to talk, but about which I now feel compelled to do so. I refer to the concern and apprehension which has been felt and voiced over the past few years regarding the change in our pre-primary school education.

It may sound rather strange that that is a reason for my supporting the Bill, but I feel it is a good reason. When it becomes law, the legislation will put behind us the uncertainty that has caused so much concern over the past few years.

When we were first discussing pre-primary centres I voiced the opinion at that stage that it was a shame we could not complete the whole exercise at the one time. However, that would not have been a prudent course to follow because we were trying something which was new to us, and it was logical to take orderly steps; first, to have pilot schemes to demonstrate their success, which they undoubtedly did; then to amend the Act and move ahead with spreading the scheme as it had been introduced. This, too, has been a tremendous success.

The Minister mentioned in his second reading speech that in 1975 there were 359 centres of all types. Now, in 1977, there are 490 centres—an increase of 131—providing wonderful facilities for young children to be introduced to education. Next year 11 pre-primary centres in new schools being built will be added to the list, and another

25 will be incorporated in established schools. So the Government is moving ahead at a fast pace, providing pre-school facilities for the young to introduce them to learning, perhaps not a formal type of learning but a considerably more formal type than they would have in their own homes.

I believe in equality of education and equality of opportunity, as I am sure do members on both sides of the House. It is accepted as basic to our way of life today. To achieve that in a formally structured educational system through which the children will have to pass, it is reasonable to assume we need a degree of uniformity and a central aim to which we progress, and it must be done in a rational manner. The Bill achieves those aims.

Of course, problems will be experienced in the beginning, but nothing worth while is ever achieved without problems. The problems which may arise concerning married women have been faced for years by teachers in the primary service and to a lesser extent by teachers in the secondary service of the education system. They are problems which can be solved, although perhaps not necessarily to everyone's satisfaction on every occasion. I would strongly disagree with anyone who said that because a scheme has problems it should not be adopted.

The other concern which has been voiced is parental involvement. As an ex-primary school teacher, were I in the position of being a headmaster of a primary school into which a kindergarten was to be incorporated, I would welcome the enthusiasm of the parents, working on behalf of their children in my school. The only limitation to parental involvement is parental interest, and if we have such strong parental interest in the kindergartens the whole education system can only gain from having it added to the interest of the parents and citizens' organisations which already exist in the primary schools.

The fact that the proposals in the Bill have caused concern is a very good reason to put that concern behind us. I do not see that putting off the implementation of the scheme for a year or two years will serve any useful purpose. Whenever there is a change there will always be some people who feel their own position is under attack and who will agitate against the change. Since the first pilot schemes were introduced the matter has been debated publicly and very widely. I do not consider it would be of any advantage to wait another year or two. We should get on with the job and solve any problems as they arise. On the record of the Education Department over the past few years, I feel extremely confident that any problems will be solved and that the parents will

be satisfied the right thing is being done for their children.

I support the Bill.

THE HON. N. F. MOORE (Lower North) [5.51 p.m.]: I support the Bill because I believe the situation now applying in relation to pre-primary education in Western Australia needs to be rationalised. The Government's decision, following the 1974 election, to provide free voluntary pre-primary education to five-year-olds is very laudable and worth while, and I congratulate the Government on the way it has carried out its policy.

To implement the policy it was necessary to adopt a programme which contained a great deal of flexibility because of the widely differing circumstances in various parts of the State. In some areas new pre-primary centres have been built adjacent to existing primary schools. In other areas, with the consent of the local committee, existing centres have been taken over by the Education Department; and where only a small number of children were involved they were taken into the existing classes at primary schools. Thus a situation arose whereby pre-primary education was provided in differing circumstances in different areas.

Operating parallel with this scheme, we have the Pre-School Board system. The aim of the Bill is to abolish the Pre-School Board so that practically all pre-primary education will become the responsibility of the Education Department. Whether or not this should occur is, I believe, the crux of this debate. I therefore intend to explain why in my opinion the system proposed in the Bill will improve the situation rather than cause it to be worse.

In recent years we have heard a great deal, particularly from those involved in education, about the K-to-12 concept of education, and the Education Department has been restructured to enable this concept to operate more efficiently. In basic terms, the K-to-12 concept suggests education be thought of as an on-going process from kindergarten to a year-12 situation, and continuing through to tertiary education. The idea is that arbitrary divisions into primary, secondary, and tertiary education—because they are arbitrary—are not in the best interests of education. Children moving from kindergarten or pre-primary to primary education, and from primary to secondary education, pass through traumatic stages. The transition from secondary to tertiary education is not so traumatic because the children are older. I consider the scheme

proposed in the Bill will make these steps less traumatic for the children involved.

In line with the K-to-12 concept, the Education Department has geared itself to make the process much smoother and has done a great deal of research into development of the curriculum from kindergarten to year 12, rather than as separate areas of education. The department is also encouraging the staff of high schools and primary schools to meet together and discuss areas of mutual concern with a view to making the chain much smoother.

District high schools—in which I have been involved for many years—have proved to be very beneficial. To my mind, great benefits have accrued from the interaction resulting from having primary and secondary education in the same school. I believe the expansion of pre-primary education and its interaction with the primary school will play an important role in the K-to-12 concept. With pre-primary education attached in most cases to the parent primary school, we will have interaction between the staff of the primary school and the staff of the pre-primary centre. This interaction will be of great assistance in both cases, so that we can look at the overall concept.

A previous speaker said the close proximity of the two buildings was not necessarily such a good thing, but I have seen it in practice and it enables interaction to take place between the two centres. In most cases the pre-primary centre is somewhat apart, although it is usually in the same grounds as the primary school. It enables the pre-primary teacher to take the children from one section of the school to another with a minimum of fuss, and a great deal of benefit is derived. I therefore believe the K-to-12 concept will be implemented much more effectively now that the Education Department has become involved in pre-primary education.

Further, because of this involvement, pre-primary education will benefit from the considerable resources of the Education Department. The various specialist branches of the Education Department will be available to pre-primary education. The physical resources and expertise of the Education Department will now be available to the total area of pre-school education. Therefore, purely from an educational point of view and taking into consideration the K-to-12 concept, the Bill has a great deal of merit.

Apart from the educational reasons, the Bill has merit in another respect; that is, administration. Strangely enough, some of the points raised by the Hon. Robert Hetherington in

relation to administration are actually reasons why I am in favour of the Bill. I will come to that in a moment.

Under the Pre-School Board system, the parent committee was responsible for the total administration of the centre and in many instances was required to pay administrative costs such as water and electricity. The pre-school teacher was required to carry out many of the day-to-day administrative tasks—some of them tedious. Under the new system the Education Department will be responsible for many of the details, such as paying electricity and water bills, and the primary school principal will make many of the day-to-day administrative decisions, enabling the pre-primary teacher to devote her attention to the work she is meant to do.

Another reason I am in favour of the proposed scheme is that in small communities it is often impossible or impracticable for the local committee to finance or operate a pre-school centre. In such communities the primary school is now taking in five-year-olds, including them in classes with grades 1, 2, and 3. Thus, pre-school or pre-primary education is now available to five-year-olds in small communities. This is of considerable benefit because I believe a child who starts school at five years of age has an advantage over a child who starts school at six years of age, especially in a small community. Many of the towns in my province, for example, have only small schools, and pre-primary education will now be available in places where it was not available previously.

However, one thing does concern me about this: the addition of pre-school children into the normal school situation could result in classes becoming too big. I believe the Education Department should not allow a situation to arise in which there are too many children in, say, a one-teacher school as a result of five-year-olds becoming part of the class. The Education Department needs to be realistic in determining how many pre-primary children should be permitted into a multi-class situation. On the other hand, there could be a benefit from this in the sense that the additional, pre-primary children could result in a new teacher being appointed, thereby benefiting the school overall.

It is my belief that teachers currently employed by the Pre-School Board will be offered employment by the Education Department. I further believe they will be offered only temporary status during their first year, and I am a little concerned about the prospects which arise from that situation. I trust that the Education Department, when it decides to place pre-school

teachers into the new system, will take into account such things as their length of service, the effectiveness of their service, and the length and location of their country service. All the service of these people for the Pre-School Board must be taken into account in their placement within the Education Department.

I support the Bill because I believe it will provide many benefits in the area of pre-primary education. I do not believe, as other speakers have suggested, that standards have declined. The APA standards are very strict and have been applied to the physical aspects of buildings. In some cases I know of fences have not been built, but in the particular circumstances they have been found not to be necessary. When we talk about standards, we must look at educational standards overall, and I believe to date in most cases the standards have remained the same whilst in many areas they have become better. I do not believe that as a result of the passage of this Bill standards will decline at all.

In conclusion, I would like to outline a situation which applied in my own position in Laverton last year, when I was employed by the Education Department as the principal of the school. There was last year a pre-school centre in Laverton which was affiliated with the Pre-School Board. The finance for this building was provided by the shire, and the centre was administered by a local parent committee, together with the pre-school teacher.

Unfortunately, midway through 1976 the pre-school teacher's husband was transferred out of the town and, naturally, she went along with him. The Pre-School Board was then required to provide a replacement teacher. The board found it could not provide a replacement, and so an unqualified person in the town was appointed to do the job. I worked closely with that person, and I acknowledge her good work and her dedication to her job; and it was members who actually raised the question, through the parent committee of the pre-school centre, of the centre being taken over by the Education Department and becoming a pre-primary centre. That proposal was put to the committee, and it agreed with the transfer basically on the grounds that by becoming a pre-primary centre as distinct from a kindergarten it would be guaranteed a teacher in the future, along with the necessary accommodation that the Education Department is able to provide through the Government Employees' Housing Authority. That was the main aim in respect of the takeover.

However, the members of the committee were delighted when the change took place because they found a great deal of extra equipment was

provided by the Education Department, and many administrative costs were taken over by the department. They found they had extra money with which to buy teaching aids, rather than having to pay bills for such services as electricity and water. A trained teacher was provided at the beginning of this year, and this has overcome the problem which arose when the centre was under the Pre-School Board.

I am also pleased to note that the parent committee has continued to be involved in fund-raising activities and in assisting the pre-primary teacher. The pre-primary centre in Laverton is located adjacent to the district high school, and the pre-primary children actually move physically from their centre across to the resource centre of the high school and use the facilities available there; then they move back to their own centre. So this is a very flexible system, and the resources are being used fully.

I am sure this example has been repeated in other centres, and it illustrates some of the advantages of the new scheme. As a result of the Government's policy since 1974, and as a result of this Bill, I believe pre-primary education in Western Australia, particularly in smaller country towns, will obtain very significant benefits, and I therefore commend the Bill to the House.

Sitting suspended from 6.05 to 7.30 p.m.

THE HON. M. McALEER (Upper West) [7.30 p.m.]: I rise only to give brief comments as the ground has been very well covered by my colleagues. I have been interested in the pre-primary school policy for many years and up to this point I have found it very satisfactory, particularly as it relates to my province.

Mr President, you will remember that the discussions on pre-primary school education have extended over many years, certainly the last three or four years. When the pre-primary school policy originally appeared in the Liberal Party policy in 1968 its first motivation was to ensure that all people in the State had the opportunity to receive kindergarten education, whether they came from remote areas with sparse populations or from suburban areas where parents were not very affluent and often without the same interest. The intention was to ensure that children whose parents did not have the means or perhaps the interest to run kindergartens, would have the chance to attend them.

At that time there were no large allocations of money available for pre-school education. When the policy was formulated it was thought at first that all pre-school education should be the responsibility of the Government. I do not believe

this principle has ever been departed from. However, the practicalities of the situation did not make it possible for the Government of the day to undertake the total pre-school education, so it was decided then to take responsibility for the education of the five-year-olds.

There is an additional reason which is well known and has been well covered, and it is an educational one. It was thought that pre-school education of five-year-olds should be considered as a preparation for their primary school education. As the policy stated, the pre-primary buildings should be sited on the school grounds or in close contact with the primary schools.

While this was fine for five-year-olds and generally accepted by education authorities, although it is also an area of some controversy, it did not deal with the needs of four and three-year-olds who were to be considered next.

Interest in pre-school education was greatly enhanced at this in the education world. Very soon when the Whitlam Government came to power the controversial aspect of education for the four-year-olds and below came to the fore; so much so that the Commonwealth Government of the day considered that a different type of funding, a different ministerial responsibility, and a different type of education were more suitable for the four to nought-year-olds and child care was the predominating concept.

In this State the Liberal Party policy had envisaged that the five-year-olds would be catered for by the Government. The buildings left from the old kindergarten system would be filled by the three and four-year-olds.

I would agree with the Hon. R. Hetherington that funds were more readily available in the years of the Whitlam Government. The pre-primary schools were well able to be funded by the State Government and at the same time the Pre-School Board received a very adequate funding from the Federal Government. This was true to such an extent that both were able to develop at a greater pace than was previously envisaged.

The situation has now been reached that while the pre-primary school system is by no means fully developed or totally adequate, both it and the pre-school kindergartens are in fact almost in a position of competing in the same areas. There is nothing wrong with having two systems of education, and probably it is beneficial. However, there is a practical limit when the Government is funding both schemes as it is at present. I am afraid that limit is in funding two systems of education for the one age of children. This

therefore constitutes the rationalisation of opting for one system instead of both.

At the same time the Pre-School Board as it stands is not entirely geared to deal with children of four years and under. Therefore, it has to be reconstituted as a more suitable body. It is quite true that people in my province have been among those whose children were under the control of the Pre-School Board. They have been very pleased with that system in many cases and they have not wished to change to the pre-primary school system, and they are not obliged to do so. They can retain their status as affiliates, although they will be coming under the authority of the Education Department and not the Pre-School Board.

I suppose it is always a question of judgment as to when one should make a change, but there has been a great deal of discussion. The proliferation of pre-schools now is such that if we were to go on we would be duplicating the system unnecessarily, and I think ample time has been allowed since the announcement of the change of policy. There has been ample time for reasonable discussion and I believe the department and the Minister will have taken note of all the legitimate objections, and these will be incorporated into the system as it finally evolves. Therefore I support the Bill.

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South-Minister for Transport) [7.40 p.m.]: I would like to thank members for their support of this Bill and the principle contained in it. I think the Government must be congratulated for the introduction of the Bill and for the one year voluntary education for five-year-olds.

I know that just over three years ago when the Liberal-Country Party Government came into office there was apprehension in certain areas about this voluntary year, especially in country areas. I know there were people in isolated areas who felt that it might be very difficult to introduce this ideal into their areas. They felt it would be more for the benefit of people in the city.

I believe it augurs well when we see so many country members rise to their feet and praise the manner in which this system is working, and undoubtedly it has opened up a whole new opportunity for country people.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Are you talking about the country members of this Chamber who spoke? There were only two of them.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: There were three or four of them.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: I was thinking only of the two who spoke tonight.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Mr Wordsworth is a country member.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: As it happens I think I am the fifth country member to speak. We now have 70 per cent of children able to take the opportunity to attend an extra year's schooling. I am sure we will see more of this. I am surprised that the Labor Party has put up such a dismal complaint, as their colleagues in South Australia were among the first to introduce the idea.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: They are upset because they did not think of the idea themselves.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: They are upset because it has been such a success and it is putting egg on their faces.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Mr President, it is remarkable how times change. We have a certain amount of argument being put up about the standards of buildings, but of course most of these buildings were there previously during the kindergarten stage. They are the ones Opposition members are complaining about, and we have seen a very high standard maintained in the new buildings that have been established.

The previous complaint was that when we saw so many children taken from other forms of education and put into kindergartens there would be competition for the money, but this has proved to have little significance.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Every argument the Opposition has is of little significance.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I believe the Leader of the House must be congratulated because a lot of this work was introduced when he was the responsible Minister and the way it has worked is a great reflection on him.

Some of the Opposition's arguments are rather strange. One dealt with communications. I suppose one can say there may be some difficulty in the city, but undoubtedly there has been a great improvement in this field in country areas by bringing the pre-school centres under the pre-primary system. In the country we saw many kindergartens which did not even have telephones. If a child was sick or was hurt it would be very difficult for a teacher to tend to that child or to take him home. The teacher would have to leave the class unattended.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: How many were without phones?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I could not give the member the number. By being incorporated into the education system they have benefitted greatly.

One of the complaints put forward by Mr Cloughton was that more specialist training took place before pre-schools came under the control of the Education Department, but I think that is a rather poor argument because the Education Department is able to give regular in-service training and is able to call upon specialist advisory personnel.

Arguments have been put forward about the difficulty of funding but we have seen that teachers and teaching aides are able to make purchases for their needs with the involvement of parents.

It has been argued that there has been less parent involvement. I certainly have not found that to be the case in schools in my area. I think it is a great credit to the whole system that parents have become more involved with their children's education, and in time this will be reflected throughout the whole system. So that also is a very poor argument.

The comment has been made that some schools were departing from the Pre-School Association standards. I have asked the Minister for Education for information on this matter and he assures me that the Pre-School Association standards lay down that there shall be one teacher and one aide for each group of 25 five-year-old children and that this ratio has been maintained by the Education Department. But regrettably some schools under the control of the Pre-School Board have not been able to maintain that standard.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: The Minister would seem to be in disagreement with his director.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I am not in a position to query the Minister for Education. I gather the Pre-School Board believes that some features of those standards require further consideration. So we cannot necessarily say that because the Education Department is not conforming to those standards in every case it is falling behind, because the Pre-School Board also felt there was a need for further consideration of some of the recommendations which included the two noncontract half days.

Mr Cloughton mentioned several schools, one of which was the Doubleview Pre-Primary Centre.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: I hope you have the names right now.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I think I have. I gather this situation was fully explained to Mr Cloughton by the Minister for Education in a private letter to him.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: After I had spoken in the debate.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I had not realised it was after the debate, but I am glad he has done that. The case which Mr Cloughton put up was entirely initiated by the parents at that school.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: That is not what the Minister says.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: He tells me it was.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I remember him saying that.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: I am quite happy to read the letter for you.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Perhaps Mr Cloughton can re-read the letter. I think he will find that the parents actually nominated the classrooms in this case and have not expressed dissatisfaction to the Minister or the Education Department because they realise it is only an interim measure, and they are quite happy that the money has been expended on painting rooms, and so on. So there can be very little argument in that regard.

Mr Cloughton also mentioned the Davillia Primary School. I do not know whether the Minister has replied to him about this school, but in this case the parents agreed to using the classrooms at the Sorrento Primary School until such time as their own pre-primary centre was constructed in the suburb of Carine. Once again that was in agreement with the Stirling City Council, and the principal of the school was satisfied with it being transferred for a short time. I think those were the specific schools of which some complaint was made.

I think the House must agree that those members who have spoken in support of this legislation have answered most of the queries in a practical manner by citing the experiences which have taken place in their electorates; and I think that is sufficient.

I think the basic argument of the Opposition was that we were acting too soon and that we ought to wait a little longer. If there are problems, which I doubt, I do not believe they will go away. I think we have seen this change evolve gradually over 3½ years and I think it would be wrong not to go ahead. I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (the Hon. V. J. Ferry) in the Chair; the Hon. D. J. Wordsworth (Minister for Transport) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1: Short title and citation—

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: As Mr Wordsworth has raised the matter, I think I should mention the letter I received from the Minister for Education—and I thank him for the courtesy—following the remarks I made in the second reading debate regarding the Doubleview Primary School. Among other things, he took me to task for incorrectly naming the school. It is something of a reflection on the Minister, the Education Department, and members of the Liberal Party in general when they continually fall into traps because they do not know—

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Did you say the Liberal Party in general?

Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: We have a Liberal Party Government, do we not?

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You are getting very broad in your statements. They are probably as inaccurate as the ones you made previously.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: That is what I expect from Mr Lewis, and we have almost come to expect it from the Minister. I had no sooner received that letter than I received another one apologising for stating incorrectly in the Minister's letter that it was the parents of children at the Doubleview Pre-School Centre who were protesting and who went along with Mr Young. The letter said that it was in fact the parents of children at the Westview Play Centre who attempted to have a facility made available. That sort of thing indicates the whole chapter of errors, misinformation, and assurances given and not lived up to.

Because Mr Wordsworth criticised me when referring to the APA standards I shall quote the comments of Dr Mossenson as reported in *The Western Teacher* of Thursday, the 9th December, 1976. He said—

Although at the outset it had been considered desirable for A.P.A. standards to be met, experience now shows, together with advice from other sources, that this is not a sound proposition and, in fact, the people who have set the A.P.A. standards were amongst the foremost in breaching them.

That is an admission from the Director-General of Education—

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Is that a direct quote or is that the way *The Western Teacher* has quoted him?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Dr Mossenson has not denied this report and I think he said the

same on other occasions. But it says quite clearly that the director-general, through the Education Department, is not adhering to APA standards. With regard to the matter of fully qualified teachers, in the same article Dr Mossenson set out the six points that were to be Education Department policy in respect of these pre-primary centres. He said—

Each teacher who was associated with the programme is given five days of In-Service Education for orientation purposes with full relief being provided.

That can be necessary only for teachers who have not undergone the early childhood programme in teacher education. Those teachers who have undergone the programme do not need an orientation course; they are fully qualified early childhood teachers.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That is rubbish!

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Absolute claptrap!

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: When you get a change in a system and you get a change in the forms and the administrative procedures switching from, say, the Pre-School Board, of course you need an orientation course; and there have been some minor changes. There have been changes in regard to finance expenditure.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Does it take five days to become familiar with administrative practices which other speakers here tonight have said are fewer than they were because the principal of the school is taking over these administrative procedures?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Does it matter?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: They hardly need five days to understand administrative practices which they are no longer required to follow.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I agree with you, but what does it matter?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I quite understand the Minister is trying to make some sort of excuse and rationalisation.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Would you suggest we cut this down?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: If Mr Lewis will spare a moment from blasting to hear my comments, he will see I am indicating that whether or not the Minister honestly believes it, he said that the teachers in the primary schools had in-service courses available to them. He was implying that the in-service courses were not

available to teachers employed by the Pre-School Board. However, that is not so; in-service courses are available to them. So, that point is not true.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: The Minister did not say in-service courses were not available under the Pre-School Board, but that they were available under the pre-primary system. It is very difficult to understand what the member is saying.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I agree it is extremely difficult to sort out the truth. A great number of statements have been made.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: There are none so blind as those who do not want to see! The Minister has countered all these arguments. Why is the member going over them again?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The Minister for Education (Mr P. V. Jones) made a particularly important statement on this matter.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I think the member is hoping to impress by repetition.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I have not mentioned this particular quote previously. It deals with the credibility of the Ministers involved, and the credibility of the assurances which have been given. The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon was the previous Minister for Education, but we are now dealing with a new Minister. I have already given one instance of where the Minister gave incorrect information directly to me, and he had to rush in and correct it. Even then, it was not very well done.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Is the member talking about the Minister's reference to Doubleview instead of Westview?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The Westview play centre is a private centre, and does not come under the jurisdiction of the board. It is a day-care group, and operates under a different system. It is several blocks removed from the school.

The Minister, in countering criticism of the changeover, said that the Pre-School Board and the Teachers' Union had been informed beforehand of the changes that were to take place. He was reported in *The West Australian* of the 10th August, under the heading "Government plan worries pre-schools" as saying he had told the union and the board representatives of the Government's ideas before the announcement was made public.

If we turn to the minutes of a meeting of representatives held at Meerilinga, the Pre-School Board building at 1186 Hay Street, West Perth, on the 25th July, 1977, we will see what Mrs Lefroy, the chairman of the board, had to say.

Representatives of the board as well as other representatives of pre-schools, together with the Minister, were present. Mrs Lefroy made her statement in the presence of the Minister and she would not do that without being certain of her facts. She said that the representatives of the affiliated committees should know that the Pre-School Board had no opportunity to take part in the planning of the changes. She said it was extraordinary that a group of people who were invited to become members of a statutory body because of their expertise and experience should not be consulted when there was a plan to rationalise services.

She also said that the Minister had called her in, as an individual and as chairman of the board, to advise her. However, that is not advising the board; so we have this lack of confidence in statements made by the Government in respect of this issue.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 2 and 3 put and passed.

Clause 4: Section 3 amended—

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: This clause will insert a new interpretation of "care-centre", and refers to centres where there are three or more children over the age of three years. It does not include an assembly at a Government school, or where the children are members of the same family or of not more than two families.

The Government has told us it has introduced this legislation to bring order into an area where it is claimed there exists some confusion. However, I am afraid this particular provision will create more confusion.

I do not know whether members are aware of the child-care regulations made under the Community Welfare Act. I had a good deal to do with those regulations around 1969 when I was on the Stirling City Council, and I had difficulty in trying to get that authority to accept these regulations within its by-laws. I have been familiar with the regulations for some years.

We must remember that local authorities have generally accepted the classifications of child care within their own by-laws. When a group wishes to establish a child-care centre it must apply to the local authority for permission to do so. On receiving approval the group then obtains a permit from the early childhood services section of the Community Welfare Department—another area where there is confusion.

Amongst the categories of child care is the term "family care". Family care can be a group of up to four children of ages from nought to four, and

if the person in charge has children of her own that total of four must include those children. If the children are older than four years, then the centre can have up to five, all of whom may come from different families. Surely there will be confusion with what is already laid down in those particular regulations of that Act.

What will be the relationship between those regulations and the way they have been incorporated in the Local Government by-laws, and what is proposed here? I am aware that the Government has established a committee to look into the area of four years and younger, but there is established already an organisation which deals with that particular section. Why is it being brought in here? I believe the Government does not really know what it intends to do about this particular group.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Perhaps there should be another inquiry!

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: A committee has been established to study this particular matter. Similar to other matters which have been mentioned, I believe this is an area which was not considered or even known by the Government when it first drafted this Bill. I expect it has heard something about it since. This aspect has not been discussed or debated at all, and I would be interested to know what thought the Government gave to this particular provision before the introduction of the Bill. The Minister will probably say that I am right and that the Government has established a committee and will look into it. However, that will not explain why this provision has been incorporated in the Bill before us when such an inquiry has not been conducted previously.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: The Minister has supplied me with a note which I think is self-explanatory. Two new definitions are required to give effect to the intentions of the proposed amendment. A care-centre will cater for children of more than one year below school age, and will provide for the care, guidance, and education of those children.

A pre-school centre will provide education, guidance, and care, in the reverse order of those provisions for children during those years prior to year 1 of primary schooling. The distinction drawn between the two centres, in terms of the age of the children and the type of programmes they undertake, foreshadow future amendments which will place the care centres outside the Education Department. A care-centre will cater for children more than one year below school age,

and will provide for their care, guidance, and education.

An advisory committee is to be established to make recommendations for the long-term provision of programmes and facilities for the younger children, and the appropriate authorities required to administer such programmes.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Having listened to the Minister, I am even more confused and wonder why the provision is included in this Bill. As I understood the Minister, he said that this was to cater for children who were one year or more younger than primary school age. The control of those children will not be under the Education Department; it will be with some other department.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It could well be.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: The committee is set up to look into it.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: When will we know? That is one of our worries.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: We have this provision before us.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You would know now.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I think the Leader of the House would worry if he were in our situation. Why is this provision in the Act to put these matters under the control of the Education Department, when the Minister has told us that children who are one or more years below school age will not be under the care of the Education Department?

The clause provides that where there are three or more children of more than two families, a care-centre will come within the control of this legislation, and the people operating the centre will be required to obtain a permit from the Education Department. People who operate family care-centres will not know the ages and number of children for whom they will cater. One week they may have children from two families, and the next week they may have children from three families. They must then operate under this legislation and not under the child-care regulations. This is where we will find the confusion.

Let us take the example of a person who wishes to set up a family care-centre, but who does not know the ages and the number of children for whom he will be caring. Should such a person apply to the early childhood services section of the Department for Community Welfare, to the Education Department, or to both? This does not seem a sensible or logical way to go about it.

I am pleased to hear what the Minister has said about this, but I would have been happier had the Minister indicated the section would be deleted. The provision does not seem to belong in this Act if the Government intends to do what the Minister has said it will.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: It is fairly plain that the provision is to define the two. Arguments have been advanced to the effect that the Education Department should control children from nought to six years. The object of this clause is to provide a definition which can be used in conjunction with further amendments. The honourable member asked whether this could be changed during the year.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: It can be changed from week to week.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I believe that system is acceptable in any field; it must be laid down at the beginning of the year.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: You cannot lay it down in family care.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: It is the same problem with school buses. A service is provided when there are 12 children to use it. Just because one child leaves during the year, the bus service is not discontinued.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: This section cannot apply to family care-centres because a person who wishes to operate a centre will not know the ages and the number of children for whom he will cater. It is only after approval has been obtained from local government and the Department for Community Welfare that a person can advertise for children to attend the centre. It is not as easy as the Minister says it is.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It is easier.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: This is one of those assurances that Mr MacKinnon gives which have proved so unreliable before.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Nothing unreliable about what I said.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I know it is extremely hard for members opposite—

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Your comments will not be very helpful, I am sure.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: That is about the sort of comment I would expect from the honourable member.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: About the sort of reply I expected.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: If Mr Claughton reads the clause he will see that the draftsman is attempting to cover what we used to call—

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Cover up!

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Perhaps Mr Claughton would like to listen, rather than to waffle on in his own idiotic way.

In certain pre-primary centres there is a demand by parents that their pre-pre-primary children be permitted to stay on within that complex. Many parents are worried that their pre-pre-primary children will be thrown out of pre-primary centres, so this clause is worded in such a way as to encompass those children. These younger children are now the subject of an investigation by a committee. When the committee reports it may be suggested that these children also ought to be under the control of the Education Department. Personally I hope this is not a recommendation of the committee.

This clause has been included so that four-year-olds can still attend pre-primary centres; and it has been included for a simple purpose. Time and time again the Government has stated that its aim is to give pre-primary children first bite of the cherry, but if extra places are available in pre-primary centres then these places may be filled by pre-pre-primary children.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: In a number of country towns this happens already on Friday afternoons.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I believe such a situation occurs also in developing metropolitan areas where there are not quite sufficient pre-primary children and some mothers of pre-pre-primary children wish their children to attend these centres.

I do not wish to pre-empt the decision of the committee which has been set up to study early childhood education, but I certainly hope that this education will not come under the control of the Education Department.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I feel the Minister in charge of this Bill will be very indebted to you because you know more about it than he does.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: On that note I will sit down because Mr Thompson is not noted for making nice comments.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Don't push your luck too far!

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Mr Thompson forestalled me; I was about to ask the Minister whether the information given by the Government back-bencher can be taken as an authoritative Government statement.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I think Mr Lewis explained very well what actually happens in practice. Mr Claughton drew a bit of a red

herring by asking how many children, of what ages, and at what times can attend these centres. The matter of the permit is also written into the legislation.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: All that has been said highlights once again the great ignorance of members of the Government about what is happening. It is not an unusual practice to accommodate pre-pre-primary children—as Mr Lewis called them—in the pre-school system. In the past five-year-old children were given preference, but if other places were available, then the four-year-old children could also be accommodated. Generally the system has been that five-year-old children attend the morning sessions, and the younger children attend on three afternoons and on Friday morning each week.

My wife and I were associated closely with the construction of the centre at Bridgetown, and we were very proud to be involved. This centre made the Friday sessions available to children who lived outside the town so that these children too had the opportunity to attend. That practice was followed for many years. What Mr Lewis pointed out is not a new innovation, but rather something that has existed for many years. It was not a problem.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You are quite right, and we are making provisions in the Act for it.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Parents of the younger children fear that their children will be excluded, and Mr Lewis has made us aware that this could happen.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I do not think that is what Mr Lewis has told you; again you were not listening.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I am accepting what Mr Lewis said at its face value. We can see clearly that there is continuing confusion about this matter in the minds of Government members.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You are quite wrong. You know the real reason for this provision. The group to which you referred, and of whom you have a great deal of knowledge, went around making false statements.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Who made false statements?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It was necessary for the Government to reiterate this, and to actually put it in the legislation for the first time.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Who made the false statements?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Different groups. You know who they were; I read a few letters of

yours. It became necessary to state things that it had not been necessary to state before.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The Minister has been accused of making misleading statements.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I know I was accused of all sorts of things, and quite maliciously.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I have made mention of that previously.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Quite unfairly.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: By people who had an axe to grind.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: There was plenty of evidence to show that statements were made about things that were to happen and that in the long run did not happen. I would never encourage anybody to make misstatements.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You did your share of encouraging.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: That is not true.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I can quote a letter here.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I challenge the Leader of the House to show that any statements I have made on this matter were untrue.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I would not say "untrue"; you just skirted around the edges a bit.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I would be very happy to go through statements made by the Leader of the House to show that his predictions did not come true.

Returning to what has happened here tonight, the Minister in charge of this Bill has made a statement about what will happen to children who are more than one year younger than school age. We have now had Mr Lewis on his feet telling us that something different is to happen.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I have not said anything different.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: That is the area where the confusion has occurred.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I hope the honourable member can read better than he can listen because he has misquoted me twice already.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: You should do the same and read the Minister's speech.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: If he stops talking for a while he may be able to listen.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: I heard you very clearly the first time; you may be able to repeat it.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Mr Claughton's lack of comprehension amazes me. I stood on my feet to explain this clause to him, because he obviously did not understand it.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: We have a Minister whose task it is to give us the correct information.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Obviously Mr Claughton does not understand the provision.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: The Minister doesn't understand it.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: He did not understand what the Minister said. He has proved by the quotes he made regarding what I said a few minutes ago that he just does not listen, nor can he comprehend what the Minister and I have said. I tried to put it into more earthy terms, which probably were not as precise as those used by the Minister; and then Mr Claughton asked the Minister whether the Government agreed with my statement. My statement was the same as the Minister's.

Again I say the Government has always said it would give priority to pre-primary students in pre-primary centres—in exactly the way Mr Claughton has said the system is working at present. However, as we are amending the Act and dealing with these children in the context of the Act—

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: And creating more confusion.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Perhaps we are creating confusion in Mr Claughton's mind, and I do not know whether that is a good or bad thing.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I think you are clearing up things for the Minister.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I can see by the look on the faces of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition that they understand the provision. There is only one person in this place who as yet cannot understand it, and that is Mr Claughton. The policy of the Government on this matter has been the same ever since the pre-primary system was introduced, and we made it clear from the start that this was to be our policy. Right from the start Mr Claughton has not wanted to listen. He has tried to pick holes in the whole scheme of pre-primary education for some unknown reason. Certainly he has not done so for the benefit of the children—

The Hon. R. Hetherington: That is nonsense.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: —because the benefit of the children is being considered at every stage by the Government, and by both the present and previous Minister for Education.

I will not explain this clause again. I have

explained it fully, and so has the Minister. Mr Claughton can get on his feet again, as he certainly will, simply because he cannot understand that the Government has been fair all along the line and has stipulated what would happen in pre-primary centres. At every mention of pre-primary centres a red herring is drawn across the trail by the Hon. Roy Claughton. To say that the former Minister misrepresented the case is grossly unfair. I challenge Mr Claughton to come outside this Chamber and show me where are all these pre-primary centres in respect of which the former Minister misrepresented the case.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: That is right; use cheap abuse.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I am not using it cheaply, because I do not like talking like this. However, there are some self-seeking groups that have treated the truth very lightly. Some members of this place have written letters that have skirted the truth. The purpose of the clause we are discussing now is laid out clearly and precisely. I support it, and I am sure the Committee will.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I cannot resist Mr Lewis' challenge. I rise to remind him that during the Address-in-Reply debate he charged me with being silent on this matter. Now we find him changing his mind and saying I have been anything but silent. He cannot have it both ways on that issue, any more than the Government can have it both ways on this issue. There were some 340 community-based kindergartens which decided to join together to form an organisation to attempt to remain community based and not be taken over. Obviously the Government has not convinced the people concerned that what it is doing is correct.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Are there still 340?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: That was the figure in the Press.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Get your facts right.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I do not keep a daily count; there may be 350 or 330 now.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: There are about 80.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Nevertheless, there is a considerable number of pre-school centres that are resisting the pressure.

The issues I raised originally in this debate have been thoroughly confused by Mr Lewis, and I would prefer to hear from the Minister what is the position. I am sure the Minister has said all he intends to say, and I am happy to leave it at that.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Clause 4 is to provide a new interpretation of "care-centre" and judging by the length of the debate I am sure everybody understands it.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5 put and passed.

Clause 6: Section 27A added—

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I move an amendment—

Page 4, line 9—Delete the words "without assigning a reason" and substitute the passage "in circumstances which would justify the cancellation of a permit issued pursuant to section twenty-seven B of this Act".

This amendment is self-explanatory. It is designed to make it harder for the Minister to cancel a permit without stating explicitly the reason for so doing. It lays down the conditions under which he may cancel a permit.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I support the amendment. I think it is a good thing because it gets away from arbitrary dictates by Ministers which, in my opinion, should be avoided wherever possible. It means there is some sort of objectivity which can be tested, and it gives people the right of appeal. This is something which is desirable at all times, and I will say more about that on another Bill later.

The Government should be given credit for introducing this amendment. Certainly it is always undesirable to give any Minister the power to do anything without a reason for it. I support the amendment.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Thank you.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 7: Section 27B added—

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I want to mention a matter similar to that I mentioned in respect of clause 3. Some local authorities—the Shire of Wanneroo for example—are appointing co-ordinators of child-care services. This is another area in which there may be some confusion and conflict between the different systems that are operating. Many local authorities have taken an interest in providing child-care facilities for children up to five years of age. I mention this to the Minister because he may not be aware of it. The purpose of these co-ordinators is to attempt to see that sufficient services are provided in the community to fulfil the demand.

I would not like to think that the steps being taken by the Government in this case may conflict with those activities of local authorities. I think

local authorities are to be encouraged in this area. These comments are not meant to be critical of the Government, but simply to indicate that there may be a problem.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I thank Mr Cloughton for his comments. It is good that local government is taking an interest in this matter. Undoubtedly this will be of benefit, and I hope we see more pre-schools introduced as a result of it. I move an amendment—

Page 4, line 26—Delete the words "without assigning a reason" and substitute the passage "if, in the opinion of the Minister—

- (i) the conditions subject to which the permit was granted are not being observed; or
- (ii) the regulations made under this Act relating to that centre are contravened."

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am pleased generally about this amendment, but not quite so pleased as I was about the previous amendment, because this produces a rather subjective matter. It says, "if, in the opinion of the Minister"; and we do not know how the Minister forms his opinions. Therefore this amendment has not the same objectivity, and there is not the same right of appeal. All one can do is appeal from the Minister to the Minister better informed, and if the Minister then refuses to do anything about it, that is it.

However, the amendment does mean the Minister must have reasons and must state them. Therefore it is an improvement on the Bill as it stands, and for this reason once more the Government is to be commended. I hope this is an indication that the Government will continue to insert such provisions in its Bills without having to put them in later as amendments. With those brief comments I support the amendment.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I am sure Mr Hetherington will draw our attention to the matter if necessary.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 8 put and passed.

Clause 9: Section 27D added—

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: The Opposition opposes this clause, because it is the nub of the whole Bill. Nothing the Minister has said has convinced me there is any reason for repealing the Pre-School (Education and Child Care) Act at this stage. From the debate which has ensued on this legislation, I believe it would

be much better for the Government to wait until it had all its information, wait until its committee reported, and wait until there was a better time to bring in this Bill. Obviously, there is no urgency for the Bill. If, as Government members have said, the system is working reasonably well at present, I do not see why we should suddenly abolish the Act. We should wait. For those reasons, and for all the reasons I expressed during the second reading debate, I oppose this clause.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Attention should also be drawn to the fact that this clause seeks to make over to the Government, property which to this time has belonged to the kindergarten union as it was originally established. I would suggest if such a proposal had been put forward when the Pre-School Board was established by a Bill passing through this House, there would have been a very loud public outcry.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: They would have called it "Socialist confiscation." However, it is all right for this Government.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Undoubtedly, they would have made that very accusation.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It is a good business deal.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Yes, in their light. I would also point out that a parent body has been established for the community-based centres, and I believe the persons who inherit those properties should be the people comprising the parent group, rather than have the properties swallowed up by the jaws of the all-embracing Education Department and its master, the Liberal Party Government. I very strongly oppose this clause.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 10 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments.

MINE WORKERS' RELIEF ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Receit and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Leader of the House), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West—Leader of the House) [8.50 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Legislation was passed in 1974 to bring the medical examination requirements for mineworkers under the one Act.

At that time the initial medical examination for persons entering the industry was carried out pursuant to the Mines Regulation Act while subsequent periodical examinations were provided for in accordance with the Mine Workers' Relief Act.

The 1974 amendments relating to the periodical medical examinations of mineworkers and the resultant notifications and prohibitions have now been incorporated in the Mines Regulation Act together with associated regulations.

This Bill is, therefore, principally designed to remove those provisions from the Mine Workers' Relief Act and to relate fund benefit entitlements to diagnoses made under the Mines Regulation Act.

For the information of any members not fully conversant with the Mine Workers' Relief Act the following summary is given in respect of health and fund benefits.

The Mine Workers' Relief Act relates to the relief of mineworkers who contract certain occupational diseases in the course of their employment in the mining industry, excepting coalmining, which is covered by separate legislation.

It provides for the periodical medical examination of mineworkers following their entry into the industry on an initial health certificate issued under the provisions of the Mines Regulation Act and also for the establishment of a fund from which benefits are payable to mineworkers who are diagnosed by the Mines Medical Officer to be suffering from silicosis, asbestosis or tuberculosis.

The Mines Medical Officer is a medical officer appointed under the Act and is responsible for the periodical medical examination of the mineworkers.

The fund constituted under the Act is named the Mine Workers' Relief Fund and is financed by subscriptions from the Government, the employers and the employees.

Subject to the Minister, the fund is administered by a board of five comprising one independent chairman and two representatives from each the employers and the employees.

The Act provides for all mineworkers who are diagnosed to be suffering from silicosis or asbestosis to be notified of the diagnosis so made, but the mineworker is not thereby prevented from

continuing his employment in the industry if he wishes to do so.

A mineworker who is diagnosed to be suffering from tuberculosis, either with or without silicosis or asbestosis, is prohibited from further work in the industry, unless and until the diagnosis is set aside on appeal or he is subsequently issued with a certificate of freedom from the disease.

In general, a mineworker who has been diagnosed to be suffering from early silicosis or early asbestosis and who leaves the industry, may register under section 50 of the Act. By so doing he maintains his entitlement to continue contributing to the fund and so protect his rights under the Act in the event of a general deterioration of his health in later years.

Subject to certain statutory requirements, fund benefits accrue to a mineworker who leaves the industry upon his being diagnosed to be suffering from advanced silicosis or advanced asbestosis, or who is prohibited from further work in the industry upon his being diagnosed to be suffering from tuberculosis in association with silicosis or asbestosis, but subject to his first exhausting any entitlement he may have at workers' compensation.

Once again, subject to certain statutory requirements, a mineworker who is prohibited from further employment in the industry upon his being diagnosed to be suffering from tuberculosis without silicosis or asbestosis, becomes entitled to fund benefits, but in these cases there is no entitlement to workers' compensation as it is not an industrial disease.

A further amendment contained in the Bill also is necessary to reflect a new concept introduced by the regulations resulting from the 1974 amendments to the Mines Regulation Act inasmuch as provision now is made for mines to be classified according to their potential health hazard.

There are three such classifications—

Class "A"—all underground workings and any mine for asbestos, manganese, lead, vanadium, talc, mica or radioactive substances;

class "B"—all quarries or other surface mining operations not included in class "A" or class "C" mines; and

class "C"—all surface mining operations or quarries worked for clay, gypsum, limestone, salt, natural sand or gravel, and any sinter plant, pellet plant, smelter, refinery, blast furnace, privately owned railway built to transport the mine ore or

material and wet sluicing and dredging operations.

Whereas previously all mineworkers had to undergo pre-employment and biennial medical examinations, under the present scheme these requirements are applicable only in respect of class "A" mines.

In respect of class "B" mines, a pre-employment examination still is necessary but the periodical examinations are only five yearly.

In respect of class "C" mines no medical examination is necessary.

The reason for this is that medical advice is to the effect that class "C" mines do not present a health hazard and that the hazard in class "B" mines is much less than in class "A" mines.

Accordingly, monitoring is not necessary in class "C" mines and monitoring in class "B" mines need not be as frequent as in class "A" mines.

It necessarily follows that fund benefits may not accrue to mineworkers who are not subject to the pre-employment and periodical medical examination requirements, and as it would be illogical to expect them to contribute to the fund, the Bill therefore proposes to exclude those employed on class "C" mines from the provisions of the Act.

It has been estimated that the loss of subscriptions to the fund, by the exclusion of such mineworkers, will cause a loss in fund revenue amounting to some \$8 000 per annum.

The Act also provides for mineworkers who are prohibited for tuberculosis to undergo curative treatment, but as the treatment for all tuberculosis sufferers is provided for under the Health Act, the curative treatment provisions have not been availed of for many years and the Bill proposes to repeal those provisions.

For many years office workers engaged solely on clerical work, and mine managers, have been specifically excluded from the definition of a "mine worker" in the regulations under the Mines Regulation Act. Although the joint legislation has always been interpreted to mean that a person who is not a mineworker for the purposes of the Mines Regulation Act is by that very fact not a mineworker for the purposes of the Mine Workers' Relief Act, this has never been specifically stated in that Act. This Bill therefore proposes to clarify the position by stating specifically that the clerical workers mentioned and the managers are not mineworkers for the purposes of the Mine Workers' Relief Act.

In addition, by the 1976 regulations under the Mines Regulation Act, the exclusion mentioned in respect of clerical workers and mine managers was extended to persons possessing special professional and scientific qualifications. It is proposed to reflect such exclusions in the Mine Workers' Relief Act.

District inspectors and workmen's inspectors of mines have been mineworkers for the purposes of the Acts, and it is intended that this scope should be extended to departmental ventilation officers whose duties are primarily on and about mines.

I take this opportunity of also informing the House that, in accordance with an undertaking given by the Minister for Mines in another place, I will be moving a minor amendment to this Bill during its Committee stage.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. R. T. Leeson.

APPROPRIATION BILL

(CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND) (No. 2)

Consideration of Tabled Paper

Debate resumed, from the 21st September, on the following motion by the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Leader of the House)—

That, pursuant to Standing Order No. 151, the Council take note of tabled paper No. 245 (Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure and related papers), laid upon the Table of the House on 21st September, 1977.

THE HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [8.58 p.m.]: I find myself at some disadvantage tonight in being called upon to speak to the Appropriation Bill (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (No. 2) because of some minor interruptions during the suspension of the sitting for tea, when I was beset upon by a delegation of some 50 people from the Jandakot area. It is rather difficult to stand and give a concise reply to the Budget as presented, when one considers that the Premier in introducing the Budget in another place used no less than 81 pages of speech notes on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, and when the additional document dealing with the State trading concerns contains no less than 133 pages.

Although we have amended our Standing Orders in this House to give us time to study the documents, it appears that at some stage more consideration should be given to the Standing Orders to enable all members of this Chamber to speak more fully to the Budget. I am well aware that we use the opportunity in this debate to speak about things which affect our own

electorates, but at the same time we should also in this Chamber give some attention to the Budget itself, and I hope that at some stage we may be able to use some more extensive speech notes when dealing with a document of this nature because I do not think anyone can do justice to a document so lengthy, so comprehensive, and so wide, and the implications of which affect every man, woman, and child in this State.

I have been called upon to speak to the Budget paper as it was laid upon the Table of the House by the Leader of the House. The Budget paper was introduced about a fortnight ago, and it is notable for its rather dismal outlook. It is notable not for the things it does, but for the things it does not do.

I am aware, as is everyone in this community, that there is a tight economic situation and that things are not improving to the extent they should be improving. Although, like other people in the community, I hope that in the future things will become more rosy, the facts are that all the economic indicators and, indeed, a report by the Reserve Bank Board point to a worsening situation. In today's paper the Chief Manager of BHP paints a very dismal picture of the steel industry and, indeed, in all sections of industry.

One of the things which concerned me in the Budget in the short time I have had available to me this evening to study it—and I might say it was not by design that the Leader of the House had those 50 people up to interrupt me—

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You know I jolly well didn't do that.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: It was some kind of accident, and I did manage to involve him in the discussion.

On the question of unemployment a plan has been submitted, as I see it, to tackle the problem, or an illusion has been created that somehow or other some of the provisions of the Budget will generate further employment. A closer look at the situation reveals that all the Premier talks about in the Budget is roughly some \$4 million in one area, and some \$3 million in another area. If we examine the situation closely we find that the so-called job creation scheme simply does not exist, and that the money made available in broad terms will go to hold the position as is. To my way of thinking this will do nothing to alleviate the unemployment problem which is very heavy in my own area.

As at the end of August there were some 26 595 people out of work in this State, and the position is worsening every day. That figure represents 4.9 per cent of the work force. At the

risk of repeating myself, I wish to say that I do not like to talk about unemployment in terms of cold statistics or figures, because I have said here on numerous occasions before, and will do so again, that if a person genuinely wants to work and cannot find employment, he is one unemployed person; and every one of those bold statistics involving people genuinely looking for work simply means human misery, particularly in the area I represent which includes the heavily industrialised regions of Kwinana and Fremantle, which are some of the worst affected areas of this State. If one speaks to these people one meets with despair and hopelessness because they have a feeling of not being wanted.

We can all talk about dole bludgers and others who do not want to find work, but the fact is that there are literally thousands in the community who do want jobs. Many families have been used to a second income in the home and they have based their economic well-being on the two incomes, and some of those people are now even worse off than others who normally would have had only one income.

The so-called job creation scheme appears to me to be some kind of pre-election gimmick to whip up a bit of enthusiasm in the community to create the illusion that the Government is really going to do something, because the present Government in this State, like its Federal counterpart, is well aware that it has to choose very carefully the time it goes to the people; and it is freely tipped that there will be an election sometime this year. Therefore, if some kind of illusion is created that the Government will soak up the pool of unemployed people, then the Government's chances at that election will be enhanced.

I do not believe that the job creation scheme will in the short or long term create one more job than is at present offering. Although I hope I can be proved wrong, I am quite confident that despite all the budgetary talk on unemployment, we will be talking in the vicinity of some 5 per cent to 5½ per cent unemployment. I am sure that the schemes outlined by the Premier will not eventuate. He spoke of \$4 million for maintenance work and of an extra \$3 million for Public Works Department maintenance programmes. If we study the situation more closely we realise that the \$3 million for the PWD amounts to an increase of a mere 22 per cent on what would normally be allocated. Allowing for inflation, this amounts to an increase of only about 10 per cent, which is a pitiful sum and which will have a minimal effect. In fact, the \$4

million will go to people already enjoying PWD contracts.

I could go on and dot all the "i's" and cross all the "t's," but the cold hard facts of the matter are that this document does nothing to tackle the problem of unemployment at a State level. It does exactly nothing.

When introducing the Budget—and I think this was rather a way-out method to tackle things—the Premier had the temerity to say that the Budget did not increase any taxes and charges. Of course the Government does not have to increase taxes and charges in a Budget if it has already done so in the first three months of the financial year. I must give the Premier great credit because it looks good to say that the Government is not going to increase charges. Of course the people are supposed to have forgotten about the charges already imposed. No-one will deny there is a need for charges to be increased, but not to the extent which this Government is increasing them.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That will be the day the people forget increased charges!

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Strange though it may seem, and in reply to the Leader of the House, we seem to be becoming a particularly selfish society where those who have money do not worry very much about those who do not have it; and this applies right across the board. There is nothing wrong with unemployment in this country, if one is not one of the unemployed; there is nothing wrong with low wages, unless one is receiving low wages; there is nothing wrong with living in a State Housing Commission house, if one is not living in one; and so it goes on. This is the human side of these problems.

We have a high rate of unemployment, and this Budget does nothing to alleviate it.

Let us have a look at the myth created that no extra charges have been allowed for in the Budget. On the first day of this financial year, excess water rates were increased by an average of 15 per cent; country water rates were increased by an average of 30 per cent; electricity charges by an average of 11 per cent; gas charges by 21 per cent; and, in addition, the quarterly electricity charge rose from \$2.40 to \$6 on the inter-connected grid system and from \$5 to \$6 in the country. Gas charges for industry and commerce rose by an average of 20 per cent, while Westrail freight rates rose by 17.5 per cent.

In the middle of August abattoir slaughtering fees increased by between 9 and 25 per cent, and yet we have the drivell served up to us that the first problem which must be tackled is inflation.

From the 1st October motor vehicle licence fees were increased by 30 per cent; drivers' licence fees by 40 per cent; and State Housing Commission metropolitan rents by between 34 and 37 per cent. Everyone in this Chamber knows what is going on with State houses at the moment. Perhaps in some cases there is some justification for the full commercial rent to be charged.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: Are these on an annual basis?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: These are the increases announced in the first three months of the financial year.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: They are applicable to a 12-month period?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: They are applicable right now. Country State Housing rents increased by between 12 and 14 per cent. These are the increases already imposed. I am not talking about the proposed increases in State Housing rents. Yet the Premier boasts about a Budget which does not increase taxes and charges.

If we go a little further, in addition we find that the Metropolitan Water Board, the SEC, and the Fremantle Port Authority—an area which affects me greatly and certainly affects the primary producers of this State—have imposed on them a 3 per cent levy. In respect of the Port of Fremantle if this 3 per cent levy is not abolished, then very shortly more and more ships will be bypassing the port. It is the dearest port in Australia now and it is steadily getting dearer, and ships are not very fussy about where they dump their cargoes. They do not care whether people subsequently have to transport the cargo by rail or road. That is just too bad. The ships are certainly hesitant about using the Port of Fremantle.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Where do you get the information it is the most expensive port?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Let the Minister tell me of a dearer port.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You are making the statement.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Let the Minister tell me where the same conditions apply anywhere else in Australia as apply in the Port of Fremantle.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You know they add the wharfage.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I was not talking about wharfage. How does the Minister know that?

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: That is why they look bigger.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: They are dearer.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: They are not.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: The SEC pays this 3 per cent levy and it is a snide way of applying another 3 per cent taxation. With regard to the Metropolitan Water Board it is another 3 per cent tax levy on every consumer of water, and it is an extra tax on every consumer of electricity as well as a tax on every user of the facilities of the Fremantle Port Authority.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: Is this an unusual tax which is not applied in other States?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: It is a very unusual tax.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: It is a rip-off.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: As Mr Cooley says, it is a rip-off. It is a snide way of collecting another 3 per cent surcharge.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: Is that different from the situation in other ports?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I do not know about other ports. Every time a person uses a unit of electricity, in addition to the charges already imposed and which I have just mentioned, the 3 per cent rip-off by the Government becomes greater. The taxes on water and electricity are major factors in making Perth water amongst the most expensive in Australia.

At the same time people are saying inflation is the thing to be beaten. We want to attract commerce and industry but we are steadily making it harder for industry to operate. If the Government is really intent on bringing inflation down and if it really believes as its Federal partner once believed, but certainly not now, that inflation is the major cause of our ills, then certainly it should be taking another look at the extra taxes, charges and surcharges. In the kind of economy in which we live and the type of life we lead, increasing taxes and charges does not reduce inflation. The Government is indulging in a little bit of propaganda because at no stage does it endeavour, by Government action, in any way to mitigate the ravages of inflation. It may well be that the Treasurer is saying that private industry and the individual wage earner are the cause of inflation, and that any charge the Government puts on does not affect the inflationary rate at all.

There are two points to be considered. The Budget has done nothing except to make a lot of empty promises. The Government has offered a minimal amount of money to create the illusion that it is a job-creating plan, which it will not be. Unemployment will continue to rise.

If the Treasurer continues to think that the economy is going to be reactivated by an investment-led surge he is quite wrong. Even the Federal Government does not believe that any more and has swung over to the view that it must be a consumer-led recovery. The State Government does not understand that one should feed more money into the public sector to create public works, otherwise the private sector has virtually nothing to feed off.

I hope in the not-too-distant future the Treasurer will change his mode of thinking because no matter where one stands in the political arena one has to agree that at this time the question of investment-led recovery is nonexistent.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Where does the public sector money come from for the private sector to feed off?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I do not want to be rude to Mr Withers, but he could come to my office later on and I will show him quite easily where the public sector dollar comes from. It comes from exactly the same place as the private sector dollar. As I have told him previously he has never been able to prove in this Chamber why a public sector dollar somehow or other is more inflationary than a private sector dollar.

All over the western world, in the very complex kind of society in which we live today, it is accepted that Governments must lead the economic recovery. Money must be ploughed into the public sector to allow the private sector to operate. There is no-one in this Chamber who is game enough to tell me that unemployment is falling. It is rising all over the world and people are recognising that unemployment is the major problem to be tackled; not inflation, but unemployment.

Unemployment gets to a stage where it is like a wheel rolling downhill and one cannot stop it. Unless people are earning money and spending it there will be no recovery. People are saying that there is going to be a continual pool of unemployment. We are being conditioned to accept a high rate of young unemployed. Apart from the fact that there are young unemployed I have read of studies carried out in West Germany indicating how we can destroy the confidence of these people. I wish we would carry out some studies here. The study indicated that the young people go through a first three-month stage, then through a second three-month stage, and then they are lost for all time.

The Government should not try to create illusions; it should not try to hang onto old ideas. There will be no investment-led recovery and the

Treasurer should start listening to economic experts in Australia who have swung around in their thinking, and say that money must be fed back into the public sector. I would have thought our society was put together for the mutual benefit of everyone to give them the opportunity to work, but we now have close to 500 000 people unemployed.

I would have been surprised if anyone had said to me a little while ago, when people were buying nickel shares and Poseidon shares passed all limits, that we would be looking at a situation of 700 people being put off from the nickel industry. In this morning's paper there was a very gloomy report on the world steel industry.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Do you think our prices are helping us with markets?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: If Mr Withers were to look at pricing in this part of the world he certainly would not make such statements.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Yes, I would. I look at the domestic scene as well and I have experience there which you do not have.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: How do you know that?

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I know your record.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Perhaps I will stagger the honourable member some day; he should be sure of what he says. If I say that Australia makes the cheapest steel in the world someone might say that is not correct. However, steel is one of the major components in an industrialised society.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Granted.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: We produce some of the best rural produces in the world at very competitive prices. Australia is the only country in the world that produces sugar with white labour and sells it world wide.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: Through mechanisation.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Of course. It is a very capable industry. We sometimes fall for the three card trick and say we should import things from Japan as it has cheap labour.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You are talking about the old days now.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: The wage levels in Japan are higher now than those in Italy. At the same time do not let us delude ourselves into thinking we are the bread basket of the world; we are not. However, Australian farmers are among the most proficient. We must think carefully when we talk about domestic costs.

When we talk about costs perhaps we should talk about members of Parliament, compare costs with our British counterparts, and compare the wages they get with ours. That would be a fair start. I do not think members opposite would want to talk about that.

We have a standard of living in this country to which we are all accustomed. If we talk about costs in relation to this Budget it is good to go across the whole arena of costs; and our own position, as I said, would be a good one to start with. Deathly silence!

The Hon. W. R. Withers: We are waiting for you.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Recently we saw on television a very plausible person urging us to invest in building society loans as interest rates are going to drop. I have not noticed any advertisements in the paper, but I read recently in an overseas paper, and more recently in an Australian paper, about this matter. Everyone is sure to have read of the information that was leaked from the Federal Government, which seems to be the practice of Governments in the Federal arena. It seems if one is not game to tell the population of a certain problem one can let the Press tell everyone and then the Government can lead a hunt for the person who has leaked the information.

The forecasts of the Reserve Bank which I mentioned earlier in the debate indicate that prices will rise from between 11 and 12 per cent in 1978. So much for the inflation rate being under 10 per cent! I will not go into that, although the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer made that statement which has been destroyed so many times it is not worth repeating. The Treasurer seemed to multiply the cost of living, that is the Consumer Price Index, by four and then said the inflation rate was under 10 per cent.

The Reserve Bank also forecasts that unemployment will increase since the last financial year from 5.3 per cent to 6 per cent. What disturbs me is where are the 100 000 jobs the Premier has spoken of?

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: Wait and see.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: The Reserve Bank, and I imagine it employs some of the best economic forecasters in the country, indicates that unemployment will rise from 5.3 per cent to 6 per cent next year. If we could find those 100 000 jobs we would be able to bring that figure down.

The Hon. R. Thompson: We will have a pool of 100 000 unemployed before they find the jobs.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: They forecast that the

short-term interest rates would probably have to rise despite the Fraser Government's promise to the contrary. It seems strange that someone can say people should get in and invest in building societies. Australia has just had to borrow about \$2 000 million, but interest rates are going down. Of course they are not; they are going to rise. In reply to Mr Oliver I do not know of any parliamentarian who speculates in the manner he has mentioned. One of the things worrying us is the number of speculators. They are overseas investors who like to bring in large sums of money, export it, and do all kinds of things; only their investment in Australia is for their benefit alone.

I do not know of any parliamentarians doing that. Even Mr Withers with his business experience would have difficulty in keeping pace with the international monetary market. In Kununurra he would have to use a message stick.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Hayden knows!

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I would not argue about Mr Hayden. The easiest way to solve that problem is for the Prime Minister, the man who made the accusations about Mr Hayden, to accept the offer to debate the issue. If the offer is not taken up by the Prime Minister it could be pursued by Mr Lynch; but the indications are that he might soon be the ex-Treasurer.

That is politics, and it happens in all parties. To continue—

the dollar will remain unsteady.
credit will remain tight.

the non-farm gross domestic product—the measure of economic growth—will rise by only about 1.3 per cent. This is a stark contrast to Federal Treasurer Lynch's optimistic forecast of growth of a minimum of 2 per cent.

This is not a Labor Party document; it is a document put out by the Reserve Bank. It continues—

The average weekly incomes will rise by only 10 or 11 per cent—less than inflation—though the gross operating surpluses of companies will increase by 23.3 per cent—a rate similar to last year.

Of course things are not so good in the rural sector either, despite the fact that the balloon was blown up and it was said that all sorts of things would happen. To continue—

The gross value of rural production in 1976-77 was 2 per cent down on the 1975-76 level.

The Treasury points out there is a likelihood of declining returns to farmers in the wheat industry and that these farmers will be faced with continuing and increasing pressure to improve technical and economic efficiency in both production and marketing.

I do not have to change my direction because the whole time I have been in this place I have believed that the real economic indicator of this country—despite iron ore and all those other things—is the value of our primary produce.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: We have a point of agreement.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I thank Mr Withers. To continue—

In regard to other grain crops, the overseas marketing outlook is not encouraging with prices likely to be pushed down because overseas producers have enjoyed good seasonal conditions which are likely to lead to high output.

I must confess that it was not until I was in Fremantle the other day, speaking to someone in the wool industry that I realised what was happening. This gentleman said things had never been so bad.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: He must have been a buyer.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: He was. To continue—

The situation also looks bad for wool. The State's clip last financial year was the smallest since 1973-74 and indications are that wool output will fall by a further 10 per cent in 1977-78.

One need only look at the declining numbers of stock available for slaughter and for live export to realise the extent of the problem. I agree there is very little one could expect the Government to do. We appear to be entering another drought period while we are still suffering from the effects of last year's drought. One cannot blame the present Government for the lack of rain; it would be nice to do so, but we cannot.

There is plenty of evidence to show that certain sectors of the rural industry are ailing and they will continue to ail and to feed the queues of the unemployed. These circumstances will continue to cause the kind of human misery I spoke about. I am not saying that the only hardship being felt in the community is being felt in city areas. Sure enough the highest levels of unemployment in the State are being experienced in Kwinana, Fremantle, and Lockridge, although I stand to be corrected if this is not so. I have just had the benefit of a trip through the wheatbelt area and through some parts of Mr Moore's province. I had

a look at the railway line there, and I will have a few words to say about that in a moment.

It is not only the farmers in the country areas who are affected. There is very little prospect of employment for many country people, and this brings all sorts of social problems. I have spoken to social workers in some areas and they have informed me that the number of deserted wives is increasing daily. Situations such as this become a further charge on the Government. In many areas farmers are having it tough and for many of them it may become tougher. Perhaps, like the fitter in the city who has a good job and enjoys a good rate of pay, there are a few farmers who are enjoying a high income and a good way of life. However, there are a number of them who are not doing so well.

Although the Budget papers have been here for a little while, as I was away I have not been able to give them the attention they deserve. We see that there will be additional aid for some sporting bodies and I believe the amount involved is \$110 000. I laud the Government for making this money available so that sporting teams may travel interstate, but \$110 000 is not a large amount of money. Certainly recreation must become a major preoccupation of Governments of all political colours in the future, and I hope this amount can be increased in the future. I would like to say also that I hope the Government will not be too strict when making decisions about what is a legitimate football team or what is a legitimate hockey team. I hope it will give consideration to cases such as young people who may wish to compete in sailing races in the Eastern States. Although this is not a large sum of money, it is a breakthrough.

The budgetary decision to station an officer of the Department of Labour and Industry in the Pilbara area is soundly based. Such action should have been taken a long time ago. I believe such an appointment will be of value, although in my opinion the best course to take would be the appointment of a full-time Industrial Commissioner. The Pilbara area seems to provide a popular talking point here from time to time, especially when the men up there have stopped work.

By his very presence in the area, an Industrial Commissioner could get the feel of the industry; he could come to know the industry and the personalities engaged in it. He would then have a greater appreciation of the problems that beset not only the men on the job but also management. I urge the Government to give serious consideration to stationing a permanent Industrial Commissioner in the area as well as an officer from the Department of Labour and Industry. I

do not know whether a commissioner would go there voluntarily; the Government may have to draft one.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: Mr Coleman would go up there.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Mr Coleman is a Commonwealth commissioner, and I do not think he would do much good up there. I was talking really of the State scene, although it would not be a bad idea to appoint a Commonwealth conciliator and a State Industrial Commissioner.

We are now into the second term of the Court Government. In their first terms Governments tend to rush in and do things. Of course, I appreciate that the Government is now running out of puff, but I must say that there is nothing to really excite me in the Budget. It seems to me that many urgent problems have been ignored, and the Budget is full of holes.

In my opinion some of the Government's good ideas have been ruined by bad implementation. The taxpayers of this State—and that is another answer to Mr Withers' query about how we obtain the private or public dollar—have a right to expect their money to be spent more wisely. I would like to see greater emphasis placed on the public sector in the Budget so that private sector spending will generate the private sector pickup. That is the catalyst that is needed to set the process in motion. Rather than talk about increased unemployment, we will then talk about reduced unemployment. Once we start talking about reduced unemployment, we will be well on the way to a consumer-led economic recovery.

I do not want to belabour the Budget much longer. As I said, there is ample scope for other members to speak on it. The introductory speech notes cover 81 pages and the Budget documents altogether cover 133 pages, so members may rise to address themselves to many subjects.

This debate gives members the opportunity to speak on any subject of their choice. The first matter I would like to speak on, and about which I would like to implore the Government to take action, is the Meekatharra-Mullewa railway line. I have just had the opportunity to tour the Murchison-Eyre district, and I heard that Mr Wordsworth along with other people had passed through the area. He could not say he would save the railway, and neither could I. Let me put it this way: perhaps the Railways Department has some problems, but if this Government or any other Government is really sincere in its efforts to decentralise, then I urge it to keep that line open.

I have here some figures which were given to me by the locomotive and firemen's union, and I

regard them as being substantially correct. I cannot say categorically they are correct because I have not checked them out. These figures relate to the towns of Mullewa, Mt. Magnet, and Meekatharra. I do not know whether anyone in Cue will be affected. The figures show that the closure of the railway line will take \$1 million in wages from the area and it will hasten the death of some of the towns. I had the opportunity recently of visiting Wiluna, and I do not quite know how to describe that town. It appeared to me as though it had been under continuous mortar attack for 10 years. One thing that hastened the demise of Wiluna was the closure of the railway line. If the Government closes the Meekatharra-Mullewa line, it will destroy the towns, and it will add to unemployment. It may cost a little bit of money to upgrade the railway.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: \$23 million.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: But this amount will be spread over a period of time.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: The line has had it now!

The Hon. D. K. DANS: In reply to Mr Moore let me say that that brings no credit to the previous Government. This line was allowed to deteriorate to its present condition and probably the Tonkin Government must accept some of the blame for this. In fact, if the Government really wishes to put people to work, this would be a good chance. The repairs do not have to be carried out overnight. If this area is serviced by road transport, what will happen to the roads? I have seen what happened to the Hume and the Pacific Highways, and these highways were far better to begin with than the roads we have in this area. Eventually it will cost millions of dollars to upgrade the roads; perhaps Mr Wordsworth can give us figures on this matter. I do not know, as I have no immediate interest in the Murchison-Eyre electorate because it does not come within my province at all.

It seems to me to be tragic that with the withdrawal of the railway the human misery connected with unemployment will be further accelerated. Surely as an energy-starved society it would be of some advantage to upgrade the line little by little because eventually the upgrading of the roads will cost a great deal more if the area is to be serviced in any way at all. I do not know how all the ammonium nitrate will be transported to the area but, as I am from a port area, it would make me very happy to see ships used as a method of transport.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: It depends on where you decide it is to go.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I look at this problem as a human one, and I hope money will be found to upgrade the railway, to find employment for people, and to assist the people who like to live in the towns concerned. I cannot say that I share their enthusiasm for some of these places, but it is a matter of choice, and employment in these towns will slow down the exodus to the city.

Whilst the figure of \$23 million has been mentioned, surely to goodness if the area does develop—and there are minerals there—the amount of money spent on upgrading the road systems and maintaining them in the short term and the long term will be far more than \$23 million. In addition to this there will be the cost to the community of resettling, if that is the term to use, the people who are thrown out of work. I am not talking particularly about the railway men because they will be re-located in other railway depots in various parts of the State. I am talking about the people who depend on the produce carried by the railway system. The effects on them will be tremendous.

I think some of the lines which have been closed should have been closed, but such a line, with a little imagination and if we have faith in the north-west, could be taken into the Pilbara area to link up with the systems which are already there. That seems to me to be the logical thing to do.

I agree with Mr Moore; I should not like to travel very far on that railway line. But the engine drivers say that it is quite safe even at speeds in excess of 30 kilometres an hour. The fact is that the line is there and to upgrade it and slowly repair it would enable us to keep it, which I think would be an investment for the future. This would stop the escalation of unemployment, it would preserve those towns which are in a reasonably stable condition, and it would provide a nucleus for the railway line to be—

The Hon. W. R. Withers: It would cause a lot of confusion in the Pilbara with the iron ore deliveries.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Why?

The Hon. W. R. Withers: If it were hooked up with the existing railways already there.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I think many studies have been undertaken to show how it can be done. I saw a railway in one part of the world over which a train ran every minute of every day with automatic signalling systems quite adequately controlling them.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: With a 3 ft. gauge and an 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge mixed up?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: In many parts of the world axle systems can be adjusted, but let us not talk about gauges. Australia struggled through about 50 or 60 years of its history with five different railway gauges. I should like to tell a story here. After the war when the peace settlement was being negotiated in Germany a British general asked, "How can we ever prevent Germany mounting another full-scale war?" An American general, who had served in Australia, said, "Give them six separate railway gauges and they will never have the ability to become industrialised again." We staggered along with six separate railway gauges and we are still staggering along with a number of different railway gauges. I do not think that is an argument against the railway line remaining where it is for the time being. All I am saying is that at the end there would be a bonus if the railway line were resleepered right now to provide for a future widening of the gauge by simply putting in longer sleepers.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Where do you put your priorities when spending money on railways?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: At the moment we seem to be ripping up the Fremantle to Perth line, if I can believe what I read.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: If you are ever Minister for Transport please do not stop at the Pilbara. You will carry the railway on to the Kimberley.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: He will discover the Kimberley next week.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I venture to suggest that I knew all about the Kimberley before Mr MacKinnon ever went there. That was a long time ago when it was really a romantic place. The point is that if we are really serious about decentralisation and about establishing regional offices, we need some people for the regional offices to service. If the railway line is taken away it will never be put back as there is no guarantee that \$23 million will be sufficient to service the roads because they will not stand up to the volume of traffic.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Why do you say it would never be put back?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I do not think there has ever been a case of a Labor Government closing a railway line and a subsequent Liberal Government reopening it, or *vice versa*. Let us not repeat the mistakes of the past. There is a railway line in existence which has been surveyed. It could be resleepered gradually. This would provide work and help to keep the people in the towns, and in the long term would be a good investment.

Perhaps the honourable Mr Wordsworth could privately give information to Mr Withers with regard to extending the line into the Kimberley, but if the railway line is to be closed the Government should tell the people that it is to be closed and when it is to be closed, so that the people in those areas may make the necessary plans to get out of the area as soon as they can. Do not just allow the towns to die on the vine.

I support the motion.

THE HON. G. W. BERRY (Lower North) [9.50 p.m.]: I support the motion. I take this opportunity of congratulating you, Mr President, on your elevation to the presidency of this Chamber. I congratulate also the Leader of the House, the Ministers, the Leader of the Opposition, and new members on both sides of the House.

I also wish to pay a tribute to the late Jack Heitman. I did not take the opportunity to do so previously because I was afraid I might become a little too emotional. The late Jack Heitman was a very great friend of mine and I was affected greatly by his sudden demise. He helped me considerably while I have been a member of this Chamber and I appreciate all he did for me. I offer my condolences to his family.

I wish to mention a few matters with regard to the Budget. The first matter is the Carnarvon drought-relief scheme which was undertaken last year because of the serious situation which developed because the Gascoyne River had not flowed. Because the Gascoyne River had not flowed to the sea since the 6th April last year, although there is a small flow this year to within a few miles of the bridge, the situation is becoming very serious. Work was under way because money had been allocated over the years and that injection of money was used to extend the pipeline and to alleviate the situation which had arisen.

I have been speaking about this problem ever since I became a member of this Chamber. If in the early 1960s the Liberal-Country Party Government had not grasped the nettle and committed that Government and any subsequent Government to a programme of improving the water supply—and it is upon this that the very existence of the town of Carnarvon depends—the present situation would have been, to say the least, calamitous. I hope it has been brought home to those in the district who have not experienced a shortage of water during the last 17 years just how serious the area can be affected when the river does not flow. It is vital that the Government continues the work it has been doing to augment the water supply until the groundwater scheme is

completed so that at least the supply of water is capable of keeping the irrigated areas in action.

I have heard it said it is a paradox that Carnarvon's wealth in the irrigation areas depends on a shortage of water so as to restrict winter production. But the stability of an area depends upon a stable water supply and until we achieve that and the spectre of drought is removed the area cannot prosper and can only live on a knife edge, as it has done in the years it has been in existence.

I commend the Government for the action it took in the 1960's and for the work that has been continued ever since to bring this scheme to fruition. It is not the scheme which was originally envisaged whereby it was hoped we would have a large dam in which we could impound a large quantity of water. It was found that the area was unsuitable for such a scheme and the scheme of tapping underground water in the area of the riverbed about 42 miles from the river mouth has been accepted as the one to stabilise the situation.

The drought which has affected parts of the State and the shortage of water in the metropolitan area must bring home to us the need to make provision at some future time to bring water from the areas in which it abounds; and the nearest area would be Fitzroy. I suggest it is time we started to plan for water to be brought from Fitzroy to serve the coastal areas, the goldfields, and the agricultural areas because in the Fitzroy there is virtually an unlimited quantity of water and rain falls every year. Little use is made of the water which flows down the Fitzroy River and out to the sea. There is a considerable quantity of water in the Ord which has not yet been put to full use. I understand that we could find as much water in the Fitzroy which could be put to use a lot easier and at a much lower cost to service the State. I think it is time consideration was given the study of such a project.

Another matter I should like to mention which concerns particularly the area of Carnarvon is the system of estimated annual rental values for rating purposes for the country sewerage scheme. As honourable members are probably aware, the country sewerage scheme is operated under a system whereby a maximum rate of 15c in the dollar is charged on estimated annual rental values and the shortfall is picked up by the Government. I find this to be a most inequitable system of rating for this type of service because we find the more valuable the property the greater the cost to the user for a service which is the same for every property. The service is similar to the provision of power. Power is provided at a nominal service cost and a person pays for

electricity as he uses it. A charge of 15c in the dollar on one's annual rental value is quite inequitable because of the way it affects different properties. In one case it could cost more than \$100 and in another case the cost could be half that amount.

I think we should look at a scheme which is similar to the power undertakings operating in different places throughout the State whereby an equitable charge could be made on properties connected to the country sewerage scheme. Under the country water scheme we pay for water as we use it and there is no difficulty in that respect. I think a system could be devised which would give a more equitable distribution of the cost of installation and running of the country sewerage scheme.

As was mentioned previously, there was a committee of inquiry into the rating system. I have read the findings of that committee but I was not able to find anything which would affect the present system and reduce the charges. I hope that someone will come along with a suggestion which will solve the problem.

I will now speak about the pastoral industry. Except for a small coastal strip, in the Gascoyne area the province is suffering from a serious drought. In the *Daily News* of the 21st September, 1977, an article appeared under the heading, "PM promises aid to WA pastoral industry". The article stated that the Federal Government would give the WA pastoral industry urgent financial assistance. The Prime Minister gave that undertaking to a delegation of the WA pastoralists during a two-hour meeting last night.

I do not know the form which the assistance will take, but at least there is some promise for that area which is suffering from probably the severest drought in its history. In fact, an agricultural adviser told me that the upper Gascoyne was in the worst state he had ever seen it. This applied especially to the wool industry. It is opportune that the Federal Government has seen fit to come to the party and I hope it will do something to enable the people to carry on until we receive some rain.

One of my pet subjects, on which I have spoken previously, is that of pornography. With great dismay I read an article which appeared in the *Daily News* on the 29th September, 1977. The article was headed, "Age-of-consent campaigner shocks Britain". The article stated—

The growing outrage in Britain about child pornography and sex erupted into violence in London last week.

The focus for finger-nail attacks and

showers of spit were members of the Paedophile Information Exchange, whose members want to legalise sex between adults and children over the age of four.

I just do not know where we are going and what is happening to society when groups of people advocate measures such as that. It appears we are getting to the lower depths when children are involved in this sort of trade. The trade has prospered, and nothing has happened yet to make it any less acceptable to society. We must eventually get to the stage where we will have to examine our values.

Coupled with pornography is the drug scene. An article appeared in *The West Australian* on the 10th August, 1977 under the heading, "Expert: Drug crisis looms". The article reads—

Legalising marihuana would inevitably lead to greater abuse of the drug, an American physiologist said yesterday.

Professor Hardin B. Jones, who regards marijuana as 30 times more dangerous than alcohol, has come to Australia with a warning about avoiding his own country's "tragic drug crisis".

We have reached the stage where the quantity of cannabis coming into this State is getting into the million dollar field. The situation is far more serious than people will believe, and it is time we examined our values with regard to this matter also. Another article appeared in the *Daily News* on the 21st September, 1977, under the heading, "MP's son 20 died of drugs". The article reads—

Piers Shore, son of senior British Labour Government minister Peter Shore, had been an addict for five years when he died of a heroin overdose 11 days ago.

He started by smoking cannabis and thus becomes yet another statistic on the side of those who believe there is no such things as a tolerable drug.

That is evidence, again, that the agitation for the legalising of marijuana is something which should be carefully considered by the people involved. They should give more thought to the tragedies which are occurring.

An article in today's *The West Australian* is headed, "Enormous profits in heroin". The article states that the estimated heroin business of one operator was \$9 000 million a year. That is only one organisation involved. If I remember correctly, the narcotics bureau recently recovered heroin to the value of \$1 million which was brought into this State. It is time our society took

stronger action to stamp out this disease—as I prefer to call it—before it gets any worse.

I will now deal with the problem of feral cats. I refer to domestic cats which go back to their feral state. Many people, particularly in country areas, like to have a cat as a pet, but no-one seems to worry about the way cats reproduce. An article which appeared in the *News of the North*, on Tuesday, the 20th September, 1977, might be of interest to members. The article was written by Kathy De La Rue, and reads—

The big number of feral cats in national parks, which has been causing concern in South Western Australia, is also a serious problem in the Pilbara.

The article continues—

Feral cats—domestic cats which have been abandoned in the bush—are one of the most serious threats to the survival of our native animals.

Wildlife officer R. Smith of the Karratha district, caught one cat at Yanrey station.

This is interesting because it concerns a domestic pet which everyone usually considers as being such a docile animal. The article continues—

An examination of the cat's stomach revealed the remains of three geckoes, two dragons, two big centipedes, one stick insect, two skinks, two blindworms, three grasshoppers and a spinifex hopping mouse, which is a rare species.

The WA Museum has recorded 32 species of mammals eaten by feral cats.

If the cats were to eat the rabbits they would help to solve a problem. We have the licensing of dogs, but I think that wild cats have a more serious effect on our wild life. Some consideration ought to be given to sterilising cats in order to reduce their numbers otherwise our wildlife will suffer—which will be our loss. When a cat reverts to the feral state it is very cunning and is able to thrive in its wild state. So, consideration might have to be given to the licensing of cats.

I have covered a wide range of subjects during this debate, and with those remarks I indicate my support of the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. G. E. Masters.

House adjourned at 10.10 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE RAILWAYS

Additional Passenger Services

158. The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What arrangements have been made by Westrail to cater for extra passenger traffic desiring to come to Perth from country areas to attend the Football Grand Final and/or the Royal Show—
 - (a) on Kalgoorlie-Perth Prospector and connecting buses from Esperance or Norseman;
 - (b) other rail passenger services and, if any, connecting buses;
 - (c) on entirely bus routes only?
- (2) (a) Have bookings been refused at any station or booking office because transport was fully booked; and
 - (b) if so, where?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) (a) The *Prospector* service from Kalgoorlie and Merredin to Perth was strengthened on Friday, September 23rd. No additional buses were required.
- (b) The Bunbury-Perth and Albany-Perth passenger train services were strengthened on Friday, September 23rd. No additional buses were required.
- (c) Regular services are being supplemented as necessary to meet demands. On Monday, September 26th, four additional buses were scheduled Bunbury to Perth and return to cope with the movement of school children.
- (2) (a) No.
- (b) Answered by (a).

TRAFFIC BRIDGE

Hardy Road

159. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) In view of delays being caused to traffic at the Hardy Road railway crossing, Forrestfield, by train movements between Forrestfield marshalling yards and the Kewdale freight terminal, will the Minister advise whether an overhead road traffic bridge is to be constructed at this point?

- (2) If so, will he advise the date on which construction is to commence?
- (3) If not, would he advise what action the Main Roads Department intends to take to overcome the problem in this rapidly developing area?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) to (3) In my answer to the honourable member's questions asked on September 21—which differed from his present question only in respect to construction of a rail bridge rather than the road bridge now mentioned—I indicated that it was not the intention to construct a bridge at this stage.

In amplification, and in answer to his present question, Main Roads Department long range planning provides for future bridging of the railway in this area but no date has been established as yet.

At this stage investigations are being undertaken to see what improvements might be carried out without having to resort to the bridge option.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

ROADS

TWU Signs

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister aware—
 - (a) that certain persons have erected badly painted signs bearing the

caption "T.W.U. trucks stop" on Great Eastern Highway and other main roads quite some distance from the metropolitan area;

- (b) that these signs contravene section 33B of the Main Roads Act?

- (2) If the answers to (a) and (b) are "Yes" why has not action been taken—

- (a) to have the signs removed;
- (b) to penalise the persons responsible for their erection?

- (3) If the answers to questions 1(a) and 1(b) are "No" what action does the Main Roads Department intend to take?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

I thank the honourable member for giving me some notice of this question, the answer to which is as follows—

- (1) (a) Yes.
- (b) No, it is considered that these are not advertising signs within the meaning of section 33B of the Main Roads Act.

- (2)(a) and (b) Answered by (1).

- (3) The Main Roads Department does not intend to take any action at the present time as the temporary signs are only incidental to the whole action being taken by the Transport Workers' Union.